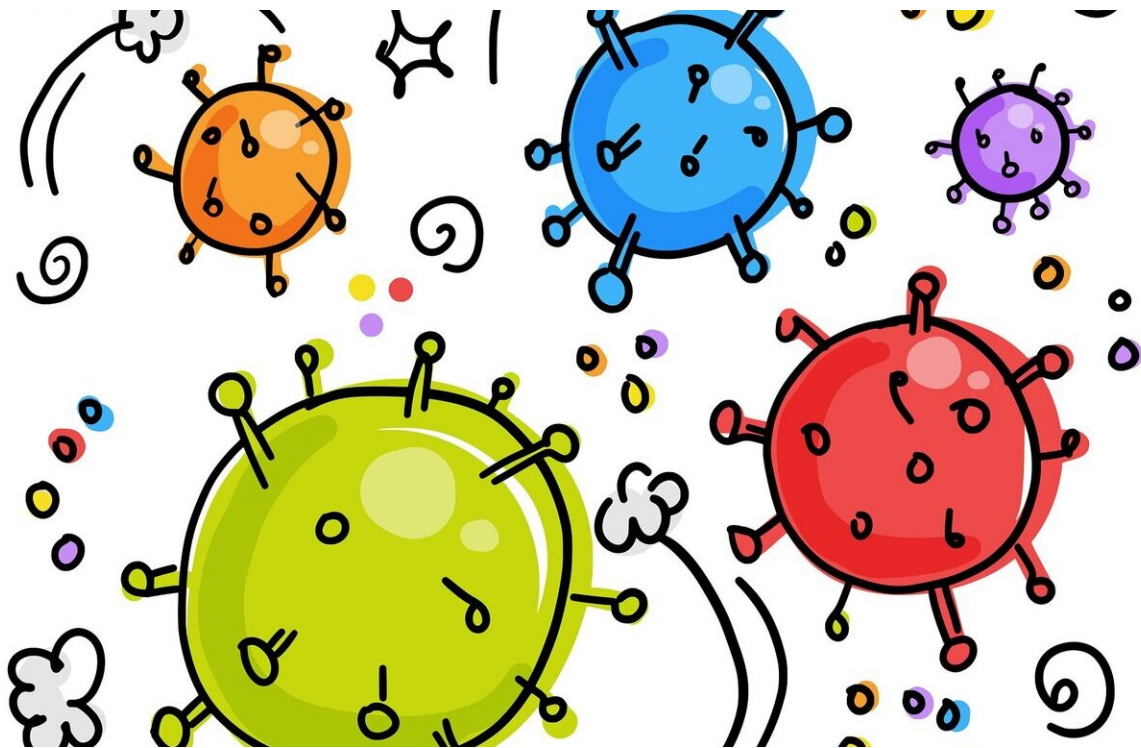


U.S. tops 4,000 daily deaths from coronavirus for 1st time

January 8 2021, by Eugene Garcia, Lisa Marie Pane and Thalia Beaty



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The U.S. topped 4,000 coronavirus deaths in a single day for the first time, breaking a record set just one day earlier, with several Sun Belt states driving the surge.

The tally from Johns Hopkins University showed the nation had 4,085

deaths Thursday, along with nearly 275,000 new cases of the virus—evidence that the crisis is growing worse after family gatherings and travel over the holidays and the onset of winter, which is forcing people indoors.

Deaths have reached epic proportions. Since just Monday, the United States has recorded 13,500 deaths—more than Pearl Harbor, D-Day, 9/11 and the 1906 San Francisco earthquake combined.

Britain, with one-fifth the population of the U.S., likewise reported on Friday its highest one-day count of deaths yet: 1,325. That brings the country's toll to nearly 80,000, the highest in Europe.

Overall, the scourge has left more than 365,000 dead in the U.S. and caused nearly 22 million confirmed infections.

Cases and deaths are soaring in California, Arizona, Texas and Florida. Those four states had a combined nearly 1,500 deaths and 80,000 cases on Thursday. Daily records have been set in those states this week as well as in Mississippi and Nevada.

Thursday ranks as one of the deadliest days in U.S. history, with the COVID-19 toll far outstripping the nearly 3,000 killed on 9/11 and exceeding the combined total of nearly 3,900 U.S. lives lost on D-Day and at Pearl Harbor.

Many hospitals in Los Angeles and other hard-hit areas are struggling to keep up and warned they may need to ration lifesaving care. Many nurses are caring for more sick people than typically allowed under the law after the state began issuing waivers to the strict nurse-to-patient ratios.

In Los Angeles County's Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital in Valencia,

nurse Nerissa Black said the place is overwhelmed with patients, likening the situation to New York's at the beginning of the pandemic.

She was assigned six patients but could spend only about 10 minutes with each of them per hour, including the time it takes for her to change her protective gear.

"It's very hard to decide which one should I go see first: the patient who has chest pain or the patient whose oxygen level is dropping," she said.

At St. Joseph Hospital south of Los Angeles, nurses in the COVID-19 ward described being overwhelmed as the deaths mount.

"Just today we had two deaths on this unit. And that's pretty much the norm," said Caroline Brandenburger. "I usually see one to two every shift. Super sad." She added: "They fight every day, and they struggle to breathe every day even with tons of oxygen. And then you just see them die. They just die."

The outbreak has taken another turn for the worse in Arizona, with the state now leading the nation with the highest COVID-19 diagnosis rate. Since Dec. 31, one in every 111 Arizonans has been diagnosed with the virus.

More than 132,000 people nationwide are hospitalized with the virus.

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