



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, August 25, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT:

Governor's Press Office, ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration Expands Measles Response Efforts Following Pennsylvania's First Measles-Associated Deaths in 35 Years

The PA Department of Health has hosted 91 measles vaccine pop-up clinics so far this year – and is planning to host 40 additional pop-up clinics in the weeks ahead.

The PA Departments of Health and Education are working together to ensure parents, students, and school communities have the resources and information they need to make informed decisions.

Getting vaccinated is the best protection against the virus, providing 97 percent lifetime protection after two doses.



Lancaster, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** outlined his Administration's aggressive statewide strategy to protect Pennsylvanians from the highly-contagious measles virus, following the **Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH)**'s announcement of two measles-associated deaths in Lancaster County earlier today.

Since the April outbreak began, the Shapiro Administration has expanded access to the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine in affected communities – administering more than 4,100 vaccinations at pop-up clinics thus far – and equipped school nurses and health care providers with important clinical guidance as many have never handled a case of measles before. Together with health care providers, more than 35,000 Pennsylvanians received an MMR vaccine in July 2026 – 10,000 more vaccine doses than a typical month.

“As a father of four children, I know every parent wants what’s best for their kids – but right now, there’s a barrage of information thrown at us online, on TV, and in our daily lives,” said **Governor Shapiro**. “I want every Pennsylvanian to know this: measles does not care about your county, your faith, or your social circle. It’s vital for every parent to know that if you or your kids are unvaccinated, you are at an increased risk for contracting this highly-contagious virus. The Department of Health is working around the clock to ensure impacted communities have access to the right vaccines so they can protect themselves and those they love. I urge everyone to take this seriously and to discuss any concerns with their trusted health care provider.”

Earlier today, **DOH** [confirmed two measles-associated deaths](#) of Lancaster County residents. To protect the privacy of the individuals and their families, DOH will not release additional details that could personally identify them. Pennsylvania has not seen a measles-associated death since 1991.

“Our hearts go out to the Lancaster County families grieving the loss of their family members,” said **Secretary of Health Dr. Debra Bogen**. “Their loss underscores why the Department of Health is working diligently to provide information and protection for Pennsylvanians. The measles virus spreads quickly and easily to anyone who is not immune. If you are not protected or immune, you are at risk of getting measles. Reach out to your health care provider or the Department of Health for information. We will ensure you have access to facts and access to vaccines to keep yourself, your family, and your community safe.”

Thus far in 2026, DOH has confirmed [393 cases of measles across 28 counties](#). In response, DOH staff have administered more than 4,100 MMR vaccinations at 91 pop-up clinics in impacted areas since the outbreak began in April — with another 40 pop-up vaccine clinics planned to open in the coming weeks.

The best protection against measles is getting vaccinated, as the MMR vaccine boosts a person’s immune system and [provides 97 percent lifetime protection after two doses](#).

People who believe they were exposed to measles, and are experiencing symptoms, should contact their health care provider or call DOH’s toll-free hotline at **877-PA-HEALTH** (877-724-3258).

Provider and School Outreach

Because the MMR vaccine helped eradicate measles in the U.S. for more than three decades, most practicing health care providers have never diagnosed or treated patients for measles. This spring and summer, DOH [expanded educational opportunities for health care providers](#) to raise awareness about the signs and

symptoms of measles and stress the importance of expanding access to routine immunizations across the Commonwealth.

More than 1,000 health care providers participated in DOH medical briefings to help them identify and treat the virus. To provide an expanded level of protection for the youngest Pennsylvanians, DOH also issued guidance to health care providers to administer [MMR vaccines to residents as young as 6 months old](#), based on extensive research and guidance from nationally recognized medical associations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

As the new school year begins, DOH and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) are ramping up proactive outreach to school administrators and nurses to prevent the spread of measles. This includes the Secretaries of both departments sending letters to school administrators and nurses reminding them of the state requirement to report immunization data to DOH by December 31 every year.

Since a majority of students are fully vaccinated, Pennsylvania schools benefit from robust community immunity that serves as a powerful shield against the virus. When most of a community is protected, it greatly reduces the ability for viruses to spread.

Based on data from the 2025–2026 school year, [93.2 percent of Pennsylvania kindergarten students, 94.6 percent of seventh graders, and 96.9 percent of twelfth graders, received both required doses of the MMR vaccine](#). While the majority of schools boast high MMR vaccination rates, there is a significant number that are currently under the 95 percent community immunity threshold recommended by public health experts.

To further empower families, DOH recently launched a [school vaccination resource tool](#) so parents have easy access to their children's school's vaccination data with the ability to make informed health decisions.

Last week, nearly 1,000 Pennsylvania school nurses attended medical briefings DOH hosted to provide additional guidance as students return to the classroom. DOH also provides resources on preventing the spread of measles in school and child care facilities on its [dedicated webpage](#).

Measles Symptoms and Transmission

It is important for Pennsylvanians to remember that the overall risk of measles remains low, especially for those who are fully vaccinated.

Measles is a highly contagious virus that can cause serious short- and long-term health problems including pneumonia and brain swelling, with nearly 20 percent of people who contract measles being hospitalized. Death from measles, though rare, occurs in one to three patients per 1,000 cases.

Measles spreads when a person who is infected breathes, coughs, or sneezes. The virus remains infectious in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours after the person with the infection leaves the area.

Symptoms begin with fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis), followed by a rash that starts on the head and spreads downward. Without proper protection or supportive care, measles can be deadly. Symptoms can start 7 to 21 days after exposure.

“Protecting our community’s health is at the heart of everything we do,” said **Michael D. Barber, CEO, Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health**. “The continued presence of measles is a sober reminder of why vaccination matters — not just for ourselves, but for our neighbors who are most vulnerable: newborns, pregnant women, and patients under our care.”

“As a physician, I have seen firsthand the power of vaccines to prevent diseases. The MMR vaccine is highly effective and remains one of the safest and most important tools we have to keep our communities healthy,” said **Dr. Jeffrey Martin, MD, family medicine physician and Chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine, Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health**. “Ultimately, public health is about caring for one another — the strength of a community is measured not by how well it protects the strongest among us, but by how well it protects those who are most vulnerable.”

Pennsylvanians can access current guidance, the measles dashboard, and additional resources at pa.gov/measles.

MMR vaccine is available across the state by contacting a health care provider, [county or municipal health department](#), [DOH State Health Center](#), [Federally Qualified Health Centers](#) (FQHCs), or a [Vaccines for Children](#) (VFC) program.

People who believe they were exposed to measles, and are experiencing symptoms, should contact their health care provider or call DOH’s toll-free hotline at **877-PA-HEALTH** (877-724-3258).

#