

April 26, 2021

### Summary

The United States has 32,077,477 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 572,200 reported related deaths. The White House announced last Friday that the next phase of its vaccination program will have four key areas of focus: continuing to vaccinate Americans, increasing accessibility of vaccines, strengthen public confidence in vaccines, and ensure that access to vaccines is equitable. The Biden administration also promised to provide aid to India amidst its severe coronavirus outbreak. The National Security Council said the United States would provide India with vaccine materials, drugs, test kits, ventilators, and personal protective equipment.

On Friday, CDC and FDA jointly announced that the administration of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine will resume immediately, following a pause during which a total of 15 cases of rare blood clots were reported in patients who had received the vaccine. New CDC data concerning two-dose vaccines shows that about 5 million Americans received the first dose but missed the second, which is about 8% of recipients of those vaccines. CDC has also released guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19 at summer camps, suggesting that children maintain three feet of distance between each other and wear masks when possible. President Biden is expected this week to announce new changes to CDC's mask-wearing guidance, possibly loosening requirements for outdoor activities for vaccinated individuals.

New reported COVID-19 cases are decreasing nationally. Michigan is beginning to show signs of improvement, with reported cases dropping by nearly 26% from the State's mid-April average. Oregon is experiencing the highest rate of case growth in the country, yet still reports fewer cases per capita than several Northeastern and Midwestern states. New York and New Jersey continue to report steady declines in hospitalizations, deaths, and cases.

As of April 25, New York reported 41 deaths, 3,174 hospitalizations, and 729 COVID-19 patients in intensive care. Approximately 3,039, or 2.39%, of the 126,953 tests administered in New York were positive for COVID-19. New York has administered 14,550,880 doses of the vaccines to patients; 44.3% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 31.4% are fully vaccinated. From April 24 to May 2, New York State will open five new vaccination sites that will offer walk-in appointments for New York City grocery workers. On April 24, Governor Cuomo announced that New York State would resume administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. On April 23, the State disbursed nearly \$2.3 million to six New York-based businesses that will produce supplies to help combat the COVID-19 pandemic. State lawmakers are calling on Governor Cuomo to sign a bill that would require employers to adopt safety plans addressing COVID-19 and other airborne diseases.

## **U.S. Government**

- [Press Briefing by White House COVID-19 Response Team and Public Health Officials](#), April 23
  - The White House announced last Friday that the next phase of its vaccination program will have four key areas of focus: first, continuing to vaccinate Americans; second, to increase accessibility of vaccines; third, educating the public on vaccines to strengthen confidence; and fourth, to ensure that Americans have equitable access to the vaccines by expanding the Community Health Center program, deploying more mobile and pop-up clinics, and providing more transportation options. To this end, the White House stated, it plans on opening two new federally-run vaccination sites in Kentucky with a combined capacity of 7,000 shots per week.
- [India sets another daily coronavirus case record; U.S. pledges help](#), April 25
  - On Sunday, the Biden administration promised to provide aid to India, including the materials for making vaccines, amidst the country's severe coronavirus outbreak.
  - The National Security Council said the United States would provide vaccine materials, drugs, test kits, ventilators, and personal protective equipment.

## **Vaccines and Therapeutics**

- [FDA, CDC Lift Pause on Johnson & Johnson COVID Vaccinations](#), April 23
  - On Friday, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, a CDC advisory board, voted ten to four (with one abstention due to a conflict of interest) to recommend lifting a pause on the administration of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. The committee also recommended adding a warning about the increased risk of blood clots.
  - After the vote, CDC and FDA jointly announced that administration of the vaccine may resume "immediately."
  - The pause, which began on April 13, was recommended by the agencies after six reports of dangerous blood clots among the more than seven million people in the U.S. who had received the vaccine.
  - Since the pause began, an additional nine cases of blood clots (for a total of 15) have emerged. There are a handful of potential additional cases still under review. CDC is calling the extremely rare combination of blood clots and low platelet counts "thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome," or TTS.
- [Second Vaccine Shot Statistics Show Majority Getting It, Only Five Million Missing It](#), April 25
  - According to CDC data collected through April 9, 92% of Americans who have received the first dose of a two-dose mRNA vaccine (including the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines) received their second dose during their scheduled windows. The other 8% may have missed their second dose.
  - The percentage of people who have missed their second dose has more than [doubled](#) since February, when 3.4% of people missed their second dose.

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

- [COVID Data Tracker Weekly Review](#), April 23
  - CDC summarized key COVID-19 disease indicators for the past week.

- The current seven-day average number of daily new cases reported is 62,596. This is a 10.1% decrease compared to the previous week's average, and an overall 74.9% decrease compared to the national peak on January 8, 2021.
- The current seven-day average number of new daily hospital admissions was 5,631, a 1.6% increase compared to the previous week's average.
- The current seven-day average of new reported deaths is 691 per day, a 3.7% decrease compared to the previous week's average.
- [\*CDC Issues New Guidance for Summer Camps\*](#), April 25
  - CDC issued new [guidance](#) on Saturday to limit the spread of COVID-19 at summer camps. Similar to the agency's recommendation for schools, CDC recommends that children be at least three feet away from each other most of the time, and six feet while eating and drinking. Counselors and other adults should remain six feet apart from each other and from children. Anyone 16 and older should be vaccinated as soon as possible, the guidance suggests.
  - CDC further [recommended](#) mask-wearing unless doing activities that preclude it, like napping, eating, drinking, and swimming. Days earlier, however, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said that the agency is [considering](#) revising its mask guidance, potentially easing restrictions for outdoor activities. President Biden is [expected](#) to announce changes to CDC's mask guidance on Tuesday.

### **New York State**

- [\*New York State COVID-19 Updates\*](#), April 26
  - New York reported 41 deaths, 3,174 hospitalizations, and 729 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on April 25, 2021.
  - Approximately 3,039, or 2.39%, of the 126,953 tests administered in New York on April 25 were positive for COVID-19.
  - As of April 25, New York has administered 14,550,880 doses of the vaccines to patients; 44.3% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 31.4% are fully vaccinated.
  - From April 24 to May 2, New York State will [open](#) five new, pop-up vaccination sites that will offer walk-in appointments for New York City bodega, grocery store, and supermarket workers (collectively "Workers"). These sites are open to all eligible New Yorkers, but only Workers with proof of employment can walk in without an appointment. The sites will each receive 400 doses of the vaccines for the duration of their existence, with specific doses set aside for Workers.
  - On April 24, Governor Cuomo [announced](#) that, effective immediately, New York State would resume administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at all State-run facilities. New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker commented, "The data has shown the vaccine's known benefits far outweigh the potential and extremely rare risks, but we urge anyone with questions about the COVID-19 vaccines to speak with their healthcare provider."
  - On April 23, the State [disbursed](#) nearly \$2.3 million to six additional New York-based businesses that will produce supplies to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this effort to date, New York State has awarded nearly \$22 million to 39 qualifying companies. These grant funds will help alleviate product shortages due to supply chain

issues that could lead to unfair pricing practices and delays. The funds will also help to create new jobs, increase the State's manufacturing capacity, and facilitate new market opportunities.

- [Gov. Andrew Cuomo Urged to Approve Covid-19 Workplace-Safety Bill](#), April 22
  - State lawmakers are calling on Governor Cuomo to sign a bill, known as the HERO Act, which would require employers to adopt safety plans addressing COVID-19 and other airborne diseases.
  - The bill, which passed earlier this week, would direct New York State Department of Health to develop a model infection-control plan addressing air filtration, social distancing, workplace cleaning, and the use of personal protective equipment. The HERO Act would also allow employees to form joint workplace safety committees with the power to review safety policies and implementation of such policies.
  - New York State Department of Labor would be responsible for enforcing the bill and, in cooperation with New York State Office of the Attorney General, could seek an injunction against an employer for violations. Additionally, the bill allows employees to sue their employer for violating the protection standards.

### **New York City**

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), April 26
  - As of April 23, New York City no longer [requires](#) appointments at its COVID-19 vaccination centers and is now allowing residents ages 16 or older to walk-in for a vaccination. Additionally, the City-run centers have removed any geographical restrictions put in place when demand for the vaccines made appointments difficult to schedule. In making this change, Mayor de Blasio commented, "We want to make it simple. You can go to any City-run site, you can go there and get a shot."
  - New York City Department of Education [released](#) estimates that, as of April 26, nearly 61% of public school students have chosen to continue remote learning instead of returning to in-person education. Parents and teachers have noted that students are making the decision to remain home for a variety of reasons, including: concerns about health, safety, and commuting; needing to take care of siblings; and a preference for remote learning.
  - On April 22, the Essential Workers Monument Advisory Committee [met](#) for the first time. Governor Cuomo participated in the first meeting, which discussed the design of and other recommendations for a monument in New York City. The monument will recognize the 17 essential worker groups whose members continue to serve New Yorkers during the coronavirus pandemic. These groups include: nurses, doctors, hospital staff, teachers, transportation workers, police, emergency medical services, firefighters, corrections, sanitation, national guard, store employees, government employees, building service workers, utility workers, delivery drivers, and construction/manufacturing.

### **International**

- [India's](#) coronavirus crisis deepened Monday with the number of new reported cases setting a global record for the fifth consecutive day, as countries, companies, and members of the large diaspora pledged to send oxygen and other critical [aid](#). India's health ministry reported

almost 353,000 new cases and 2,812 deaths on Monday. Experts say that India's reported overall toll of more than 195,000 could be a vast [undercount](#). Amidst this building crisis, Indian officials ordered [Twitter](#) to take down social media posts critical of the government's pandemic response.

- On Monday, the governments of [Singapore](#) and Hong Kong said that a long-delayed travel bubble between the two Asian financial centers would begin next month, allowing travelers on designated flights to bypass quarantine.
- [Japan](#) declared a third state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with new restrictions imposed in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, and Hyogo prefectures. The declaration comes as Tokyo prepares to host the Summer Olympics, slated to begin in July, and just before Japan enters one of its biggest holiday seasons, Golden Week, in late April.
- On Sunday, the European [Union](#) announced that it will let vaccinated American tourists visit over the summer.
- Last Thursday, [Israel](#) and Bahrain reached what Israel calls the world's first bilateral agreement for mutual recognition of COVID-19 vaccine passports for quarantine-free travel between the two countries. Israeli foreign minister Gabi Ashkenazi said in a statement that Israel would reach similar agreement with other countries in the coming days.

### **Other Updates**

- [Emergent](#) CEO Robert G. Kramer sold more than \$10 million worth of his stock in the company in January and early February, shortly before publication of the company's financial results on February 19 caused its stock to fall significantly. The company's stock has further declined since disclosure at the end of March that production problems at the firm's plant in Baltimore had ruined 15 million doses of Johnson & Johnson's coronavirus vaccine.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\) Phase 5 Stimulus Package – Highlights of Certain Key Tax-Related Provisions in ARPA](#), March 26
- [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 – Summary of Key Provisions](#), March 25
- [Key Employee Benefit Provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#), March 19

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