

Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

Over 800 measles cases confirmed in 27 states

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From the Editor: Measles continues to spread as HHS Secretary RFK Jr. focuses on preventing autism. Also news about Lilly's daily pill for weight loss, UnitedHealth's comeback plans and the plight of rural hospitals. Click on the headline for the full article; subscribe to **TMR** [here](#).



[3 more states report their first measles case of 2025](#), by Riley Hoffman and Youri Benedjoud, ABC News,

4/19/25

TMR Topline – Louisiana, Virginia and Missouri reported their first [measles](#) cases of 2025, all linked to international travel. The CDC reported that the US measles outbreak has reached 800 confirmed cases in 27 states with 96% of the cases have occurring in unvaccinated individuals or those with unknown vaccination status. Six states are currently battling significant outbreaks, defined as three or more related cases: Texas, New Mexico, Ohio, Kansas, Indiana, and Michigan.



[Trump's Immigration Tactics Obstruct Efforts To Avert Bird Flu Pandemic, Researchers Say](#), by Amy Maxmen, KFF Health

News, 4/10/25

TMR Topline – Dairy and poultry workers account for [most cases](#) of the bird flu in the US, and preventing and detecting cases among them is key to averting a pandemic. But public health specialists say they're struggling to reach farmworkers because many are terrified to talk with strangers or to leave home given the Trump Administration's aggressive deportation tactics. Border Patrol raids in in California's Central Valley began in January

where [an estimated 880,000](#) mainly Latino farmworkers live. Outreach workers in other states report a similar chilling effect from raids and immigration policies passed after Trump took office. He repeatedly degraded immigrants and pledged mass deportations on the campaign trail. The public health effects of farm workers shrinking from view are potentially massive: Infectious disease scientists say that preventing people from getting bird flu and detecting cases are critical to warding off a bird flu pandemic. Undetected infections pose a threat to farmworkers and to the public at large. Because viruses evolve by mutating within bodies, each infection is like a pull of a slot machine lever. The CDC declined to comment on the impact of immigration actions on farmworker outreach.



[FDA says it will phase out petroleum-based food dyes, authorize four natural color additives](#), by Jen Christensen, CNN, 4/22/25

TMR Topline – FDA Commissioner Martin Makary [announced](#) plans to phase out the use of [petroleum-based](#) synthetic dyes in the US food supply due to health concerns. The dyes can be found in candies, cereals, beverages and even in some medication. Companies use the dyes to give food and drinks brighter colors and make them more appealing. Makary emphasized that this effort to eliminate dyes will be done by working with, rather than against, the industry. For decades, research in animals has shown a potential link between artificial food dyes like red No. 3, red No. 40, [blue No. 2](#) and [green No. 3](#) and an increased risk of cancer or tumors. [In January](#), under the Biden administration, the FDA announced that it had banned the use of red dye No. 3 in ingested drugs, food and beverages. The FDA is establishing a national standard and timeline for the food industry to transition from petroleum-based food dyes to natural alternatives.



[Florida Democrat chides RFK Jr. over 'disrespectful' rhetoric around autism](#), by Tara Suter, The HILL, 4/17/25

TMR Topline – Representative Maxwell Frost (D-Fla.) criticized HHS Secretary [Robert F. Kennedy Jr.](#) for comments he made that “*autism destroys families*” during a press conference on a [recent report](#) from the CDC announcing new studies to examine environmental factors linked to autism. Kennedy stated that “*these are kids who will never pay taxes, they’ll never hold a job, they’ll never play baseball, they’ll never write a poem, they’ll never go out on a date. Many of them will never use a toilet unassisted. And we have to recognize we are doing this to our children.*” He also said there is not a genetic connection to autism, but the CDC’s research in the past has found otherwise.

TMR’s Take: Anthony Hopkins, Susan Boyle and Elon Musk are on the autism spectrum with Asperger’s syndrome and might disagree with RFK Jr.’s characterization of them. Cuts to public health funding and Border Patrol raids are making it more difficult to monitor the measles and bird flu outbreaks. However, eliminating petroleum based synthetic dyes may be one small step towards RFK Jr.’s goal to “*Make America Healthy Again.*”



[Daily Pill May Work as Well as Ozempic for Weight Loss and Blood Sugar](#), by Gina Kolata and Rebecca Robbins, New

York Times, 4/18/25

TMR Topline – [Eli Lilly](#) announced results of a clinical trial of its daily pill, orforglipron, that may be as effective in lowering blood sugar and aiding weight loss in people with Type 2 diabetes as injectables Mounjaro and Ozempic. Lilly will seek FDA approval later this year to market it for obesity and early in 2026 for diabetes. The clinical trial involved 559 people with Type 2 diabetes who took the new pill or a placebo for 40 weeks. For 65% of people taking the new pill, blood sugar levels dropped into the normal range and those taking the highest dose lost 16 pounds on average. Side effects were similar to those with the injectable obesity drugs, but there were no adverse effects on the liver. [About 40%](#) of US adults are obese and [12%](#) say they have taken a GLP-1 that must be kept refrigerated and must be injected. A pill that can be taken daily likely will be a major blockbuster.



[UnitedHealth's Medicare Advantage troubles stoke anxiety](#), by Lauren Berryman, Modern Healthcare, 4/18/25
TMR Topline – UnitedHealth

Group’s 2025 is off to a rocky start due in part to unexpectedly high Medicare Advantage (MA) spending. It reported first quarter earnings to investors and made the [rare decision to downgrade](#) its annual net earnings guidance from a \$29.50-\$30 per share range to \$24.65 - \$25.15. UHG operates the largest MA group business with a 32% market share, followed by Aetna with 23%, Humana with 10% and Elevance Health with 6.3%. The sector has faced turbulence in recent years as MA members [seek more costly care](#) and insurers navigate [lower federal reimbursement](#) and [tighter regulatory oversight](#). UHG cited elevated costs among new Optum Health patients. Optum is the largest employer of physicians in the US, adding exposure to the physician risk-sharing business. MA [payment cuts](#) in 2024 and 2025 spurred UHG to raise premiums this year. UHG is still in a favorable financial position with net earnings of \$6.5 billion and revenue up 9.8% to \$109.6 billion.

TMR’s Take: In a series of interviews with [Bloomberg](#), United Health’s new CEO, Tim Noel, acknowledged that the insurance unit needed to do a better job of communicating with its customers to make the system easier to navigate, especially around prior authorizations (PAs) and denials. Noel succeeded Brian Thompson who was killed on his way to an investor meeting in December. The company is speeding up decisions on requests for care (PAs), and reducing the number of medical services subject to those hurdles.



[Rural Hospitals and Patients Are Disconnected From Modern Care](#), by Sarah Jane Tribble, Holly K. Hacker and Caresse Jackman, KFF Health

News, April 9, 2025

TMR Topline – Alabama’s Greene County Health System is one of more than 200 counties with some of the nation’s worst access to not only reliable internet, but also primary care providers and behavioral health specialists, according to a [KFF Health News analysis](#). Residents in these “dead zone” counties tend to live sicker and die younger than people in the rest of the US. They are places where systemic poverty and historical underinvestment are commonplace, including the remote West, Appalachia, and the rural South. Lack of access to high-speed internet impedes support for electronic health records, video consultations, transfer of scans and images, and continuous remote monitoring of patients’ heartbeats and other vital signs.