

Giving Children A Shot@Life

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

Shelli Dankoff – Media Relations Program Manager

[World Immunization Week](#), observed the last week of April, is getting an elevated profile this year thanks, in large part, to a growing outbreak of measles cases across the United States.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that as of April 29, at least 704 people have contracted measles, with one-third of those children under 5, breaking a 25-year-old record. Seven of the cases are in Illinois with more than 500 of the people infected with the highly contagious, and potentially deadly, disease not vaccinated according to the CDC. Even President Trump is weighing in, urging Americans to get vaccinated against measles.

April 27-May 4, is also [National Infant Immunization Week](#). Established 25 years ago, the week is designed to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Immunizations are recognized as one of the most successful and cost-effective health interventions.

SOT Dana Deshon, APN – OSF HealthCare

(Statistically, if you have measles and the people around are not vaccinated, 12 to 18 of those people will contract measles and then it just spreads like wildfire. So those infants, they are totally at risk and we know people die from measles – encephalitis, so an inflammation of the brain, and pneumonia are the two things that are most concerning when you get measles. :28)

SOT Dana Deshon, APN – OSF HealthCare

(There are certainly children that should not be vaccinated, there are medical reasons that puts them at risk if they should get some of those vaccinations. But that's a very small portion of it, all those other children really need to be vaccinated to save their lives and save their friends' lives. :18)

Dana Deshon is a pediatric Advanced Practice Nurse with OSF HealthCare, practicing in the Peoria, Illinois area. For more than four years, she has also been involved with the United Nations Foundation initiative called Shot@Life. As part of Shot@life, Dana and others lobby Congress to fund vaccine support for children in low income countries. According to Deshon, the funding accounts for less than 1% of the total U.S budget but saves 2.5 million lives every year worldwide.

The vaccines funded include polio, pneumonia, rotavirus, and measles. According to Shot@life statistics, more than 20-million people have been saved by the measles vaccine since 2000. But there were still 110,000 measles deaths in 2017, about 300 children every day.

SOT Dana Deshon, APN – OSF HealthCare

(Diseases do not know borders. The outbreak that were seeing currently in the United States - in a lot of them - we have visited areas that have measles, especially measles is what we're seeing right now and then it's coming back into our country. The hope is what we're going into those countries, we are trying to eradicate those diseases in the countries that don't have the opportunity to have those vaccinations and then eradicate disease. :29)

SOT Dana Deshon, APN – OSF HealthCare

(What shot@life does is they work with different organizations like Gavi and UNICEF and world health organizations and they help raise funds so then they can go into those countries and vaccinate and then we will, hopefully, my hope is polio will be gone and we won't need to give those shots anymore, just like smallpox was eradicated. :23)

The world is now nearly polio-free thanks to an aggressive immunization effort, where just 30 years ago polio paralyzed over 1,000 kids a day worldwide.

Visit [Shot@life](#) to learn more about efforts to provide vaccinations to countries most in need.