

Average COVID hospitalization is 150 times more expensive than vaccination

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(HealthDay)—While the cost of administering COVID-19 vaccines is

nominal—and free to consumers in the United States—the cost of paying for hospitalizations for people who've contracted the virus is dramatically higher.

The average financial cost of hospitalization for a COVID-19 patient insured by Medicare—at \$21,752—is about 145 times the reimbursement Medicare pays for vaccinating one person, *CNN* reported. The [news agency](#) analyzed billing documents from government health insurers Medicare and Medicaid.

That \$21,752 is for an average 9.2-day stay, *CNN* noted. When someone's condition requires a ventilator and longer hospitalization (an average of about 17 days), bills to Medicare rise to an average of \$49,441, more than 300 times the cost of one person's vaccination.

"We know the pathway to end this pandemic," U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy told *CNN*. "That's getting vaccinated."

While the average eligible American can get their COVID-19 vaccine for free, Medicare reimburses providers who administer the shots – \$40 for each dose and \$35 for each time the provider administers a dose in the Medicare patient's home or group living setting. That's true for both of the existing two-dose mRNA vaccines, Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech.

In June and July alone, more than 100,000 [unvaccinated people](#) were hospitalized with preventable COVID-19 cases, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation analysis. That means the United States paid more than \$2 billion to care for those unvaccinated patients, if their care was estimated at costing roughly \$20,000 each, *CNN* said.

Currently, about 102,000 COVID-19 patients are hospitalized in the United States, including 25,800 in intensive care unit beds, according to

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services data.

The [federal government](#) continues to urge people to get vaccinated. About 53% of all Americans are fully vaccinated, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, but children younger than age 12 are not yet eligible for a vaccine. Overall, this means that about 27% of the American population now eligible for vaccination have not yet gotten their shots, *CNN* said.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on the [COVID-19 vaccines](#).

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