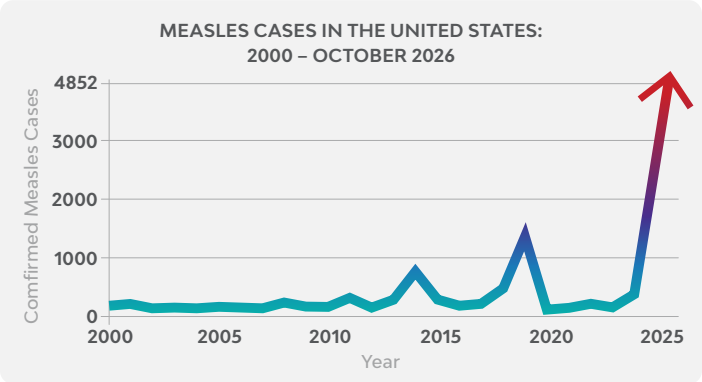
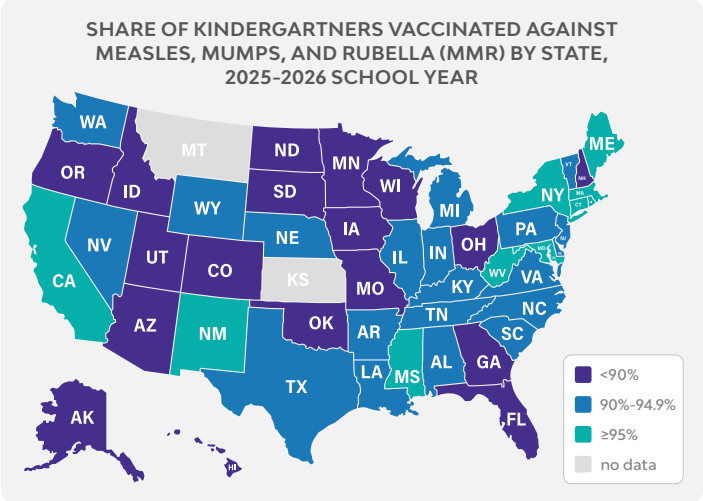
Declining Childhood Vaccination Rates Threaten Public Health

Declining childhood vaccination rates put more Americans at risk of measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases, increasing the potential for serious illness, hospitalization, and death.

The Problem

MMR vaccination coverage among U.S. kindergarteners fell from 95.2% in 2019–2020 to 92.4% in 2025–2026, **below the 95% target for preventing measles transmission**.

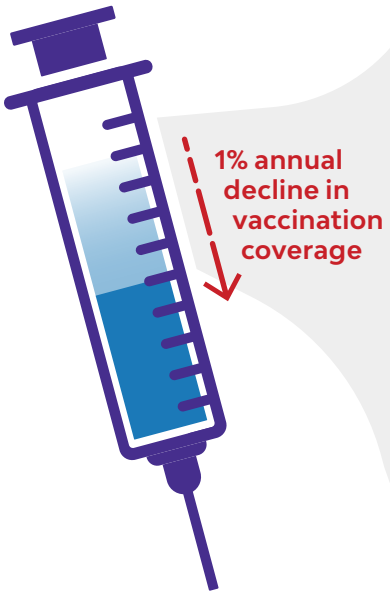




As of October 22, 2026, the United States had recorded 4,852 confirmed measles cases—about twice the total for all of 2025.

The Threat

By 2029, a decline of just 1% in vaccination rates would result in 21 lives lost, 2,300 hospitalizations, and 10,000 Americans sick from a preventable disease.



PROJECTED FOR 2029

21 deaths

More than **2,300** hospitalizations

Nearly **10,000** measles cases

The Risks Extend Beyond Measles

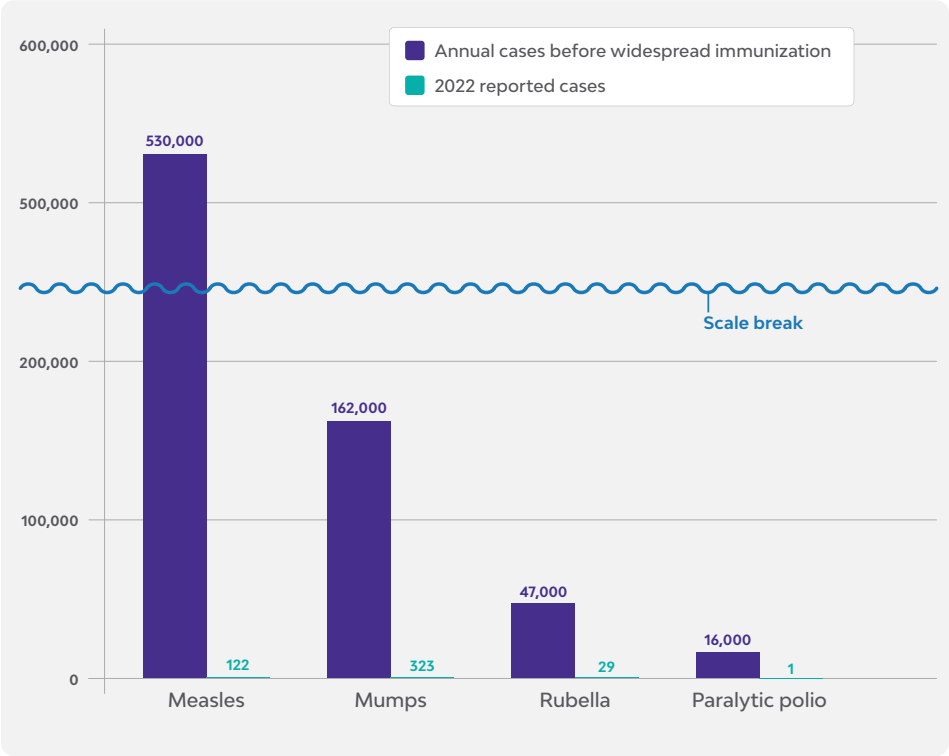
Declines of 10% in coverage for other routine childhood vaccines could increase cases, hospitalizations, and deaths from pneumococcal disease, chickenpox, Hib, and whooping cough.

Disease	Additional Cases	Additional Hospitalizations	Additional Deaths	Additional Societal Costs
Pneumococcal	1,700	1,400	51	$97.9M
Chickenpox	337,900	3,100	35	$737.0M
Hib	19	18	<1	$0.6M
Whooping cough	26,800	1,300	13	$120.4M

What Vaccination Protects

Widespread immunization has dramatically reduced diseases that once affected hundreds of thousands of Americans each year.

These declines represent generations of children spared serious illness, lifelong disability, and premature death.



The Solution

Protecting Childhood Vaccination Coverage

Federal lawmakers can help keep vaccine-preventable diseases from regaining a foothold by supporting high childhood vaccination coverage. Keeping children fully vaccinated protects decades of public health progress — and spares families preventable illness, hospitalizations, and loss of life.