



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
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**DOH MONITORING WASTEWATER DETECTION OF MEASLES IN  
KAUA'I COUNTY**

26-025

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 17, 2026

HONOLULU — The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) is reporting that a wastewater sample from Kaua'i County has tested positive for measles virus. The sample was collected on Feb. 25, 2026, at a site in East Kaua'i County and the DOH was notified of the result on March 16, 2026. The DOH continues to monitor measles statewide, including on Kaua'i. Healthcare providers have been notified and reminded to remain alert for patients who may present with symptoms consistent with measles.

A confirmed measles case was reported in Hawai'i on March 7, 2026, involving a visitor who had recently arrived from an area of the continental U.S. experiencing measles transmission. The traveler was on O'ahu and Hawai'i Island between Feb. 26 and March 4. Based on the timeline and location, this case does not align with the wastewater detection on Kaua'i from Feb. 25, 2026.

If you traveled to an area with a current measles outbreak, speak with your doctor if you develop symptoms. International and U.S. locations are still experiencing cases of measles, with 31 states reporting cases as of March 12, 2026.

Measles symptoms usually start with a high fever, cough, runny nose and red eyes, followed by a rash of tiny red spots that begins at the head and spreads downward. The disease can lead to serious complications, including pneumonia, neurological illness and death.

If you think you have symptoms of measles or were exposed to someone with measles, isolate yourself immediately and contact your healthcare provider for guidance to avoid further spread.

The DOH urges everyone to stay up to date on the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Measles is highly contagious but preventable through vaccination. Infants under 1 year of age are at particularly high risk because they are too young to be vaccinated, but in certain situations, vaccination may be recommended for children between 6 and 12 months if they are exposed to a known case. To get an MMR vaccine, contact your medical provider or pharmacy.

Hawai'i collects municipal wastewater samples each week and sends them to the State Laboratories Division (SLD) for dPCR testing, as well as to the University of Missouri for advanced sequencing to look for bacterial and viral genetic material associated with community infections. In the most recent results, dPCR testing did not detect measles; however, sequencing identified measles virus D8 in a sample taken from Kaua'i County on Feb. 25, 2026. Genotype D strains are associated with wild-type measles infections, whereas the vaccine strain is genotype A. The difference in results is not unusual: dPCR looks for specific targets, while sequencing can detect very small amounts of genetic material. Using both methods provides important redundancy and strengthens Hawai'i's ability to identify low-level signals in wastewater. A subsequent sample has been collected and will undergo dPCR testing and be shipped for sequencing.

Wastewater sampling is routinely conducted across Hawai'i to support infectious disease surveillance. This testing can identify viral genetic material shed by infected individuals, including those who may not yet have symptoms or have not sought medical care. A measles signal in wastewater does not confirm a clinical case or indicate community transmission. Instead, it serves as an early indicator prompting awareness and monitoring for potential cases.

In addition to the work by SLD, measles is also being monitored in other Hawai'i counties through the National Wastewater Surveillance System (NWSS) and WastewaterSCAN.

## **ABOUT DOH WASTEWATER TESTING**

The SLD wastewater testing program is collaborating with a laboratory at the University of Missouri through a project that advances the detection of infectious disease pathogens in the environment. This national effort aims to strengthen environmental monitoring of air and water to detect, forecast and contain pathogen outbreaks and other biological threats. As part of the project, wastewater samples from sites across the country, including Hawai'i, are analyzed to characterize viruses present spanning those that infect humans, animals, plants and microbes.

For more information about wastewater surveillance:

[Hawaii Wastewater Surveillance](#)

[Wastewater Data for Measles | National Wastewater Surveillance System | CDC](#)

[WastewaterSCAN Dashboard](#)

For more information about measles, visit:

DOH [measles information](#) website

CDC [measles](#) website

MMR vaccine [factsheet](#)

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