Measles Elimination Status

Understand the loss of the U.S. measles elimination status and the potential path to regaining status

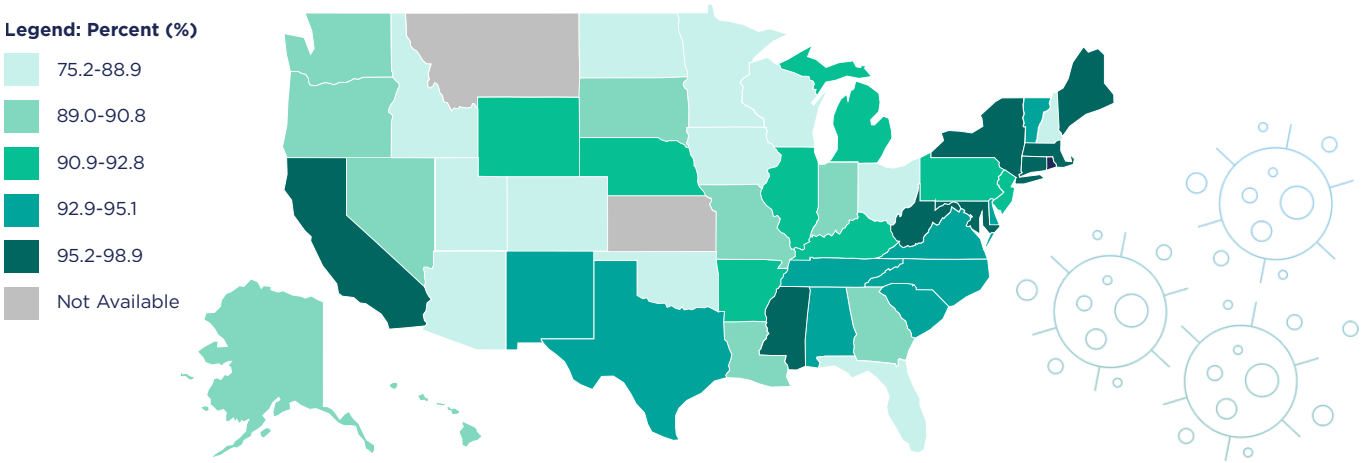
VACCINATE YOUR FAMILY

In November 2026, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) revoked the United States' measles elimination status due to sustained measles outbreaks since January 2025.

Vaccination coverage rates (VCRs) are declining nationwide, with measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccination coverage insufficient to prevent outbreaks in 39 states.[1]

In 2026, the U.S. has reported more than 5,000 measles cases, more than doubling the 2025 case counts that broke 30-year records.[2]

MMR Vaccination Coverage among Kindergartners, School Year 2025-26[3]



Not only are measles outbreaks costly to communities, but outbreak response is also costly to local and state health departments that are already stretched thin. A 2025 measles outbreak in New Mexico cost $5.4 million to address, with an average cost per case of $53,000 and over 22,000 staff hours dedicated to the response.[4]

Losing our measles elimination status is an indicator we need clear, targeted efforts by the federal government to protect our nation from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Act now to prevent further outbreaks. The loss of our elimination status is a call to action to regain trust, increase vaccination rates, and prevent devastating outbreaks.

WHAT IS MEASLES ELIMINATION STATUS?

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Regional Monitoring and Re-Verification Commission for Measles, Rubella, and Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS) is an independent technical commission that monitors and verifies the elimination for measles, rubella, and CRS in PAHO member states.[5] By reviewing national epidemiological and lab data, molecular evidence, and findings from field investigations, the committee can determine if a country has reached measles elimination status.

Measles elimination status means a country:

- **Has not had large measles outbreaks**
- **Has not had 12+ months of uncontrolled transmission of measles in their country**

The U.S. achieved measles elimination status in 2000, a status held for 26 years due to high vaccination rates.

Measles elimination status can be regained, with coordinated, data-driven efforts to increase vaccination and investigate outbreaks. To regain status, a country must demonstrate that measles transmission has been interrupted for at least 12 months, and provide comprehensive vaccination, surveillance, and outbreak response data.[6,7]

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

1. **Conduct swift and comprehensive oversight of the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) actions to contain the ongoing outbreaks.**
2. **Demand HHS cooperate with PAHO to design and implement an action plan under the regional framework[8] for measles elimination.**
3. **Increase Section 317 Immunization Program funding to support states and jurisdictions' ability to conduct outreach to under-vaccinated communities, purchase vaccines, and respond to outbreaks.**



A CASE STUDY: Canada

Canada achieved measles elimination status in 1998.[8] In November 2025, Canada lost its measles elimination status due to ongoing measles outbreaks starting in October 2024. Canada is actively working to address the recommendations of PAHO to regain measles elimination status, including:

- **Addressing immunization gaps**
- **Building vaccine confidence**
- **Strengthening monitoring and data**

80%
DECREASE



In 2026, Canada has reported approximately 1,120 measles cases, compared to over 5,000 cases in 2025.[9] Over the course of the year, case counts have decreased, and there has been almost an 80% reduction in the number of cases between 2026 and 2025.

References

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6 PAHO. "PAHO calls for regional action as the Americas lose measles elimination status." Accessed September 21, 2026. https://www.paho.org/en/news/10-11-2025-paho-calls-regional-action-americas-lose-measles-elimination-status

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