

# Disease outbreaks multiply, as Trump and Kennedy wage war on science

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13 August 2026

The United States is undergoing the broadest breakdown of public health in modern history. The largest cyclosporiasis outbreak ever recorded has sickened tens of thousands across 47 states; measles has returned at levels unseen since 1991; multiple salmonella outbreaks are now moving through the food supply; and the COVID-19 pandemic is at the start of its 13th wave of mass infection. This is part of a global collapse, with Ebola ripping through eastern Congo, the death toll surpassing 2,000 and on track to become the worst in the history of the disease.

Each of these crises has been produced or deepened by the Trump administration and Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who have gutted the agencies that detect disease, destroyed the programs that once contained it abroad and made the repudiation of science central to government policy. What appears as a series of separate emergencies is one widening catastrophe, global in its causes and its consequences.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported Tuesday that there have now been 13,895 laboratory-confirmed cases of cyclosporiasis acquired in the United States since May 1, with 740 hospitalizations and two deaths across 47 states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico, and 10,455 further illnesses awaiting confirmation. Michigan, which normally records about 50 cases a year, has counted a staggering 12,485. These figures are just the tip of the iceberg. *Cyclospora* is missed by standard stool panels, and many laboratories do not perform the test, so those counted are only the sickest with access to testing. The real toll is undoubtedly tens of thousands higher.

Two salmonella outbreaks have been large enough to trigger public CDC warnings. Jalapeños grown in Sinaloa, Mexico, have sickened 345 people in 27 states, in clusters traced to Chipotle and Qdoba restaurants, while shell eggs from Midwest Poultry Services have infected 98 people in 17 states, forcing the recall of 1.5 million dozen eggs. The agribusiness giant Taylor Farms, whose iceberg lettuce is the primary known culprit in the cyclosporiasis outbreak, recalled 20 jalapeño products on August 9.

In a surreal interview with CNBC Tuesday, acting Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Kyle Diamantas declared that the United States has “the safest food supply in

the world” and that Americans should feel confident eating fresh produce. This Orwellian lie was issued amid three expanding outbreaks, four days after a second Taylor Farms recall, and on behalf of an agency that has examined just five of the company’s more than 168,000 shipments from Mexico this year.

*Cyclospora* completes its life cycle only in the human gut and reaches a bag of salad only through human feces, primarily through poor irrigation and wash water. The conditions that produced this outbreak, which no corporate media outlet cares to investigate, are those imposed on farmworkers in Mexico and Central America and the largely immigrant workforce in California, Arizona and Florida. In order to maximize profit, these workers are routinely denied clean water, working toilets, handwashing and paid sick leave; and housed on failing septic systems, with irrigation running past latrines, creating the conditions for parasites to enter the food supply.

Measles, meanwhile, has reached 2,371 cases in the United States, the highest since 1991, and the country is on track to lose its elimination status in November. In January, Ralph Abraham, then the CDC’s principal deputy director, called this “just the cost of doing business.” The American outbreak is one front of a global resurgence of measles. Bangladesh has tracked more than 120,000 suspected cases and nearly 800 deaths since March, overwhelmingly children, while India has logged 26,607 cases and Mexico 12,495.

Across the Atlantic, a catastrophe of another order is unfolding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Officials reported Wednesday that there are now 4,566 confirmed Ebola cases and 2,128 deaths, up 117 cases and 67 deaths in a single day. Nearly half of those infected with Ebola die, through days of vomiting, bloody diarrhea and hemorrhage. The dead remain infectious, so families are forbidden to bury their own. Already the second-worst Ebola epidemic on record and the worst in Congolese history, it is on course to eclipse the West African outbreak that killed over 11,000 in 2014-16.

Genomic sequencing has established that Ebola transmission began in February, three months before an outbreak was declared. That failure of detection was manufactured by the Trump administration in Washington. Roughly 83 percent of USAID (United States Agency for International Development)

programs were terminated in 2025 and the agency dissolved, along with the \$100 million STOP Spillover project monitoring hemorrhagic fevers in seven countries. One assessment estimates that over the past year alone, these cuts have caused 762,000 deaths, over 500,000 of them children.

Looming behind these crises is the H5N1 avian influenza panzootic, the largest ever recorded. Historically, H5N1 has a 50 percent fatality rate among humans. Now on every continent, it has infected 68 mammalian species, with sustained mammal-to-mammal transmission in European fur farms, South American marine mammals and American dairy herds. More than 1,166 US dairy herds in 19 states have been infected since March 2024, and 200 million poultry have been killed since 2022. In July 2025 the CDC ended its dedicated reporting on the virus, folding it into routine influenza updates and further limiting the detection of H5N1. Laboratory studies have shown that as few as five mutations would make H5N1 airborne between mammals, and strains already circulating carry some of them.

The worsening climate crisis is accelerating this global resurgence of infectious diseases and the risk of future pandemics. July was the hottest month in the 132-year US record, with ocean temperatures the highest ever measured for the month. Warming extends the ranges along which H5N1 travels and the seasons in which *Cyclospora* matures and is projected to drive thousands of new viral spillovers even as governments destroy the capacity to detect them.

The origin of the present collapse of public health is the ruling class response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which the *World Socialist Web Site* characterized as a “trigger event in world history.” The pandemic has now killed roughly 1.5 million people in the United States and 30 million globally, and it has left an estimated 400 million people worldwide with Long COVID. After months of lull, transmission is rising once again, tracked through wastewater surveillance the government has spent years defunding. According to the Pandemic Mitigation Collaborative, roughly 315,000 Americans are now catching COVID-19 each day, a 50 percent increase in the past month.

Having normalized mass death and debilitation, the ruling class is determined to destroy the very foundations of modern science and public health. On August 10, Trump signed an executive order cutting the diseases against which all children are recommended to be vaccinated from 18 to 11, predicated on the long-debunked lie that vaccines cause autism. Beside him stood Kennedy, who has long profited from the promotion of anti-vaccine disinformation, and Jay Bhattacharya, co-author of the Great Barrington Declaration demanding deliberate mass infection at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last week, a Senate committee referred Anthony Fauci for criminal prosecution in a witch-hunt against science orchestrated by the fascist Republican Rand Paul. This follows the debarment of Peter Daszak and the indictment of David

Morens, a 78-year-old epidemiologist who faces dying in prison for routing emails through a personal account.

The war on science and public health is the modern revival of the Nazi policy of *Gleichschaltung*, or “synchronization,” which subverted academic freedom, drove Jewish scientists from the universities and subordinated German intellectual life to the state, destroying the core conceptions of the Enlightenment and philosophical materialism. Trump demands the same falling into line, with Kennedy serving as his top enforcer.

While Trump and Kennedy are prosecuting this war most ferociously, it predates them and has bipartisan support. The 2011 food safety law Obama signed contained a traceability requirement that has never taken effect, and his 2013 budget eliminated the Microbiological Data Program, the only federal effort that tested produce for pathogens. Biden declared the pandemic over in September 2022, at a time when 400 Americans were still dying of COVID-19 every day, and the majority of COVID-19 deaths took place under his watch. The Democrats did not resist the destruction of public health. They continued it and prepared the ground on which Trump and Kennedy are now building.

There is no faction of the ruling class to which the defense of public health can be entrusted. These pathogens travel through supply chains and migratory routes spanning the planet. What is required is the conscious planning of the world economy: the expropriation of the agribusiness, food-processing and pharmaceutical monopolies and their integration into a globally coordinated system of production and distribution under the democratic control of the working class.

The knowledge and resources to stop these outbreaks already exist. They are squandered because production is organized for private profit rather than planned for human need. The defense of science and of human life is inseparable from the fight for socialism.



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