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**“We commit to the safety and well-being of the people of New Mexico by doing the right thing, always.”**

## **State Prison and Health Officials Investigate Two Cases of Chickenpox at Otero County Prison Facility**

**SANTA FE (Jan. 2, 2018):** The New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD) is collaborating with epidemiologists at the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) to investigate two confirmed cases of chickenpox at the Otero County Prison facility.

Two inmates tested positive for varicella (chickenpox) last Friday .The Corrections Department has adopted NMDOH’s recommendations for limiting the spread of disease in the facility.

“We are working closely with epidemiologists at NMDOH to contain the spread of chickenpox in the facility,” stated David Jablonski, Secretary of Corrections. “Our goal is to protect the health of inmates and prison staff so that spread of the disease can be limited and complications can be avoided.”

About 135 inmates in two affected units in the facility are being offered blood testing to determine who is already protected (immune) and who is not protected (non-immune). Inmates without evidence of immunity will be quarantined in order to assure that anyone who does develop chickenpox doesn’t expose other people living or working in the facility. Staff working in the facility are also being assessed to determine who is or isn’t already immune to the disease.

Individual chickenpox cases and clusters of cases are reportable in New Mexico. Cases should be reported to NMDOH. Contact the on-call epidemiologist 24 hours a day at 505-827-0006 to report confirmed or suspect cases.

For additional information, please contact S.U. Mahesh at [mahesh.sita1@state.nm.us](mailto:mahesh.sita1@state.nm.us) or 505-490-3071.

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