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“AMGA Immunizations Brief”—brought to you by the Rise to Immunize® (RIZE) campaign—delivers vaccine news and updates relevant to healthcare leaders. This brief provides concise, actionable information to help you stay informed and guide patient care in an evolving immunization landscape.

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At a Glance

- New CDC data show kindergarten vaccination coverage declined again during the 2025-2026 school year, while exemptions from required school vaccinations increased to 4.2%.
- The U.S. has reported more than 2,600 measles cases this year; COVID-19 cases are also increasing in every state.
- New research highlights the effectiveness of flu and COVID-19 vaccination in preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, emergency care visits, and deaths.
- A new article illustrates effective communication strategies for talking to patients who are vaccine hesitant.

Detailed Brief

New CDC data show kindergarten vaccination coverage declined again during the 2025-2026 school year, while exemptions from required school vaccinations increased to 4.2%.

- New [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) findings](#) show that during the 2025-2026 school year, vaccination coverage among U.S. kindergartners decreased for all reported vaccines from the year before, continuing a multiyear erosion in childhood vaccination coverage rates.
 - National coverage for the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) and polio vaccines fell to approximately 92.4%, while diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (Tdap) coverage fell to 92.0%.
 - MMR coverage remains below the approximate [95% level](#) needed to reliably prevent sustained measles transmission and varies substantially by state, ranging from 98.9% in West Virginia to 75.2% in Idaho.
- At the same time, exemptions from one or more required kindergarten vaccinations increased to 4.2% from 3.6% the year before.

- Exemptions increased in 41 states and D.C., with 24 states reporting exemptions greater than 5%.

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- As of Aug. 14, the U.S. has reported [2,632 measles cases](#) in 2026—an increase of 148 cases since last week.
- In addition, the most recent [CDC](#) data show that COVID-19 infections are growing or likely growing across all 50 states.
 - Leading medical organizations, including the American Academy of Family Physicians ([AAFP](#)) and [AAP](#), recommend that everyone six months and older receive an updated COVID-19 vaccine annually for the best protection against severe illness. The CDC has not issued updated recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination due to ongoing litigation.

New research highlights the effectiveness of flu and COVID-19 vaccination in preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, emergency care visits, and deaths.

- The 2024-2025 influenza (flu) season was the most severe flu season since 2017, but [new data](#) from a CDC-led study shows that flu vaccination reduced rates of hospitalization and emergency department or urgent care visits.
 - The vaccine was 51% effective against hospitalization for children and 43% for adults. It was 54% effective against outpatient visits in children, and 49% for adults.
- Separately, a new [modeling study](#) suggests that COVID-19 vaccination may have prevented more than 16,000 hospitalizations and 4,000 deaths in a Washington county during the first eight months of vaccine rollout.
 - In the study, older adults experienced the greatest protection with vaccination, accounting for half of all averted hospitalizations and nearly three-quarters of prevented deaths.

A new article highlights effective communication strategies for talking to patients who are vaccine hesitant.

- A new [article](#) published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* builds upon previous research that “empathy-driven, patient-centered strategies... help address concerns, counter misinformation, and build trust while preserving relationships that may encourage future vaccination decisions.”

NEW RESOURCE: To learn evidence-based communication techniques that engage patients in trust-building conversations about vaccination, view [“The AIMS Approach to Vaccine Conversations” Video](#) developed by the Rise to Immunize® campaign in collaboration with the Trusted Messenger Program.

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