

May 10, 2021

Summary

The United States has 32,708,028 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 581,755 reported related deaths. In a press briefing last Friday, the White House underscored its ongoing efforts to improve vaccine accessibility for Americans. One way the Biden administration has sought to achieve this is with its new vaccine hotline, which became operational last week. The Biden administration has shared information about the hotline with community leaders and members of Congress, including the Congressional Rural Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus. It also shared information on the hotline with Made to Save, a group that is working to increase access to and trust in the COVID-19 vaccines in communities of color.

Pfizer and BioNTech have applied for full FDA approval of their COVID-19 vaccine. If granted, it would be the first COVID-19 vaccine fully approved by FDA, rather than authorized for emergency use only. Today, FDA expanded the emergency use authorization for the Pfizer vaccine to include 12-to-15-year-olds. Novavax may become the latest manufacturer to apply for FDA emergency use authorization for its COVID-19 vaccine, but it is unlikely to do so before June. As vaccinations continue, Dr. Anthony Fauci predicted that CDC will soon relax its guidance on wearing masks indoors.

Over the past two weeks, the United States has reported a 30% decrease in COVID-19 cases, a 13% decrease in hospitalizations, and a 6% decrease in deaths. While outbreaks are subsiding in the Upper Midwest, states like New Mexico and Hawaii continue to experience an increase in infection rates. Many states have updated their mask mandates to align with CDC recommendations and are moving towards reopening their states within the next few weeks.

As of May 9, New York reported 27 deaths, 2,016 hospitalizations, and 493 COVID-19 patients in intensive care. Approximately 1,580, or 1.43%, of the 110,541 tests administered in New York were positive for COVID-19. New York has administered 16,826,409 doses of the vaccines to patients; 48.4% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 39.1% are fully vaccinated. On May 6, Governor Cuomo signed the New York Health and Essential Rights Act (NY Hero Act), which directs State agencies to create clear and enforceable health and safety standards that private employers have to follow in an effort to keep their employees safe. On May 7, State Senator Brad Hoylman introduced new legislation that would require all students attending college and universities in New York State to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Additionally, beginning May 10, the limit on outdoor gatherings in New York State will increase to 500 people and, on May 19, the limit on indoor gatherings will increase to 250.

U.S. Government

- [*Press Briefing by White House COVID-19 Response Team and Public Health Officials*](#), May 7
 - In a press briefing last Friday, the White House underscored its ongoing efforts to improve vaccine accessibility for Americans, as well as building confidence in the vaccines.
- [*To Bridge the Digital Divide, Biden Administration Launches Vaccine Hotline*](#), May 9
 - One way the Biden administration is seeking to improve vaccine accessibility is with its new vaccine hotline.
 - Since the hotline went operational last week, the Biden administration's COVID-19 team has shared information about the hotline with community leaders and members of Congress, including the Congressional Rural Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus. It also shared information on the hotline with Made to Save, a group that is working to increase access to and trust in the COVID-19 vaccines in communities of color.

Vaccines and Therapeutics

- [*FDA Authorizes Pfizer's COVID-19 Vaccine For Use in People Ages 12 to 15*](#), May 10
 - U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has expanded emergency use authorization for Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine to now include people ages 12 to 15. The vaccine had previously been authorized for people age 16 and older.
 - At the end of March, Pfizer said that a clinical trial of 2,260 12-to-15-year-olds showed the vaccine to be safe and 100% effective.
 - CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is scheduled to meet Wednesday to advise CDC on whether to recommend use of the vaccine in this age group. CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky will then decide whether the agency will recommend the vaccine's use in the new group. Vaccinations of the new group are not expected to begin until after CDC's recommendation.
- [*Pfizer Seeks Full FDA Approval For COVID-19 Vaccine*](#), May 7
 - Pfizer and its vaccine partner BioNTech have started the application process for the full approval of FDA for its COVID-19 vaccine. It now becomes the first vaccine maker to request full FDA approval for a COVID-19 vaccine, as opposed to the less rigorous emergency use authorization it currently has.
 - FDA [approval](#) of a vaccine means that the agency has decided that the vaccine's benefits outweigh the known risks following a comprehensive review of the manufacturer's testing results.
 - Prior to FDA approval, Pfizer-BioNTech will need to submit follow-up data six months after vaccinations. If granted, the approval would be for those 16 and older.
- [*Maker Of Latest Experimental Vaccine Not Expected To Seek Authorization Until June at the Earliest*](#), May 10
 - Novavax, a vaccine manufacturer whose COVID-19 vaccine relies on a more traditional technology, is unlikely to seek emergency use authorization from FDA until June at the earliest.

- The company’s vaccine was shown to be about 90% effective in a 15,000-person study in the United Kingdom. However, Novavax’s 30,000-person North American trial of the vaccine was delayed several times, beginning in late December 2020. The results are expected in May 2021. If FDA’s review is consistent with its earlier reviews of other COVID-19 vaccines, authorization of the Novavax vaccine would be unlikely until well into summer.
- If eventually authorized, the vaccine could fill an urgent global need. Requiring only ordinary refrigeration temperatures, it is easier to store than some vaccines already in distribution.

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

- [*COVID Data Tracker Weekly Review*](#), May 7
 - CDC summarized key COVID-19 disease indicators for last week.
 - As of May 5, the seven-day average number of daily new cases reported was 45,817. This is a 13.2% decrease compared to the previous week’s average, and an overall 81.6% decrease compared to the national peak on January 8, 2021.
 - As of May 6, 252 million vaccine doses have been administered in the United States. Overall, approximately 149.5 million people in the United States have received at least one dose of the vaccines, which is 45% of the population. Approximately 108.9 million people are fully vaccinated, which is 32.8% of the population. The seven-day average number of reported vaccine dose administrations was 2.1 million, a 26% decrease compared to the previous week.
 - As of May 4, the seven-day average number of new hospital admissions was 4,640, an 8.4% decrease compared to the previous week’s average.
 - As of May 5, the seven-day average of reported deaths was 656 per day, a 3.8% increase compared to the previous week’s average.
- [*It May Be Time To Relax Indoor Face Mask Mandates, Fauci Says*](#), May 10
 - Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said over the weekend that federal guidance on wearing face coverings indoors may change soon. CDC will be updating its masking guidance almost in real time as more Americans get vaccinated, Fauci said.
 - Last month, CDC [*relaxed*](#) its guidance on wearing masks outdoors, but currently it still advises both vaccinated and unvaccinated people wear masks in indoor public spaces.

New York State

- [*New York State COVID-19 Updates*](#), May 10
 - New York reported 27 deaths, 2,016 hospitalizations, and 493 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on May 9, 2021.
 - Approximately 1,580, or 1.43%, of the 110,541 tests administered in New York on May 9 were positive for COVID-19.
 - As of May 9, New York has administered 16,826,409 doses of the vaccines to patients; 48.4% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 39.1% are fully vaccinated.
 - Beginning May 10, the limit on outdoor gatherings in New York State will [*increase*](#) to 500 people, and on May 19, the limit for indoor gatherings will increase to 250.

- On May 7, State Senator Brad Hoylman [introduced](#) new legislation that would require all students attending college and universities in New York State to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Currently, a handful of colleges, including Cornell University, Syracuse University, Columbia University, and New York University, already require students to be vaccinated prior to the Fall semester.
- On May 6, Governor Cuomo [signed](#) the NY Hero Act, which directs State agencies to create clear and enforceable health and safety standards that private employers have to follow in an effort to keep their employees safe. This bill provides minimum standards for workplace safety that include protocols on testing, Personal Protective Equipment, social distancing, hand hygiene, disinfection, and engineering controls. Under this law, workers have a “direct role in monitoring and reporting violations through workplace health and safety committees” and employees are protected against retaliation for doing so.

New York City

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), May 10
 - New York City [plans](#) to offer tourists a COVID-19 vaccine as part of an effort to draw in more tourists to the City. The initiative still requires approval as current regulations only allow for individuals working and living in the State to get vaccinated. If approved, tourists would be offered the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in mobile vans that would be set up at Central Park, the Empire State Building, and other sightseeing locations.
 - New York City’s subway will [return](#) to 24-hour service beginning May 17, following a year of nightly shutdowns to clean and sanitize trains and stations during COVID-19. The return of 24-hour subway service coincides with the end of the 12 a.m. curfew on outdoor dining and drinking.

International

- [India](#) faces an increasingly deepening crisis, with 350,000 new infections daily since the beginning of May. The official total death count is nearly 250,000, but the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation estimates that total deaths are about three times higher than the government’s number. The Institute has also projected that India could suffer more than a million coronavirus deaths by August.
- The [European](#) Union is effectively turning away from the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, after the Anglo-Swedish manufacturer fell behind on its delivery targets and amid concerns over the vaccine’s efficacy against some variants of the coronavirus. The EU signed a [deal](#) with Pfizer-BioNTech for up to 1.8 billion doses of its COVID-19 vaccine.
- [British](#) Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to announce the lifting of more coronavirus restrictions Monday, as England awaits the next stage of the government’s lockdown exit road map, which will proceed May 17.
- [China](#) said on Sunday that it has taken steps to prevent coronavirus cases from entering the country by installing a dividing line on the Mount Everest summit to prevent climbers from the Chinese side and the Nepal side from coming into contact.
- [Saudi Arabia](#) said on Sunday that it would hold the hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca that before the current coronavirus pandemic drew millions of Muslims to the kingdom, but did

not say how many pilgrims would be allowed to come, from which countries pilgrims would be admitted, or what health and safety precautions would be required.

Other Updates

- [*A man who received more than \\$5 million in Covid relief funds bought a Lamborghini and other luxury cars, prosecutors say*](#), May 10
 - A man in California who received more than \$5 million in Payment Protection Program loans was arrested on Friday on federal bank fraud and other charges after he used the money to buy a Lamborghini and other luxury cars, federal prosecutors say.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [Annual Meetings, Compensation and COVID-19: Where Things Stand](#), April 13
- [Managing Volatility in a Pandemic? Document your Derivatives Transactions Appropriately](#), April 13
- [California Authorities Issue a Wide Range of Rules and Guidance on COVID-19](#), April 10
- [HHS Initiates Initial \\$30 Billion Distribution of the \\$100 Billion Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund](#), April 10

Send questions to:

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