

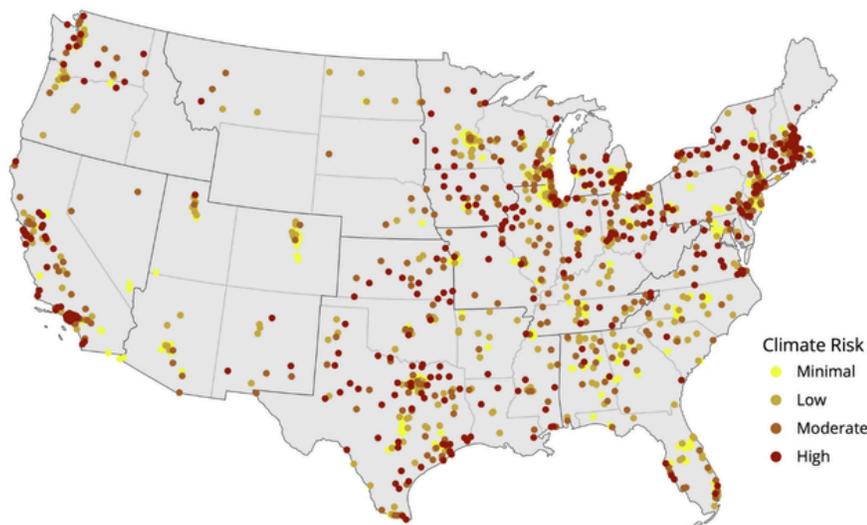
February 20, 2026

Key Takeaways

- Virginia reported its 8th, 9th and 10th measles cases of 2026.
- Despite slowing, the SC measles outbreak continues to spread, and outbreaks in other states are raising concerns.
- VDH reaffirmed its commitment to vaccines, eschewing new federal recommendations.
- Preliminary estimates suggest fatal drug overdoses declined in Virginia for the fourth straight year.

Key Figures

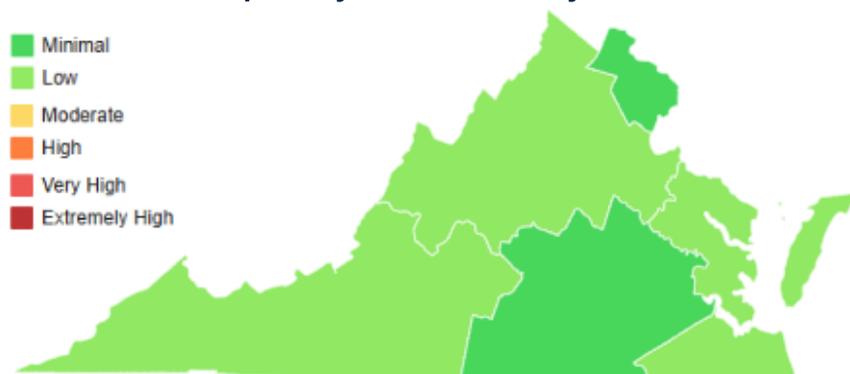
Climate Risk & Drinking Water Utilities



A [recent study](#) examined climate risk and water utility vulnerability for select water systems. Several Virginia utilities are rated 'high risk'.

Image Source: [CEE](#)

Respiratory Disease Activity Level



Flu activity is low or minimal in all Virginia regions.

Image source: [VDH](#)

Measles

72

Measles cases confirmed nationally in the week ending Feb 19.

Seasonal Illness

Low

Overall respiratory disease activity in Virginia for the week ending Feb 14.

12.4%

The share of Virginia ED visits for respiratory illness for the week ending Feb 14.

Key Date

Feb 24

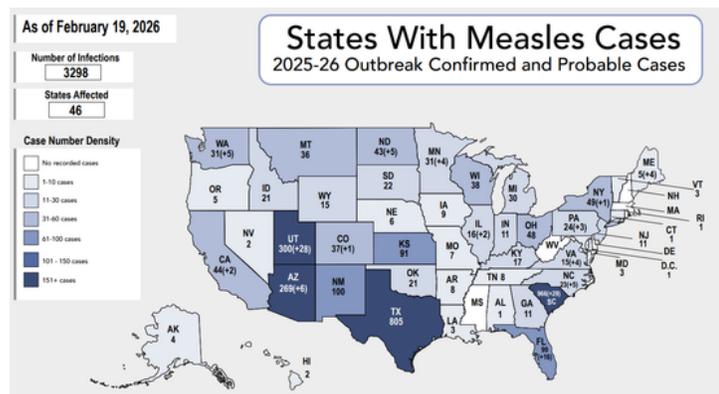
Federal State of the Union Address and response.

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Ongoing Monitored Situations

Measles

2025-2026 US Measles Outbreak



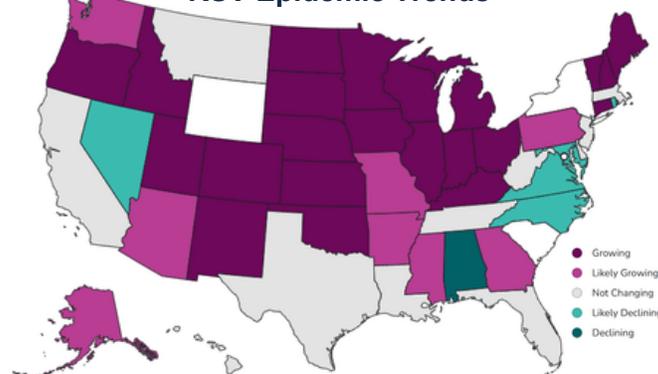
Only 5 US states have not reported a measles case since the outbreak began in Jan 2025 (New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Delaware, West Virginia, and Mississippi). Image Source: [Pandemic Center](#)

- The CDC reported **72 new measles cases** in the US over the past week, bringing the 2026 total to 982 cases across 25 US states. [Canada](#) reported 58 new cases last week. [Mexico](#) reported 609.
- [South Carolina](#) reported **29 new measles cases** in the week ending Feb 17, bringing the outbreak total there to 962. More recent outbreaks in [Florida](#) and [California](#) are raising concerns, while the outbreak on the [Utah/Arizona](#) border has spread to the capitals of both states.
- [Virginia](#) confirmed **three new measles cases** this week, all in the Northern region, bringing the [2026 total](#) to 10. VDH is reporting 16 active exposure sites in Northern Va.

Seasonal Illness

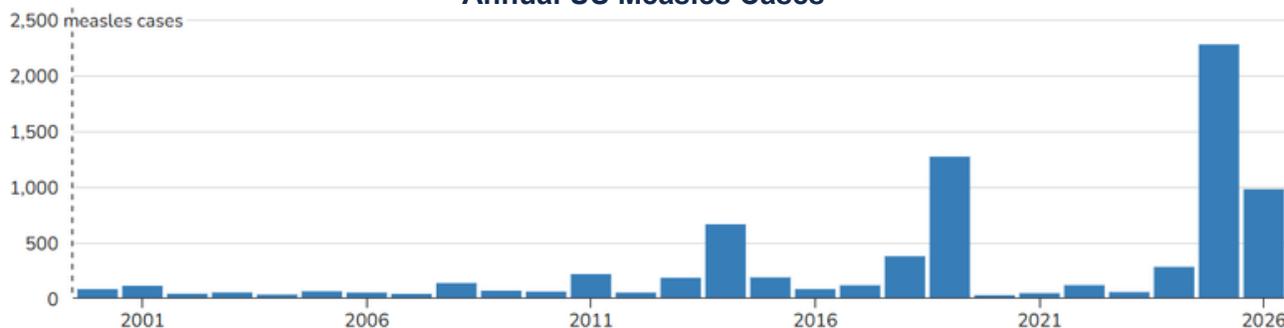
- In [Virginia](#), overall respiratory activity is **low and stable**. Flu activity accounts for 1.9% of all ED visits, down from 2.1% a week ago. Flu activity is trending down, while COVID-19 and RSV activity is stable.
- The CDC is **reporting a strong growth signal for flu in the Mid-Atlantic**, including in Virginia. RSV is also showing a strong growth signal nationally.
- **Gastrointestinal illness** is above threshold in [Virginia](#), accounting for 11.3% of ED visits. GI illness is above threshold in all regions except Southwest Virginia.
- **COVID-19** was associated with **290,000 to 450,000 hospitalizations** from Jul 1 2024 to Jun 30 2025. RSV was associated with 190,000 to 350,000 hospitalizations. Both viruses were also associated with tens of thousands of deaths.

RSV Epidemic Trends



As of Feb 17, RSV was growing or likely growing in 30 states and declining or likely declining in just 6. Image Source: [CDC](#)

Annual US Measles Cases

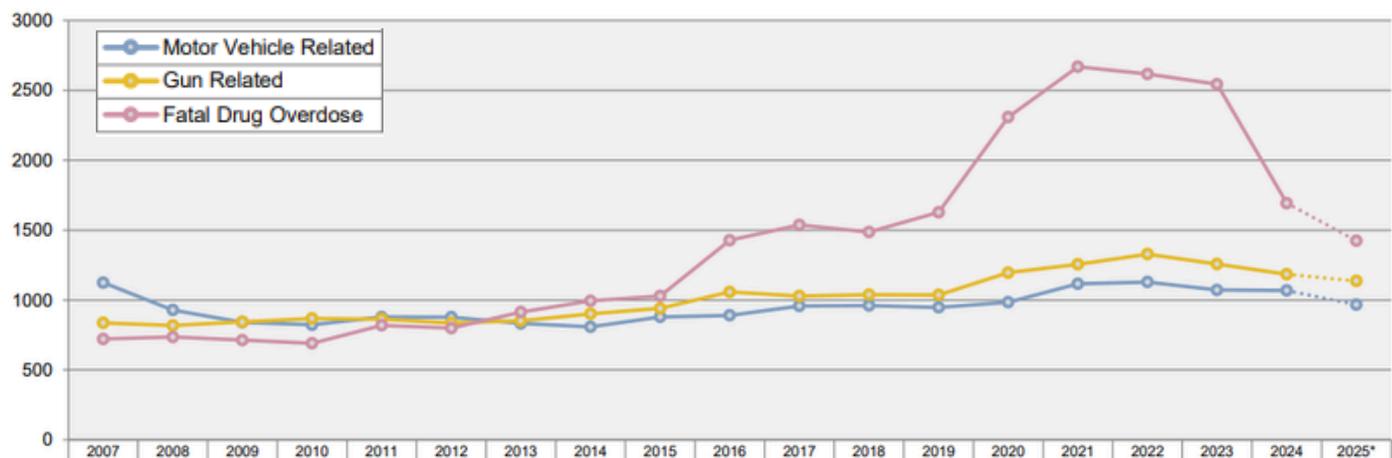


2026 already ranks third in US measles cases since 2000. Image Source: [CDC](#)

Other News

- **VDH reaffirmed its commitment to vaccines** as an essential tool in protecting public health, recommending children be vaccinated according to the AAP Immunization Schedule. Virginia joins at least 28 other states with vaccine recommendations that differ from the CDC's schedule.
- **Elevated carbon monoxide levels at a Bristol, TN clinic sent 13 people to local hospitals.** All patients were expected to be released Wed. The clinic was evacuated and closed as the cause of the leak was investigated.
- **The NTSB made 50 recommendations to five federal agencies and one professional association** in its final report on the Jan 29, 2025 midair collision over the Potomac. Safety issues cited included workforce and culture deficiencies, inadequate equipment, helicopter route design and interagency coordination.
- **About 4,700 gallons of jet fuel spilled into the James River in Newport News.** The spill was contained near a shipyard but residents reported an odor and oily sheen. There is no impact on drinking water or shellfish. Some local officials noted delayed notification of the spill.
- **The City of Danville issued a boil water advisory Monday.** Run off from heavy rain increased turbidity, leading to a drop in pressure. The boil water advisory remains in effect.
- **VDH issued a recreational water advisory for the Potomac River.** A collapsed sewage pipe released over 200 million gallons of wastewater into the defunct C&O canal and the Potomac. A temporary reroute is limiting overflows. Drinking water is not impacted.
- **The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases will remove references to 'biodefense' and 'pandemic preparedness' from its website.** In January, officials announced a new strategy for the agency, moving away from biodefense and preparedness and towards immunology and infections causing current disease burdens.
- **Chikungunya cases increased in the Americas Region in late 2025 and 2026,** ahead of traditional peak season. Local transmission has also resumed in some areas where it has not occurred in several years. Meanwhile, dengue returned to non-epidemic levels in 2025, with cases declining 66% compared to historic numbers seen in 2024.

Top Three Methods of Unnatural Death in Virginia



Preliminary estimates show drug overdose deaths declining in Virginia for the 4th straight year in 2025. However, fatal drug overdoses remain the leading cause of unnatural death in Virginia. From 2020 to 2023 overdose deaths exceeded motor vehicle and gun deaths combined.

Image Source: VDH