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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

- The full Senate confirmed Erica Schwartz as director of the CDC.
- Sec. Kennedy urges parents and caregivers to vaccinate children against measles, despite previous criticism about the vaccine.
- New measles research highlighted the substantial economic costs of outbreaks and the continued safety of vaccination.
- Ensitrelvir is now available in the U.S. for COVID-19 postexposure prophylaxis.
- The U.S. released \$600 million in previously frozen funding for Gavi under an agreement that ties future support to new conditions, including efforts to transition away from vaccines containing thimerosal.

Detailed Brief

The full Senate confirmed Erica Schwartz as director of the CDC.

- The Senate [voted](#) on Aug. 5 to approve the confirmation of Erica Schwartz, MD, as the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Sec. Kennedy urges parents and caregivers to vaccinate children against measles, despite previous criticism about the vaccine.

- On Aug. 2, Health and Human Services (HHS) Sec. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. [endorsed](#) the measles vaccine after being pressed by host Dana Bash during an appearance on CNN's *State of the Union*.
- Kennedy eventually said the measles shot is safe, and parents who have not vaccinated their children against the viral disease should do so, despite previously stating that the vaccine is “leaky” and immunity from the vaccine declines quickly.

- Kennedy also said during the interview that he takes no responsibility for the current outbreak of measles in the U.S., which is currently experiencing its higher number of measles cases since 1991.

New measles research highlighted the substantial economic costs of outbreaks and the continued safety of vaccination.

- An [analysis](#) of New Mexico's 2025 measles outbreak estimated a total economic cost of \$5.4 million. The outbreak included 100 cases that resulted in seven hospitalizations and one death.
 - The estimate includes direct medical costs, public health response costs, and lost productivity of caregivers and those who were required to quarantine. The response involved 133 public health workers who spent more than 22,000 hours investigating cases, tracing contacts, coordinating vaccinations, and working to contain the outbreak.
- Separately, a [new study](#) of more than 2.5 million U.S. children published in the *Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal* found that receiving the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMRS) vaccination before age two was not associated with an increased risk of autism.
 - Researchers analyzed electronic health records from 2015 to 2024 and followed children until age eight, finding no increased risk of autism across any of the age groups studied.

Ensitelvir is now available in the U.S. for COVID-19 postexposure prophylaxis.

- Ensitelvir, a once-daily oral SARS-CoV-2 main protease inhibitor, is [now available](#) by prescription in the United States for COVID-19 postexposure prophylaxis in adults and adolescents aged 12 years or older.
- The FDA approval was supported by [SCORPIO-PEP](#), a global, double-blind, placebo-controlled phase 3 trial conducted from June 2023 through September 2024.
- According to the trial report, ensitelvir reduced the risk of symptomatic COVID-19 by 67% relative to placebo.

The U.S. released \$600 million in previously frozen funding for Gavi under an agreement that ties future support to new conditions, including efforts to transition away from vaccines containing thimerosal.

- The U.S. government has agreed to [immediately release](#) \$600 million in congressionally appropriated funding for [Gavi](#), the Vaccine Alliance, reversing a months-long freeze that threatened immunization programs in lower-income countries.
 - In June, the Trump Administration began [withholding](#) the funding over Gavi's use of vaccines containing [thimerosal](#), a preservative safely used in multidose vaccine vials. Earlier this year, the U.S. said it would not provide additional funding unless Gavi agreed to phase out thimerosal-containing vaccines.
- Under the new agreement, Gavi committed to "work towards transitioning" from vaccines containing thimerosal and expanding access to newer alternatives.
- The decision restores near-term funding but does not reinstate the more than \$1 billion in additional U.S. support previously [pledged](#) to Gavi through 2030.

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