

November 2, 2020

Summary

The United States has 9,254,287 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 231,263 reported related deaths. On October 30, the United States recorded more than 98,000 new cases, setting another daily record. Dr. Fauci warned that the country is “in for a whole lot of hurt” and must make an “abrupt change” in its public health practices to curb the spread of the virus. CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) met to discuss how the government should prioritize groups for COVID-19 vaccination. When a COVID-19 vaccine is approved by FDA, ACIP will make recommendations regarding prioritization to the CDC; ACIP has not yet finalized its recommendations but it plans to recommend that health care workers be vaccinated first. CDC published data indicating that COVID-19 spreads easily among members of the same household; CDC recommends that households isolate infected persons.

The country’s seven-day new case average ending on November 1 was 45% higher than the same average two weeks earlier. Massachusetts governor Charlie Baker announced new restrictions, including a stay-at-home advisory between 10 PM and 5 AM, curfews on businesses, a reduction of indoor gathering limits, and a mask mandate for anyone in public, including outdoors and regardless of whether social distancing can be maintained. Arizona governor Doug Ducey plans to put federal COVID-19 relief funds into the soon-to-be insolvent state unemployment trust fund, but will not raise the state’s \$240/week cap on benefits, the second lowest in the nation. California unveiled a new \$120 million COVID-19 testing facility north of Los Angeles - the facility will enable the state to process an additional 150,000 tests per day. Alabama created a dashboard where residents can track COVID-19 cases by school system, which allows school nurses to update reported cases on a weekly basis.

New York reported 14 deaths, 1,151 hospitalizations, and 276 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Sunday, November 1, 2020. Approximately 1,633, or 1.7%, of the 96,101 tests administered in New York on November 1 were positive for COVID-19. New York updated its quarantine rules for out-of-state travel to permit certain travelers to “test out” of the required 14-day quarantine if they test negative within three days prior to arrival in New York and test negative four days after arrival. All travelers except essential workers, travelers from states contiguous with New York, and travelers who traveled outside of New York for less than 24 hours are required to quarantine upon arrival in New York. On October 31, Governor Cuomo, the New York Attorney General, and the Presidents and CEOs of the National Urban League and the NAACP criticized the current federal vaccination program for failing to provide adequate support to communities of color.

Presidential updates

- [Dr. Fauci, White House Clash Over Pandemic Response](#), October 31
 - During an interview with the press, Dr. Fauci commented on the trajectory of the pandemic and the White House response.
 - Dr. Fauci predicted that the pandemic will continue to get worse during the winter months, noting that the country could surpass 100,000 new cases per day. He expressed that, “We’re in for a whole lot of hurt . . . All the stars are aligned in the wrong place as you go into the fall and winter season, with people congregating at home indoors. You could not possibly be positioned more poorly.” Dr. Fauci warned that the United States must make an “abrupt change” in its public health practices to curb the spread of the virus.
 - Dr. Fauci said that the White House Coronavirus Task Force has been meeting less frequently, as top aids focus on re-opening the economy. He added that he and Task Force Coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx no longer have regular access to President Trump and Dr. Fauci has not spoken to Trump since early October.
 - When asked about presidential candidate Joe Biden’s approach to the pandemic, Dr. Fauci praised the Biden campaign for “taking [the pandemic] seriously from a public health perspective,” noting that President Trump is “looking at [the pandemic] from a different perspective” focused on “the economy and reopening the country.”
 - In response to Dr. Fauci’s comments, White House spokesperson Judd Deere said that, “It’s unacceptable and breaking with all norms for Dr. Fauci . . . to choose three days before an election to play politics.” Deere added, “Dr. Fauci has a duty to express concerns or push for a change in strategy, but he’s not done that, instead choosing to criticize the President in the media and make his political leanings known by praising the President’s opponent”
 - During a campaign rally on November 1, President Trump [suggested](#) that he may fire Dr. Fauci after the election.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [WHO COVID-19 Updates](#), November 2
 - WHO published technical [guidance](#) on the prevention, identification, and management of health worker infection in the context of COVID-19. The document is intended to guide occupational health departments, disease prevention and control departments, health facility administrators, and public health authorities at the national and facility levels.
 - WHO Secretary-General Tedros [announced](#) he will enter quarantine after coming into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.
 - New York Times published an [article](#) describing WHO’s conciliatory attitude towards China throughout its investigation of COVID-19. China has largely blocked WHO researchers from investigating the outbreak origins, and WHO has not yet published the terms of their agreements with China.

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

- [COVIDView Weekly Surveillance Summary of U.S. COVID-19 Activity](#), October 24
 - CDC summarized key COVID-19 disease indicators for the week ending October 24.

- The national average of respiratory specimens testing positive for COVID-19 increased from 6.6% to 7.1% from October 17 to October 24.
 - Regionally, the percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for COVID-19 increased in all ten regions of the country.
 - The overall cumulative hospitalization rate is 199.8 per 100,000, up from 193.7 per 100,000 during the previous week.
 - Based on death certificate data, the percentage of total deaths attributed to pneumonia, influenza, or COVID-19 increased 0.6% from October 17 (7.6%) to October 24 (8.2%). The percentage remains above the epidemic threshold and will likely increase as more death certificates are processed.
- [*CDC Publishes Data Regarding COVID-19 Transmission Among Household Members*](#), October 30
 - Researchers conducted a study regarding COVID-19 transmission among members of the same household.
 - Researchers identified 101 confirmed COVID-19 patients (“index patients”) living with uninfected people in Nashville, Tennessee and Marshfield, Wisconsin.
 - Researchers followed the index patients’ co-habitants (“household contacts”) to determine what percentage of them became infected.
 - The index patients had a total of 191 household contacts; 102 contracted the virus, for a secondary infection rate of 53%.
 - Approximately 75% of the secondary infections were identified within five days of the index patient’s illness onset.
 - Researchers observed “substantial transmission” regardless of whether the index patient was a child or adult. The secondary infection rate from index patients under 12 years old was 53% and the secondary infection rate from index patients aged 12–17 years was 38%.
 - Researchers concluded that household transmission is common and can occur rapidly. Researchers warned that “persons should self-isolate immediately at the onset of COVID-like symptoms, at the time of testing as a result of high risk exposure, or at the time of a positive test result, whichever comes first . . . all members of the household should wear a mask when in shared spaces in the household.”

New York State

- [*New York State COVID-19 Updates*](#), November 2
 - New York reported 14 deaths, 1,151 hospitalizations, and 276 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Sunday, November 1.
 - Approximately 1,633, or 1.7%, of the 96,101 tests administered in New York on November 1 were positive for COVID-19
 - On October 30, Governor Cuomo, New York Attorney General Letitia James, National Urban League President and CEO Marc Morial, and NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson [alleged](#) that the federal government’s current COVID-19 vaccination plan fails to adequately serve communities of color. The leaders argued that the current plan, which closely mirrors the federal influenza vaccination policy and relies on pharmaceutical companies and pharmacies to hand out vaccines, will fail to reach many

communities of color that reside in “health care deserts.” Governor Cuomo also questioned whether the states could trust the FDA’s approval of a vaccine.

- On October 30, 2020, Governor Cuomo [released](#) guidance for school re-openings in red or orange micro-cluster zones. Schools that are shut down under the targeted lockdown policy must remain closed for at least four days after the region is designated as an orange or red zone. Following that mandatory closure, the school may reopen so long as (i) 25% of the school’s students, faculty, and staff are tested each week, (ii) each subsequent week, different members of the in-school community are tested until the fifth week of reopening (at which point the first group would be re-tested), (iii) members who test positive isolate according to pre-existing guidelines, and (iv) the school community submits to contact tracing.
- A *Wall Street Journal* analysis [indicates](#) that New York City residents’ who have moved out of New York City during the pandemic and registered to vote in their new hometowns may tip competitive elections in once reliably Republican counties this year. The former New York City residents’ votes tend to skew more towards Democratic candidates compared to longstanding residents of upstate communities.
- [Governor Cuomo Announces New Guidelines Allowing Out-of-State Travelers to “Test Out” of Mandatory 14-Day Quarantine](#), October 31
 - On October 31, 2020, Governor Cuomo announced a “test out” option for travelers arriving in New York from other states that would allow travelers to exit quarantine earlier than the current 14-day quarantine period.
 - Travelers who wish to test out must first receive a negative test within three days prior to arriving in New York; upon arrival, travelers will be required to quarantine for three days. Then, the traveler may take another test on the fourth day following arrival. If that test is negative, then the traveler may exit quarantine.
 - Travelers from states contiguous with New York and essential workers continue to be exempt from the quarantine protocol. Travelers from New York who were out of state for less than 24 hours do not need to quarantine, but must get a test four days after returning to the state.
 - The new travel guidelines follow the Governor's October 20 announcement [discouraging](#) interstate travel between Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York for non-essential business.

New York City

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), November 2
 - Manhattan office leasing is on track to end the year at its [lowest](#) volume in the past twenty years, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Colliers International, a real-estate brokerage, estimates that technology firms will lease only 2.8 million square feet of space in New York City—the slowest activity since 2015. Last year, technology companies leased 7.5 million square feet of space in Manhattan. In contrast, some larger technology companies have used the pandemic to increase real estate holdings in New York City; for example, Facebook signed a 730,000 square foot lease in Manhattan’s West Side in August.

Other Related Updates

- [*CDC Advisors Meet to Discuss COVID-19 Vaccine Priorities*](#), October 30
 - CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), which makes [recommendations](#) on vaccine use in the United States, met to discuss how the government should prioritize groups for COVID-19 vaccination.
 - When FDA approves a COVID-19 vaccine, ACIP will make recommendations regarding prioritization to the CDC.
 - ACIP has said that its prioritization recommendations will depend, in part, on the characteristics of the approved vaccines and the quantities available. However, ACIP has formed a consensus that health care workers (approximately 21 million people) should be first in line to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.
 - During the meeting, ACIP reviewed what is known about the candidate vaccines now in clinical trials to ensure that they can make rapid decisions once a vaccine is authorized.
 - In addition to health care workers, ACIP discussed three overlapping groups who are at high risk: other essential workers (approximately 87 million), people with underlying conditions (100 million), and adults aged 65 years and older (53 million).
 - ACIP's recommendations will aim to reduce overall transmission, illness, and deaths from COVID-19.
 - During ACIP's meeting, CDC epidemiologist Matthew Biggerstaff presented a modeling study showing that vaccinating all adults 65 years and older second (after health care worker) might have the greatest effect on reducing the overall number of deaths in the United States.
 - Biggerstaff's presentation also suggested that vaccinating adults with underlying medical conditions second might have the greatest effect on reducing the number of infections, and thus limiting the spread of the virus.
 - In making its recommendation, ACIP is [considering](#) input from other groups, including Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine ("National Academies").
 - Last month, National Academies released a prioritization [framework](#). Under the framework, health care workers would be vaccinated first, followed by people with underlying conditions and people aged 65 years or older living in congregate settings.

- [*Regeneron Trial Stopped for Sickest Patients*](#), October 30
 - Regeneron will comply with an independent data monitoring committee [recommendation](#) to stop enrollment of hospitalized patients who require high-flow oxygen or mechanical ventilation in the trial of Regeneron's experimental antibody cocktail, REGN-COV2.
 - The recommendation was based on "an unfavorable risk/benefit profile" for the subset. Trials have not been stopped for hospitalized patients who require either no or low-flow oxygen or for outpatients.
 - The REGN-COV2 treatment is a combination of two monoclonal antibodies designed to block infectivity of SARS-CoV-2. The therapeutic was used to treat President Trump's COVID-19 infection in early October.

- [HHS and DOD Announce \\$119 Million Contract to Hologic to Better Meet the Demand of COVID-19 Testing](#), October 30
 - HHS and DOD awarded a \$119 million contract to Hologic, Inc. to expand production capacity for COVID-19 tests in their supplier's facilities in Wisconsin, Maine, and California. The contract aims to increase production capacity to 13 million COVID-19 tests per month by January 2022.
- [FDA COVID-19 Updates](#), October 2
 - Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a consumer [update](#) entitled "Pulse Oximeters and Oxygen Concentrators: What to Know About At-Home Oxygen Therapy." The update notes consumers should not use an oxygen concentrator at home unless prescribed by a health care provider.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [When Down the Hall Becomes Across State Lines—Part 2](#), October 23
- [When Down the Hall Becomes Across State Lines—Part 1](#), October 22
- [Private Funds Exam and Enforcement in the COVID Period: What Advisors Need to Know Now](#), October 22
- [Risk Assessments Need to Account for Public Nuisance Litigation](#), October 13

Send questions to:

- COVID-19-Implications@ropesgray.com
- COVID-19RecoveryPolicies@ropesgray.com