

Kentucky child dies from influenza

State’s first pediatric death of the flu season

BY TOM LATEK | KENTUCKY TODAY
FRANKFORT — Kentucky’s first pediatric death from influenza was announced Friday afternoon by the Department of Public Health. The child had not received this season’s flu vaccine, the department said.

“Influenza is on the rise across Kentucky,” said Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Department of Public Health. “Unfortunately, viruses like influenza and COVID-19 are serious diseases that can be deadly to some people, including children. Vaccination is the best way to prevent severe illness and death.”

Kentucky also reported its first COVID-19 pediatric death of the 2024-2025 respiratory virus season last month. Hospitalizations and emergency department visits related to influenza are increasing in Kentucky. The most current data on respiratory virus activity in Kentucky is available online here.

Though most influenza and COVID-19 infections result in mild illness, serious symptoms such as difficulty or fast breathing, seizures, bluish lips or face, high fever (above 104 degrees), fever or cough that improves but then comes back or gets worse, dehydration (e.g., reduced urine output, dry mouth, no tears when crying) or worsening of other medical conditions require medical attention. Antiviral treatment of influenza and COVID-19 are also recommended for some individuals to reduce the severity of illness.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends everyone 6 months of age and older get the annual flu and COVID-19 vaccine,



DR. STEVEN STACK

especially children under 5 or anyone with a high-risk medical condition.

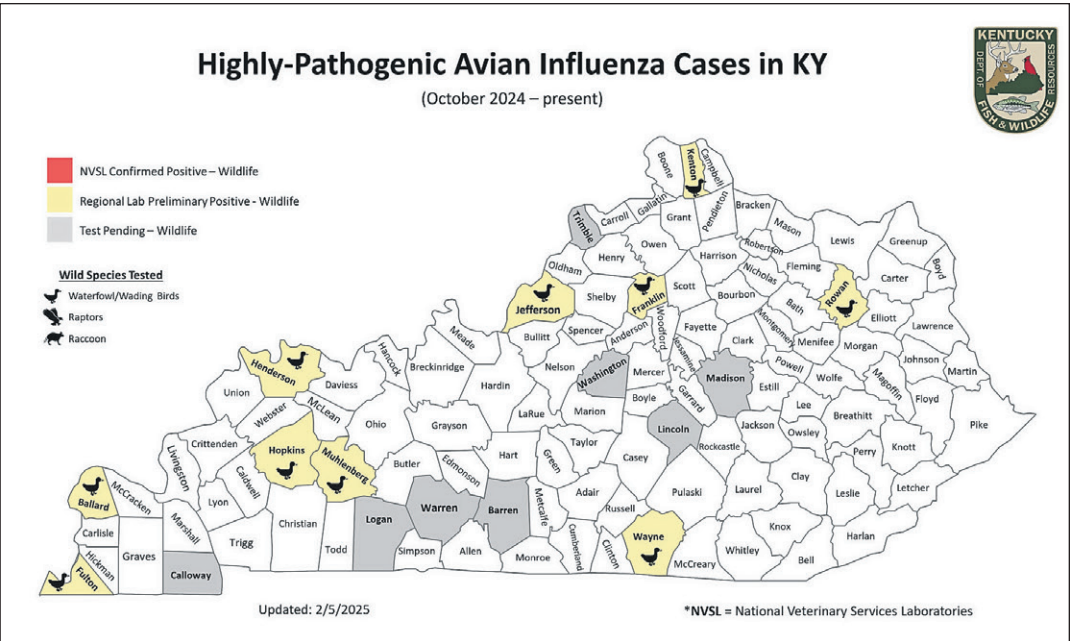
Influenza vaccination rates have been declining in recent years. Less than 17% of Kentucky children have received a flu vaccine this season, and just 2% have received an updated COVID-19 vaccine.

“It is important for people who have not been vaccinated this season to get their updated influenza and COVID-19 vaccines as soon as possible, along with other recommended immunizations, to protect themselves and others,” Stack noted.

Widespread flu and respiratory virus outbreaks have led to schools closing or using non-traditional instruction days statewide.

Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are widely available in health care provider offices and pharmacies, and both can be administered at the same time. Most can receive both vaccines for free. To find flu or COVID-19 vaccine locations, visit vaccines.gov.

Health officials also encourage good health habits to prevent transmission of flu and other respiratory illnesses. These include washing hands often with soap and warm water, covering coughs and sneezes and staying at home from work or school when sick.



KDFWR
A Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources map shows counties where wild animals have tested positive for avian influenza.

Bird flu spreads among Kentucky wildlife

Cases reported in Ballard and Fulton counties

BY SUN STAFF
The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources is tracking avian influenza cases in wild birds and mammals, with positive test results reported in 10 counties since October.

A map of cases available on the KDFWR website shows regional lab preliminary positive bird flu test results have been reported in Ballard and Fulton counties. Other Kentucky counties reporting preliminary positive tests include Henderson, Hopkins, Muhlenberg, Jefferson, Wayne, Franklin, Kenton and Brown. Calloway County and several others across the state are awaiting pending test results as of Feb. 5, when the map was last updated.

The map does not specify how many preliminary positive test results have been reported in each county, but it does indicate that the all occurred among waterfowl/wading birds. A KDFWR official

told Lexington news television station WLEX-TV that the outbreak is widespread in birds such as ducks and geese.

That official, KDFWR Migratory Bird Program Director John Brunjes, described the signs of bird flu in wildlife in his interview with WLEX-TV.

“You just know they’re not right,” he said. “A lot of the time with waterfowl and geese their head will be a little droopy. They’ll sag their head and pop out of it. Imagine a drunk goose. It will just be wobbly and unstable.”

According to the KDFWR webpage on highly-pathogenic avian influenza, other symptoms include mild respiratory illness — including coughing, sneezing, and nasal discharge. Waterfowl that have it may be seen swimming in circles. Birds may show signs of incoordination, lethargy, and unwillingness to fly. High mortality

rates are reported among raptors, shorebirds, and scavengers, but some waterfowl may show no signs of illness. KDFWR noted that cases have been reported in a variety of wild mammals as well.

There is no cure for bird flu. Infected birds spread it through saliva, mucus and feces. People can catch the virus if they inhale it or if it gets in their eyes, nose or mouth. No cases of person-to-person transmission have been reported, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The public is advised not to touch any sick, injured or dead wild birds.

Anyone who sees a wild animal showing signs of bird flu or other illnesses can report it to the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife online at <https://tinyurl.com/yc6kjmca> or by calling 1-800-858-1549 between the hours of 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. CT on weekdays.

Calvert City infant murder case heads to grand jury

BY GRACE BOATRIGHT JACHIM | FOR THE SUN
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MARSHALL COUNTY
— A grand jury will hear the case of a Calvert City, Kentucky, couple charged with the murder of their infant daughter following a preliminary hearing held Monday in Marshall County District Court.

The hearing included testimony from Calvert City Police Officer Dylan Bobo, who was the first officer to arrive on the scene Jan. 17 at the Calvert City Apartments.

Bobo recalled receiving a call from dispatch at 10:27 a.m. that morning for a baby that was barely breathing. Bobo was “around the corner” and was able to be at the apartment by 10:28 a.m.

When he entered the home, Bobo said 20-year-old Cheyenne Driver was sitting on a couch holding her 5-month-old daughter, Brianna Walker, and 18-year-old Albert Walker was walking around with his hands on his head. Bobo described Walker as “distraught” and Driver as being “in a state of shock.”

Bobo said he saw the baby cough up “a brownish red substance,” and he laid the child on the couch and turned her on her side to prevent her from choking.

The officer said when he asked the couple what happened he was told that Walker had tripped at the top of a staircase in the home and dropped the baby. Bobo said while he talked with the couple, their account of when the

fall happened changed multiple times, but they ultimately said it happened around 8:30 a.m.

Emergency medical service responders arrived within minutes of Bobo’s arrival, and the baby was taken to Baptist Health Paducah, where she was evaluated before she was transferred to Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee. When the Calvert City Police Department announced the charges against Driver and Walker in January, the law enforcement agency said the baby had multiple broken bones, head injuries, and other bruises.

During his testimony on Monday, Bobo said staff members at Baptist Health Paducah told him many of the baby’s bruises were not new. Bobo contacted the Department for Community Based Services, which sent representatives to interview Walker and Driver the same day.

Bobo said he interviewed Walker and Driver on Jan. 21, and more details emerged from there. Investigators have said the baby was released from a neonatal intensive care unit in late November. When Bobo interviewed Driver, the officer said she claimed the baby had been dropped or fallen from a bed at least three times between the time she came home from the NICU and Jan. 17. However, Walker claimed the baby had been dropped or fallen about five times in that time frame.

The officer testified that

Walker and Driver also admitted to having shaken the baby while frustrated. However, it was noted that the baby was in Walker’s care each time she was dropped or fell.

Walker and Driver were arrested after the Jan. 21 interviews. They were each charged with criminal abuse of a child age 12 or under, failure to report child dependent neglect/abuse on the first offence, and endangering the welfare of a minor.

Bobo was informed that the baby had died on Jan. 23, after which Walker and Driver were charged with murder.

Following Bobo’s testimony, Driver’s attorney requested that the murder charge be dropped and that Driver’s bond be lowered on the grounds that the baby was allegedly in Walker’s care when she was injured.

Commonwealth’s Attorney Dennis Foust said the commonwealth would not oppose a lower bond, provided the defendants were not around children.

Marshall County District Court Judge Jack Telle said that, based on the testimony presented, the only bond adjustment the court would make would be an increase, but that he did not believe that was necessary because neither Walker nor Driver had managed to pay their current bonds.

The case was bound over to a grand jury. Foust said the grand jury is expected to meet March 6, and an arraignment could be expected around March 25.



GRACE BOATRIGHT JACHIM | The Mayfield Messenger
Albert Walker and Cheyenne Driver appeared in Marshall County District Court on Feb. 10, for a preliminary hearing. The two are charged with murder in the death of their 5-month-old daughter, Breanna.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Housing Authority of Mayfield hereby provides the following notice:
Public Hearing FY 2024 Annual Plan, Sale of Lots
Tuesday April 3, 2025, at 10:00 am
Housing Authority of Mayfield Housing Authority
312 Brookside Drive
Mayfield, KY 42066

The public hearing will be held for the purpose of receiving comments on the agency’s Annual Plan and the sale of lots on South 2nd St.

The Annual Plan will be available for review for a 45-day public comment period from February 17, 2025 - March 31, 2025, at the above address and on the website at www.mayfieldhousing.com. Any person wishing to comment on the Authority’s Annual Plan or the sale of lots on South 2nd St. may file his or her written comments with the Executive Director no later than 5:00 PM April 2, 2025. Email to greg.vaughn@mayfieldhousing.org or call 270-247-6391 ext. 228.

All comments will be considered in preparing the final plan or Sale of lots on South 2nd St. before submittal to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Reasonable Accommodation: The Housing Authority of Mayfield will provide reasonable accommodations under its program rules, policies, practices or services when such accommodation will permit a person with disabilities to benefit from such accommodation. Disabled persons are asked to notify MHA staff should an accommodation be required.