April 17, 2026

Key Takeaways

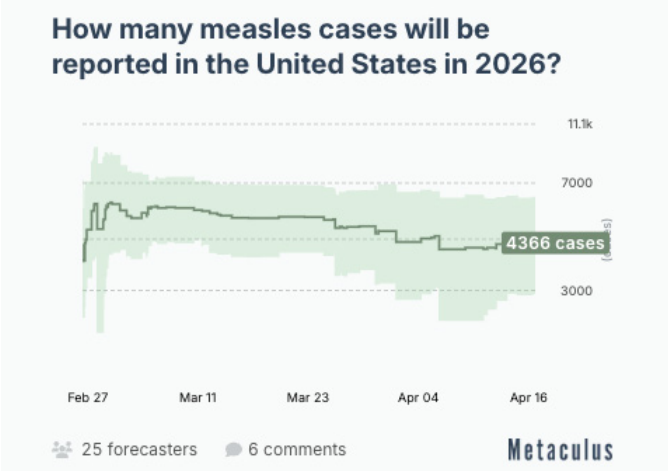
- **Metaculus forecasters have lowered their 2026 measles case estimates to 4,366 (50% prediction interval [2,934, 6,247]) as the rate of new cases has decelerated.**
- **With the flu season over, forecasters assign a 97.7% probability of the season being classified as moderately severe, with the final share of influenza A decreasing to 73.2% (50% prediction interval [71.5%, 75.1%]) due to a late-season surge in influenza B.**
- **Emerging non-respiratory threats remain low-probability but monitored: forecasters put a 18% chance on local New World screwworm transmission and expect Clade I Mpox cases to rise to 31 (50% prediction interval [22, 47]), with only a 2.7% chance of exceeding 100 cases in 2026.**

A Closer Look

Measles

As of April 9, 2026, 1,714 confirmed measles cases were reported in the United States in 2026, with 17 new outbreaks across the country.

Despite the overall rise, Pro forecasters have slightly revised their 2026 estimates downwards to 4,366 cases, with a 50% prediction interval of 2,934 to 6,247. They now assign a less than 8% probability of cases exceeding 10,000. This is due to the apparent deceleration in new cases suggesting that the rate of spread seen in the first couple of months of the year may not be sustained through the year.



Current hospitalizations are at 6% of reported measles cases, still far below last year's 11%. Forecasters speculate that this may be due to improved treatments preventing hospitalization. Nevertheless, forecasters anticipate the hospitalization rate will continue to rise slightly over the course of 2026 to 7.7% cases (50% prediction interval [6.2%, 9.3%].

Forecasters increased their estimates to a 72% chance the Pan American Health Organization will revoke the US's measles elimination status before 2027. They note the sustained endemic transmission of more than a year, along with the precedent of Canada's revocation.

Influenza

The flu season officially ended in March, closing related hospitalization and immunization forecasting questions on March 31 for influenza, COVID, and RSV. Forecasters assign a 97. 7% probability of the CDC classifying this season as moderately severe when they make the expected announcement at the end of April. They anticipate the final share of influenza A subtype sequences among tested samples to land around 73.1% [71.8%, 74.8%], reflecting late-season increases in the share of influenza B cases.

Non-respiratory diseases

Forecasters estimate that the total number of Clade I Mpox cases will rise to 31, with a 50% prediction interval of 22 to 45. They assign a 2.7% probability to outbreaks pushing the total over 100 cases, noting that local transmission has not yet occurred and that the CDC has paused testing for Mpox, which may slightly depress confirmed case numbers.

Forecasters have increased estimates of local transmission of New World screwworm, whether in humans or animals, from 10% to a probability of 18%. This upward change is largely due to cases in the US being reported farther from the border, likely due to arid and windy conditions naturally spreading the screwworm and limiting the effectiveness of border precautions.

Methodology

Metaculus develops forecasting programs to improve decision-making and public coordination on topics of global importance and operates one of the world's largest forecasting platforms. The Respiratory Outlook 2025/26 initiative is designed to harness the effectiveness of crowd forecasting for real-time decision-making, aiding public health officials in responding to ongoing epidemiological changes and better anticipating future conditions. Five Metaculus Pro Forecasters, among the most accurate forecasters on Metaculus, are contributing to the Respiratory Outlook 2025/26 initiative.

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