



ZACH KLEIN

COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

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Contact: Pete Shipley, 614.965.0203
Email: pishipley@columbus.gov

Columbus Files Lawsuit Against Trump Administration for Cutting Infectious Disease Funding with Measles Outbreaks on the Rise

City leaders say health department has already had to terminate 11 infectious disease staffers as a result—all while deadly diseases like measles remain on the rise among children nationwide

COLUMBUS, OH— Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today announced that the City filed a lawsuit in federal court challenging the Trump administration’s \$11.4 billion in funding cuts to infectious disease programs, funding that was already approved by Congress to be distributed to public health institutions, including more than \$3.1 million to Columbus Public Health. As a result of the cuts, CPH had to terminate 11 infectious disease workers due to a lack of grant funding at a time when dozens of potentially deadly measles cases have been reported in Ohio, and hundreds more across more than 30 states.

“These federal cuts have very real – potentially lethal – consequences in our city,” said **Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther**. “We are taking action to sustain the equitable access to healthcare and disease prevention measures that our residents need and deserve.”

In March, the Trump administration eliminated \$11.4 billion in congressionally appropriated grants for infectious disease funding. This action is already having a significant impact at the local level by threatening the availability of life-saving immunizations for children and residents and making it harder for health departments to plan for emergencies and to swiftly and effectively respond to outbreaks of deadly diseases impacting children and the most vulnerable populations.

“The Trump administration’s termination of billions of dollars in infectious disease funding is both dangerous and unconstitutional,” said **Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein**. “The City cannot stay quiet on the sidelines as extremists within this administration continue to defy the Constitution and recklessly endanger the health and safety of our children and the public. That’s why we’re in the arena fighting to see this funding released as Congress intended—so that health departments can do their jobs and prevent needless deaths of children and our most vulnerable from outbreaks of deadly diseases like measles.”

The lawsuit claims the administration violated the U.S. Constitution by unilaterally terminating funds appropriated by Congress. Additionally, the administration's actions also violate the Department of Health and Human Services' own regulations regarding canceling grants, therefore these grants should not have been terminated.

The lawsuit also details the direct impact of the funding cuts to Columbus, which eliminates more than \$100,000 for the City's CelebrateOne initiative to decrease infant mortality and improve maternal health, as well as more than \$3 million to support infectious disease intervention operations and upgrade information systems to assist in prevention and response.

Because of these cuts and the resulting termination of 11 infectious disease workers, only 11 employees remain in infectious disease investigations which significantly weakens the City's ability to respond to a measles or other infectious disease outbreak. In its filing, the City also says that diverting resources to bolster infectious disease efforts would negatively impact other important healthcare services for residents and families—a choice city leaders say they should not have to be making.

“This funding helped us respond quickly to infectious disease outbreaks like measles and mpox. Without the 11 staff funded by the grant, we no longer have the staff to respond proactively to infectious disease outbreaks in vulnerable locations like schools and long-term care facilities, impacting our ability to protect residents' health,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mysheika Roberts**.

At a time when childhood vaccination rates are declining, in part due to rhetoric and misinformation from national figures without any background in public health or medicine, such as HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., the U.S. continues to see more outbreaks of infectious diseases like measles and whooping cough. This year alone, there have been more than 800 confirmed measles cases across the country compared to only 285 during all of 2024—a 180 percent increase not even a full four months into the year. To date, Ohio has seen at least 30 confirmed measles cases so far in 2025. There were no reported measles cases in Ohio in all of 2024.

The cities of Kansas City and Nashville, as well as Harris County, Texas (Houston), joined Columbus in the suit, which was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.