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ICE activity ‘unsettling’ for region

As immigration enforcement dips into more communities, wariness spreads

By Jacob Geanous
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Last Thursday, health care workers in UPMC Mercy’s bustling emergency room were a little startled by a patient brought in during the early afternoon — although it was not the 22-year-old male patient who raised eyebrows. Instead, it was the three masked federal agents with him. Photos circulated on social media that day and in the days after showed Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers detaining a man outside UPMC Mercy Hospital, images that

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helped reignite already-heightened tensions over immigration enforcement in the region and sparked rumors that agents were targeting the hospital in Uptown. That was not the case, the Post-Gazette has learned. Instead, the

agents brought the man in for treatment after he was injured during his arrest in Mount Oliver. The man, Jeremy Zambrano, said he had been shot by a rubber bullet and tasered when he tried to flee ICE agents, leaving him with a large gash in his leg that required four stitches. UPMC health care workers said the agents remained masked as they waited outside the room

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EPSTEIN FILES MAXWELL INVOKES FIFTH IN DEPOSITION

Appeals for clemency at House committee hearing

By Stephen Groves
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ghislaine Maxwell, the former girlfriend of Jeffrey Epstein, declined to answer questions from House lawmakers in a deposition Monday, but indicated that if President Donald Trump ended her prison sentence, she was willing to testify that neither he nor former President Bill Clinton had done anything wrong in their connections with Epstein. The House Oversight Committee had wanted Maxwell to answer questions during a video call to the federal prison camp in Texas where she’s serving a 20-year sentence for sex trafficking, but she invoked her Fifth Amendment rights to avoid answering questions that would be self-incriminating. She has come under new scrutiny as lawmakers try to investigate how Epstein, a well-connected financier, was able to sexually abuse underage girls for years. Amid a reckoning over Epstein’s abuse that has spilled into the highest levels of businesses and governments around the globe, lawmakers are searching for anyone who was connected to Epstein and may have facilitated his abuse. So far, the revelations have shown how both Trump and Mr. Clinton spent time with Epstein in the 1990s and early 2000s, but they have not been credibly accused of wrongdoing.



Maxwell

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HIGHER LEARNING



Alexandra Wimley/Post-Gazette

A student walks across the Sklar Skywalk pedestrian bridge on Monday at Duquesne University in Uptown. The skywalk, standing 80 feet above Forbes Avenue, connects Forbes Garage/Power Center to the academic campus.

92K in Pa. drop Obamacare in 2026

For many people, [the cost of Affordable Care Act health plans is] just unworkable from a financial perspective. It’s a steep hill to climb.”
Devon Trolley
Pennie executive director

State’s enrollment decline blamed on expiration of tax credits

By Kris B. Mamula
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Roughly 1 in 5 Pennsylvania Obamacare plan enrollees dropped health coverage for 2026 due to “unprecedented cost increases,” the state’s online health insurance marketplace reported Monday. Enrollment in the Affordable Care Act health insurance plans, also called Obamacare, totaled about 486,000 for 2026, with about 92,000 dropping their health plan. Terminations are expected to continue at elevated levels for the next several months. Pennie, Pennsylvania’s ACA marketplace, blamed the enrollment decline on the expiration of enhanced premium tax credits, which ended Dec. 31. New enrollees in ACA plans totaled about 79,500, down 12% from a year ago. “For many people, it’s just un-

workable from a financial perspective,” Pennie Executive Director Devon Trolley said. “It’s a steep hill to climb.” All ACA plans are eligible for government subsidies depending on enrollee income up to 400% of the federal poverty level. Enhanced tax credits were added in 2021, which mostly removed the 400% income cap, and the enhancements

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3 streams in area join ‘impaired’ list

Water quality advocate calling for state inquiry

By Ford Turner
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Plum Creek in Oakmont, McGhee Run in Westmoreland County and Likens Run in Butler County are all classified as environmentally “impaired” and a water quality advocate on Monday says the state needs to dig deeper into why. The three waterways are among the 37% of Pennsylvania stream miles that were listed in the state’s new Integrated Water Quality Report as impaired — and many other southwestern Pennsylvania waterways fell into the same category. The percentage statewide increased from 34% two years earlier, and those asked to testify about it to a state House committee on Monday included Heather VanTassel, executive director of the nonprofit Three Rivers Waterkeeper. Ms. VanTassel said the report made clear sediment is a leading pollutant but did not delve enough into whether current sediment control practices are working. “Reliance on existing practices risks perpetuating impairment rather than resolving it,” Ms. VanTassel said. The report, issued by the Department of Environmental Protection, is required by the federal Clean Water Act. It found that some of the chief culprits in stream impairment are agricultural runoff, mine

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Migrants languish in U.S. detention centers

Extreme conditions now more common

By Gisela Salomon
Associated Press

MIAMI — Felipe Hernandez Espinosa spent 45 days at “Alligator Alcatraz,” an immigration holding center in Florida where detainees have reported worms in their food, toilets that don’t flush and overflowing sewage. Mosquitoes and other insects are everywhere. For the past five months, the 34-year-old asylum-seeker has been at an immigration detention camp at the Fort Bliss Army base in El Paso, Texas, where two migrants died in January and which has many of the same conditions, according to human rights groups. Mr. Hernandez

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Eric Gay/Associated Press

Immigrants line up for a meal in a migrant holding center in Carizo Springs, Texas. Prolonged detention has become more common in President Donald Trump’s second term.



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