



COVID-19 UPDATE

December 7, 2020

Global

Total cases – 67,178,542

Total deaths – 1,537,975

United States

Total cases – 14,761,732

Total deaths – 282,345

More than 280,000 Americans have died of the coronavirus since the pandemic began. The United States averaged 196,233 new cases over a seven-day period ending Sunday, a record high. On Sunday, hospitalizations surpassed 100,000 for the fifth consecutive day. Even as cases rise across the United States, public health experts warn that the country has still not experienced the full effects of gatherings and travel over the Thanksgiving holiday.

Trump Administration

- **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** issued [guidance](#) Friday recommending that Americans wear masks indoors if they are not in their own home. This is the first time the CDC has advised universal mask wearing. The report warned that the United States has entered “a phase of high-level transmission” as cold weather and the holiday season move activities indoors.
- **A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** panel voted Tuesday to give health-care workers and long-term care facility residents the first coronavirus vaccine doses once one is approved by the Food and Drug Administration.
- On Friday, **the Food and Drug Administration** authorized an at-home diagnostic test that detects both COVID-19 and the flu.
- **President Trump** announced in a [tweet](#) Sunday that his lawyer and former New York City mayor, **Rudy Giuliani**, tested positive for the coronavirus. Giuliani was hospitalized on Monday.
- On Monday, the **Environmental Protection Agency** declined to tighten controls on industrial soot emissions despite [scientific evidence](#) linking air pollution to coronavirus death rates.
- **President Donald Trump** plans to order the Department of Health and Human Services to make people in the U.S. its priority for coronavirus vaccination, according to a senior administration official.
- **Trump** will hold a “vaccine summit” at the White House on Tuesday that’s intended to increase confidence in the new vaccines among the American public. The president will open the three-hour, indoor summit with remarks, followed by discussions of how the vaccines were developed and how they’ll be regulated, distributed, and administered.

Biden Presidential Transition

- **President-elect Joe Biden** said Thursday that on his first day as president, he will ask Americans to wear masks for 100 days.
- At an event in Wilmington, Delaware on Friday, **President-elect Joe Biden** said that his transition team has communicated with the Trump administration about vaccine rollout, but voiced concern that the current administration has “no detailed plan” to distribute the coronavirus vaccine.
- **President-elect Biden** said that he will follow the advice of public health experts when planning his inauguration and predicted that there will not be large crowds at the event to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.
- **President-elect Biden** announced several new members of his health team on Sunday:
 - **California Attorney General Xavier Becerra** will be Secretary of Health and Human Services. Becerra previously served in Congress and helped drive passage of the Affordable Care Act.
 - **Dr. Vivek Murthy** has been nominated to serve as Surgeon General, a role he held under the Obama administration. He is a decorated physician, research scientist, and former Vice Admiral in the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. Dr. Murthy is a long-time advisor to Joe Biden and currently serves as a co-chair of the President-elect’s COVID-19 transition Advisory Board.
 - Biden has selected **Rochelle Walensky, Chief of Infectious Diseases at Massachusetts General Hospital and a Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School**, to head the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She is one of the nation’s leading experts on virus testing and has worked on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic response in Massachusetts.
 - **Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith** will serve as the COVID-19 Equity Task Force Chair. She is an Associate Professor of Medicine, Public Health, and Management at the Yale School of Medicine and founded Yale’s Equity Research and Innovation Center. She currently serves as co-chair of Biden’s COVID-19 transition Advisory Board and will advise the president-elect on a whole-of-government effort to reduce COVID-19 disparities in response, care, and treatment.
 - **Dr. Anthony Fauci**, the nation’s top infectious disease expert, will be the Chief Medical Adviser to the President on COVID-19. He will also continue his role as Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.
 - **Jeff Zients** will serve as coordinator of the COVID-19 Response Team and Counselor to the President. Zients has expertise in crisis management, having previously served as Director of the National Economic Council, Acting Director and Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the inaugural Chief Performance Officer of the United States, and will advise the president-elect on the implementation of the federal government’s COVID-19 response.
 - **Natalie Quillian** will be the Deputy National Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response Team. She is a national security expert and former White House and Pentagon senior advisor and helped coordinate the Obama-Biden administration’s response to the opioid epidemic.
- **Dr. Moncef Slaoui**, chief advisor of the Trump administration’s Operation Warp Speed, will meet with President-elect Joe Biden this week to discuss vaccine distribution.

- **President-elect Joe Biden** says he'll take a coronavirus vaccine to demonstrate its [safety](#) to Americans and will work to ensure the vaccine and treatment of any side effects are provided free.
 - Speaking at a news conference in Delaware on Friday, Biden was asked about wariness among Americans, and particularly among African Americans, about taking a vaccine developed quickly and under a cloud of pressure from President Donald Trump's administration.

Congress

- On Tuesday, a **bipartisan group of lawmakers** unveiled a \$908 billion coronavirus relief proposal. The framework includes \$160 billion for states and cities, \$180 billion for unemployment insurance, and \$288 billion for more small business assistance through the Paycheck Protection Program. The plan would provide \$300 a week in federal unemployment benefits for four months but does not include direct stimulus payments to Americans.
 - **Progressives** have criticized the proposed framework and are pushing for direct payments to Americans.
 - **President Trump** said Thursday that he would sign a coronavirus relief package if Congress is able to pass a bill.
 - A key sticking point is liability protections for companies from Covid-19 lawsuits, a Republican priority. The draft bipartisan plan contains a six-month moratorium on lawsuits, but the GOP wants federal tort law changes.
 - Negotiations led by **Sens. John Cornyn (R-Texas)** and **Dick Durbin (D-Ill.)** aimed at compromise liability language remain at a standstill. Republicans have offered some concessions to a prior proposal from Cornyn, but they were rejected by Democrats

Vaccines and Treatment

- **States** are set to receive the first shipments of COVID-19 vaccines within weeks and are developing their own plans to distribute doses. However, public health experts say that state and local governments are underfunded and underprepared. The **Trump administration's** Operation Warp Speed plans to provide states with vaccines based on their population, but it is unclear exactly how many doses states will receive.
- **Dr. Moncef Slaoui**, head of the Trump administration's vaccine program, said that the United States will be able to immunize 100 million people by the end of February.
- **Pfizer** and **BioNTech** are projected to produce 50 million doses of their coronavirus vaccine and aim to exceed the 1.3 billion doses the partners promised to manufacture in 2021.
- A vaccine produced by **GlaxoSmithKline** showed a strong immune response in its early trial participants and will now undergo advanced trials.
- The federal government has downgraded the quantity of coronavirus vaccine it projects it will distribute in December from 300 million to closer to 40 million doses, the Washington Post [reported](#) Saturday.
- Drugmakers **Pfizer** and **Moderna** are slated to receive hearings for Food and Drug Administration emergency use authorizations in the weeks ahead. The government has since announced it will distribute the vaccine on a staggered scale to ensure state supplies do not run short before the second dosage, which comes 21 days after the initial dosage.
- **Moderna** says participants in the Phase 1 study of mRNA-1273 retained high levels of neutralizing antibodies through 119 days following first vaccination.

- Company re-affirmed its expectation of having about 20 million doses available in the U.S. by the end of 2020
- Expects to have between 100 million and 125 million doses available globally in the first quarter of 2021, with 85-100 million of those available in the U.S. and 15-25 million of those available outside of the U.S.

Other

- On Thursday, **California Governor Gavin Newsom** announced new regional stay-at-home orders that will take effect if the available intensive-care capacity dips below a 15 percent threshold. The restrictions, which limit store capacity and allow restaurants to serve only takeout or delivery, will be in place for at least three weeks. California will also withhold funding from counties that do not enforce the new stay-at-home order.
- **Delaware Governor John Carney** issued a new stay-at-home advisory on Thursday encouraging people to avoid indoor gatherings with individuals outside their household.
- **Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez** issued a statement Sunday warning that the tribe's intensive-care units are almost to capacity and that health care providers will soon be forced to "make very different decisions" when distributing limited resources to patients.
- Though New York City's average case and positive-test rates continue to climb, **Mayor Bill de Blasio** reopened some of the city's public schools Monday.

