

# The Minnesota Star Tribune

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026

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## State's uninsured rate climbing

Kids are especially hard hit as number of children without insurance jumps 70%.

By **CHRISTOPHER SNOWBECK**  
The Minnesota Star Tribune

State officials' best estimate for the number of Minnesotans who lack health insurance climbed 55% from 2023 to 2025, a worrisome jump for cash-strapped patients and a health care system already con-

cerned about further coverage losses from Medicaid cuts on the horizon.

The increase apparently was driven by cuts in public health insurance coverage. And it didn't spare kids.

The estimated number of children ages 18 and younger lacking health insurance grew

to about 62,000 – a striking 72% increase from two years earlier, according to survey data released Tuesday, March 10, by the Minnesota Department of Health.

Overall, the state's uninsured rate increased from an all-time low of 3.8% in 2023 to 5.8% in 2025. That translated to roughly 328,000 Minnesotans lacking insurance in the waning months of last year, when respondents filled out the surveys.

"It's definitely a substantial increase from a time when Minnesota enjoyed high rates of coverage," said Stefan Gildemeister, the state's health economist.

More people going without health insurance coverage creates greater health and financial risks for residents and health care providers.

The cost of getting health care has become so expensive that uninsured patients are more likely in many cases to skip

care than take on medical debt, putting them at risk of worse and more costly health problems down the road. Hospitals and clinics, in turn, have greater financial risks as more patients lack coverage for medical bills and turn to hospital charity care programs.

The Health Department has been publishing reports on the state's uninsured rate for more than a decade, based on surveys taken every other year. The new

numbers show Hispanic and Black Minnesotans, as well as lower-income state residents, were again more likely to go without health insurance.

"The sharp increase in uninsured Minnesotans over the past two years is deeply disturbing, as are the long-standing disparities in the uninsured rate by race/ethnicity and income that continue to persist," Minnesota Health Commissioner **SEE UNINSURED ON A9**

## Iran targets ships, Dubai airport



ALTAF QADRI • The Associated Press

A man carries a child on the beach as oil tankers and cargo ships line up in the Strait of Hormuz near Khor Fakkan, United Arab Emirates, on Wednesday, March 11.

### Oil facilities also targeted as economic concerns mount

By **JON GAMBRELL, SAM MEDNICK and DAVID RISING**  
The Associated Press

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – Iran fired upon commercial ships on Wednesday and targeted Dubai International Airport, escalating a campaign of bottling up the oil-rich Persian Gulf as global energy concerns mounted and American and Israeli airstrikes pounded the Islamic Republic.

Iran's response to the surprise Israeli and U.S. bombardment that started 12 days ago has upended trade routes, choked supplies of fuel and fertilizer

coming out of the Gulf and threatened air traffic through one of the world's most-traveled regions. Both sides have dug in, hoping to outlast the other.

Iran's new supreme leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, was wounded at the start of the war – on the day when his father and predecessor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed in an Israeli airstrike, an Israeli intelligence assessment has found.

An Israeli intelligence official and a reservist with knowledge of the assessment spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to **SEE IRAN ON A8**



Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth says school strike is under investigation.

**'Entertainment'**  
White House war videos are condemned. **A5**

**Miscalculations**  
Trump, advisers downplayed energy risks. **A8**

**Oil reserves**  
Record volume of emergency stores released. **A11**

### Military report faults U.S. for deadly strike on school

By **JULIAN E. BARNES, ERIC SCHMITT, TYLER PAGER, MALACHY BROWNE and HELENE COOPER** • The New York Times

WASHINGTON – An ongoing military investigation has determined that the United States is responsible for a deadly Tomahawk missile strike on an Iranian elementary school, according to U.S. officials and others familiar with the preliminary findings.

The Feb. 28 strike on the Shajarah Tayyebah elementary school building was the result of a targeting mistake by the U.S. military, which

was conducting strikes on an adjacent Iranian base of which the school building was formerly a part, the preliminary investigation found. Officers at U.S. Central Command created the target coordinates for the strike using outdated data provided by the Defense Intelligence Agency, people briefed on the investigation said.

Officials emphasized that the findings are preliminary and that there are important unanswered questions about why the outdated information had not been double-checked.

Striking a school full of **SEE STRIKE ON A8**

### Citing 'trade secrets,' U won't reveal athlete pay

By **ALEXANDRA DEYOE**  
For the Minnesota Star Tribune

The University of Minnesota is refusing to release either individual or team-by-team details about how it's directly paying student athletes.

Citing privacy and trade secrets, university officials refused repeated data requests from the Minnesota Star Tribune that aimed to understand how the school is compensating athletes after the historic House v. NCAA settlement, which lets

schools pay \$20.5 million to its athletes this year. The school cited student privacy when refusing to release data on individual athletes, and also refused to release payment breakdown by program because the school considers it commercially valuable information.

"Such summary data would reveal the method for allocating the \$20.5 million, which the university is protecting as a trade secret," said U spokesman Joe Linroth.

**SEE ATHLETE PAY ON A9**



ALEX KORMANN • The Minnesota Star Tribune

Under the NCAA settlement, schools including the University of Minnesota, above in 2025, can pay athletes \$20.5 million this year.

### Northern Minn. man kills wife, self after jail release

By **PAUL WALSH**  
The Minnesota Star Tribune

Ashley Kittelson did everything she could to keep herself safe from the years of physical and emotional abuse by her husband that she had documented.

The 35-year-old International Falls, Minn., nurse and mother of three petitioned a judge for an order for protection. She detailed Nicholas Kittelson's many threats that he would kill her, along with her injuries and the terror she felt.

"Nicholas has threatened my life many times," she wrote late last month. "He is not accepting that the marriage is over, and I fear for my safety."

Nicholas Kittelson, 44, defied orders to stay away from Ashley, killing her and then himself March 6. It happened days after he was released from jail without having to post bond for violating the protective order, court records show.

The shooting occurred at the home they once shared in the **SEE KILLING ON A11**

<b>TOP NEWS</b> Ukraine strikes Russian city where missile components are produced, killing 6 civilians. <b>A4</b>	<b>NATION &amp; WORLD</b> U.K. leader was warned of risk in appointing ambassador with ties to Jeffrey Epstein. <b>A2</b>	<b>STATE &amp; REGION</b> Metro Transit ridership fell by 3% in 2025 when compared with the previous year. <b>A10</b>	<b>SPORTS</b> Brink has a happy homecoming in his first home game with the Wild, Reusse writes. <b>C1</b>	<b>BUSINESS</b> At least a dozen Minnesota businesses have filed for refunds on Trump's tariffs. <b>D1</b>	<b>TASTE</b> Mpls. restaurant Post Modern Times makes its pay-what-you-can concept permanent. <b>T1</b>
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**HAVE YOU HEARD?**  
The Alexander brothers are found guilty in a sex-trafficking conspiracy involving the drugging and raping of dozens of women. **A2**

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