John Bel Edwards
GOVERNOR

Rebekah E. Gee MD, MPH
SECRETARY

State of Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Health

Office of the Secretary

March 13, 2017

Re: Mumps Virus in Louisiana

Dear Parent/Guardian/Student:

The Louisiana Department of Health is investigating cases of mumps in Louisiana, including a cluster of cases at LSU in Baton Rouge. This while just to our north, the State of Arkansas is experiencing a prolonged mumps outbreak with more than 3,000 cases since October, 2016. Most of these cases are occurring in school-aged and young college students.

The purpose of this letter is to alert you to the developing situation in Louisiana, and provide you with information to best protect you and your family from getting sick with mumps.

The mumps virus is found in saliva, and is spread through coughing, sneezing, kissing and sharing drinks, utensils, food or water bottles.

The risk of mumps can be greatly reduced by ensuring your child is vaccinated. Students who are not up-to-date with mumps vaccinations can be excluded from school.

Since mumps has been identified in Louisiana, and the outbreak to our north is so severe, we are asking parents/guardians to take the following general precautions:

1. **Check the vaccination records for you and your child**. Two shots of mumps vaccine (MMR/MMRV) are recommended for children four years and older.

2. **Watch for symptoms of mumps.** Mumps infection causes fever, loss of appetite, tiredness, and headache, along with swelling of one/both of the salivary glands. A person can be infectious with mumps from two days before the onset of symptoms until five days after the swelling begins.

3. **Seek care**. If you/your child have the symptoms of mumps, please contact your health care provider or the student health center and DO NOT attend school or work.

4. **If you are planning to travel**, ensure that your immunizations are up-to-date for you and all your family members before traveling.

For more information visit www.cdc.gov/mumps.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Guidry, M.D.
State Health Officer