

IN THE NEWS

PULSE EDITION

Gaps in CDC Health Data Raise Public Health Concerns

Delayed and missing CDC updates threaten disease surveillance and public health preparedness |
WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Right now in 2026, public health experts are sounding the alarm about major gaps in how health data is updated in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A newly released audit found that nearly half of the CDC's normally updated health surveillance databases stopped or delayed updates in 2025. These databases track critical topics like vaccinations, respiratory diseases, and drug overdose deaths information that doctors, researchers, and policymakers rely on to make decisions about disease prevention and treatment.



Source: REALHEALTH

Researchers from Vanderbilt University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Boston University School of Law reviewed about 1,400 CDC health surveillance datasets and found that 38 of the 82 databases normally updated monthly had unexplained pauses. More than a third of these delays lasted more than six months, and only one of the paused databases had been updated by early December 2025.

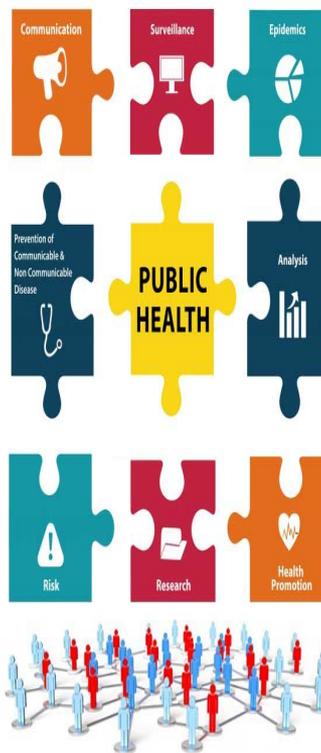
Why this matters...

Health surveillance data is essential for identifying disease trends, understanding how illnesses spread, and determining when public health responses like vaccination campaigns or emergency alerts should be activated. When these databases are not updated on time, doctors and public health officials can't see accurate, up-to-date information about outbreaks, vaccination rates, or health risks. This could delay responses to emerging threats and affect how well communities stay healthy. Many of the paused databases focus on vaccination tracking, which includes how many children and adults are getting immunized against diseases like measles and influenza. Other paused sources track respiratory diseases and drug overdose deaths, both of which remain top public health priorities in the U.S. Experts worry that delayed updates could make it harder to respond quickly to rising outbreaks or changing trends.

Source: HEVO



What Experts Are Saying...



Public health researchers emphasize that regularly updated health data helps save lives by identifying when something unusual is happening faster than hospital reports alone. With incomplete data, the picture of public health becomes less clear, making it harder to issue timely warnings or guidance for doctors and the public.

Source: Virginia Health Information

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Works Cited

"Nearly Half of CDC Databases Aren't Being Updated as Experts Sound Alarm over Gaps in Health Data." *Global Health Newswire*, 28 Jan. 2026, globalhealthnewswire.com/policy-law/2026/01/28/nearly-half-of-cdc-databases-arent-being-updated-as-experts-sound-alarm-over-gaps-in-health-data.