

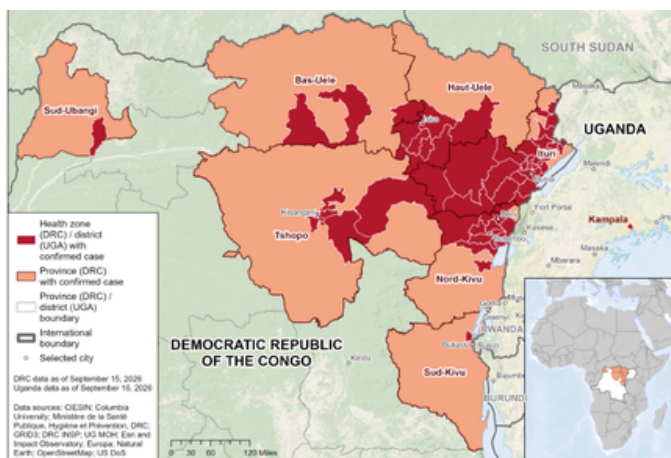
September 18, 2026

Key Takeaways

- Respiratory illness activity in Virginia is minimal and stable.
- MMR vaccines have broad support. However, trust in MMR's safety has declined over the past 6 years.
- This summer broke multiple heat records in the US and globally.
- The Governor's office declared an emergency due to the drought's impact on agriculture.

Key Figures

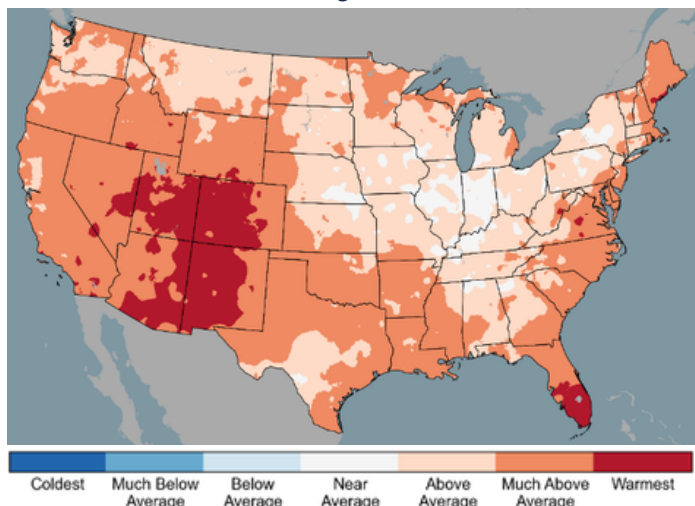
Ebola Outbreak



The Ebola outbreak has reached another, non-contiguous DRC province. Image Source: [CDC](#)

Mean Temperature Percentiles

Jun-Aug 2026



Summer 2026 was the hottest on record for the contiguous US since 1895. For Virginia, it was the 6th hottest. Image Source: [NCEI](#)

Ebola

7,914

Suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases reported as of Sep 16.

3,608

Probable and confirmed Ebola deaths reported as of Sep 16.

Measles

177

New measles cases reported nationally in the past week.

Drought

35%

The share of Virginia's land mass remaining in drought status as of Sep 15.

[Subscribe to receive this update in your inbox weekly](#)

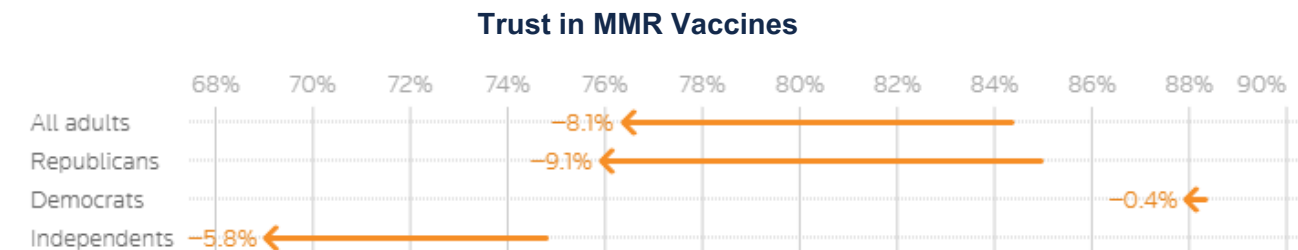
Ongoing Monitored Situations

Measles

- **Nationally**, the CDC reported 3,471 year-to-date cases across 47 jurisdictions. Pennsylvania added 108 cases last week and Ohio added 30. No other state added more than 7.
- **Pennsylvania confirmed 2 more measles-associated deaths**, bringing the total to 4. The CDC has not reported the deaths, claiming they are not yet included in National Center for Health Statistics records, and that they are working with the CSTE to develop a case definition. Previously, the CDC reported deaths that were reported to it by states. The CDC still reports 3 deaths from 2025, presumably under the existing methodology.

Ebola

- The outbreak has spread to a 7th province, and continues to spread to new health zones in previously affected province. Sud-Ubangi province reported an imported case from a patient who traveled through Rwanda, Uganda, and several DRC provinces after becoming ill in previously-affected Tshopo province.
- **DRC's Minister of Communications claimed that the outbreak is slowing**, and had peaked in the 3rd week of August. However, the UN urged caution and noted that, despite some progress, the outbreak remains 'massive' and is not yet under control.

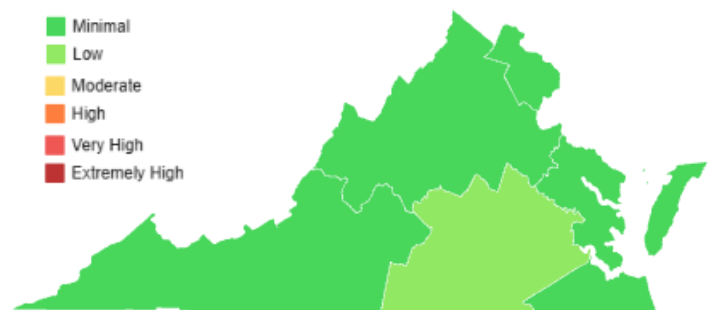


The majority of Americans believe the MMR vaccine is safe, but trust is declining. A recent survey found trust declined to 76% from 84% in 2020. Though MMR vaccines have broad bipartisan support, both the level and change in trust vary by political party. Image Source: [Reuters](#)

Seasonal Illness

- **Virginia's overall respiratory illness activity is minimal and stable.** Respiratory illness accounted for 9.8% of ED visits for the week ending Sep 5, up from 9.7% the prior week.
- **2 reviews of recent scientific studies found that COVID-19 and influenza vaccines continue to be safe and effective** for the 2026-27 season. The JAMA reviews found both vaccines are associated with reduced risk of severe disease and hospitalization, including among persons at high risk.
- **Federal officials have not determined whether COVID-19 vaccines will be available through the Vaccines for Children program.** States, which administer the program, have not been able to order the vaccine, which is usually included in fall respiratory virus vaccination campaigns. Federal officials note that COVID-19 does not follow the usual seasonal pattern.

Regional Respiratory Illness Activity



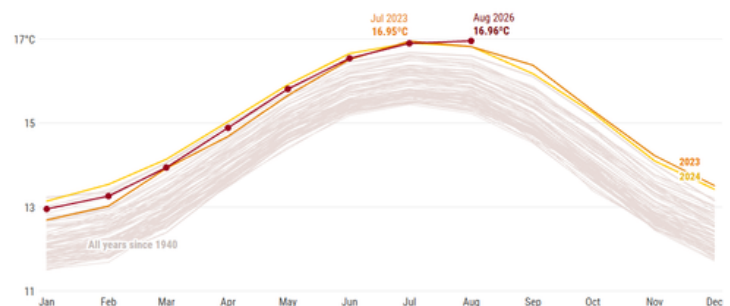
Respiratory illness activity is 'low' in Virginia's Central Region, and 'minimal' in all others.

Image Source: [VDH](#)

Other News

- This summer was the **hottest on record** for the **contiguous US**, exceeding the previous record by 0.4°F. Aug 2026 was also the hottest on record for CONUS since 1895. 59% of CONUS was in drought on Sep 1.
- **Saturday set the record for the latest date in the season without a hurricane in the Atlantic.** Atlantic tropical activity is at a post-1950 low, at just 7% of normal for this time of year. The strong El Niño is likely suppressing activity.
- The CDC declared the **cyclosporiasis outbreak over**, noting the number of infections has declined significantly. The CDC recorded 12,883 cases, 570 hospitalizations and 2 deaths across 21 states in the outbreak. The FDA's investigation into the source is ongoing.
- The Governor's office **declared an emergency due to the ongoing drought** and its impact on farmers, particularly affecting hay and forage. The order may waive some non-safety regulations on related transportation, prevents price-gouging, and activates the VEST.

Monthly Global Surface Temperatures



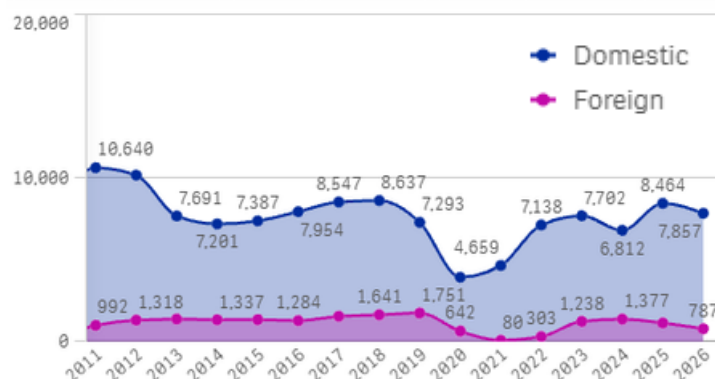
Aug 2026 had the hottest global average surface temperature on record. At 16.96°C, it edged out Jul 2023's 16.95°C. However, the 0.01°C difference is within the uncertainty interval so the months are officially rated as tied. Global sea surface temperatures also broke records in August.

Image Source: [CI](#)

- An **EF-0 tornado** touched down in Surry County causing limited damage. September is one of Virginia's busiest months for tornadoes, usually spurred by tropical activity. Severe storms also caused flash flooding in parts of the US Northeast.

Spotlight

FDA Inspections by Fiscal Year
Food/Cosmetics



FDA inspections were reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspection rates have not returned to pre-pandemic levels overall, including inspections within the food/cosmetics category as pictured above. Note: data for FY2026 is incomplete and preliminary.

Image Source: [FDA](#)

Food Safety System

- The FDA has struggled to meet its **food inspection targets**, particularly in foreign facilities. Between 2018 and 2023, the FDA inspected at most 9% of its annual foreign facility target, compared to over 90% of domestic facilities in non-pandemic years.
- A Jan 2025 GAO report noted **workforce capacity as the primary challenge**. In Jul 2024 the FDA had 432 investigators to conduct 19,200 foreign inspections, along with inspections of 75,000 domestic facilities on a rotating basis. In 2025, the FDA lost 3,859 employees, with food inspector vacancies hitting 20% in Jun 2025.
- Some experts suggest the large cyclosporiasis outbreak reveals weaknesses in the US food safety system. Cases from the outbreak were unusually high. However, recall numbers remain stable, and changes in testing and food distribution may explain increases in reported outbreaks and cases.