



RC/PIO News & Notes |

January 9, 2026

A Weekly Update from **Eric Jens, Risk Communicator** – Georgia Department of Public Health
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News & Notes

Thanks to everyone who responded with feedback from last week's inaugural Constant Contact version of News and Notes. We're still working on fine-tuning it, which should occur in the coming months. Response has been predominantly positive already, so that bodes well going forward. This week we'll preview the up-coming legislative session, along with planning for other events in the not-too distant future.

Flu

A state [DPH news release](#) went out Monday, calling attention to the severe and widespread flu cases at this time in Georgia. Receiving a flu vaccine is highly encouraged to prevent cases or at least weaken the impact of the virus. Cases, hospitalizations, and fatalities have all increased dramatically in the past month. The numbers are likely to continue increasing in the coming weeks as people head back to school and work after some time away during the recent holidays.

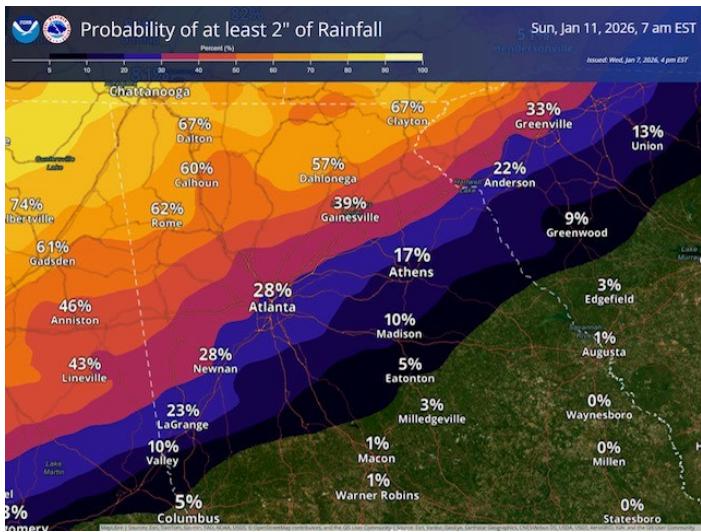
Legislative Session

The 2026 Georgia legislative session begins Monday. DPH Government Affairs Director Graham Seagrest provided a thorough preview Wednesday, starting with a procedural walk-through of a bill's first reading through final enactment of a new law. The DPH Office of Government Relations disseminates weekly updates on bill progression with a focus on those related to DPH operations each Friday during the session.



Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication

DPH Media / Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication trainings resume later this month after a year's absence. The next two trainings will be held specifically for epidemiologists at the state office on January 21 and January 27. There are 59 signed up for the first class and 54 registered for the second session. Requests are pending to hold a training in March or April at one of the health districts and we hope to receive word on that request within the next few weeks. If you are in a district that is interested in hosting the potential training this Spring, please reach out.



Severe Weather

While a year ago most of the state, and atypically mostly the southern portion of Georgia, had freezing temperatures and considerable snow accumulation, this year the concern is excessive rainfall and potential flooding. The focus today and tomorrow is primarily the northern portion of the state.

Next Week Preview

We have an interesting variety of meetings and webinars scheduled for next week including cyber-security, FIFA planning, and chatbots and mental health. On Tuesday I'll be a featured interviewee for Jeannette David's Disaster Mental Health class at UGA.

About "News & Notes"

"News & Notes" is a weekly communication aimed at risk communicators and public information officers within Georgia's 18 public health districts. The goal of the communication is to increase preparedness through the exchange of information about significant events, training and other planned activities. Some information herein may be considered FYOU or For Your Use Only. Please be judicious when forwarding. For questions, comments or to submit information for inclusion, contact Eric Jens at Eric.Jens@dph.ga.gov.

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