COVID-19 Newsletter (vol. 56)

Center for Disaster Medicine, New York Medical College

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Tuesday, January 26, 2021

During this COVID-19 pandemic and other future events, the CDM has been and will continue to be a source of reliable information, education and models for mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. We hope this informational document has helped provide you filtered and actionable information. As the pace of new information and changes occur, we will evaluate the current once per week to determine if this information should be provided on a more frequent basis.

David Markenson, M.D., M.B.A.
Director
Center for Disaster Medicine
## COVID-19 Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Cases</th>
<th>Total Deaths</th>
<th>Total Recovered</th>
<th>Total Tested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worldwide</strong></td>
<td>99,770,308</td>
<td>2,141,602</td>
<td>55,123,052</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>United States</strong></td>
<td>25,297,072</td>
<td>421,129</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>293,694,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Jersey</strong></td>
<td>666,951</td>
<td>20,972</td>
<td>65,519</td>
<td>9,062,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York</strong></td>
<td>1,347,667</td>
<td>42,544</td>
<td>122,544</td>
<td>30,762,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connecticut</strong></td>
<td>243,632</td>
<td>6,911</td>
<td>9,800</td>
<td>5,542,984</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information as of 1/26/21 at 0500 EST. Source: [https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html](https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html)

## United States COVID-19 Case Map / GIS

![United States COVID-19 Case Map / GIS](https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html)

## Center for Disaster Medicine Updates

- Coordinating volunteers to support local public health response to COVID-19.
- Conducting research and analysis of current events and COVID-19 response to identify strengths and areas for improvement in other regions.
● Updating and developing new programs to provide enhanced education on public health emergencies including pandemics.
● Redesigning summer fellowship in disaster and emergency medicine to better address preparedness skills, lessons learned and highlight the importance of high-fidelity simulation in medical education while finding new focus on pandemic-related research projects.
● Exploring course development opportunities in infection prevention and control for frontline responders in the hospital and in the field.
● Serving as a source of information for COVID-19 related concerns or questions regarding public health, emergency medical service (EMS), public safety and healthcare response.
● Local networking and pandemic response analysis for New York’s tri-state area, using first-person experiences to highlight current trends.
● Coordinating and overseeing COVID-19 screenings at NYMC campus
● Offered Geriatric Emergency Medical Services and All Hazard Disaster Response courses to public safety provider
● Hosted The COVID-19 MCI: What Training Didn't Prepare Us For
● COVID-19 Vaccines: Virtual Q & A Session
● Offered Incident Response to Terrorist Bombing

View the Center for Disaster Medicine’s newest webinar, The COVID-19 Vaccine: What to Tell Your Patients

Federal Updates

● As a protective public health measure, Rochelle P. Walensky, M.D., M.P.H., director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will extend the current order temporarily halting residential evictions until at least March 31, 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a historic threat to our nation’s health. It has also triggered a housing affordability crisis that disproportionately affects some communities. Despite extensive mitigation efforts, COVID-19 continues to spread in America at a concerning pace. We must act to get cases down and keep people in their homes and out of congregate settings — like shelters — where COVID-19 can take an even stronger foothold. 
  https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0121-eviction-moratorium.html

● U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) researchers and Veteran volunteers from the Atlanta and San Antonio VA medical centers were part of a recently published study that yielded crucial insights into COVID-19 treatment. The study published December 11, 2020, by the New England Journal of Medicine, showed the drugs baricitinib and remdesivir combined were far better at improving and reducing recovery time of COVID-19 patients than treatment with remdesivir alone. “Safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19 are being rolled out in VA and other health care settings, but finding treatments remains crucial,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “VA researchers and all the Veterans who volunteer for studies are contributing to steady progress with regard to both vaccines and treatment options.” The combined use of baricitinib, an anti-inflammatory drug, and remdesivir, an antiviral drug, has already influenced clinical practice. On November 19, 2020, the Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use authorization of the treatment in certain hospitalized adults and children, based mainly on the trial results.
  https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5606

● VA health care facilities will begin offering COVID-19 testing and vaccinations to designated family caregivers of Veterans participating in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC). Each facility will determine its own start date based on site-
specific resources, needs and vaccine availability.  
https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5609

- The VA flew doses of the Moderna vaccine to the Montana VA Health Care System (MTVAHCS) last week, as part of a new pilot program providing vaccines to Veterans living in rural parts of the country. Chosen as the initial site for the pilot, MTVAHCS provided 240 Veterans in Havre, Montana, with the vaccine. Montana was selected due to size and rurality. It is the country’s fourth largest state and its mountainous terrain makes for difficult driving conditions during the winter. The facility arranged transportation via air charter to deliver the vaccines.  
  https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5610
The White House

President Biden will deliver bold action and immediate relief for American families as the country grapples with converging crises. This will include actions to control the COVID-19 pandemic, provide economic relief, tackle climate change, and advance racial equity and civil rights, as well as immediate actions to reform our immigration system and restore America’s standing in the world.
https://www.whitehouse.gov

Health and Human Services (HHS)

Dr. Anthony S. Fauci provided remarks on January 21, 2021, to the World Health Organization Executive Board Meeting.

For the latest COVID-19 information from HHS

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

In a large clinical trial conducted worldwide, full dose anti-coagulation (blood thinner) treatments given to moderately ill patients hospitalized for COVID-19 reduced the requirement of vital organ support—such as the need for ventilation. A trend in possible reduction of mortality was also observed and is being further studied.

View the latest COVID-19 information from NIH
https://www.nih.gov/coronavirus

United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

As of January 22, 2021, 319 tests and sample collection devices are authorized by the FDA under emergency use authorizations (EUAs). These include 237 molecular tests and sample collection devices, 69 antibody tests, and 13 antigen tests. There are 33 molecular authorizations that can be used with home-collected samples. There is one molecular prescription at-home test, one antigen prescription at-home test, and one over-the-counter (OTC) at-home antigen test.
As part of the list required pursuant to section 506J(g) of the FD&C Act, the FDA is providing a separate, publicly-available, up-to-date list of the devices for which the FDA has been informed by the manufacturer have been discontinued. The FDA will update this list when it receives additional information regarding device discontinuances.

For the latest overall FDA information about COVID-19

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

CDC provides resources regarding how to manage stress and anxiety during COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives. Many of us are facing challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming, and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but they can make us feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety.

All air passengers arriving to the U.S. from a foreign country need to get tested no more than three days before their flight departs and to present the negative result or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 to the airline before boarding the flight. Air passengers will also be required to confirm that the information they present is true in the form of an attestation. This Order is effective as of 12:01 a.m. EST (5:01 a.m. GMT) on January 26, 2021.

For daily updates of cases in United States

For the latest CDC information

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

View the latest information from CMS

Vaccines
As of January 26, 2021, the FDA granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) only to Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna. As additional vaccines are granted EUA, information for those vaccines will also be included.

The new New York State DOH COVID-19 Vaccine Tracker Dashboard will update New Yorkers on the distribution of the vaccine including the number of doses received by the state, a breakdown of first or second doses, and the number of persons vaccinated with the first and second doses in each region.
https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine-tracker

CDC created a website section regarding the Moderna vaccine to provide updated relevant information including side effects and safety data, clinical trials demographic statistics, and information on how the vaccine works.

CDC created a website section regarding the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine to provide updated relevant information including side effects and safety data, clinical trials demographic statistics, and information on how the vaccine works.

CDC created a website section regarding COVID-19 vaccine information in one location.

Vaccines will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and bring this pandemic to an end. As Americans get vaccinated over the next few months, it is important to continue to follow public health safety measures. Wear a mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community. Refer to this Health and Human Services (HHS) website to get the latest information about COVID-19 vaccines.

**Educational Institution Information**

- Higher Education
  - High rates of isolation, loneliness and heightened stress and anxiety among students coping with the pandemic are an inescapable aspect of the work of college mental health therapists. As the public health crisis stretches on and approaches the one-year mark, the overworked professionals who provide mental health services to students are also feeling emotionally overburdened -- and are themselves seeking support from each other and their institutions. Among the many negative consequences of the public health crisis, sad and stressed-out therapists was an unexpected but perhaps inevitable outcome. The increased need for services has taken a toll on the counselors. A recent survey found widespread emotional exhaustion among these providers.
  - Higher education groups, including associations representing colleges and universities, asked Congress on Monday for $97 billion more in aid if
there is an additional coronavirus relief package. The groups, including the American Council on Education, had asked for $120 billion in help for struggling institutions before Congress and then-President Trump approved a mammoth $2.3 trillion package in December. But having only received $23 billion, the groups are asking for the rest.

President Biden signed an executive order directing the secretary of education to provide, in consultation with the secretary of health and human services, “evidence-based guidance to institutions of higher education on safely reopening for in-person learning, which shall take into account considerations such as the institution’s setting, resources, and the population it serves.” The “Executive Order on Supporting the Reopening and Continuing Operation of Schools and Early Childhood Education Providers” was one of 10 orders signed by Biden in conjunction with the release of a new 200-page strategy from the White House on COVID-19 response.

The Education Department said that at President Joe Biden's request, it is continuing to give student loan borrowers a break from making their monthly payments for another nine months, until September 30. The department's student aid website was also updated to reflect the pause had been extended. The department said the order came from Phil Rosenfelt, who was named acting education secretary. However, advocacy groups for borrowers urged him to go further.

- K-12
  - Establishing decision-making frameworks can help school leaders take rapid but meaningful action — especially with difficult decision, Jessica Cabeen, principal at Ellis Middle School in Austin, Minnesota, writes for Edutopia. Cabeen uses a strategy she calls “Adapt, Adjust, Accept.” First, she establishes whether she needs to adapt or modify what she is doing. This year, there have been plenty of adaptations due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, including shifts to schedules, calendars and models for learning. Then, she adjusts by comparing what worked and what didn’t, implementing changes based on informed decisions. Sometimes, leaders must also accept help from others to avoid burnout, she writes, and that they don’t know everything and aren’t perfect. Principals and other school leaders, she adds, need to know when to ask for help and when to accept it when it’s offered.

  As many state legislative sessions get underway this month, Michael Leachman, vice president for state fiscal policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, warned states could sharply cut funding. According to a report released in December by the National Association of State Budget Officers, K-12 saw the largest decrease in state funding for fiscal
The Biden administration is set to give educators and school leaders the very thing that the previous administration refused them: a centralized data collection to help them understand the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on students and teachers alongside the status of in-person learning for schools and districts across the country. The directive, which was included in an executive order signed by the president last week and falls to the Institute of Education Sciences to facilitate, is part of the Biden administration's sprawling plan to curb COVID-19 in the U.S. and get the country's economy and school systems back up and running. It's a herculean task, given the country's 13,000 school districts have, for the most part, been going it alone for the last 10 months, operating without any substantive guidance from state or federal officials.

Clinical Trials

To view the latest information on clinical trials regarding COVID-19

American Red Cross

State Updates
Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced a $130 million proposal to enact the Pandemic Recovery and Restart Program to help highly impacted small businesses recover from the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the FY 2022 Executive Budget. The Program would establish three new tax credits and increase a fourth one to help highly impacted small businesses in the accommodation, arts and entertainment, restaurant and musical and theatrical production industries bring back jobs to New York and help the economy recover faster. [https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-130-million-proposal-help-highly-impacted-small-businesses-tax-credits](https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-130-million-proposal-help-highly-impacted-small-businesses-tax-credits)

Governor Cuomo announced the Department of Financial Services’ newly formed Office of Pharmacy Benefits today announced it has initiated investigations into significant price spikes for six drugs that were connected to the COVID-19 pandemic by sending a demand pursuant to New York Insurance Law Section 111 requiring a statement from the manufacturer explaining the facts and circumstances surrounding the spikes. [https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-investigations-prescription-drug-price-spikes-connected-covid-19](https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-investigations-prescription-drug-price-spikes-connected-covid-19)

Governor Cuomo announced that New York is expanding its deployment of community vaccination kits to further strengthen fairness and equity in the vaccine distribution process. Last week, New York successfully piloted the deployment kits to five NYCHA senior housing developments and eight churches and cultural centers where nearly 4,200 seniors and eligible New Yorkers received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Kits are now being redeployed to four additional NYCHA sites and eight other churches to further build on that progress. In total, this initiative is expected to provide first doses of the vaccine to an additional 3,000 seniors and eligible New Yorkers by Tuesday. As with the pop-up sites established last weekend, these sites will be re-established in three weeks to administer second doses. [https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-expanded-deployment-community-vaccination-kits-strengthen-fairness-and](https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-expanded-deployment-community-vaccination-kits-strengthen-fairness-and)

Governor Cuomo updated New Yorkers on the state’s vaccination program. The total week 6 federal vaccine allocation has been delivered to providers for administration. As of January 25, 2021 at 1p.m., New York’s health care distribution sites have received 1,304,050 first doses and already administered 91 percent or 1,180,468 first dose vaccinations and 71 percent of first and second doses. Delivery of the week seven allocation from the federal government will not begin arriving until the middle of this week. The Governor also announced the launch of a new hotline focused on vaccine-related fraud. New Yorkers who suspect fraud in the vaccine distribution process can now call 833-VAX-SCAM (833-829-7226) toll-free or email the state Department of Health at STOPVAXFRAUD@health.ny.gov. Hotline staff will route complaints to the appropriate investigative agencies to ensure New Yorkers are not being taken advantage of as the State works to vaccinate the entire eligible population. [https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-updates-new-yorkers-state-vaccination-program-1](https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-updates-new-yorkers-state-vaccination-program-1)
For a list of positive cases by county in New York State


Get the NYS DOH COVID-19 App to stay informed. Download the COVID-19 Alert NY app, New York State's official exposure notification app, to get private exposure alerts.

https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-alert-ny

NYS DOH has created a dynamic COVID-19 Tracker which provides COVID-19 information regarding testing, cases, percentages, and fatalities across New York State. It also breaks down cases by county.


Governor announced new guidelines allowing travelers to New York to “test out” of the mandatory 10-day quarantine for asymptomatic individuals. Travelers from states that are contiguous with New York are exempt from the travel advisory; however covered travelers must continue to fill out the Traveler Health Form. Essential workers will continue to be exempt as well. The guidance also applies to any person who has traveled to CDC Levels 2 and higher Health Notice country under the COVID risk assessment.


For the latest COVID-19 information from NYS DOH

https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home

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**New Jersey**

- Governor Phil Murphy signed Executive Order No. 215. The Order extends the Public Health Emergency that was declared on March 9, 2020 through Executive Order No. 103, which was previously extended in 2020 on April 7, May 6, June 4, July 2, August 1, August 27, September 25, October 24, November 21, and December 21. Under the Emergency Health Powers Act, a declared public health emergency expires after 30 days unless renewed.  

**Connecticut**

- With nearly 1.4 million individuals included in Phase 1b of Connecticut’s COVID-19 vaccine rollout and the state anticipating to receive about 45,000 doses of vaccine per week from the federal government, Governor Ned Lamont today announced that he is directing the Connecticut Department of Public Health to proceed through the remaining groups in the phase with a tiered approach based on risk of adverse health outcomes from the virus. The governor is directing the implementation be done in an equitable way, with
vaccine distribution points focused in areas where residents and communities have barriers to access and care. The tiered approach to Phase 1b will proceed as follows:
  o Scheduling now: Individuals over the age of 75
  o Scheduling next (likely early February): Individuals between the ages of 65 and 74
  o Scheduling soon (likely late February or early March): Frontline essential workers and individuals with underlying medical conditions who have an increased risk for severe illness
  • Governor Ned Lamont announced that Connecticut public health officials have confirmed that the COVID-19 variant B.1.1.7, commonly known as the UK variant, has been detected in four additional individuals in the state who recently tested positive for COVID-19. This brings the total number of confirmed cases of the UK variant in Connecticut to eight. The eight individuals, who live in New Haven (2), Oxford (3), and West Haven (3), range in age from 15 to 50. Several individuals were tested through Griffin Hospital’s testing program between January 6 and January 18, 2021. Subsequent genomic sequencing by Griffin’s laboratory partner, The Jackson Laboratory of Farmington, confirmed the presence of the UK variant. [https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2021/01-2021/Governor-Lamont-Announces-UK-Variant-of-COVID-19-Detected-in-Four-Additional-Connecticut-Residents](https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2021/01-2021/Governor-Lamont-Announces-UK-Variant-of-COVID-19-Detected-in-Four-Additional-Connecticut-Residents)
Local Updates

New York Blood Center (NYBC)

Researchers from NYBC’s Project Achieve are answering the call by taking mobile labs to areas of Queens and Brooklyn with large African American, Asian, and Hispanic populations. [https://www.nybc.org/news/articles/ap-article-features-project-achieves-role-vital-covid-19-vaccine-education/](https://www.nybc.org/news/articles/ap-article-features-project-achieves-role-vital-covid-19-vaccine-education/)


**For the latest updated NYBC information about COVID-19:**
[https://nybc.org/covid-19/](https://nybc.org/covid-19/)

New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)

For NYC DOHMH’s COVID-19 information for providers
[https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-providers.page](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-providers.page)

For NYC DOHMH updated COVID-19 data page

For NYC DOHMH updated guidance regarding COVID-19 vaccine

NYC DOHMH provides updated COVID-19 information regarding prevention and groups at higher risk and reminds people to do their part to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in NYC by taking a few steps every day.

**For the latest COVID-19 information from NYC DOHMH**

Westchester County Department of Health

For the latest COVID-19 information in Westchester including how to avoid the latest vaccine scams offering earlier access to vaccines.

Putnam County Department of Health

Breakdown of positive cases by towns in Putnam County as of January 18, 2021-

**For the latest COVID-19 information**
Dutchess County Department of Health

For the latest COVID-19 information:

Orange County Department of Health

For the latest COVID-19 information

Updated COVID-19 dashboard for Orange County, NY
https://ocnygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/21de1fb5ce0c480f95dc0cf2b8b83b71

Rockland County Department of Health

Review Rockland County’s dashboard with the latest COVID-19 information regarding cases, hospitalizations and deaths

For the latest COVID-19 information

Healthcare

GNYHA provides the latest information regarding NYS DOH COVID-19 vaccine updates. Over the weekend, the New York State Governor’s Office released Executive Order (EO) 202.91, which includes the following directives:
Local health departments and county governments receive allocation for and must prioritize essential workers in the 1B category. Hospitals receive allocations for and must prioritize health care workers. Pharmacies are to prioritize individuals who are 65+. The New York State Department of Health (DOH) approved general population mass vaccination sites are to prioritize 65+ and essential workers in the 1B category. We allocate dosages to these provider classes to represent the fair distribution. If a provider distributes to a group outside of their “prioritization,” they will disrupt the fairness of the allocation.

Providers, unless otherwise directed, should not schedule appointments until they receive an allocation, and no more appointments should be scheduled than the actual allocation allows.

For the latest COVID-19 information for healthcare facilities from the Greater New York Hospital Association that covers hospitals in the tri-state area.
https://www.gnyha.org/
Center for Disaster Medicine Media

New York Medical College Leadership News:
Vaccine rollout under President Biden's administration
The Joe Piscopo Show
1/22/2021
https://player.fm/series/the-joe-piscopo-show-1665113/ep-7-am-hour-the-joe-piscopo-show-1-22-21
At 00:40:10: Alan Kadish, M.D., president

The Faustian bargain that was Trump has come home to roost - opinion
The Jerusalem Post
1/20/2021
https://www.jpost.com/opinion/the-faustian-bargain-that-was-trump-has-come-home-to-roost-opinion-656132
Edward C. Halperin, M.D., M.A., chancellor and chief executive officer

Vaccine scramble leaves many Westchester residents seeking doses elsewhere
City and State New York
1/20/2021
https://www.cityandstateny.com/articles/policy/health-care/vaccine-scramble-leaves-many-westchester-residents-seeking-doses
Robert W. Amler, M.D., M.B.A., dean of the School of Health Sciences and Practice and vice president for government affairs
Faculty News:
Norway warns of coronavirus vaccine risks for elderly
CBS News
1/15/2021
https://www.cbsnews.com/video/norway-warns-of-vaccine-risks-for-elderly/#x
Robert G. Lahita, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine

Doctor discusses Biden’s COVID-19 plan and latest vaccine guidance
CBS News
1/22/2021
https://www.cbsnews.com/video/biden-covid-19-plan-vaccines-cdc-guidance/?intcid=CNM-00-10abd1h
Robert G. Lahita, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine

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