

U.S. Death Rate Falls To Lowest On Record

BY SABRINA SIDDIQUI

Influenza and pneumonia are now among the nation's top 10 causes of death for the first time in years, even as the nation's overall death rate in 2025 fell to its lowest point on record, according to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The death rate fell 4.6% last year to 689.2 deaths per 100,000 people, down from 722.1 in 2024, according to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. The death rate declined across every age group and nearly every demographic group tracked in the provisional report.

The main driver of the record low was a continued drop in drug overdose deaths, said Farida Ahmad, a health scientist at the CDC and one of the report's co-authors. Another factor, she added, was that Covid-19 no longer contributed to as many deaths.

Against that backdrop, influenza and pneumonia stood out—moving from 11th to eighth place in all age groups— with 56,511 deaths in 2025 compared with 48,139 in 2024. It is the first time the influenza category has cracked the top 10 since 2020.

Geeta Sood, an associate professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, said the severity of recent flu seasons came down to a number of factors, including the flu strain itself and a continued decline in vaccination rates.

“Some seasons are better, with lower attack rates and lower morbidity, and other seasons, just by nature of the changes in the viruses, are worse, with more hospitalizations and more deaths,” Sood said. The 2024-2025 flu season was one of the most severe in years.

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