



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Leslie Ridgeway (619) 685-2239

FLU MAY BE CULPRIT IN RAMONA SCHOOL DISTRICT ILLNESSES *Absences Appear Unrelated to Child Who Fell Ill While at Sixth Grade School Camp*

The illnesses of a large number of Ramona School District sixth graders appear to be unrelated to a fellow student who was hospitalized with serious illness Sunday, Jan. 21 after attending sixth grade camp at Camp Cuyamaca last week.

Children's Hospital reported the child has methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), but additional tests are being performed to definitively determine the child's illness. Tests and symptoms of other students who attended the camp with the child indicate that most of them have the flu.

"Public Health Services is working with Children's Hospital to determine the definitive cause of the child's illness, and is working with the school district to keep parents updated," said Nancy Bowen, M.D., San Diego County Public Health Officer, San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). "School district officials tell us that many parents kept their children home from school when they heard about the hospitalized child's illness."

It appears the child did not contract the illness while at camp. It is not yet known how the child contracted the disease. Latest reports indicate the child's condition has improved.

The sixth graders attend James Dukes Elementary and Hanson Lane Elementary schools in Ramona.

MRSA can cause potentially life-threatening infections in the lungs, bloodstream, heart, joints and bones. It can be resistant to many antibiotics. It does not spread person-to-person through the air.

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