

July 12, 2021

Summary

The United States has 33,857,814 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 607,178 reported related deaths. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Sunday that she was concerned that the coronavirus variants could have a negative impact on the global economic recovery and stressed the need to vaccinate more people around the world. Also on Sunday, US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said that he is concerned about the Delta variant, but that vaccines appear to work well against it. More than 320 million doses of the vaccine have been administered to people in the United States.

Pfizer announced it will seek emergency authorization for booster shots of its vaccine, citing preliminary data showing that a third dose drastically increases antibody levels. Despite evidence that two doses of Pfizer are not as effective against the proliferating Delta variant compared with other variants, experts maintain that two doses of Pfizer still provide robust protection, especially against hospitalization. The same day, the CDC and FDA announced jointly that fully vaccinated individuals do not yet need booster shots.

The CDC released new guidance on school COVID-19 safety. The new guidance aims to fully reopen schools. Under the guidance, strict six-foot distancing and masking for vaccinated people are now optional. The guidance continues to urge vaccination, ample ventilation, hand washing, quarantining, and other longstanding policies.

As of July 11, New York reported one death, 348 hospitalizations, and 78 COVID-19 patients in intensive care. Approximately 573, or 1.10%, of the 51,890 tests administered in New York were positive for COVID-19. New York has administered 21,577,298 doses of the vaccines to patients; 61.1% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 55.3% are fully vaccinated. Governor Cuomo announced that two-thirds of all adults in New York State have completed their vaccine series.

U.S. Government Updates

- [*Janet Yellen calls for accelerating vaccination worldwide to help economic recovery*](#), July 12
 - On Sunday, at a gathering of the finance ministers of the Group of 20 nations, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said that she was concerned that coronavirus variants could derail the global economic recovery and called for an urgent push to vaccinate more people around the world.

- The spread of the Delta variant is driving outbreaks among unvaccinated populations, and Yellen noted that, although many countries had been able to finance the purchase of vaccines, they were still struggling with the logistics of actually getting the shots administered.
- In light of the spread of variants, Kristalina Georgieva, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, said on [Saturday](#) that the divergence across economies is intensifying and the world is facing a two-track recovery.
- [U.S. Surgeon General on the Delta Variant, Vaccinations and Masks in the Fall](#), July 11
 - US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said on Sunday that he is concerned about the Delta variant, but that vaccines appear to work well against it and that more than 320 million doses of the vaccine had been administered in the country.
 - Murthy also said he thought it was possible that the FDA would issue a decision regarding full approval for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines sometime toward the end of the summer or early fall.
 - Murthy stressed that the pandemic is far from done and that, although the CDC had issued guidance that vaccinated people had a choice of whether to wear masks, individual communities still have the choice to have more restrictive mask mandates if needed.

Vaccines and Therapeutics

- [Pfizer to seek OK for 3rd vaccine dose; shots still protect](#), July 8
 - On Thursday, Pfizer announced that it will seek FDA emergency authorization for booster shots of its COVID-19 vaccine. Early data from Pfizer's study suggest that a third dose of the vaccine causes antibody levels to increase five to ten times over antibody levels after a second dose. Higher antibody levels increase protection against the virus, including the Delta variant, the impetus behind Pfizer's push for boosters.
 - Research from Canada and Israel suggests that two doses of the Pfizer vaccine are less effective at preventing symptomatic infections from the Delta variant, compared with previous variants. Yet, experts reiterate that, despite this drop, two doses of the Pfizer vaccine still offer sound levels of protection against the Delta variant: 64% to 88% against symptomatic infections, and crucially, over 90% against hospitalization.

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

- [COVID Data Tracker Weekly Review](#), July 9
 - CDC summarized key COVID-19 disease indicators for last week.
 - As of July 9, the seven-day average number of daily new cases reported was 14,885. This is a 16.0% increase compared to the previous week's average, and an overall 94.1% decrease compared to the national peak on January 10, 2021.
 - As of July 8, 332.3 million vaccine doses have been administered in the United States. Overall, approximately 183.2 million people in the United States have received at least one dose of vaccine, which is 55.2% of the population. Approximately 158.3 million people are fully vaccinated, which is 47.7% of the population. The seven-day average number of reported vaccine dose administrations was 239,497, a 54.5% decrease from the previous week.
 - As of July 5, the seven-day average of new daily hospital admissions was 2,037, an 8.6% increase compared to the previous week's average.

- As of July 7, the seven-day average of reported deaths was 154 per day, a 25.2% decrease compared to the previous week's average.
- [*The C.D.C. Issues New School Guidance, With Emphasis on Full Reopening*](#), July 9
 - On Friday, the CDC released new guidance to schools. The guidance urges schools to fully reopen. In doing so, the agency cited declining caseloads and the human costs of continued virtual learning, such as the deleterious effect on the social and educational development of children and the strain on working parents.
 - The guidance no longer requires uniform physical distancing if such distancing would prevent a full return to the classroom. Moreover, the guidance allows schools to make masking optional for vaccinated individuals, though it also suggests schools may implement universal masking if local cases surge.
 - The guidance encourages schools to promote vaccination. It also urges schools to implement social distancing, regular screening and testing, improved ventilation, hand washing, contact tracing, and the quarantine of infected individuals.
- [*Despite New COVID Variants, CDC Says You Don't Need Any Booster Doses Right Now*](#), July 8
 - In a joint statement on Thursday, the CDC and FDA declared that fully vaccinated individuals do not need a booster shot, despite the surge of the Delta variant.
 - This statement was issued the same day as Pfizer's announcement that it will seek emergency authorization for booster shots of its vaccine.

New York State

- [*New York State COVID-19 Updates*](#), July 12
 - New York reported one death, 348 hospitalizations, and 78 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on July 11, 2021.
 - Approximately 573, or 1.10%, of the 51,890 tests administered in New York on July 11 were positive for COVID-19.
 - As of July 11, New York has administered 21,577,298 doses of the vaccines to patients; 61.1% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 55.3% are fully vaccinated.
 - Governor Cuomo [announced](#) that two-thirds of all adults in New York State have completed their vaccine series.

New York City

- [*New York City COVID-19 Updates*](#), July 12
 - Some New York City neighborhoods are experiencing a marked [increase](#) in new COVID-19 cases and health officials say low vaccination rates and more transmissible variants, such as the Delta variant, are to blame.
 - New York City schools are [sticking](#) with COVID-19 mask mandates despite new CDC guidance. Mayor Bill de Blasio is planning to abide by a universal mask mandate policy in New York City schools in the fall, despite last week's CDC guidance suggesting vaccinated kids and adults do not have to wear masks inside classrooms.

International

- More than 600 medical workers in [Thailand](#) who were fully vaccinated with Sinovac, a Chinese-developed vaccine, were infected with coronavirus. On [Monday](#), Thailand said that

healthcare workers who had receive the Sinovac vaccine would also be vaccinated with the Oxford-AstraZeneca or Pfizer-BioNTech shots to give them greater protection.

- Officials in Sydney, [Australia](#), warned on Monday that the city’s lockdown, which started more than two weeks ago, could be extended, as an outbreak of the Delta variant continues to spread.
- Thousands of migrant workers in countries like [Bangladesh](#), India, and Nepal are out of work or unable to return to their jobs abroad because of the pandemic; lack of COVID-19 vaccines is compounding the problem, as many countries require migrant workers to be vaccinated to avoid quarantine or even to enter.
- [Malta](#) will ban visitors over the age of 12 from entering the country starting on Wednesday unless they are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, the first country in the European Union to impose such restrictions.
- On Monday, BioNTech [announced](#) a deal to provide 10 million doses of its coronavirus vaccine to [Taiwan](#), easing a serious vaccine shortage.
- As [Iran](#) endures its fifth wave of the pandemic, thousands of Iranians are traveling to Armenia to be vaccinated.
- [Israel](#) said on Sunday that it will begin offering a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to adults with weak immune systems, although it is still debating whether to make the booster available to the general public.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [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:

COVID-19-Implications@ropesgray.com