

Editorial: Ban personal-belief exemption for vaccinations

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Unvaccinated teenagers have been sent home from school for as long as three weeks. Dozens of babies who may have been exposed to measles have been placed in quarantine. One in four of the more than 73 Californians infected has required hospitalization. It's getting hard to keep up with how many cases of measles have emerged thanks to the single infected woman who visited Disneyland just before Christmas, or where it might show up next.

Enough. It's time to ensure that more Californians are vaccinated.

The outbreak this winter has illustrated quickly and forcefully how a highly contagious disease can spread when the vaccination rate falls below the level needed for "herd immunity." Herd immunity means that so many people are immune that the chance of outbreak is low, which protects the few who are not immunized because they are too young to have been fully vaccinated or because they are among the few in whom the vaccine doesn't "take" or because they haven't been vaccinated for valid medical reasons.

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