

Texas measles outbreak nears 100 cases, raising concerns about undetected spread

BY AMY MAXMEN
Kaiser Health News

Some private schools have shut down because of a rapidly escalating measles outbreak in West Texas. Local health departments are overstretched, pausing other important work as they race to limit the spread of this highly contagious virus.

Since the outbreak emerged three weeks ago, the Texas health department has confirmed 90 cases with 16 hospitalizations, as of Feb. 21. Most of those infected are under age 18. Officials suspect that nine additional measles cases reported in New Mexico, across the border from the epicenter of the Texas outbreak in Gaines County, are linked to the Texas outbreak. Ongoing investigations seek to confirm that connection.

Health officials worry they’re missing cases. Undetected infections bode poorly for communities because doctors and health officials can’t contain transmission if they can’t identify who is infected.

“This is the tip of the iceberg,” said Rekha Lakshmanan, chief strategy officer for The Immunization Partnership in Houston, a nonprofit that advocates for vaccine access. “I think this is going to get a lot worse before it gets better.”

An unknown number of parents may not be taking sick children to clinics where they could be tested, said Katherine Wells, the public health director in Lubbock, Texas. “If your kids are responding to fever reducers and you’re keeping hydrated, some people may keep them at home,” she said.

Most unvaccinated people will contract measles if they’re exposed to the airborne virus, which can linger for up to two hours indoors. Those infected



(Photo by Ed Us/Unsplash)

can spread the disease before they have symptoms. Around 1 in 5 people with measles end up hospitalized, 1 in 10 children develop ear infections that can lead to permanent hearing loss, and about 1 in 1,000 children die from respiratory and neurological conditions.

Gaines has a large Mennonite population, which often shuns vaccinations. “We respect everyone’s right to vaccinate or not get vaccinated,” said Albert Pilkington, CEO of the Seminole Hospital District, in the heart of the county, in an interview with Texas Standard. “That’s just what it means to be an American, right?”

Local health officials have been trying to persuade the parents of unvaccinated children to protect their kids by bringing them to pop-up clinics offering measles vaccines.

“Some people who were on the fence, who thought measles wasn’t something their kids would see, are recalculating and coming forward for vaccination,” Wells said.

Local health departments are also operating mobile test-

ing units outside schools in an attempt to detect infections before they spread. They’re staffing clinics that can provide treatment prophylactically for infants exposed to the virus, who are too young for vaccination. Local health officials are advising day care centers on how to protect young children and babies, and educating school nurses on how to spot signs of the disease.

“I am putting 75% of my staff on this outbreak,” Wells said. Although Lubbock isn’t at the center of the outbreak, people infected have sought treatment there. “If someone infected was in the [emergency room], we need to identify everyone who was in that ER within two hours of that visit, notify them, and find out if they were vaccinated.”

Local health departments in rural areas are notoriously underfunded. Wells said the workload has meant pressing pause on other programs, such as one providing substance abuse education.

Zach Holbrooks, executive director of the South Plains Public Health District, which includes

Gaines, said health officials were following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, as of last year, by advising schools to keep unvaccinated children home for 21 days if they shared a classroom or the cafeteria with someone infected. This means that many parents may need to stay home from work to care for their kids.

“A lot of private schools have closed down because of a high number of sick children,” Holbrooks said.

The burden of measles outbreaks multiplies as the disease spreads. Curbing a 2018 outbreak in Washington state with 72 cases cost about \$2.3 million, in addition to \$76,000 in medical costs, and an estimated \$1 million in economic losses due to illness, quarantines, and caregiving.

Public health researchers expect such outbreaks to become larger and more common because of scores of laws around the U.S. — pending and recently passed — that ultimately lower vaccine rates by allowing parents to exempt their children from vaccine requirements at public schools and some private schools.

Such policies are coupled with misinformation about childhood vaccination now platformed at the highest levels of government. The new director of the Department of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has erroneously blamed vaccines for autism, pointing to discredited theories shown to be untrue by more than a dozen scientific studies.

In Kennedy’s first week on the job, HHS postponed an important meeting of the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, without saying when it would resume. In addition, the CDC’s letter

template to school principals, advising unvaccinated children to remain home from school for 21 days if they’ve been exposed to the measles virus, is no longer on the agency’s website. An old version remains posted on its archive.

As a rule, at least 95% of people need to be vaccinated against measles for a community to be well protected. That threshold is high enough to protect infants too young for the vaccine, people who can’t take the vaccine for medical reasons, and anyone who doesn’t mount a strong, lasting immune response to it. Last school year, the number of kindergartners exempted from a vaccine requirement was higher than ever reported before, according to the CDC.

In Gaines, exemptions were far higher than the national average, approaching 20% in 2023-24. Gaines has one of the lowest rates of childhood vaccination in Texas. At a local public school district in the community of Loop, only 46% of kindergarten students have gotten vaccines that protect against measles.

Amid an outbreak that displays the toll of measles in under-vaccinated pockets of America, Texas lawmakers have filed about 25 bills in this year’s legislative session that could limit vaccination further. Lakshmanan said the public — the majority of whom believe in the benefits of measles vaccination — should contact their representatives about the danger of such decisions. Her group and others offer resources to get involved.

“We’ve got children winding up in the hospital, and yet lawmakers who’ve got their blinders on,” she said, referring to pending policies that will erode vaccination rates. “It’s just mind-blowing.”

Public Notices

Street Lexington, KY. (859) 255-1021. Inquiries related to the project may be made by contacting Katrina Littrell of Tate Hill Jacobs Architects at (859) 252-5994.

Jessmine County:
Feb. 27, 2025
BID

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 25-P-17

NOTICE is hereby given that Samuel L. Amburgey has qualified as Executor of the estate of Shelby J. Amburgey, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on January 16, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Samuel L. Amburgey, 317 Forest Ridge Drive, Frankfort, KY 40601 or to his, attorney, Heather Warren, 108 West Maple St., Nicholasville, KY 40356 not later than July 16, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/AMBURGEY, S.

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 25-P-00009

NOTICE is hereby given that Stephen Gerald Ayers has qualified as Executor of the estate of Gerald Buckley Ayers, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on January 16, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Stephen Gerald Ayers, 215 Whispering Brook Drive, Nicholasville, KY 40356 not later than July 16, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/AYERS, G.

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 25-P-003

NOTICE is hereby given that Carrie Bush has qualified as Administratrix of the estate of John Delaney Flynn, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on January 9, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Carrie Bush, 37 McDowell, Nicholasville, KY 40356 not later than July 16, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/FLYNN, J.

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

CASE NUMBER 25-P-43

NOTICE is hereby given that Ivan Brandenburg has qualified as Executor of the estate of Alice M. Bowles, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on February 6, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Ivan Brandenburg, 105 Cleveland Ct., Nicholasville, KY 40356 or to his, attorney, Hon. Heather Warren, 108 West Maple Street, Nicholasville, KY 40356 not later than August 6, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/BOWLES, A.

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 24-P-379

NOTICE is hereby given that Jeffrey Cochran has qualified as Executor of the estate of Mary L. Cochran, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on January 16, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Jeffrey Cochran, 7007 Derby Dr., Crestwood, KY 40014 or to his, attorney, David W. Thomas, 400 S. Main St., Nicholasville, KY 40356 not later than July 16, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/COCHRAN, M.

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 25-P-06

NOTICE is hereby given that Marsha E. Melville, Michael R. Engle, and Mark A. Engle have qualified as Co-Executors of the estate of Billie Engle, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on January 16, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Marsha E. Melville, 1060 Lauderdale Dr., Nicholasville, KY 40356; Michael E. Engle, 411 West Maple, Nicholasville, KY 40356; and Mark A. Engle, 112 Spring Run Rd., Lexington, KY 40514 or to their, attorney, Walter R. Morris, Jr., 250 W. Main St. Suite 1600, Lexington, KY 40507 not later than July 16, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/ENGLE, B.

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

CASE NUMBER 25-P-13

NOTICE is hereby given that Margaret A. Frank has qualified as Executrix of the estate of Thomas R. Frank, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on January 23, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Margaret A. Frank, 6536 Apache Circle, Cincinnati, OH 45243 or to her, attorney, Jacob G. Samad, 312 Elm St. Suite 2200, Cincinnati, OH 45202 not later than July 23, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/FRANK, T.

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 25-P-40

NOTICE is hereby given that Kristy Garrett has qualified as Administratrix of the estate of Leo Garrett, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on February 6, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Kristy Garrett, 532 Alta Ave., Nicholasville, KY 40356 not later than August 6, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/GARRETT, L.

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 25-P-18

NOTICE is hereby given that Catherine L. Henry has qualified as Executrix of the estate of Joseph Lee Henry, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on January 16, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Catherine L. Henry, 204 Revere Way, Versailles, KY 40383 or to her, attorney, Kimberly Barnard Ostroske, 310 E. Main St., Wilmore, KY 40390 not later than July 16, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/HENRY, J.

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 24-P-380

NOTICE is hereby given that Bettie Carter Humphrey has qualified as Executrix of the estate of Wanda Jean Humphrey, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on January 16, 2025. All persons having claims

Public Notices

against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Bettie Carter Humphrey, 200 Natchez Trace, Nicholasville, KY 40356 or to her, attorney, Howard Downing, 109 South First Street, Nicholasville, KY 40356 not later than July 16, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/HUMPHREY, W.

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 25-P-00029

NOTICE is hereby given that Georgette Smith has qualified as Executrix of the estate of Mary Smiley Padan, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on January 30, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Georgette Smith, P.O. Box 545, Midway, KY 40347 not later than July 30, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/PADAN, M.

Do you have available jobs?

Call 859-553-7057 to let others know about job opportunities at your business.

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 25-P-19

NOTICE is hereby given that David Ashley Perkins has qualified as Executor of the estate of Barbara Ann Perkins, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on February 6, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid David Ashley Perkins, 49 McDowell Rd., Nicholasville, KY 40356 or to his, attorney, David W. Thomas, 400 S. Main St., Nicholasville, KY 40356 not later than August 6, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/PERKINS, B.

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 25-P-008

NOTICE is hereby given that Tracy J. Day has qualified as Executrix of the estate of Dorothy Jean Thompson, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on January 16, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Tracy J. Day, 1400

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/PERKINS, B.

Public Notice

CASE NUMBER 25-P-008

NOTICE is hereby given that Tracy J. Day has qualified as Executrix of the estate of Dorothy Jean Thompson, deceased of Jessamine County, Kentucky on January 16, 2025. All persons having claims against the said estate are requested to present the same properly proven as required by law to the aforesaid Tracy J. Day, 1400

Public Notices

Stephens Lané, Nicholasville, KY 40356 not later than July 16, 2025.

Doug Fain
Jessamine County Circuit Clerk

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/THOMPSON, D.

Public Notice

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
EST/THOMPSON, D.

Public Notice

Rapp Goods, LLC, 121 Bethel Harvest Drive, Nicholasville, KY 40356, Hereby declares intention(s) to apply for a Caterer’s Alcohol License, no later than 03/15/2025. The business to be licensed will be located at 121 Bethel Harvest Drive, Nicholasville, KY 40356 doing business as Unify Coffee Co. The owner and president is Trevor Rapp, 1126 Jonestown Lane, Lexington KY 40517. Any person, association, corporation, or body politic may protest the granting of the license(s) by writing the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control within thirty (30) days of the date of legal publication.

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
LICENSE

Public Notice

The Nicholasville Board of Adjustment will meet in regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 10, 2025 in the Community Room of the Nicholasville Police Department, 717 North Main Street, Nicholasville, Kentucky. Dimensional Variance 100 Grosser Street. Dimensional Variance to place a building in the side yard setback. Requested by Claude & Ashley Soper, Nicholasville KY. Annual review of previously approved Conditional Use Permits. Alex Lyttle, Chairman Nicholasville Board of Adjustment

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
MEETING

Public Notice

Notice Request for Bids FOOD PRODUCTS

The Jessamine County Board of Education will receive sealed bid responses for **Food Products** at its office address shown below until 10:00 a.m. Thursday, March 13, 2025. Opening of responses to follow immediately thereafter. Required bid packets may be obtained by contacting Kim Flynn - Purchasing Supervisor, Jessamine County Board of Education, 871 Wilmore Road, Nicholasville, KY 40356; 859-885-4179 ext 3023 (kim.flynn@jessamine.kyschools.us)

Jessamine Journal:
Feb. 27, 2025
RFB-01FY25

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR BID PROPOSALS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS FRANCHISE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to Sections 163 and 164 of the Kentucky Constitution, Jessamine County, KY (“County”) is soliciting bid proposals from parties interested in obtaining franchises to provide telecommunications services within the confines of Jessamine, Kentucky, pursuant to Jessamine County Telecommunications Franchise Ordinance. Franchise(s) awarded pursuant to this Request for Bid Proposals will be non-exclusive. A copy of Jessamine County Telecommunications Franchise Ordinance and the Application for Telecommunications Franchises can be obtained from the office of the Jessamine County Judge/Executive, David K. West, 101 North Main Street Nicholasville, KY.

Bid proposals for telecommunications franchises must meet all the requirements of Jessamine County Telecommunications Franchise Ordinance. Additionally, the submission of a bid proposal for a telecommunications franchise will require compliance with all County procurement laws, regulations, and procedures.

All persons desiring to submit a bid proposal for a telecommunications franchise may do so by submitting a bid proposal on or before March 17, 2025 at 12:00 PM to: the office of Jessamine County Judge/Executive, David K. West, 101 North Main Street, Nicholasville, KY. Bid proposals must be clearly marked “Bid Proposal for Telecommunications Franchise”. All bid proposals submitted will be opened at 1:00 PM, local time on March 17, 2025.

The County reserves the right to accept any bid proposal, to reject any and all bid proposals, and to waive any irregularities or informalities in awarding a telecommunications franchise.

Jessamine County Fiscal Court

Jessamine Journal: Feb. 27, 2025
RFP/TELECOM FRANCHISE

Need to find the right employee?

WE CAN HELP.

Reach the Jessamine County market for less using the Jessamine Journal classifieds. Need a quick quote? Submit your ad online at JessamineJournal.com. Call 859-553-70577.