

March 28, 2025

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, MD
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor
& Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders:

We, the undersigned medical, public health and patient organizations, write with grave concern about our nation's ongoing ability to respond to widespread health crises. We urge you to ensure that our nation has the workforce, infrastructure, and expertise it needs to prevent and respond to disease outbreaks, and we stand ready to assist you in achieving this goal.

As you know, the measles outbreak that began in the Southwest United States is spreading to other parts of the country. As of March 27, there have been 483 confirmed cases of measles in twenty states, 70 people have been hospitalized,¹ and experts are concerned that this could represent a significant undercount. Evidence appears to indicate that this outbreak is not under control, and is actually spreading; sadly, two people have already died. Measles is a highly contagious, acute viral disease that can affect individuals across the life course. When one person has measles, they can infect up to 9 out of 10 unvaccinated, susceptible individuals they come into close contact with, and the measles virus can remain infectious in the air and on surfaces for up to 2 hours after an infected person leaves an area.² Measles can be fatal in 1-3 out of 1000 cases and 1 in 5 children with measles will be sick enough to need hospitalization.³

Measles outbreak responses are labor and resource intensive. The majority of the work falls to local jurisdictions; however, it is the role of the Federal health agencies like CDC to provide jurisdictions with support, including financial resources, medical and epidemiology expertise, vaccines, therapeutics, and, importantly, clear, consistent, evidence-based messaging. Local, state, and federal public health experts rely on data, communications, and guidance from the federal partners like CDC to receive guidance during outbreaks.

This outbreak is occurring on the heels of the worst flu season in over a decade. There have been 159 pediatric deaths, and at least 44 million illnesses, 580,000 hospitalizations, and 25,000 deaths from

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/index.html>

² <https://www.nfid.org/infectious-disease/measles/>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/signs-symptoms/index.html>

flu so far this season.⁴ Finally, in addition to the challenges posed by the severity of these illnesses, the public health community is working under reduced federal staffing and funding levels at CDC.

We urge the HELP Committee to consider how any future director of the CDC will address these challenges. The agency and its leadership must be accountable and must ensure that our public health infrastructure is prepared to prevent and to respond to the current outbreak and any future health crises. We look forward to working with you to help keep Americans safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
Alliance for Aging Research
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Physicians
American Lung Association
American Pediatric Society
American Pharmacists Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Meningitis Prevention
AMR.Solutions
Arizona Families for Vaccines
Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition (Immunize Arkansas)
Arizona Partnership for Immunization
Association of Immunization Managers
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
California Immunization Coalition
Caregiver Action Network
Colorado Families for Vaccines
Community Catalyst
Connecticut Chapter, American College of Physicians
Delaware Academy of Medicine and Delaware Public Health Association
Denver Health
Dia de la Mujer Latina Inc
Families Fighting Flu
Families USA
First Focus on Children
Gerontological Society of America
Head & Neck Cancer Alliance
HealthHIV

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/fluview/surveillance/2025-week-12.html>

HealthyWomen
Idaho Immunization Coalition
Illinois Public Health Association
Immunization Alliance of Michigan
Immunization Coalition of Delaware
Immunize Colorado
Immunize Kansas Coalition
Immunize South Dakota
Immunize.org
ImmunizeVA
Indiana Immunization Coalition
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Integrita Healthcare Education Foundation
Kimberly Coffey Foundation
Langlade County Immunization Coalition
Latinx Voices
Louisiana Families for Vaccines
March of Dimes
Marked By Covid
Massachusetts Adult Immunization Coalition
Massachusetts Families for Vaccines
Montana Families for Vaccines
MyCARE Foundation
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Consumers League
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases
National League for Nursing
New Hampshire Families for Vaccines
New Mexico Immunization Coalition
North Carolina Immunization Coalition
NTM Info & Research
Oklahoma Alliance for Healthy Families
Oklahoma Caring Foundation
Oregon Families for Vaccines
Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease
Partnership to Fight Infectious Disease
Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society (PIDS)
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner House Calls
Pediatric Policy Council
Primary Care Development Corporation
SAFE Communities Coalition
Sepsis Alliance
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM)

Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
South Dakota Families for Vaccines
STChealth
Stuart B. Levy Center for Integrated Management of Antimicrobial Resistance at Tufts
Tennessee Families for Vaccines
UnidosUS
Vaccinate Your Family
Vaccine Ambassadors
Vaccine Education Center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
West Virginia Families for Immunizations