

## Decline in Alabama Vaccination Rates Should Worry Us All

By Aaradhya Vedre Kayanam

Vaccinations in the United States have saved countless lives, but in Alabama, the people who need the vaccines the most – toddlers – are getting them less and less. And that means people here could get sick more and more.

As Wes Stubblefield of the Alabama Department of Public Health [tells al.com](https://www.al.com), “Anytime vaccine rates are coming down, it creates the opportunity for these diseases to re-emerge in the population.” According to ADPH data, there are 13,700 more unvaccinated toddlers in the state than just two years ago.



Vaccines are vital to the health of our state and our country, and without them, we would see more death and illness from viruses like COVID-19, measles, and more. It is essential that children get their vaccines. Some parents have concerns about vaccine safety, but vaccines have been scientifically proven to work safely. For example, in the late 1950s, scientists developed and distributed the first polio vaccines, which was given to millions of children. The last

reported poliovirus case in the United States was in the 1970's, according to the Centers for Disease Control. So polio, a terrible disease, was eradicated in the US. In some countries, however, [it's making a comeback](#), and if people aren't vaccinated, you can guess what that could mean.

But why are people in Alabama less likely to make sure their children are vaccinated? Even though vaccines have been proven to work, some people still doubt them because of politicians, other public figures, and the [anti-vax movement](#). Robert F. Kennedy, who was just named Secretary for Human and Health Services, has said that vaccines cause autism, and that the polio vaccine can be more fatal than the actual disease. Republican Senator Tommy Tuberville also [is skeptical of vaccines](#), which could be another reason why state vaccination rates are down in majority-Republican Alabama.

Regardless of people's *beliefs*, the *fact* is that vaccines save human lives and human health. And parents being convinced to avoid them should worry people who live in Alabama and beyond.