

September 16, 2021

Summary

The United States has 41,593,179 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 666,440 reported related deaths. President Biden will call on global leaders to make new commitments in the fight against the coronavirus; in particular, the President will call on leaders to commit to fully vaccinating 70 percent of the world's population by September 2022. President Biden also spoke to business leaders and CEOs this week following last week's announcement of new Department of Labor rules that will require all employers with more than 100 employees to ensure that their employees are vaccinated and regularly tested.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has received three additional reports suggesting booster shots are effective and safe. The agency will release its decision on booster shots for the general population in the coming months. At the same time, leaders of the World Health Organization (WHO) are calling on developed countries to forego mass booster shots, in order to conserve these doses for developing countries with lower rates of initial vaccination.

The CDC published a study today suggesting one-third of COVID-19 cases may cause at least one protracted symptom—and perhaps more depending on racial and medical factors.

Reports of new cases have significantly declined in Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama. However, all ICU beds in Alabama are currently occupied. West Virginia has the highest rate of new infections per capita, and is experiencing its most severe outbreak yet.

New York reported 34 deaths, 2,374 hospitalizations, and 562 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on September 15, 2021. Approximately 6,729, or 3.16%, of the 198,053 tests administered in New York on September 15 were positive for COVID-19. As of September 15, New York has administered 24,499,103 doses of the vaccines to patients; 69.4% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 62.0% are fully vaccinated.

On September 14, a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order preventing New York State from enforcing its vaccine mandate against health care workers that claim a religious exemption. Governor Hochul announced on September 14 that the State has now paid a total of \$339 million in pandemic-related emergency rental assistance, and that over \$1.05 billion in Excluded Workers Program funds have been approved for distribution. On September 15, Governor Hochul announced a mask mandate for all persons age 2 or older in daycare and childcare facilities throughout the State. The State's hiring freeze was suspended through the end of the fiscal year on September 16.

U.S. Government Updates

- [*White House lays out new global targets in coronavirus pandemic fight*](#), Sept. 15
 - President Biden will call on global leaders to pledge, in addition to other new commitments, to fully vaccinating 70 percent of the world's population by September 2022.
 - The President's goals were shared with global health leaders in advance of a virtual summit the White House is holding next week.
 - The President's other goals include "providing billions of dollars in tests, oxygen and other supplies to developing countries, and setting up a financing system to pay for the global health response by next year."
- [*Remarks by President Biden at a Meeting with Business Leaders and CEOs on the COVID-19 Response*](#), Sept. 15
 - President Biden spoke to business leaders and CEOs on Wednesday following his announcement last week of a new six-point plan to address the pandemic. The plan includes new rules by the Department of Labor ("DOL") requiring all employers with 100 or more workers to ensure workers are fully vaccinated and regularly tested.
 - The vaccine mandates from DOL, combined with expanded requirements for health care workers, will cover more than 100 million workers, which is two-thirds of all workers.
 - The President also stressed that Wall Street is supportive of vaccinations, saying that they will have a positive impact on employment and result in a stronger economy.

Vaccines and Therapeutics

- [*Three reports support arguments for booster doses of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine*](#), Sept. 15
 - Three reports published Wednesday support the argument that people may need a booster dose of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine over time. The reports found that booster doses offer enhanced protection against the Delta variant, that efficacy peaked in the first few months after the booster jab, and that booster doses are safe.
 - These reports were submitted to the FDA, which is considering whether to approve a booster of Pfizer's vaccine for the general population. Moderna also plans to apply for this authorization.
- [*Giving Covid booster shots to healthy people is 'not right,' WHO says in plea to wealthy nations*](#), Sept. 14
 - WHO officials called again for wealthy nations to stop distributing COVID-19 vaccine booster doses in hopes of making more shots available for poorer countries with lagging immunization rates. In various regions, such as Africa, where only 3.5% of the population is fully vaccinated, vaccination rates lag far beyond the West.

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

- [*CDC Interpretation of Forecasts of New Deaths and Hospitalizations*](#), Sept. 15
 - CDC [consolidated](#) data from 28 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 follow a stable or uncertain trend over the next four weeks. It forecasts between 5,600 to 17,400 new deaths in the week

ending October 9, 2021, and between 689,000 to 719,000 cumulative deaths by this date.

- CDC [consolidated](#) data from 10 models projecting the number of daily COVID-19 hospitalizations. The forecast predicts daily hospitalizations will decrease over the next four weeks, with between 5,000 to 15,300 new hospitalizations per day by October 11, 2021. It predicts that hospital admissions will increase in two jurisdictions, decrease in 12 jurisdictions, and follow a stable or uncertain trend in other states and territories.
- [CDC: One-third in 'limited' study report long-term COVID-19 two months after positive test](#), Sept. 16
 - According to research published by the CDC today, one-third of participants in a smaller California study reported having at least one lingering COVID-19 symptom two month after their infection.
 - Disparate rates of long-term symptoms were reported by black participants and participants with preexisting conditions.
 - Scientists plan to conduct more research into this issue.

New York State

- [New York State COVID-19 Updates](#), Sept. 16
 - New York reported 34 deaths, 2,374 hospitalizations, and 562 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on September 15, 2021.
 - Approximately 6,729, or 3.16%, of the 198,053 tests administered in New York on September 15 were positive for COVID-19.
 - As of September 15, New York has administered 24,499,103 doses of the vaccines to patients; 69.4% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 62.0% are fully vaccinated.
 - On September 14, a federal judge [issued](#) a temporary restraining order preventing New York State from enforcing its vaccine mandate against health care workers that claim a religious exemption. Seventeen Catholic and Baptist medical professional who have declined the vaccine for religious reasons filed the complaint and seek a permanent injunction. Defendants, New York Attorney General Letitia James, Commissioner Howard Zucker of the State Department of Health and New York Governor Kathy Hochul, must file their response by September 22, with a hearing scheduled for September 28.
 - Governor Hochul [announced](#) on September 14 that the State has now paid a total of \$339 million in pandemic-related emergency rental assistance, and that over \$1.05 billion in Excluded Workers Program funds have been approved for distribution, though some are still undergoing final verification. Governor Hochul encouraged New Yorkers struggling to pay outstanding rent due to the pandemic to apply for the program.
 - On September 15, Governor Hochul [announced](#) a mask mandate for all persons age 2 or older in daycare and childcare facilities throughout the State. The mandate will also cover other state regulated facilities, including mental health facilities, substance abuse programs, juvenile detention programs, congregate foster care settings, domestic violence and other shelter programs. Andrew Cuomo had previously attempted such an order during his term, but had abandoned his efforts under public backlash.

- The State's hiring freeze was [suspended](#) through the end of the fiscal year on September 16. The announcement was made after Governor Hochul released the State Financial Plan, which projected \$2.1 billion in revenue above projections.

New York City

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), Sept. 16
 - The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [agreed](#) to reimburse New York City's public hospital system for its expenses in treating patients during the first COVID-19 waiver in 2020, sending a total of \$880 million.
 - A cluster of at least 16 COVID-19 cases have been [linked](#) to Electric Zoo, a three-day electronic music festival that occurred earlier this month on Randall's Island in New York City. Health officials have identified eight people who may have attended the event while contagious. The festival had announced a policy that attendees would have to show proof of at least one shot of the vaccine or a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of the event.

International

- World leaders who want to speak at the [U.N.](#) General Assembly meeting next week will need to be vaccinated according to the assembly leader and New York City officials.
- On Monday, government advisors in the [United Kingdom](#) overruled Britain's top vaccine task force that recommended against vaccinating 12- to 15-year-olds, saying that all children 12 to 15 will be offered a single dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- On Thursday, [China](#) announced that it had fully vaccinated one billion people, representing 71 percent of China's population of 1.4 billion.
- [North and Central America](#) are leading a surge of new COVID-19 cases at a time when other parts of the world have managed to slow the spread. In particular, cases in North America have risen by one-third in the past week alone.

Other Updates

- [Department of Labor Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report](#), Sept. 16
 - Department of Labor (DOL) reported that another 332,000 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, 28,456 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.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [Podcast: Non-binding Guidance: COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate Litigation](#), July 29
- [Three new General Licenses expand scope of COVID-19-related activity with Iran, Syria, and Venezuela under U.S. Sanctions](#), July 6

- [Regulatory Trends in Pharma Deal-making: Transitioning from the “Year of the Pandemic” to “Another Year of the Pandemic.”](#) June 3
- [Non-binding Guidance: The Defense Production Act and the COVID-19 Pandemic,](#) May 27
- [Doug Brayley Discusses Employer Vaccination Policies on CNN,](#) May 24

Send questions to:
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