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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

- A new analysis found that the CDC's revised COVID-19 vaccine guidance places greater emphasis on potential risks and off-label use while removing some language highlighting the benefits of vaccination.
- The CDC has recognized a third measles death as U.S. cases exceed 4,600 this year, while flu and RSV activity is increasing across much of the country and COVID-19 activity remains at a moderate level.
- A new study finds evidence for a rare complication of measles that can develop years after a full recovery.

Detailed Brief

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- A new analysis published by the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) in partnership with Unbiased Science highlights significant changes to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) COVID-19 vaccination guidance.
    - The updated guidance, released Sept. 23, shifts its emphasis from benefits to risks, despite evidence that indicates no new vaccine safety concerns and reaffirms the effectiveness of updated COVID-19 vaccines in preventing severe illness.
- CIDRAP identified the following key changes:
    - The CDC removed evidence supporting COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy, instead including vaccine package insert language that emphasizes potential risks and uncertainties.
        - The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) continues to recommend vaccination before, during, and after pregnancy.

    - The CDC removed universal recommendations for children six months and older, instead describing vaccination as potentially “least favorable for individuals who are not at increased risk.”
        - The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) continues to recommend vaccination for young children and those at increased risk.
    - The CDC added a list of serious adverse events, including some conditions for which evidence of a causal association remains limited or inconsistent, while removing statements that the benefits of vaccination outweigh the rare risk of myocarditis and pericarditis.
- Notably, the revised guidance continues to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for all adults ages 18 and older, but it describes some recommended COVID-19 vaccine uses as “off-label” because they extend beyond what the Food and Drug Administration has approved.
    - This includes vaccination of healthy adults under 65 and a second dose for adults 65 and older.
    - Importantly, off-label use is legal and common in medicine and does not indicate that a vaccine is unsafe or unapproved.

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- 4,603 measles cases have been reported nationally in 2026, including an increase of 572 cases between Oct. 2 and Oct. 16.
- On Oct. 20, the CDC recognized a third measles death this year, though that number remains below the six total measles-associated deaths (five confirmed and one under review) reported in Pennsylvania.
- As of Oct. 14, flu infections were growing or likely growing in 46 states, and seasonal flu activity is low but increasing across the country.
    - Week 40 (ending Oct. 10) was the first official week of the 2026-2027 U.S. influenza and respiratory disease surveillance season, with 4,024 flu hospitalizations.
    - The first pediatric flu death of the season was reported in Colorado on Oct. 16, and an adult flu death was reported on Oct. 19 in Washington state.
- As of Oct. 14, COVID-19 infections are growing or likely growing in 11 states. National COVID-19 activity is currently moderate, with overall acute respiratory illness remaining very low.
- RSV infections are growing or likely growing in 36 states, and national RSV activity is low but increasing as of Oct. 16.

A new study finds evidence for a rare complication of measles that can develop years after a full recovery.

- A study published in the CDC’s *Emerging Infectious Diseases* found that measles can cause subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE), a rare and nearly always fatal brain disease that can develop years after initial measles infection, even after a full recovery.
    - The authors emphasize the importance of maintaining high two-dose measles vaccination coverage to ensure this delayed complication does not occur.

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