December 15, 2025

Key Takeaways

- Metaculus forecasters have sharply raised their 2026 measles case estimates to **1,396** (50% prediction interval [696, 2,644]) following the November increase in cases.
- Forecasters expect mild seasons for both COVID-19 and RSV, with a projected peak hospitalization rate of 3.5 and 3.1 per 100k, respectively.
- Vaccination coverage estimates have decreased for COVID-19 (older adults and children) and RSV (older adults).

A Closer Look

Measles

The number of measles cases in the US rose in November. Considering the seasonality of measles, which peaks in late winter or early spring, forecasters further revised their 2026 case estimates upward from 959 to 1,396 (50% prediction interval [696, 2,644]).

Influenza

Forecaster estimates for both the percentage of influenza A in tested sequences (90.1% [78.0%, 94.7%]) and the proportion of influenza A cases that will be H3N2 (84.1% [69.8%, 91.6%]) saw a slight rise over the last month, as early data emerged. The probability of an influenza season of High or Very High severity slightly decreased (from 31.6% to 28.2%).

How many measles cases will be reported in the United States in 2026?

👥 1396 cases

1d 1w **2m** all

Based on 162 predictions by 26 forecasters

Metaculus

Peak Hospitalization and Timing Forecasts

Forecasters have further made slight reductions to their estimates for COVID-19 and RSV peak hospitalizations based on early data. This trend is also visible in the RSV hospitalization rates for the 0-4 years and 65 and above age groups, which are projected to peak at 20.6 [14.3, 29.6] and 6.5 [5.3, 7.6] hospitalizations per 100k people, respectively. Flu estimates and forecasts for the timing of the disease peaks remain stable.
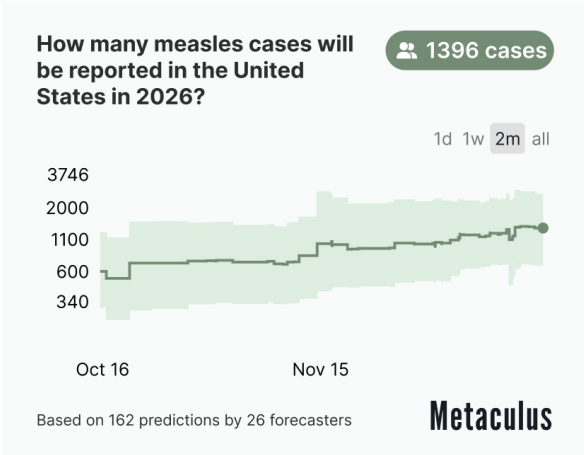
Weekly Rate of Respiratory Illness Hospitalizations per 100,000 in the US
With Metaculus Forecasts for Median and 50% Prediction Intervals of Peak Magnitude and Timing
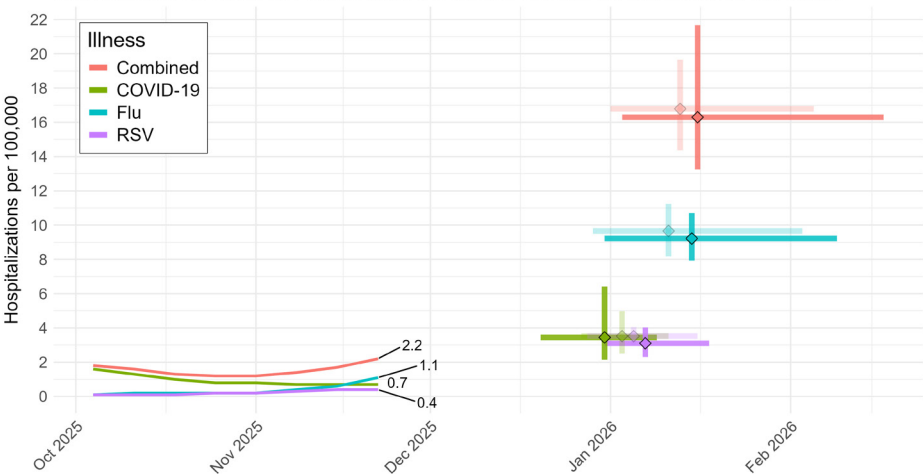
Weekly hospitalization rates per 100,000 according to RESP-NET along with Metaculus forecasts for the peak hospitalization rate in the 2025-26 season and the associated timing. Diamonds reflect median forecasts for the magnitude and timing of the peak, vertical bars show 50% prediction intervals for the magnitude, and horizontal bars show 50% prediction intervals for the timing of the peak. Forecasts from last month (November 24) are shown with transparency.

Vaccinations

Vaccination coverage forecasts for influenza and RSV have largely remained stable, with some upward and downward fluctuations, following the publication of the first data for the season. RSV vaccinations in older adults are one exception, as forecasts have continued to decline significantly following lower October and November numbers than the previous season, despite coverage being cumulative. Forecasters already expected lower vaccine coverage for COVID-19, and their estimates remain stable following the low vaccination rates reported for November.

Influenza		COVID-19		RSV	
Group	**Coverage**	**Group**	**Coverage**	**Group**	**Coverage**
Children 6m to 17y	**47.3% ↔** [44.6%, 51.0%] *46.9%* *[44.5%, 49.2%]*	Children 6m to 17y	**10.8% ↔** [9.3%, 13.2%] *11.4%* *[9.9%, 12.9%]*	Pregnant women age 18–49	**39.8% ↑** [34.0%, 45.1%] *37.6%* *[32.5%, 42.8%]*
Adults age 18+	**46.9% ↑** [44.8%, 50.2%] *45.6%* *[43.3%, 47.7%]*	Adults age 18+	**20.3% ↔** [18.0%, 21.9%] *20.7%* *[18.5%, 22.6%]*	Infants age <8m	**47.2% ↓** [38.9%, 53.3%] *49.0%* *[43.6%, 54.3%]*
Adults age 65+	**71.0% ↔** [68.9%, 74.1%] *70.8%* *[68.1%, 73.0%]*	Adults age 65+	**40.8% ↔** [38.1%, 43.8%] *41.1%* *[37.5%, 44.7%]*	Adults age 75+	**53.1% ↓** [47.6%, 61.3%] *55.5%* *[51.5%, 59.9%]*

This table displays the median and 50% prediction interval for vaccine coverage by age group for flu, COVID-19, and RSV, with values in italic representing the forecast from November 24.

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.