

# The Minnesota Star Tribune

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H: 74° L: 60° | SUN AND STORMS

## Confusion surrounds COVID shots

As the latest vaccines arrive in Minnesota, leaders are taking steps to protect access.

By JEREMY OLSON  
The Minnesota Star Tribune

State leaders are taking steps to preserve access to COVID-19 vaccines in Minnesota if federal health authorities decide later this month to discourage or limit their use. Minnesota already empow-

ers pharmacists to prescribe COVID-19 vaccines without prescriptions, regardless of any guidance from the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), which under President Donald Trump is largely composed of vaccine skeptics. Pharmacists in the state need

only comply with requirements from the Food and Drug Administration, which last month approved the latest COVID-19 vaccines for the elderly and adults and some children with underlying health conditions. If ACIP discourages some people from receiving these vaccines, it won't have as much impact in Minnesota as in other states, said Aaron Patterson, interim executive director of the Minnesota Board of Pharmacy.

Pharmacists can help by letting eligible patients know that the vaccines should remain available. "There's just a lot of chaos and noise, and a lot of states doing different things," he said. "We believe there is an opportunity for pharmacists to help clarify the message for Minnesotans." Gov. Tim Walz on Monday took the additional step of issuing an executive order to

preserve vaccine access if any shifts in federal policy make it harder to secure appointments or insurance coverage. Walz gave the Minnesota Department of Health two weeks to issue a standing order that clarifies how the dispensing of COVID-19 vaccines will work in the state. That could include off-label uses for those people who weren't on the FDA's approval list. "Minnesota will be guided by

science and medical expertise," said Walz, who also directed the Department of Commerce to consult with insurers to maintain coverage of the shots. Medica, HealthPartners and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota issued statements late last week affirming that they will pay for the shots, when recommended. It is unclear whether changes by ACIP or the Trump administration could **SEE VACCINES ON A5 »**

## Controversial bone scans for lead scrutinized

Tests were done for lawsuit against Eagan battery recycling plant.

By CHLOE JOHNSON  
The Minnesota Star Tribune

Neighbors of an Eagan battery recycling plant learned they might be entitled to part of a lawsuit settlement against the facility, Gopher Resource. But first, they had to get their bones scanned. The law firm representing them, Farrell and Fuller, rented space in March and June in the Omni Viking Lakes Hotel, next to the Vikings' training site in Eagan. Inside, an expert in lead exposure pointed something that looked like an oversized infrared thermometer at their shins. After a few minutes, the test was done. Weeks later, results arrived in an online portal. Some people were told they had much more lead in their bones than was "normal," according to copies of four people's test results reviewed by the Minnesota Star Tribune. The results seemed to confirm what neighbors to the plant suspected: that Gopher Resource

had tainted their bodies with lead. At a public meeting in July, neighbors asked the state to do its own bone scans, to capture more data from people who were not part of the settlement. But weeks later, the Minnesota Department of Health said it would not be scanning anyone — because the test method was unproven and exposed people to radiation. The agency said it is not aware of any other time similar scans have been used in Minnesota. "We understand that some people have been led to believe that these bone lead tests provide key information, but the fact is, there are no established standards for 'normal' levels of lead in bones," Amy Barrett, a spokeswoman for the department, wrote in an email. The testing method, known as X-Ray Fluorescence, or XRF, has been used for years in research studies and is emerging as a preferred tool in lawsuits, including some filed after high levels of lead were found in the drinking water in Flint, Mich. Researchers who have used it say it's a useful method to track long-term lead exposure. **SEE BONE SCANS ON A8 »**



Olivia Bledsoe  
From left, Emma Brackett, Abby Cichocki, Helena Karlstrom and Olivia Bledsoe paddled more than 1,000 miles over more than two months.

## A journey through wilderness, history

Two Minnesota groups paddle to Hudson Bay.

By BOB TIMMONS  
The Minnesota Star Tribune

Two separate groups of intrepid canoe paddlers set out in the northern Minnesota wilderness this spring toward the remote doorstep of the Arctic Circle: Canada's Hudson Bay. The foursomes, made up of Minnesotans and others with close ties to the state, dubbed themselves "The Solitude of

4" and the "Hudson Bay Girls." More than two months and 1,000-plus miles later, they completed their trips in mid-August. The accomplishments entered them into an exclusive club, tracing waterways traveled eons before by Indigenous people and, later, fur traders and explorers. It's a pattern popularized in the 1930s after Eric Sevareid took the journey fresh out of high school and wrote about it in his book "Canoeing with the Cree." It has become an epic goal **SEE PADDLERS ON A5 »**

## Supreme Court gives ICE free rein in L.A.



In 6-3 decision, conservative justices allow indiscriminate stops to go on.

By ADAM LIPTAK  
The New York Times

WASHINGTON - The Supreme Court on Monday lifted a federal judge's order prohibiting government agents from making indiscriminate immigration-related stops in the Los Angeles area that challengers called "blatant racial profiling." The court's brief order was unsigned and gave no reasons. It is not the last word in the case, which is pending before a federal appeals court and may again reach the justices. The court's three liberal members dissented. "We should not have to live in a country where the government can seize anyone who looks Latino, speaks Spanish and appears to work a low wage job,"

Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote, joined by Justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson. "Rather than stand idly by while our constitutional freedoms are lost," Sotomayor added, "I dissent." The court's ruling for now allows what critics say are roving patrols of masked agents routinely violating the Fourth Amendment and what supporters say is a vigorous but lawful effort to enforce the nation's immigration laws. The majority's failure to provide an explanation for the ruling means that it is hard to say whether its reasoning applies nationwide or is limited to the Los Angeles area, where the administration has said that the problems flowing from **SEE ORDER ON A3 »**



**POINT OF CONFLICT**  
At top, federal agents at MacArthur Park last July in Los Angeles. Protesters in the city, above, express their objections. An order barring federal agents from relying on ethnicity or speaking Spanish was overturned on Monday in a 6-3 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court. Photos by DAMIAN DOVARGANES and GABRIELA BHASKAR • The New York Times; AP

## Trump seeks power to overrule spending decisions

By JUSTIN JOUVENAL  
The Washington Post

The Trump administration asked the Supreme Court on Monday to allow it to freeze billions of dollars in foreign aid, potentially setting up the biggest test yet of the president's bid to assert sweeping authority

over federal spending. The emergency filing in the rapidly moving case comes after a federal appeals court declined to block a preliminary injunction requiring Trump officials to spend the money for food, medicine and development assistance before it begins to expire at the end of

the fiscal year on Sept. 30. Since beginning his second term in January, President Donald Trump has claimed broad powers to refuse to spend congressionally allocated money for transportation projects, health research, education, "sanctuary cities" and more, saying the spending was

wasteful or not aligned with the administration's values. One of his first acts, pausing about \$30 billion in foreign aid through the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development, was followed by the dismantling of USAID. Congressional **SEE AID ON A3 »**