

July 8, 2021

Summary

The United States has 33,771,942 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 606,220 reported related deaths. On Tuesday, President Biden announced that the administration is nearing its goal of administering 300 million doses of the vaccine in 150 days. The White House estimates that, by the end of the week, 160 million Americans will be fully vaccinated. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis announced on Wednesday that it will require employees to attest that they are fully vaccinated by the end of August; approximately 82 percent of the bank's 1,100 employees are already fully vaccinated.

On Wednesday, regulators in New Zealand provisionally authorized use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. COVAX expects to make globally available 1.9 billion vaccine doses from various suppliers by the end of the year, including 1.5 billion doses reserved for the poorest countries.

CDC data shows that the Delta variant is now the dominant COVID-19 strain in the US, comprising 51.7% of new US cases during the two weeks ended July 3. In contrast, the Alpha variant comprised 28.7% of new US cases during that period. COVID-19 case numbers remain near their lowest levels since testing became widely available, but they have started to trend slowly upward. The uptick in cases is primarily due to localized outbreaks in places with low vaccination rates. Additionally, parts of Arkansas, Missouri, Texas, and Nevada are struggling as the Delta variant spreads.

As of July 7, New York reported 3 deaths, 347 hospitalizations, and 80 COVID-19 patients in intensive care. Approximately 607, or .68%, of the 98,677 tests administered in New York were positive for COVID-19. New York has administered 21,443,054 doses of the vaccines to patients; 60.6% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 54.8% are fully vaccinated. Governor Cuomo announced that three mass vaccination sites will cease operations as part of the ongoing downscaling that will allow the State to focus on localized vaccination efforts. In an effort to help restaurants recover from the economic devastation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Cuomo signed legislation that will allow restaurants to use municipal spaces, such as sidewalks and streets, for outdoor dining.

U.S. Government Updates

- [Remarks by President Biden on the COVID-19 Response and the Vaccination Program](#), July 6
 - On Tuesday, President Biden announced that the administration is nearing its goal of administering 300 million doses of the vaccine in 150 days.
 - More than 182 million Americans have received at least one shot, including nearly 90 percent of seniors and 70 percent of adults over the age of 27.
 - By the end of the week, approximately 160 million Americans will be fully vaccinated.
 - The President stated that the administration will shift away from centralized mass vaccination sites to place more emphasis on helping people get vaccinated in their communities close to home by working with local pharmacies to administer vaccines and placing renewed emphasis on getting the vaccines to more family doctors and healthcare providers.
 - The President also stated that the administration would be focusing on getting more vaccines to adolescents ages 12 to 18, working with employers to make vaccination shots available to employees by either offering them at work or providing time off, and dispatching more mobile clinics.
 - The administration is also mobilizing “COVID-19 Surge Response teams” which will help address outbreaks amongst individuals who have not been unvaccinated.
- [The Minneapolis Fed announces a vaccine requirement for employees](#), July 8
 - On Wednesday, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis announced that it will require employees to attest that they are fully vaccinated by the end of August. Only employees who cannot get vaccinated because of medical conditions or religious beliefs will be accommodated.
 - The requirement will affect the Minneapolis Federal Reserve’s 1,100 workers, of which about 82 percent are already fully vaccinated; the remaining 18 percent have not disclosed their vaccination plans or do not plan to be vaccinated.
 - Neel Kashkari, the president of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve, stated that the decision had been made out of a preference for face-to-face interaction in the office and that “there is no way for us to bring a critical mass of our staff back into our facilities and maintain social distancing.”

Vaccines and Therapeutics

- [New Zealand gives tentative OK for 2nd vaccine](#), July 7
 - Yesterday, New Zealand’s Medsafe agency approved emergency use of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine. Final authorization requires a Cabinet vote, which is not expected until August. New Zealand has already authorized the Pfizer vaccine.
 - The country has agreed to purchase two million doses of the J&J vaccine.
- [COVAX says it's negotiating with new vaccine suppliers](#), July 6
 - COVAX, an international initiative that aims to coordinate the production and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines across the globe, expects to have 1.9 billion vaccine doses available by the end of this year, including 1.5 billion earmarked for the poorest countries, according to COVAX’s managing director.
 - Due to supply-chain problems and the suspension of Indian vaccine exports, COVAX initially lagged behind its vaccine distribution targets. COVAX now has commitments from nine suppliers to provide 5.6 billion vaccine doses this year and next year.

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

- [*CDC Interpretation of Forecasts of New Deaths and Hospitalizations*](#), June 17
 - CDC [consolidated](#) data from 32 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 remain stable or have an uncertain trend over the next four weeks. It forecasts between 700 and 2,900 new deaths in the week ending July 31, 2021, and between 610,000 and 616,000 cumulative deaths by July 31, 2021.
 - CDC [consolidated](#) data from 11 models projecting the number of daily COVID-19 hospitalizations. The forecast predicts daily hospitalizations will remain stable or have an uncertain trend over the next four weeks, with between 1,300 and 4,000 new hospitalizations per day by August 2, 2021. It predicts that hospital admissions will increase in four jurisdictions, decrease in seven jurisdictions, and follow a stable or uncertain trend in the remaining states and territories.
- [*CDC data shows highly transmissible delta variant is now the dominant Covid strain in the U.S.*](#), July 7
 - According to updated CDC [data](#), the Delta variant is now the dominant COVID-19 strain in the US. During the two weeks ended July 3, the Delta variant comprised 51.7% of new COVID-19 cases in the US, while the Alpha variant comprised only 28.7% of new cases.
 - The Delta variant, which has spread to 104 countries, is estimated to be 55% more transmissible than the Alpha variant.

New York State

- [*New York State COVID-19 Updates*](#), July 8
 - New York reported 3 deaths, 347 hospitalizations, and 80 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on July 7, 2021.
 - Approximately 607, or .68%, of the 98,677 tests administered in New York on July 7 were positive for COVID-19.
 - As of July 7, New York has administered 21,443,054 doses of the vaccines to patients; 60.6% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 54.8% are fully vaccinated.
 - Governor Cuomo [announced](#) that three mass vaccination sites will cease operations as part of the ongoing downscaling that will allow the State to focus on localized vaccination efforts. As part of the downscaling, the mass vaccination sites at Suffolk County Community College – Brentwood, SUNY Ulster, and the Javits Center in New York City will cease operations on July 9.
 - In an effort to help restaurants recover from the economic devastation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Cuomo [signed](#) legislation that will allow restaurants to use municipal spaces, such as sidewalks and streets, for outdoor dining.

New York City

- [*New York City COVID-19 Updates*](#), July 8

- New York City has recently been [scaling](#) back its efforts to monitor the spread of COVID-19, but some public health experts and elected officials are worried that Mayor Bill de Blasio’s administration is pulling back on such surveillance measures too soon and could leave the city ill-prepared should the Delta variant cause new outbreaks.

International

- On Wednesday, the [World Health Organization](#) cautioned nations planning to relax coronavirus restrictions that more contagious variants were “currently winning the race against vaccines,” as most of the world’s population has yet to be immunized. These warnings came as global [deaths](#) topped 4 million and the more contagious Delta variant has been reported in more than 100 countries, including those with high vaccination rates.
- The Health Ministry in [Israel](#) announced this week that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine offered only 64 percent protection against infection and symptomatic illness caused by the Delta variant, although the Ministry stated that the vaccine remains highly effective in preventing severe illness and death.
- The assassination of President Jovenel Moïse of [Haiti](#) could complicate efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, which has not yet started vaccinating its citizens. The director of the Pan American Health Organization made Haiti a priority in recent weeks in the face of a surging number of reported cases.
- The government of [Japan](#) declared a new state of emergency in Tokyo on Thursday after a sudden spike in coronavirus cases; the decision is likely to force officials to abandon plans announced last month to allow domestic [spectators](#) at Olympic events.

Other Updates

- [Department of Labor Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report](#), April 1
 - Department of Labor (DOL) reports that another 373,000 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, 99,001 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.
- [California’s Capitol revives a mask rule after an outbreak infected four fully vaccinated people](#), July 8
 - The California State Capitol in Sacramento has toughened its mask policy after finding nine recent cases of COVID-19 in the Assembly, including four cases amongst people who had been fully vaccinated.
 - The new policy, which went into effect on Tuesday, requires legislators and staff members to wear masks at all times in the Capitol, the Legislative Office Building, and district offices, regardless of their vaccination status.
 - The Senate and the Assembly will also begin twice weekly COVID-19 testing of employees who are not fully vaccinated.
- [As U.S. vaccinations lag, Nevada sees a sudden rise in Covid cases and hospitalizations](#), July 8

- As the speed of vaccinations has [slowed](#) across the US, reported COVID-19 cases are on the rise in several states, including Nevada, where nearly 40 percent of the adult population has not received a single vaccine shot.
- As of Wednesday, Nevada had the highest increase in average number of hospitalizations of any state, with hospitalizations increasing nearly 62 percent over the previous two weeks; Nevada also had the third-highest count of new coronavirus cases per capita.
- Both [Nevada](#) and Missouri have asked for help from the federal “[surge response teams](#)” that the White House announced last week to help states with largely unvaccinated populations cope with the highly transmissible Delta variant of the virus.

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

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