



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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MEDIA AVAILABILITY:

Melissa Graven, RN, BSN, Associate Executive Director at the Illinois Public Health Association, is available for interviews about the resurgence of measles, the importance of vaccination and what Illinois residents should know to protect themselves and their families.

Measles Is Back: Illinois Public Health Association Urges Illinoisans to Check Vaccination Status

Two measles-associated deaths in Pennsylvania serve as a wake-up call as the highly contagious disease reemerges across the country

Springfield, IL – The Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA) is urging Illinois residents to make sure they and their families are protected against measles following the deaths of two unvaccinated Pennsylvania residents.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health confirmed Tuesday that the two deaths are the state's first associated with measles in 35 years, a sobering development as measles reemerges across the country and here in Illinois. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has reported five confirmed cases in the state in 2026 and is urging Illinoisans to check whether they have received all necessary measles vaccinations.

"For years, most of us haven't had to think much about measles. That's changing," said Melissa Graven, RN, BSN, Associate Executive Director at the Illinois Public Health Association. "The deaths in Pennsylvania are a tragic reminder that measles can be a very serious disease. Both individuals were unvaccinated, and that underscores something we know works: vaccination is the best protection we have against measles."

With students returning to classrooms across Illinois, Graven said back-to-school season is a natural time for families to review children's vaccination records. But she stressed that adults should know their vaccination status, too.

Illinois continues to have strong childhood vaccination coverage. According to IDPH, the state's most recent school vaccination data show 96.78% measles vaccination coverage statewide. However, some counties and individual schools fall below 95%, creating pockets where communities may be more vulnerable to outbreaks.

"Illinois has a lot to be proud of when it comes to vaccination, but a strong statewide average doesn't mean every community has the same level of protection," Graven said. "Measles is back, and we need to remain vigilant. If you aren't sure whether you or your family are protected, don't guess. Talk with your health care provider or local health department. They can help you understand your vaccination history and whether you need to take any additional steps."



Illinois residents with questions about measles or vaccination should contact their health care provider or local health department.

Resources

Additional information about measles, current Illinois case counts and vaccination resources is available through IDPH.

- **Illinois Department of Public Health: Measles Information and Current Illinois Data**
<https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/measles.html>
- **Illinois Department of Public Health: Measles Frequently Asked Questions**
<https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/measles/faq.html>

About the Illinois Public Health Association

Established in 1940, IPHA, an affiliate of the American Public Health Association, is Illinois' oldest and largest statewide voluntary organization dedicated exclusively to public health. The Association works to strengthen and support health across Illinois communities by mobilizing partners and advancing health equity. Learn more at www.IPHA.com.

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