

Opinion

Promises made and promises kept

When Attorney General Coleman ran for office, he promised to stand with law enforcement to make Kentucky safer. He promised to hold folks accountable to make Kentucky a better place to live, work, and raise a family.



JIM ACQUISTO
CHIEF DEPUTY SHERIFF

And he's doing just that — let me give you an example.

As a law enforcement veteran with county and state service, I know that Kentucky's retirement system is important for the financial security of thousands of Kentuckians. It's been in the news a lot in recent years.

Finally, after a long-drawn-out legal battle involving the Commonwealth's pension systems, Attorney General Russell Coleman has announced a \$227.5 million settlement that will benefit Kentucky pension beneficiaries and taxpayers.

This hard-fought victory underscores the importance of supporting our police officers, teachers, nurses and other state employees.

Over seven years ago, a lawsuit was filed alleging that investment firms entrusted with Kentucky's pension systems had made risky investments damaging pension systems' finances. The case received significant attention to address the concerns of retirees reliant on these systems, like me.

The case was led by former Attorney General Daniel Cameron before he left office and was continued by Attorney General Coleman. Last month's settlement announcement reaffirms that Kentucky's legal system is committed to putting Kentuckians first and finding solutions that benefit us.

Set to be approved in March, the \$227.5 million settlement will return funds to the Commonwealth and its beneficiaries. The settlement will

be distributed among the Kentucky Public Pension Authority, the Kentucky Retirement System, and the County Employee Retirement System, in addition to covering the legal fees accumulated over the years. This is not just a

clean slate; it provides a foundation for a stronger Kentucky pension system that can better meet future financial obligations.

It's a significant win but attorneys representing four Kentucky public employees are trying to block the settlement.

Their request undermines the benefits that this settlement will bring retirees and future pension beneficiaries. Kentucky's pension systems have made great strides in recent years, thanks to essential reforms by the Kentucky Public Pensions Authority and renewed commitments from our state leaders. We have come a long way since 2018 when the Kentucky Employees Retirement Systems was on the brink of insolvency. This settlement brings us closer to making sure we have solvent pension funds. Further delays are risky and make that harder.

With the freedom granted by the resolution, trustees have access to the top funds, strategies, and asset managers available to public pension systems. Without this settlement, we risk the financial security of public servants.

When we ask our fellow Kentuckians to step up and serve, whether that's as state police, teachers, firefighters or other civil servants, we need elected officials who step up for them. That's what this settlement does. It is a crucial step toward a more successful and stronger Kentucky. Promises Made. Promises Kept.

It's time for the judge to approve the settlement.



HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Measles in Kentucky: How to protect your children and yourself

LEXINGTON
Over two decades ago, measles — a highly contagious and potentially deadly childhood disease — was declared eliminated in the United States. So far in 2025, multiple measles outbreaks have been identified across the country, a child in Texas has died from the disease and in late February, Kentucky recorded its first measles case in two years.



NICHOLAS VAN SICKELS
M.D.

Measles most commonly affects unvaccinated children and 20-40% of infected children require hospitalization. Ear infections, pneumonia, long-term neurologic issues and even death can occur. In general, most will recover, but some will have complications from the infection.

The sharp increase in cases is due to:

- A national and international decline in measles vaccination rates
- International travel to areas with active outbreaks
- The extreme contagiousness of the measles virus. On average, one infected person can infect 9-10 other people, if unvaccinated.

Last year, the U.S. recorded 285 measles cases — 40% of those individuals were hospitalized, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data shows. Over half of the infected children under 5 years old were hospitalized.

Experts still consider measles to be eliminated in the U.S. but that could change if we don't continue to take proper preventative measures.

HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF FROM MEASLES?

Fortunately, the best tool for preventing a measles infection is still highly effective and safe for both children and adults. Measles is almost entirely preventable through vaccination.

- One dose of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine is 93% protective.
- Two doses — the recommended number — are 97% protective against the disease.

Because of the inherent contagiousness of measles, 95% or more of a population needs to be vaccinated for the entire population to be protected from an outbreak.

The CDC recently estimated that 90% of Kentucky's kindergarteners had been fully vaccinated against measles — lower than the national average of just under 93%.

While news of measles spreading is alarming, it can also be a good opportunity to discuss the

importance of measles vaccination with family and friends, especially those who are planning to travel internationally or to parts of the U.S. where a measles outbreak is active. The latest tracking of measles cases and more information about the disease can be found on the CDC's measles webpage at cdc.gov/measles/index.html.

IS THE MEASLES (MMR) VACCINE SAFE?

Yes, it is very safe. The measles containing component of the MMR vaccine has been given in the U.S. for over 50 years. It provides strong, lifelong protection against measles.

The MMR vaccine is a live, weakened vaccine, so you should check with your health care provider first if you are immune compromised — such as if you are receiving cancer chemotherapy or recently completed chemotherapy, are an organ or bone marrow transplant recipient, or take other medications which can affect your immune system.

Most people have mild if any side-effects after the vaccine, which tend to be lower with second (or booster) doses of the vaccine.

The measles vaccine does not cause autism in children. This was confirmed most recently in a study of over 600,000 children in Denmark, published in 2019. The original study suggesting the association of MMR vaccine and autism, published in 1998, was retracted as the data was falsified by the lead researcher.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF MEASLES?

Measles symptoms typically include:

- Fevers (can be very high)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red eyes

Symptoms typically begin 8-12 days after exposure. After the above symptoms, the characteristic red rash appears, starting from the head and spreading downward.

People with measles are thought to be contagious from about four days prior to developing the rash to four days after the onset of the rash (with the onset being day zero).

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU'VE BEEN EXPOSED

If you're concerned you or your child have been exposed to measles, contact your health care provider immediately.

Many of us, fortunately, have never seen a case of measles in our lifetime. With a renewed focus on prevention, hopefully, we never will.

I'M UNSURE OF MY VACCINATION STATUS. HOW DO I KNOW IF I NEED THE MEASLES VACCINE?

The easiest way is to check your childhood shot records — if you have two doses of "MMR" vaccine, you are considered protected, unless you were to undergo a stem cell transplant.

If you do not have access to your childhood shot records, here are some tips which can help:

- If you were born in the U.S. before 1957, you are generally considered immune as measles circulated widely during that time. If you work in health care or another setting where you could be exposed, you should check with your employee health program to see if you should have your levels (titers) checked.
- If you were born before 1968 and received the original measles vaccine (or are not sure), try to track down your childhood and adult shot records. If you did not receive at least one dose of MMR vaccine, you should speak with your health care provider about getting vaccinated.
- If you were born between 1968 and 1989, and received your childhood vaccines, you likely received one dose of MMR vaccine. You should talk with your provider about whether you need a second dose. People at high risk for complications from measles, those traveling to areas with outbreaks or who live in group settings, such as college students in dormitories, could benefit from a second dose.
- If you were born in the U.S. after 1989, and received your childhood vaccines, you should have received two doses of the MMR vaccine. If you can track your vaccine record down, it is always good to keep in a safe place if you need it.
- If you came to the U.S. after 1996 on an immigrant visa or have a green card, you were required to show proof of measles immunity
- If you served in the U.S. military, you were required to show proof of immunity or be vaccinated.

I'M STILL NOT SURE. ANYTHING ELSE I CAN DO?

You can ask your health care provider to check a level, also called a titer.

If the level shows you are not protected, they can offer you the vaccine for your protection.

Nicholas Van Sickels, M.D., is the medical director for UK HealthCare Infection Prevention and Control.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Opposed to HB368

Dear Editor,
Count me as opposed to HB368, eliminating publishing of public notices in local papers,

based on Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis's quote: "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants."

Bill Landes of Goshen

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor should include your name, address and a phone number where you can be reached for verification. Letters should be limited to 500 words. The Era reserves the right to edit all letters for clarity, style and taste. The Era restricts publication of multiple letters on the same topic from the same author to two letters and one per every 30 days. The Era also reserves the right to hold all letters considered libelous or in poor taste. Letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Era staff.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ADVERTISING

Ad deadlines are noon Monday unless there is a holiday. Kentuckiana ads are due by 4 p.m. a week prior to publication.

SUBMITTED ITEMS

Any submitted obituaries, news, photos and community page items must be at the Era office by noon Monday for that week's publication.

CORRECTIONS

The Era will publish a correction of any error that it is made aware of. The paper will also make clarification of facts that may be misconstrued. The paper strives for accuracy, fairness and clarity in its coverage of Oldham County.