



## Greene County Public Health

Melissa Howell MS, MBA, MPH, RN, REHS, Health Commissioner

Kevin L. Sharrett, MD, Medical Director

# Press Release

For Immediate Release  
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## Greene County, OH Reports First Pediatric Flu Death of 2025-2026 Season for Ohio

**XENIA, OH** - Greene County Public Health officials are confirming the first Ohio pediatric influenza death for the 2025-2026 season in a previously healthy teen under the age of eighteen. Health Commissioner Melissa Howell said, "Our concerns are with the family and our community during this time. This is a sad and serious event that breaks our hearts."

Health officials emphasize that while most influenza infections result in mild illness, some symptoms may require urgent medical attention. Trouble breathing, bluish skin or lips, declining alertness, dehydration, and worsening fever/cough are all warning signs that parents and caregivers should watch for with an ill child.

In addition to vaccination, early treatment with antiviral medication is recommended, especially for individuals at higher risk of complications. This includes people with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, weakened immune systems, or other underlying medical concerns. Antiviral medications work best when started as soon as possible after symptoms begin and may reduce illness severity and the risk of hospitalization.

Dr. Kevin Sharrett, Medical Director for the health district, reminds the community that it is not too late for parents and children to get protection from this year's vaccine, which is still available. "This strain of influenza virus-subclade K A(H3N2) emerged after vaccine development for this year's flu season. Vaccination will still provide some protection even if the vaccine is not a perfect match to the circulating virus. There is an adequate supply of immunizations available."

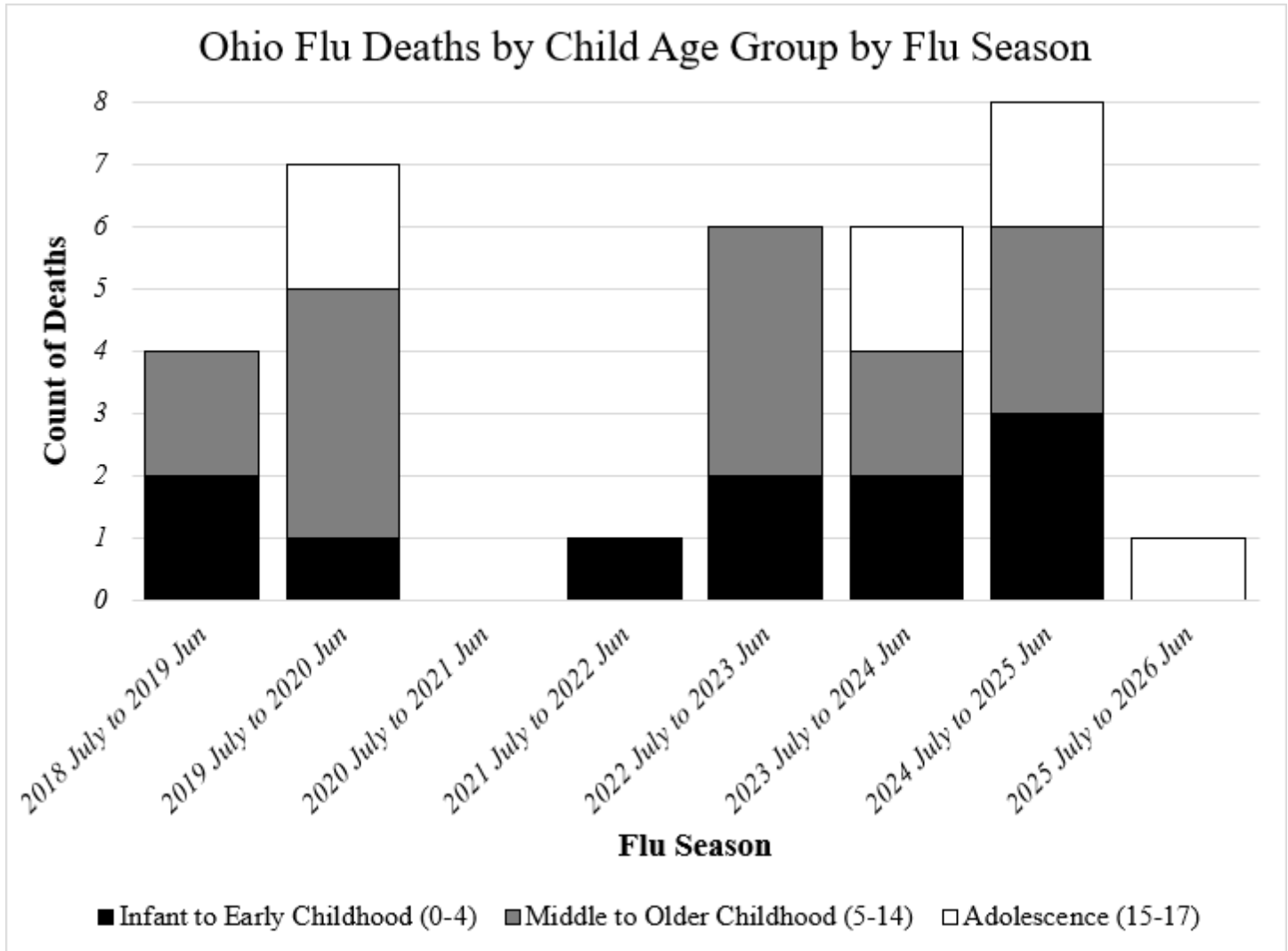
A bar graph created by Greene County Public Health illustrates pediatric flu cases by age group and across flu seasons from 2018 to 2026, using data from the Ohio Disease Reporting System. The data was provided by the Ohio Department of Health (which disclaims any conclusions drawn from the presentation of this data). The graph shows variation in flu incidence among children aged 0–4, 5–14, and 15–17 years, with 0 to 7 pediatric deaths associated with flu in Ohio since 2018, shifts in age distribution, and seasonal patterns over time. This is the first pediatric death in Greene County during the period. During the 2023–2024 flu season, an estimated 44,900 deaths across all age groups were attributed to flu complications.

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For questions or additional information, please contact Donald Brannen, PhD, Community Epidemiologist at 937-532-3846 or email [publicinformation@greenecophoh.gov](mailto:publicinformation@greenecophoh.gov).

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