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RMS End of Week Update 9/18/2026



The Bills' 41 points were the third-most by a team in its regular-season stadium debut, behind only Dallas, which scored 44 in its first game at Texas Stadium in 1971, and Miami scoring 42 in its first outing at Joe Robbie Stadium in 1987. (Spectrum News 1 / Andy Young)

Bills' First Home Opener In New Stadium

The Buffalo Bills' historic home opener Thursday night saw a number of special guests in attendance, including New York Governor and Buffalo native Kathy Hochul.

"What a magnificent venue this is," Hochul said. "We worked hard with the team and the ownership, the Pegulas have been incredible, and this is what the fans deserve, something that the rest of the nation is looking at with awe and saying, 'That's incredible.' The Bills deserve this, this community deserves this."

To read the full article please click [here](#).

Governor Hochul Announces Community Investment Framework To Protect Communities From Exploitative Data Center Development

This week, Governor Hochul announced the release of the nation's first statewide Host Community Investment Framework for Data Center Development, delivering on a commitment made through [Executive Order No. 62](#). The Community Investment

Framework provides local governments with critical guidance for any future negotiations with major tech companies and developers, a powerful tool to ensure communities are protected from exploitative data center projects and get the benefits they deserve. The Framework also ensures local communities can negotiate a deal that mitigates the negative effects of data centers and puts their communities and the families that live there first.

Localities are encouraged to use the Community Investment Framework (CIF) to build on the ongoing statewide regulatory frameworks being finalized by the Department of Public Service (DPS) that are designed to protect New York ratepayers from costs associated with data center development and create a funding pathway to directly lower bills for residential and commercial customers.

[Executive Order No. 62, issued July 14, 2026](#), established a first-in-the-nation moratorium on data center development and directed Empire State Development to formulate the Community Investment Framework. The voluntary Framework establishes a recommended community investment benchmark of \$1 million for every megawatt of utility demand associated with a data center project, recognizing the significant land, energy and infrastructure requirements of data centers and their comparatively lower number of permanent jobs per megawatt of electric demand. The benchmark is intended to help communities negotiate meaningful, long-term investments that reflect the scale of the projects they host.

“In the absence of federal leadership, someone has to write the rules, and New York is leading the way,” Governor Hochul said. “I was proud to sign the nation’s first data center moratorium and as part of that pause, we’re giving communities the tools they need to protect themselves in negotiations with major tech companies. As artificial intelligence rapidly changes the world we know, I won’t allow New York’s communities and the families who live here to be taken advantage of and that’s why I’ll continue stepping up, putting New Yorkers first.”

Putting Host Communities First

This CIF puts necessary protections in place so that data centers do not take advantage of communities across the State during this unprecedented technological development.

The Framework is designed as a flexible template that localities may use and modify based on their circumstances and priorities. It is intended to help communities negotiate and document commitments with data center developers, owners and operators while recognizing that every project and host community is different.

Data centers are a fast-growing form of industrial development in the United States and often require substantial amounts of land, electricity, water and other infrastructure. The CIF empowers localities to assess those demands alongside a project’s anticipated fiscal

and economic benefits, including employment, PILOT agreements and potential environmental and infrastructure impacts.

Under the Framework, a 50-megawatt data center, for example, would carry a recommended community investment level of \$50 million. Communities and developers would negotiate the timing and structure of those investments, including contributions to a locally administered Community Investment Fund.

The Framework provides localities with a range of potential community investments that can be tailored to local needs, including public infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer systems, parks and public transit; affordable and workforce housing; workforce training and apprenticeships; schools and educational programming; childcare; broadband access; public safety; community institutions and small business support; and revitalization of vacant or underutilized properties.

The Framework also provides suggested Good Neighbor Commitments addressing potential impacts including water consumption, noise, lighting, building design and landscaping, and encourages projects to prioritize fair labor standards and local hiring. It calls for prevailing wages for construction workers and provides a structure through which communities and developers can establish local hiring commitments and engage organized labor on high-quality employment opportunities.

Local Input, Transparency and Accountability

The Framework recommends that if a data center developer asks a locality to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), the local government should carefully consider whether the proposed NDA benefits the community. If the local government decides to move forward with an NDA, the agreement should be limited to protecting proprietary or commercially sensitive information or trade secrets that are exempt from mandatory disclosure under the New York Freedom of Information Law.

Community engagement is central to the State's guidance. Localities are encouraged to engage residents and stakeholders early through transparent public processes, establish community priorities before negotiations begin, clearly define investments and implementation responsibilities, and plan for additional commitments if a data center expands or increases its infrastructure demands.

The Framework also recommends ongoing transparency once a facility is operating, including through annual reporting to host communities on metrics such as employment, water and utility usage, energy demand, Community Investment Fund contributions and environmental impacts and mitigation measures.

The Framework does not replace or supersede environmental review, permitting or other applicable laws and regulations. Data center projects must continue to adhere to

established state, federal and local regulatory processes, including the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and municipalities are encouraged to coordinate community investment agreements with those processes.

Companies Paying Their Own Way

Earlier this year, the Governor directed DPS to begin the Energize NY proceeding, which will require data centers to either pay more for their energy or supply their own, allowing the State to keep energy more affordable for New Yorkers. In Executive Order No. 62, the Governor directed DPS, as part of the Energize NY proceeding, to develop a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for data centers to ensure new data centers coming online are being held to consistent standards. During the development of this GEIS, which will take up to a year from when the Executive Order was issued, a moratorium is in place, and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will not issue any discretionary permits not already deemed complete. The State will use the GEIS to assess the potential environmental impacts of the construction and operation of data centers in the State, including their effect on energy demand, water use and quality, and air quality. Once the State finalizes these standards, the moratorium will be lifted, allowing new data center projects to proceed as long as they follow state, zoning code and other local approvals.

Additionally, in the Executive Order, the Governor directed the DPS to consider creating a New York Grid Acceleration Fund to require data centers to invest in the State's aging grid infrastructure and energy needs so all New Yorkers benefit from responsible development. The fund could support the procurement of new clean energy supply and establishment of an insurance pool to which developers may need to contribute to protect against speculative large loads that create uncertainty and increase costs. DPS is also considering approaches to require data centers to fund new clean electric generation dedicated to their operations, including but not limited to customer-sited distributed energy resources and battery storage.

Finally, Governor Hochul is pursuing legislation to repeal sales tax exemptions for massive data centers across the State.

[ESD's Community Investment Framework for Data Centers webpage.](#)

To view the full press release please click [here](#).

RFK Jr. Announces New Members Of Preventive Services Task Force

Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr. announced Thursday eight new members of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, a panel he has criticized for being "lacksadaisical" and "negligent" and sought to remake.

Most of the new members are physician specialists, a departure from the previous iterations of the task force, where members were primary care doctors.

The task force, made of volunteer doctors, evaluates the benefits of preventive services, such as colonoscopies, mammograms, counseling and preventive medication. Congress in the Affordable Care Act required insurers to cover screenings the task force finds to have at least moderate health benefits.

Kennedy this spring faulted the task force in congressional hearings for not recommending screening for Alzheimer's. His move to remake the committee has also prompted lobbying by disease advocates, such as those promoting kidney screening, who hope it will lead the task force to order insurers to cover more.

Others who have followed the task force's work say it's been rigorous in assessing when screenings lead to better health outcomes and when they don't.

"We are strengthening the Task Force to ensure it asks hard questions, follows the evidence wherever it leads, and maintains the highest standards of scientific integrity," Kennedy said in a statement Thursday.

The new members of the task force are:

Seth Corey, a pediatrician specialized in hematology and oncology in the Departments of Pediatrics and Heart, Blood and Kidney Research at Cleveland Clinic and a professor of molecular medicine at Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine at Case Western Reserve University. Corey has more than 40 years of experience providing care for children and young adults, according to the biography provided by the Department of Health and Human Services. HHS said Kennedy appointed Corey to the task force "for his clinical expertise and his deep experience in generating, analyzing, and assessing medical evidence."

Kennedy appointed Corey as chair of the task force. In the past, chairs have already served as members of the panel.

Patrick Hunter, a pediatrician at Pensacola Pediatrics and assistant clinical professor at Florida State University. HHS said, "Hunter was appointed to the Task Force for his dedication to improving the health of children and adolescents, especially those in rural communities, his experience analyzing and assessing evidence, his bioethics knowledge, and his many years of implementing clinical guidelines into practice."

Ronald Karlsberg, a cardiovascular doctor who teaches medicine at the Smidt Heart Institute at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and who founded the National Institute for Cardiovascular Research and Innovation. HHS appointed him to the task force for "his expertise in heart disease prevention, evidence-based screening and risk assessment, and translation of clinical evidence into patient care."

Venkatesh Murthy, a specialist in cardiovascular care who teaches preventive cardiology at the University of Michigan. His expertise in heart disease prevention and medical imaging, as well as his experience generating, analyzing and assessing medical evidence, and his knowledge of using artificial intelligence and other new approaches to improve screening and risk assessment are what got him appointed to the task force, HHS said.

Stephen Parente, the Minnesota insurance industry chair of health finance and professor in the Department of Finance at the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota. HHS appointed him to the task force for his expertise in evaluating the cost and value of health care services and technologies and their impacts on patients and the delivery of care. His appointment is also a departure from past practice. The task force hasn't previously had non-physician members focused on the cost of services.

Goldie Stands-Over-Bull, the lead family medicine physician at Texas Native Health, who was appointed to the task force "for her expertise in evidence implementation in primary care, women's health, adolescent medicine, and chronic disease management." Louis Wilson, a specialist in gastroenterology, hepatology and clinical nutrition, who's the section chief for gastroenterology in the Department of Medicine at United Regional Healthcare System. HHS appointed him to the task force for his expertise in disease prevention and early detection, it said in a statement.

Dennis W. Wulfeck, a diagnostic radiologist appointed for his expertise in modeling screening approaches and his experience applying evidence-based recommendations to enhance preventive care.

They will join eight other members of the task force. HHS has canceled most meetings of the group since Kennedy took over and the health secretary fired its leaders in May, citing legal issues that weren't fully explained to the leaders and the public. One of those leaders wrote in the New York Times that Kennedy could call for "recommendations that bolster the financial interests of the myriad individuals in his circle who profit from fitness and nutrition products."

But some patient groups, such as the American Association of Kidney Patients, have agreed with Kennedy's criticism of the task force, faulting it for not recommending screening for kidney disease that the group believes would catch early signs of a disease that's expensive to treat and deadly.

The task force previously rejected expanded kidney screening, saying there wasn't enough evidence about its benefits, but is reevaluating now. Beyond his statement about Alzheimer's testing, Kennedy hasn't said what he thinks the task force should do.

Without mentioning the task force, he has suggested he'd like to see Americans receive more preventive care aimed at encouraging healthier eating and exercise. He's also said he wants everyone using a wearable device over the next few years. He expects the data they see will prompt them to adopt healthier lifestyles.

To view the full article please click [here](#).

August 2026 Medicaid Update Released

The Office of Health Insurance Programs of the New York State Department of Health has approved the release of the August 2026 [Medicaid Update](#). Please find the print-ready version of the issue available for download at: https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2026/docs/mu_no09_aug26_pr.pdf. You may also go straight to an article or topic that pertains to you by selecting from the current issue's table of contents below.

Pharmacy

- [Update to the New York State Medicaid Telehealth Policy Manual \(Cover\)](#)
- [NYRx Compound Policy and Proper Billing Practices](#)

Policy and Billing

- [Update to the New York State Medicaid Patient Centered Medical Home Billing Guidance Manual](#)
- [New York State Medicaid Coverage of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy](#)
- [New York State Medicaid Coverage of Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing for the Purpose of Bacterial Vaginosis and Sexually Transmitted Infection Diagnosis and Treatment](#)
- [Reimbursement Change for Unlicensed Individuals Providing Applied Behavior Analysis Services](#)

All Providers

[Spread the Word: New York State Medicaid Advisory Committee and Beneficiary Advisory Council](#)

Governor Hochul Announces PSC Takes Action on Her Plan to Measure Affordability of New York's Electric and Gas Utilities in Effort to Rein in Costs

This week Governor Hochul announced that the Public Service Commission (PSC or Commission) today initiated a proceeding to implement several energy affordability initiatives she pushed this year. The PSC proceeding moves toward the establishment of a new Energy Affordability Index that will be used to evaluate energy affordability in New York State and further the State's goal to keep electric and gas utility expenses below six percent of household income. Today's Order provides interim guidance to utilities and

stakeholders on how the law will be implemented in the short-term while this new proceeding develops further policy details with input from stakeholders.

Under Governor Hochul's plan that was included in the FY27 Enacted Budget, if a utility's Affordability Index exceeds this six percent target (three percent for electric and three percent for gas), the Commission may install an independent Affordability Monitor to provide additional scrutiny of utility operations and expenditures. The Monitor would report to the Commission with an assessment of the cost drivers impacting affordability and recommendations for lowering costs. The Affordability Index will also be linked to performance incentives used in executive and senior management compensation, aligning executive decisions with energy affordability for customers.

"I have made it a top priority to ensure we keep the lights on and costs down for all New Yorkers and the PSC's action today builds on those efforts," Governor Hochul said. "Just this week alone we announced that \$1 billion in energy rebate checks will start going out to 8.2 New Yorkers beginning September 21 and we began an aggressive education and enrollment effort so the 2.5 million households eligible, but not enrolled, for utility bill credits of up to several hundred dollars a year can take advantage of the savings."

PSC Chair Rory M. Christian said, "Ten years ago this Commission established the nation-leading Energy Affordability Program to help lower New Yorkers' energy burden by requiring utilities to provide discounts to income-eligible customers, and this year we expanded eligibility to households up to State Median Income. Just this week Governor Hochul directed the Department of Public Service to begin an aggressive education and outreach effort to sign up more people. This new Affordability Index will improve stakeholder understanding of energy affordability across the State's major utilities with a consistent metric, incentivize executives to address affordability concerns, and inform the Commission's rate case decisions going forward."

The Affordability Index for each utility will be included in an annual report issued by the Commission providing a comprehensive statewide look at the affordability of utilities and giving policy makers and consumers an important new tool to track utility affordability over time.

Today's PSC Initiating Order provides interim guidance to utilities to calculate their Affordability Index for upcoming rate cases and for their first annual affordability filings, which are required by February 1, 2027. The information provided in those filings will be used in the first annual affordability report to be issued by July 1, 2027. The interim Affordability Index will be calculated by dividing a utility's median annual residential electric or gas utility expenditure by the State Median Income (or Area Median Income for Con Edison and National Grid downstate).

To view the full press release please click [here](#).

NYS DOH Launches New York State Medicaid Advisory Committee and Beneficiary Advisory Council

The New York State (NYS) Department of Health has launched two new boards, the Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) and the Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC), and assistance is requested to spread the word.

Promotional flyers are available in multiple languages to facilitate reaching a broader audience and ensuring that as many NYS Medicaid and Child Health Plus members as possible can learn about these boards and participate.

Please take a moment to share these flyers with family, friends, colleagues, community groups, networks, and any other interested individuals. Support in distributing these flyers is invaluable and plays a vital role in reaching individuals who can benefit from the information and discussions at these meetings.

For additional information and to access the flyers, please visit the [NYS Department of Health “Medicaid Advisory Committee \(MAC\) and Beneficiary Advisory Council \(BAC\)” web page](#).

New York State Department of Health Launches Measles Dashboard

Recently, the New York State Department of Health announced the launch of its new [Measles Dashboard](#), allowing the public and healthcare officials to track local health risks and raise awareness about measles. The Department is also alerting the public and healthcare providers to an increase in measles cases in the Capital, Central and Western regions of the state, and encouraging all New Yorkers to ensure they are up to date on required immunizations.

"Under the leadership of Governor Hochul, we are working closely with local health departments and regional partners to track and contain this recent uptick in measles cases," State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said. "Measles is highly contagious and can cause serious illness and hospitalizations, yet it is effectively prevented with up-to-date measles immunizations. I urge New Yorkers to check their vaccination status and make sure that they and their families are protected. I also ask health providers to be prepared to diagnose and treat any measles they encounter."

As of September 12, there have been six confirmed cases in New York City and 51 in New York State outside of NYC (Rest of State) for 57 total cases this year, amid a global and domestic increase in measles cases. There have been a growing number of cases in upstate New York, including cases associated with both local transmission and domestic travel.

The Department is working with county health departments and local partners to closely monitor and investigate all reported cases, and provide the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine to any unvaccinated individuals who request it. Monitoring and investigation activities, such as contact tracing, are ways public health officials work to keep affected communities safe from the

spread of infectious diseases. Anyone who is contacted during these activities is encouraged to be responsive so that important information can be shared to prevent more infections.

All New Yorkers are urged to protect themselves by making sure they are up to date on their measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccines and be aware of health advisories when traveling with unvaccinated individuals, especially young children. Infants 6 to 11 months old can receive an early dose of the [MMR vaccine](#) for protection before travel or if they are otherwise at risk of being exposed.

Measles is a highly contagious, serious respiratory disease that causes rash and fever. In some cases, measles can reduce the immune system's ability to fight other infections like pneumonia. Measles is caused by a virus that is spread by coughing or sneezing into the air. Individuals can catch the disease by breathing in the virus or, less commonly, by touching a contaminated surface, then touching the eyes, nose, or mouth.

The best protection against measles is the [measles, mumps, and rubella \(MMR\) vaccine](#). Those traveling should plan to be fully vaccinated against measles at least two weeks before departure. One dose provides 93 percent protection while two doses provide 97 percent protection. Babies as young as 6 months should get one dose of the MMR vaccine if they are traveling abroad or to an area where measles is prevalent. After travel, these babies should then continue to get their next two MMR vaccines on schedule for a total of three vaccines. Anyone who is not protected can get measles while traveling and can easily spread it to others when they return home.

- The Department has released a [health advisory](#) for healthcare providers on clinical guidance for measles.
- The Department's travel advisory urging New Yorkers to ensure they are fully vaccinated against measles before international travel or travel to an area in the U.S. experiencing an outbreak can be found [here](#).
- Healthcare providers should report suspected measles cases to their [local health department](#).
- Visit the Department's dedicated measles website [here](#) for information about measles, current case numbers, immunization data and information for providers.
- More information about the measles vaccine can be found [here](#).

To view the full press release please click [here](#).

Helpful Links and Resources

[2026 RMS HMH End of Session Update](#)

[RMS Revenue and Tax Final Budget Table](#)

[RMS Health/Mental Hygiene Final Budget Table](#)

[FY 2027 Enacted Budget Financial Plan](#)

[Empire State Development Tariff Resource Guide](#)

[NYS COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard](#)

NYS COVID-19 Fatalities Tracker

Eliminating Distractions In Schools Resource

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Department of Financial Services information and resources

New York COVID-19 Vaccine Information Page

Department of Health

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

COVID-19 Guidance for Medicaid Providers

Office of Mental Health

<https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/covid-19-resources.html>

OPWDD

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/coronavirus-guidance>

State Education Department

<http://www.op.nysed.gov/COVID-19.html>

NYS Department of Labor

<https://dol.ny.gov/>