



## **Chickenpox (Varicella) Exposure in a Refugee from the Kyangwale Refugee Settlement in Uganda**

24 March 2015

Dear State Refugee Health Coordinator,

CDC has been notified of three cases of chickenpox (varicella) in refugees from the Kyangwale refugee settlement in Uganda. The refugees were diagnosed 10-23 March 2015 at the time of the pre-departure check, conducted by physicians from the International Organization for Migration (IOM). One of these refugees was slated for travel to the U.S., the other two to Europe. The refugees were isolated and started on symptomatic treatment. The family members of the refugees were also isolated. Family members as well as US-bound contacts who were residing in the same guest house as the cases were all vaccinated. Travel for this family has been put on hold. While it is known that chickenpox is circulating in this settlement, no national response is expected.

Refugees who were part of the caseload and determined to be contacts to these cases will be arriving 25-26 March 2015. Due to the high number of states the refugees are being resettled into, an Advanced Booking Notification (ABN) will be posted to the DGMQ Refugee Health - USA Health Forum.

Chickenpox spreads in the air through coughing or sneezing. It can also be spread by touching or breathing in the virus particles that come from chickenpox blisters. A person with chickenpox is typically contagious 1-2 days before the rash appears and until all blisters have formed scabs. For chickenpox, rash onset occurs 10-21 days after exposure. Most persons in the United States have immunity to chickenpox, either through vaccination or past exposure. CDC recommends that you verify evidence of immunity among any staff working on the resettlement of these refugees. Additional information on chickenpox is available at [www.cdc.gov/chickenpox](http://www.cdc.gov/chickenpox) or through your local health department.

CDC, with in-country partners, will continue to monitor the situation in Uganda and will follow up with additional information, if necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "H. Burke", is located below the "Sincerely," text.

**Heather Burke**

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