

U.S. COVID-19 cases now top 40 million

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(HealthDay)—There have now been more than 40 million cases of COVID-19 recorded among Americans, according to a database maintained by *The New York Times*. That's nearly one-fifth of the global

total of cases.

With the Delta variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus cutting a swathe through the United States, and about 47% of the eligible population still not fully vaccinated, COVID-19 has roared back over a summer that began with Americans hopeful that the worst was behind them.

According to the *Times*, as of Sunday there have been an average 161,000 new cases of COVID-19 in the United States each day. Hospitalizations are topping 102,000 each day, and the daily COVID-19 death toll is now at 1,560.

The vast majority of people hospitalized and dying are unvaccinated, greatly burdening an already overburdened health care system. According to the *Times*, no state has yet gotten more than 70% of its population fully vaccinated.

Speaking last Wednesday, Gov. Brad Little of Idaho, a Republican, begged people in his state to get vaccinated: "I wish everyone could have seen what I saw in the ICU last night," he said.

Things are so bad in Idaho that rationing of care is underway.

Dave Jeppesen, the state's director of the Department of Health and Welfare, said on Tuesday, "When crisis standards of care are in effect, people who need medical care may experience care that is different from what they expect. For example, patients admitted to the hospital may find that hospital beds are not available or are in repurposed rooms (such as a conference room)."

Jeppesen added, "This is a decision I was fervently hoping to avoid."

In hard-hit West Virginia, Gov. Jim Justice, a Republican, read out a list

of people who had died of conditions linked to COVID-19 since Friday, and echoed Little's call for vaccination.

"We've got to get vaccinated for all, not just for you but for everybody—we've got to do this," Justice said. "We can stop a lot of this terrible, terrible carnage."

A busy, infectious long weekend

With the Delta variant surging and many Americans mask- and vaccine-free, new cases of COVID-19 spiked to levels over the long Labor Day weekend that were 300% higher than those seen over the same weekend in 2020, according to a new tally from Johns Hopkins University.

That means packed hospitals and rising numbers of infected children as a new school year begins, according to [CNN](#).

"The takeaway for everyone is get your shots and certainly wear a mask for that added layer of protection if you're in public indoor spaces right now," Dr. Megan Ranney, professor of emergency medicine and associate dean of public health at Brown University, in Providence, R.I., told the news agency.

The surge in new cases could really hit a high point in about two weeks from now: Last year at this time, cases surged in 31 states, and the number of people testing positive for infection with then new coronavirus also spiked in 25 states, *CNN* said.

And last year, Americans didn't have the highly transmissible Delta variant to contend with. It's part of the reason that CDC director Dr. Rochelle Walensky last week urged people to curb their travel over the Labor Day holiday. She also again pushed for vaccination: Right now only 62% of Americans who are eligible for a vaccine (everyone 12

years of age and older) are fully vaccinated.

It's the unvaccinated who are landing in hospitals and dying, experts say.

"Here's the important thing: everyone that I'm hospitalizing is not vaccinated," Ranney told *CNN*. "We are, by and large across the country, not needing to hospitalize people that have gotten both doses of the vaccine. This is a disease of the unvaccinated right now."

More information: Find out more about the value and safety of immunization against COVID-19 at the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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