

Health Director's Report February 2026

- February 10, 2026 – Local Child Fatality Meeting; virtual.
- February 10, 2026 – Duke FCCP Site Visit
- February 10, 2026 – Thriving Hearts PIs/PMs meeting
- February 11, 2026 – Thriving Hearts Guilford County Charrette
- February 12, 2026 – Call with Dr. Anna Johnson, UNC Gillings Department of Epidemiology to discuss County/EMS Decision-making process
- February 13, 2026 – OCHD Epi Team Meeting
- February 17, 2026 – Thriving Hearts PIs/PMs Meeting and Meeting with Durham Health Department
- February 18, 2026 -NCALHD Work Group Meetings; DHHS RTP, Durham, NC
- February 19, 2026 – NCALHD Business Meeting; DHHS RTP, Durham, NCT
- February 20, 2026 – Thriving Hearts Local Health Department Contracts Meeting

Measles Outbreak (As of February 17, 2026)

As of February 17, 2026, NCDHHS reports 22 confirmed measles cases in NC since late December 2025. Most cases have been linked to known outbreaks (including the large outbreak in upstate South Carolina) and have affected unvaccinated people, especially children.

NCDHHS now recommends that families of infants 6-11 months talk with their health care provider about the option of early MMR vaccination if they live in or routinely visit areas with community transmission, including:

- Buncombe County
- Charlotte metro counties: Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Union.

On February 6, 2026, a traveler from South Carolina visited the Goodwill Store, 1115 Weaver Dairy Road, Chapel Hill between 9am – 10am. Staff contacted the employer to get a list of staff on duty during the exposure time. Time of interest was 9am – 12noon. This time frame takes into consideration the 2-hour period that the measles virus could have been "hanging around" and suspended in the air.

Staff continue to work with the school districts, UNC, UNC Health and local first responders to review their personnel vaccination/immunity status policies. First Responder partners have been given guidance on appropriate PPE to wear in the field. Staff have also completed FIT testing for some of the newer staff. We continue to encourage vaccination for those that are eligible. Staff plan continue to review immunization records and make outreach calls to residents that are unvaccinated or under vaccinated (eligible for the 2nd dose of MMR).

Medicaid Rebase Update - UPDATE

Medicaid is still underfunded by \$319 million. With the rate reductions no longer an available tool at this time, NCDHHS now has no remaining mechanisms to responsibly manage this funding gap. As a result, the Medicaid program is projected to run out of money early next year. Decisions about future funding.

There is still no transition plan in place for the Care Management Programs CMARC and CMHRP for July 1, 2026. The Prepaid Health Plans (PHPs) and the Tailored Plans in collaboration with the Health Directors

Association have submitted a request to DHHS for a six-month extension to solidify a transition plan that minimizes disruption to the children and families served while maintaining the integrity of the Virtual Health Data Management System. We have received strong support from the NC

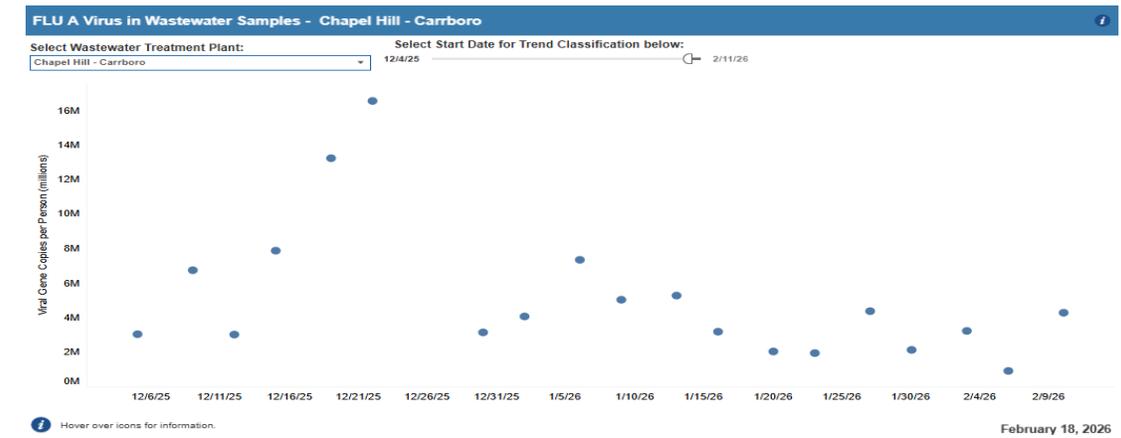
ACTION- Contact members of the General Assembly to advocate for funding of Medicaid as promised. NC still does not have a passed budget. Waiting until April for a vote from General Assembly doesn't give staff potentially impacted much time to plan for a new career.

NC Wastewater Monitoring Report (February 18, 2026)

Here are the highlights for the last two weeks (<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard>):

- Emergency Department Visits for Respiratory Viruses – **7.9% of emergency room visits** had symptoms of a respiratory virus, **a decrease** from the week before. (The week before was 8.9%.)
- Hospital Admissions from the Emergency Department – there were **1,247 hospital admissions** from the emergency department for people who were diagnosed with or had symptoms of a respiratory virus. This includes, but is not limited to, Influenza, RSV or COVID-19. This is **a decrease** from the week before. (The week before was 1,483 hospital admissions from the emergency department.)
- Respiratory Viruses Wastewater Monitoring – the wastewater viral activity level statewide for **COVID-19** is **2.9** which is **Low**; for **FluA** it is **2.7** which is **Very Low**; for **RSV** it is **1.0** which is **Very Low**. Wastewater viral activity levels may indicate the risk of infection in area.

Flu A Virus In Wastewater Samples – Chapel Hill-Carrboro



- While Flu A is still being detected across the state, levels have decreased significantly.
- The number of Flu B detections has increased. There were 17 detections for Flu B: Cary 1 (1), Cary 3 (2), Charlotte 1 (1), Charlotte 3 (1), Cherokee (1), Greensboro (1), Highpoint (1), Laurinburg (1), Salisbury 1 (1), Salisbury 2 (2), Town of Boone (2), Wallace (1), and Wilmington City (2).
- The number of RSV detections is decreasing. There were 20 detections for RSV: Charlotte 4 (2), Cherokee (1), Greenville (1), Kinston (2), Laurinburg (1), MSD Buncombe (1), New Hanover County North (1), Raleigh (1), Roanoke Rapids (1), Salisbury 1 (2), Salisbury 2 (2), Town of Boone (2) and Wallace (2), and Winson Salem (1).

Opioid Settlement Funds

- The 2026 grant cycle for Opioid Settlement Funds is now open. Applications are due by 5pm, February 20, 2026. [You can find applications, supporting materials, and a timeline on this webpage.](#)
- Application review period: February 23 – March 30, 2026.
- Recommendations go to the Board of County Commissioners April 2026.

Upcoming Events

- **February 26, 2026, 6-7pm** – Fireside Chat and Tele-Townhall: “Defend North Carolina Communities from Preventable Illnesses”. Discussion about what North Carolina families need to know about recent measles cases and guidance and how vaccines protect children and teens from serious, preventable diseases.

The fireside chat will stream live from NCDHHS [Facebook](#), [X\(Twitter\)](#) and [YouTube](#) accounts, where viewers can submit questions. The event also includes a tele-town hall, which invites people by phone to listen in and submit questions. People can dial into the event by calling 855-756-7520 Ext. 130378#.

- **March 12-13, 2026** - Public Health Leaders’ Conference, Theme: Navigating Uncertainty: Balancing Priorities & Advancing Public Health in Times of Complexity; Embassy Suites Raleigh-Durham/Research Triangle.
- **March 25, 2026, 3-7pm** – **Orange County Thriving Hearts Charrette**; Southern Human Services, 2501 Homestead Rd, Chapel Hill, NC 27516
- **April 29, 2026** – **OCHD ALL Staff Meeting**; Whitted Building, Donna Baker Room, 300 West Tryon Street, Hillsborough, NC 27278.