



**October 2, 2026**

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## At a Glance

- Senate Committees advance the nominations of Chris Klomp for HHS Deputy Secretary and Dr. Nicole Saphier for U.S. Surgeon General.
- CDC named Dr. David Sugerman as the new Acting Director of its immunization and respiratory disease center following a recent reorganization.
- CDC changed how it counts measles deaths during the ongoing outbreak, creating a gap between federal and Pennsylvania counts that could delay reporting of outbreak severity.
- Measles cases continue to climb; national COVID-19 activity is low and steady, while flu activity is beginning to grow.
- A new national initiative aims to provide clearer respiratory vaccine guidance.
- A new study finds that maternal Tdap vaccination rates have been declining since 2019.

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## Detailed Brief

### **Senate Committees advance the nominations of Chris Klomp for HHS Deputy Secretary and Dr. Nicole Saphier for U.S. Surgeon General.**

- The Senate Finance Committee [advanced](#) Chris Klomp's nomination to serve as deputy secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) on Sept. 24, sending his nomination to the full Senate.
- The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee [advanced](#) the nomination of Nicole Saphier, MD, for surgeon general on Wednesday, Sept. 30, also sending her nomination to the full Senate for consideration.

### **CDC named David Sugerman as the new Acting Director of its immunization and respiratory disease center following a recent reorganization.**

- David Sugerman, MPH, will [assume](#) the role of acting director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Oct. 5.
  - The leadership change follows a reorganization of NCIRD that took effect in early September, consolidating offices and merging the agency's influenza and coronavirus divisions into a single Influenza and Respiratory Viruses Division.
- NCIRD plays a central role in monitoring and responding to diseases including measles, influenza (flu), COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), as well as supporting immunization programs and outbreak response.

### **CDC changed how it counts measles deaths during the ongoing outbreak, creating a gap between federal and Pennsylvania counts that could delay reporting of outbreak severity.**

- The CDC has [changed](#) how it reports measles deaths during the ongoing U.S. outbreak, creating a discrepancy between federal and state counts.
  - Pennsylvania has reported four measles-associated deaths this year, while the CDC currently reports [two deaths](#) nationally. The federal agency is now counting a death only after the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) determines that measles was the underlying cause from death certificate data.
- This marks a shift from the CDC's historical approach during active outbreaks, when the agency relied on reports from state health departments to track measles-associated deaths while final mortality data were still being processed.

### **Measles cases continue to climb; national COVID-19 activity is low and steady, while flu activity is beginning to grow.**

- [3,782 cases](#) of measles have been reported nationally in 2026, including an increase of 416 cases between Sept. 11 and Sept. 25.
  - [Pennsylvania](#) continues to be a hotspot for measles activity, with 903 total cases in 2026 and 114 new confirmed cases between Sept. 21 and Sept. 28.
- As of Sept. 25, COVID-19 infections are growing or likely growing in [14 states](#). National COVID-19 activity is [low and steady](#), with overall acute respiratory illness remaining very low.
- As of Sept. 19, seasonal flu activity remains [low nationally](#) but is beginning to grow, which demonstrates an earlier rise in confirmed cases than expected.

### **A new national initiative aims to provide clearer respiratory vaccine guidance.**

- The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) launched the [National Respiratory Communications Initiative \(NRCI\)](#), a coalition aimed at providing clear, consistent, evidence-based information on flu, COVID-19, RSV, and pneumococcal disease.
  - NRCI will bring together immunization, infectious disease, patient advocacy, and public health organizations to align and amplify respiratory disease prevention messaging, with resources for the public and healthcare professionals.
- The launch comes as a new nationally representative [NFID survey](#) found that, while 77% of U.S. adults view vaccines as among the best ways to prevent serious infectious disease, only 48% tried to get at least one respiratory vaccine in the past year. Of those who tried, 22% reported issues such as long waits or vaccine unavailability. Many respondents also reported uncertainty about which vaccines are recommended for them.

### **A new study finds that maternal Tdap vaccination rates have been declining since 2019.**

- A retrospective cohort study published in [Vaccine](#) found that maternal Tdap vaccination rates dropped to 83.9% in 2023, from a high of 88.7% in 2019.
  - The study found that fewer healthcare visits were associated with lower vaccination rates, and that gaps by age, race, and ethnicity widened over time.

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