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IDPH Responds to Federal WHO Withdrawal with New Efforts Aimed at Keeping Illinoisans Safe

Department details year-long efforts to ensure residents remain informed, protected, and prepared for health risks despite federal uncertainty

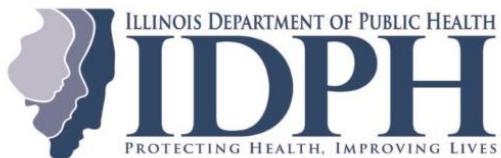
SPRINGFIELD – Today, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) marked the one-year anniversary of the federal government announcing their intent to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO). The withdrawal, which the federal government recently finalized, will disrupt long-standing systems for global disease detection, emergency coordination, and the rapid sharing of life-saving health information.

“Withdrawing from the World Health Organization is another reckless move by the Trump Administration that puts lives at risk,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Just six years out from a pandemic that transcended borders in record speed, Trump is abandoning global cooperation and it makes all of us less safe. Illinois will continue to work with trusted partners to protect lives and follow the science.”

Under the leadership of Governor Pritzker, the State has taken decisive steps over the last year to protect Illinois residents from the increased risks created by reduced global health coordination:

- IDPH convened a **Global Health Advisory Committee**, bringing together leading experts from several world-class institutions for global health including University of Illinois Chicago, the University of Chicago, Loyola University, Southern Illinois University and Northwestern University to ensure Illinois maintains access to the best available scientific insight and international intelligence. The committee is working on strategies to develop a refined response to global health threats as well as exploring impacts on the large international labor work force in Illinois.
- Illinois joined GovAct’s **Governors Public Health Alliance**, a multistate coalition committed to strengthening public health preparedness and ensuring states can collaborate directly when federal coordination is limited. Through this alliance, Illinois will work with other states to share data, align response strategies, and advocate for continued access to global health resources.
- IDPH is making preparations to join the **WHO Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN)**. Participation in GOARN will allow Illinois to maintain critical ties to global surveillance and outbreak response efforts, even as federal engagement changes. This step ensures that Illinois remains connected to rapid alerts, expert networks, and international response capabilities that are essential for protecting our residents.





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Additionally, IDPH's existing system of data collection and information gathering will continue serving as a resource to track emerging health issues. Robust data allows for fast, accurate, and transparent communication with the public. The department also leverages a globally recognized infectious disease intelligence provider that uses AI to anticipate, understand, and respond to infectious disease threats. These tools provide outbreak alerts, forecasting models, and expert-written risk assessments to inform time-sensitive, high-consequence decisions in response to public health threats.

"Disease knows no borders," said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. "The decision by the U.S. government to withdraw from the World Health Organization threatens decades of progress in global health coordination that makes Illinois residents safer. Anticipating this change, Illinois has taken decisive steps to maintain access to critical health intelligence and strengthen global, state, and local partnerships that protect Illinois communities."

Beyond this response to the federal WHO withdrawal, the Pritzker administration has taken action to protect Illinoisans from other federal efforts to erode pillars of public health. In December 2025, Governor Pritzker signed HB 767 into law, which gave IDPH the ability to offer transparent, science-based vaccine guidelines through the Illinois Immunization Advisory Committee (IL-IAC). The legislation protects Illinoisans' access to vaccines by requiring state-regulated insurance plans to cover vaccines recommended by IDPH.

As public health policies continue to evolve, IDPH remains committed to finding practical, locally driven solutions to protect residents. The department will continue to prioritize actions that protect the health, safety, and well-being of Illinoisans.

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