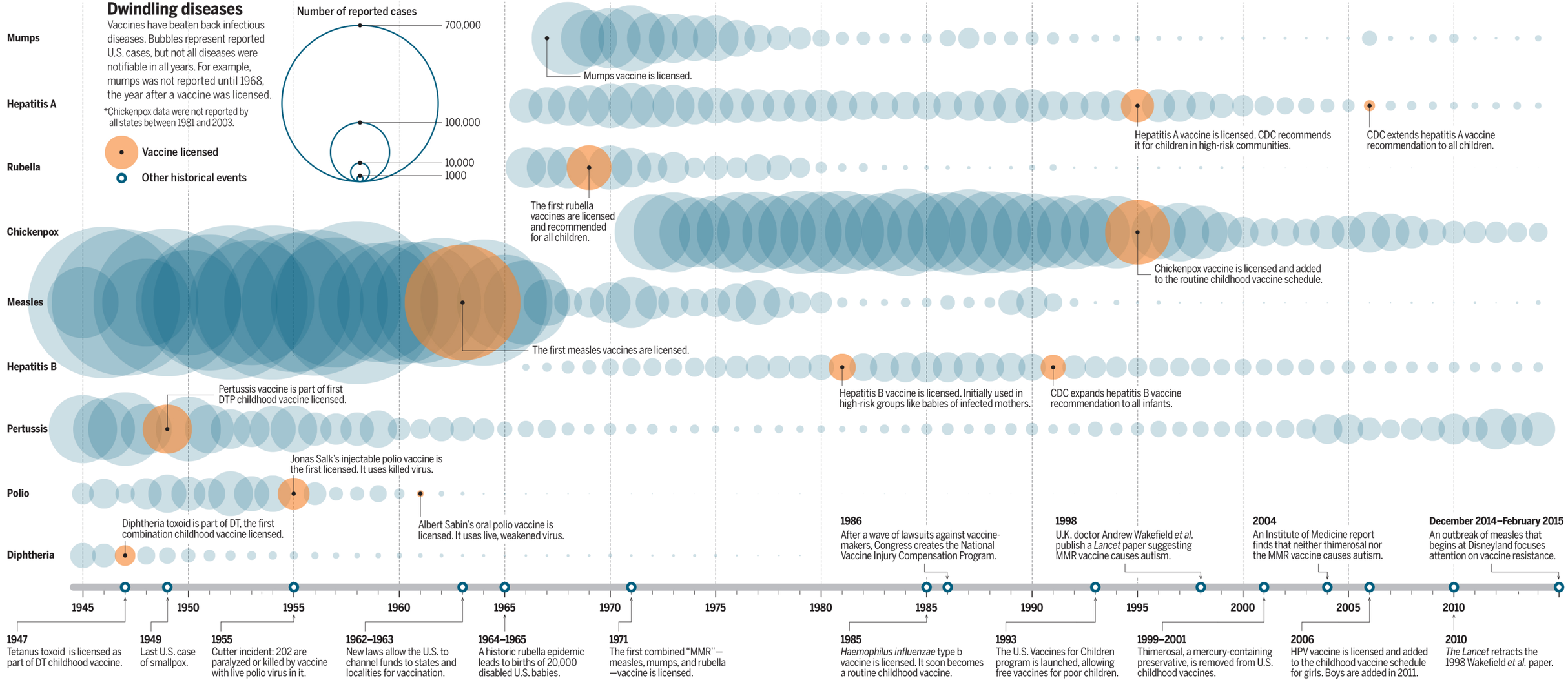
Dwindling diseases
Vaccines have beaten back infectious diseases. Bubbles represent reported U.S. cases, but not all diseases were notifiable in all years. For example, mumps was not reported until 1968, the year after a vaccine was licensed.
*Chickenpox data were not reported by all states between 1981 and 2003.
Vaccine licensed
Other historical events
Number of reported cases
700,000
100,000
10,000
1000
Mumps
Hepatitis A
Rubella
Chickenpox
Measles
Hepatitis B
Pertussis
Polio
Diphtheria
Mumps vaccine is licensed.
Hepatitis A vaccine is licensed. CDC recommends it for children in high-risk communities.
CDC extends hepatitis A vaccine recommendation to all children.
The first rubella vaccines are licensed and recommended for all children.
Chickenpox vaccine is licensed and added to the routine childhood vaccine schedule.
The first measles vaccines are licensed.
Hepatitis B vaccine is licensed. Initially used in high-risk groups like babies of infected mothers.
CDC expands hepatitis B vaccine recommendation to all infants.
Pertussis vaccine is part of first DTP childhood vaccine licensed.
Jonas Salk's injectable polio vaccine is the first licensed. It uses killed virus.
Albert Sabin's oral polio vaccine is licensed. It uses live, weakened virus.
Diphtheria toxoid is part of DT, the first combination childhood vaccine licensed.
1945
1950
1955
1960
1965
1970
1975
1980
1985
1990
1995
2000
2005
2010
1947
Tetanus toxoid is licensed as part of DT childhood vaccine.
1949
Last U.S. case of smallpox.
1955
Cutter incident: 202 are paralyzed or killed by vaccine with live polio virus in it.
1962–1963
New laws allow the U.S. to channel funds to states and localities for vaccination.
1964–1965
A historic rubella epidemic leads to births of 20,000 disabled U.S. babies.
1971
The first combined "MMR"—measles, mumps, and rubella—vaccine is licensed.
1985
Haemophilus influenzae type b vaccine is licensed. It soon becomes a routine childhood vaccine.
1986
After a wave of lawsuits against vaccine-makers, Congress creates the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.
1993
The U.S. Vaccines for Children program is launched, allowing free vaccines for poor children.
1998
U.K. doctor Andrew Wakefield *et al.* publish a *Lancet* paper suggesting MMR vaccine causes autism.
1999–2001
Thimerosal, a mercury-containing preservative, is removed from U.S. childhood vaccines.
2004
An Institute of Medicine report finds that neither thimerosal nor the MMR vaccine causes autism.
2006
HPV vaccine is licensed and added to the childhood vaccine schedule for girls. Boys are added in 2011.
2010
The Lancet retracts the 1998 Wakefield *et al.* paper.
December 2014–February 2015
An outbreak of measles that begins at Disneyland focuses attention on vaccine resistance.