

November 24, 2021

Summary

Since COVID-19 was first identified in the United States, the government has confirmed a total of 48,018,473 COVID-19 cases and 774,416 reported related deaths in the country. Members of the White House COVID-19 Response Team urged all Americans over the age of 18 to get a booster shot, in line with the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' vote on the matter. More than 90% of federal employees had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose by the end of the day on Monday, which was the deadline for federal employees to get vaccinated. The majority of the 3.5 million employees included in the mandate have been fully vaccinated.

In contrast to its prior stance, the European Union's public health agency announced that all adults should consider receiving a vaccine booster shot six months after their initial vaccination. Germany and Denmark joined a list of European countries to which the CDC has warned Americans not to travel. The CDC also released data showing that unvaccinated adults are nearly 6 times more likely to test positive for COVID-19 and 14 times more likely to die from the virus than their vaccinated peers.

Rising case numbers in the Upper Midwest and Northeast are driving an uptick in cases nationally. Michigan leads the country in recent cases per capita, averaging more than 8,000 new cases per day. Cases are also up more than 80% over the last two weeks in Massachusetts, and up more than 70% in Illinois.

On November 23, New York reported 31 deaths, 2,580 hospitalizations, and 498 COVID-19 patients in intensive care. Approximately 7,166, or 4.02%, of the 178,092 tests administered in New York on November 23 were positive for COVID-19. New York has administered 29,347,035 doses of the vaccines to patients; 77.3% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 68.1% are fully vaccinated. New York Governor Kathy Hochul announced enhanced direct messaging efforts in both English and Spanish to increase the State's COVID-19 vaccine and booster rates before the holidays. Governor Hochul also announced the new "Take Your Shot for an Outdoor Adventure" sweepstakes, which will give New Yorkers who get their first vaccine the chance to win prize packages tailored to anglers, hunters, and outdoor enthusiasts. This initiative comes as Upstate regions continue to report especially high test-positivity rates.

U.S. Government Updates

- [*Press Briefing by White House COVID-19 Response Team and Public Health Officials*](#), Nov. 22
 - On Monday, the seven-day daily average of COVID-19 cases in the United States was approximately 92,800, representing an 18% increase from last week's seven-day daily case average. The seven-day daily average of hospital admissions on Monday was approximately 5,600, or a 6% increase from the previous week.
 - Members of the White House COVID-19 Response Team also urged all Americans over the age of 18 to get a booster shot, in line with the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' vote on the matter.
 - Booster shots are free and available at 80,000 locations across the country.
- [*More than 90% of federal workers have had a shot by the COVID-19 vaccine deadline*](#), Nov. 22
 - More than 90% of federal employees had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose by the end of the day on Monday, which was the deadline for federal employees to get vaccinated. The majority of the 3.5 million employees included in the mandate have been fully vaccinated.
 - Approximately 5% of workers have requested or received an exemption or extension.
 - Federal employees who have not complied with the mandate will not be dismissed, but will instead receive education and counseling, with the goal of getting more vaccinated.

Vaccines and Therapeutics

- [*In major shift, EU says vaccine boosters should be considered for all adults*](#), Nov. 24
 - Today, the European Union's public health agency, the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control, announced that all adults should consider receiving a vaccine booster shot six months after their initial two-dose vaccination, with priority given to those over 40 years old. The agency's announcement was in sharp contrast to guidance it issued in September which declared that there was no urgent need for the administration of booster doses.
 - This guidance, although persuasive authority, is not officially binding on European member states. Several European countries have already begun administering booster shots, but not all have utilized a six-month interval between initial vaccination and booster, and they have differed in the criteria used to prioritize booster recipients.
 - The agency also noted that there was limited evidence of decreased transmission caused by the use of COVID-19 certificates to access places like restaurants, cinemas, and museums. Currently, about 20 European countries require the use of such certificates.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [*CDC Interpretation of Forecasts of New Deaths and Hospitalizations*](#), Nov. 22
 - CDC [consolidated](#) data from 25 models projecting the COVID-19 death rate. Predicted rates differ among the forecasts, depending on assumptions about the prevalence and rigor of social distancing behaviors. CDC's national ensemble forecast predicts the number of newly reported COVID-19 deaths will likely increase over the next four weeks. It forecasts between 6,100 and 12,000 new deaths in the week ending December 18, 2021, and between 794,000 and 822,000 cumulative deaths by this date.

- CDC [consolidated](#) data from seven models projecting the number of daily COVID-19 hospitalizations. The forecast predicts daily hospitalizations will likely increase over the next four weeks, with between 4,100 and 12,600 new hospitalizations per day by December 17, 2021. It predicts that hospital admissions will increase in 11 jurisdictions and decrease in 2 jurisdictions, while remaining stable or uncertain in other states and territories.
- [Unvaccinated people 14 times more likely to die from COVID-19, CDC says](#), Nov. 24
 - According to data released by the CDC this week, unvaccinated adults are nearly 6 times more likely to test positive for COVID-19 and 14 times more likely to die from the virus compared to vaccinated adults. The data was drawn from COVID-19 cases and deaths reported across 24 U.S. jurisdictions between April 4 and October 2.
 - The new data updates a prior CDC report, released in September, that found that unvaccinated people were 10 times more likely to be hospitalized and 11 times more likely to die from the disease.
- [U.S. adds Germany and Denmark to "do not travel" list as COVID cases rise, joining several other European countries](#), Nov. 23
 - Yesterday, the CDC issued a travel advisory that warned Americans not to travel to Germany or Denmark, citing a steep increase in COVID-19 cases in those countries. Following suit, the State Department issued similar advisories for both countries.
 - The two countries join a list of other European countries to which the CDC has cautioned that Americans avoid travel, including Austria, Britain, Belgium, Greece, Norway, Switzerland, Romania, Ireland and the Czech Republic.
 - Earlier this month, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that Europe and Asia were once again the epicenter of the pandemic. The WHO now projects that Europe could reach over 2.2 million COVID-19 deaths by March 2022. At present, the region has recorded about 1.5 million COVID-19 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic.

New York State

- [New York State COVID-19 Updates](#), Nov. 24
 - New York reported 31 deaths, 2,580 hospitalizations, and 498 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on November 23, 2021.
 - Approximately 7,166, or 4.02%, of the 178,092 tests administered in New York on November 23 were positive for COVID-19.
 - As of November 23, New York has administered 29,347,035 doses of the vaccines to patients; 77.3% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 68.1% are fully vaccinated.
 - Governor Kathy Hochul [announced](#) on November 23 that the State has enhanced direct messaging efforts to increase COVID-19 vaccination and booster rates before the holidays. The initiative includes direct SMS text messages in English and Spanish reminding New Yorkers to ensure that children 5 years and older are vaccinated, and New Yorkers 18 and older receive their booster dose.
 - On November 24, Governor Hochul also [announced](#) the “Take Your Shot for an Outdoor Adventure” sweepstakes. From December 1 through the end of the year, any New Yorker who receives their first vaccine dose will be entered to win prizes tailored

to anglers, hunters, and outdoor enthusiasts. This initiative comes as regions in Upstate New York continue to [report](#) high cases and test positivity levels.

New York City

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), Nov. 24
 - New York City’s test positivity rate has [remained](#) stable. The City again reported the State’s lowest COVID-19 test positivity rate on November 23 at 1.67%, while other regions of the State reported much higher rates.
 - Also on November 23, Mayor Bill de Blasio [urged](#) Governor Hochul to mandate vaccination for MTA workers, arguing that offering a testing alternative is too risky given surging cases and colder weather. According to data released last week, just 69.5% of the more than 70,000 MTA employees had gotten at least one dose, although the MTA has said that the rate is likely higher because many workers have not yet submitted proof of their vaccinations.

International

- On Wednesday, [Italy](#) announced new restrictions for those who are unvaccinated, prohibiting them from dining indoors in restaurants and bars; attending shows, sport events and public ceremonies; and entering nightclubs.
- The European Center for Disease Prevention and Control is warning that the burden on national health systems in [Europe](#) from COVID-19 will be “very high” in December and January unless prevention efforts are increased.

Other Updates

- [Department of Labor Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report](#), Nov. 24
 - Department of Labor (DOL) reports that another 199,000 workers filed initial claims (seasonally adjusted) for unemployment benefits last week.
 - The number of new claims had trended downward since March 2020, when nearly seven million people filed for unemployment insurance in a single week. However, claims began spiking again around December of last year.
 - Last week, 1,616 people filed new claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, the federal program intended to help freelancers, gig workers, the self-employed, and others not eligible for state jobless benefits.

Send questions to:

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