COVID-19 Newsletter (vol. 57)

Center for Disaster Medicine, New York Medical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://touroscholar.touro.edu/nymc_covid19_newsletter
Tuesday, February 2, 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>Worldwide</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>New Jersey</th>
<th>New York</th>
<th>Connecticut</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cases</td>
<td>103,500,950</td>
<td>26,322,365</td>
<td>700,346</td>
<td>1,428,839</td>
<td>253,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>2,240,771</td>
<td>443,613</td>
<td>21,513</td>
<td>43,805</td>
<td>7,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovered</td>
<td>57,457,138</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>68,012</td>
<td>128,354</td>
<td>9,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information as of 2/2/21 at 0500 EST. Source: https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html

**United States COVID-19 Case Map / GIS**

![Map of United States COVID-19 cases](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

To view the Center for Disaster Medicine’s newest webinar, please click here - The COVID-19 Vaccine: What to Tell Your Patients

Federal Updates

• The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is aware that the first U.S. documented cases of the B 1.351 variant of SARS-CoV-2, which was first detected in South Africa, have been identified in South Carolina. CDC is early in its efforts to understand this variant and will continue to provide updates as we learn more. At this time, we have no evidence that infections by this variant cause more severe disease. Like the UK and Brazilian variants, preliminary data suggests this variant may spread more easily and quickly than other variants. CDC will continue communicating with international, state, and local partners to monitor the presence and impact of variants in the United States and around the world. Monitoring variants is why CDC has expanded National SARS-CoV-2 Strain Surveillance (NS3). We continue working with national reference laboratories, state health departments and researchers from around the country to gather sequence data and increase use of genomic sequencing data in response to this pandemic. https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0128-sc-detects-COVID-variant.html
• The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is steadfast leading the way in President Joseph Biden’s January 22 Executive Order to deliver economic relief to Americans amid the COVID-19 crisis by addressing economic hardships the Veteran community faces during the ongoing pandemic. Through no fault of their own, Veterans and their loved ones continue to face economic hardship due to the pandemic. Effective January 29, 2020, VA will extend the existing moratorium on evictions and foreclosures until March 31, 2021. VA borrowers experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 can review VA guidance for borrowers or call 877-827-3702 for additional information. VA is also looking for immediate ways to help more than two million Veterans maintain their financial footing by exploring options to ease the burden of federal collections on compensation and pension overpayments, and medical and education-related debts. https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5612
**The White House**

President Biden believes that the federal government must act swiftly and aggressively to help protect and support our families, small businesses, first responders, and caregivers essential to help us face this challenge, those who are most vulnerable to health and economic impacts, and our broader communities – not to blame others or bail out corporations. Read the recently released National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness. [https://www.whitehouse.gov/priorities/covid-19/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/priorities/covid-19/)

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](https://www.whitehouse.gov)

**Health and Human Services (HHS)**


**National Institutes of Health (NIH)**

Pregnant women who experienced severe symptoms of COVID-19 had a higher risk of complications during and after pregnancy, according to preliminary findings from a National Institutes of Health study. Compared to COVID-19 patients without symptoms, those with severe symptoms were at higher risk for cesarean delivery, postpartum hemorrhage, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy and preterm birth.

A new database will collect information from clinicians about COVID-19-related neurological symptoms, complications, and outcomes as well as COVID-19 effects on pre-existing neurological conditions. The COVID-19 Neuro Databank/Biobank (NeuroCOVID), which was created and will be maintained by NYU Langone Health, New York City, will be a resource of clinical information as well as biospecimens from people of all ages who have experienced neurological problems associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection.

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

United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

As of January 29, 320 tests and sample collection devices are authorized by the FDA under emergency use authorizations (EUAs). These include 238 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.

For the latest overall FDA information about COVID-19

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Effective February 2, the CDC is implementing provisions of President Biden’s Executive Order on Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel and will require the wearing of masks by all travelers into, within, or out of the United States, e.g., on airplanes, ships, ferries, trains, subways, buses, taxis, and ride-shares. The mask
requirement also applies to travelers in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and seaports; train, bus, and subway stations; and any other areas that provide transportation. 
https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0130-requires-face-masks.html

CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, M.D., M.P.H., signed an extension to the order determining the evictions of tenants for failure to make rent or housing payments could be detrimental to public health control measures to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. This extension will carry this order that was scheduled to expire January 31, 2021 through March 31, 2021. 
https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0129-extending-eviction-moratorium.html

During the first month of the U.S. COVID-19 vaccination program, approximately 13,000,000 persons received ≥1 dose of vaccine. Among persons with demographic data, 63.0% were women, 55.0% were aged ≥50 years, and 60.4% were non-Hispanic White. 
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7005e1.htm?s_cid=mm7005e1_x

For daily updates of cases in United States 

For the latest CDC information 

**Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)**

In accordance with the Executive Order issued today by President Biden, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) determined that the COVID-19 emergency presents exceptional circumstances for consumers in accessing health insurance and will provide a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) for individuals and families to apply and enroll in the coverage they need. 

View the latest information from CMS 

**Vaccines**

In this section, vaccine-related information from various sources will be collected, reviewed, and tabulated here. As of February 2, 2021, the FDA has 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 NYS 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

NYS DOH releases instructions for New York State-operated vaccination sites
CDC created a 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 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 section regarding COVID-19 vaccine information in one location.

HHS created a section to provide the latest information about COVID-19 vaccines.

**Educational Institution Information**

- **Health Professions Schools**
  - Donald Alcendor, associate professor of microbiology and immunology at Meharry Medical College, a historically Black medical school in Nashville, Tennessee, is studying an antiviral treatment for COVID-19 in his lab. But his work isn’t confined to the lab: he’s also community liaison for Meharry’s Novavax vaccine trial. In that role he goes out to businesses, barbershops and beauty salons frequented by African Americans and Latinos to talk to community members about the COVID-19 vaccines and answer their questions in what he describes as a “transparent and culturally competent way.” Academic medical institutions and public health schools, including minority-serving institutions like Meharry, are taking leading roles in confronting vaccine hesitancy in minority communities.
    https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/02/02/academic-medical-institutions-address-issues-vaccine-hesitancy-through-research-and

  - Post University, in Waterbury, Connecticut, plans to acquire Denver-based American Sentinel University, a deal between two for-profit institutions allowing the larger Post to bolt on online nursing and health-care management programs as the global pandemic has exposed a deep need for trained health-care professionals. The acquisition, announced Monday, can be viewed as part of an ongoing shift in college and university portfolios toward health care and other programs that potentially offer both students and universities immediate returns on investment. It can also be seen as a continuation of merger-and-acquisition activity at a time when financial stresses, enrollment pressures and changes in student demand are forcing consolidation among for-profit and nonprofit universities alike.
• **Higher Education**
  - NORC, a research institute at the University of Chicago, released the results of a survey of 208 senior officers from science master’s and Ph.D. programs on the impact of COVID-19 on operations. Findings suggest that while science have been severely disrupted due to the pandemic, some aspects of COVID-19-era instruction and operations are here to stay. Some 82 percent of institutions represented anticipated expanding the number of graduate programs offered in a hybrid format, for instance. Forty percent of the graduate schools represented had expanded their use of the holistic review processes during the admissions process in 2020. Much of the sample increased efforts to connect with graduate students. Major challenges for graduate students were reported to be international travel, due to both financial and travel restrictions. Students with faculty responsibilities were challenged, as well. And most institutions reported fewer job placements for graduates than usual. [https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2021/02/01/covid-19s-impact-academic-research](https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2021/02/01/covid-19s-impact-academic-research)
  - In a move intended to help college students who’ve lost their jobs during the pandemic, the Education Department wrote financial aid administrators on Friday, reminding them they have the discretion to consider special circumstances in deciding whether students are eligible for federal student aid. And the department “encourages aid administrators to consider the special circumstances that may arise for students and families during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, especially as they relate to unemployment or reduction in work,” said a letter from Annmarie Weisman, who is temporarily performing the duties of the deputy assistant secretary for postsecondary policy, planning and innovation. [https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2021/02/01/ed-dept-encourages-approving-aid-unemployed-students](https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2021/02/01/ed-dept-encourages-approving-aid-unemployed-students)

• **K-12**
  - Nearly a year out from when the coronavirus pandemic initially disrupted K-12, school leaders are still grappling with daily decisions centered around how to best educate students — and how to do so safely. In a year like no other, there is no playbook, no historical references and no hard data on best practices. To assess the state of the situation, the National Association of Elementary School Principals surveyed principals in March, July and December to ask about coronavirus safety protocols, attendance issues, learning loss and more. [https://www.k12dive.com/news/a-year-into-covid-19-school-leaders-are-still-adapting-as-uncertainty-per/593797/](https://www.k12dive.com/news/a-year-into-covid-19-school-leaders-are-still-adapting-as-uncertainty-per/593797/)
  - Integrating technology into the classroom has been the overwhelming focus of teacher professional development in recent years. EAB K-12 Strategic Research Director Ben Court estimates nearly 70 percent of professional learning programs have centered around that topic, compared to 30 percent on instruction methods. “Teachers still have a lot of opportunities to become more comfortable or use advanced methods, but other key areas are rising to the top for professional learning,” said Court, who specializes in K-12 leadership development, planning and
strategy. “It’s time to flip the ratio to focus more on instruction.” The coronavirus has required teachers, like their students, to shift how they receive training and support. Even when schools can return to “normal,” these forced changes are resulting in long-term benefits. These are four PD trends to watch in 2021 and beyond.  

Clinical Trials
To view the latest information on 4,636 clinical trials regarding COVID-19  

American Red Cross  

State Updates
New York
- Governor Andrew M. Cuomo reminded insured New Yorkers that they should not be charged for Personal Protective Equipment by in-network healthcare providers under their state-regulated health and dental insurance coverage. Pursuant to State Department of Financial Services guidance, insurers are required to make sure that consumers are not charged PPE-related fees by in-network providers. New Yorkers who have been wrongfully charged are eligible for refund from their insurer. To date, the Department has recovered a total of $414,727 of PPE-related charges for more than 14,000 consumers since the start of the pandemic.  
- Governor Cuomo announced that assuming New York State’s COVID-19 infection rate stays on its current trajectory, indoor dining in New York City can reopen at 25 percent capacity on Valentine’s Day. The reopening will be subject to strict state guidance, which can be found at  
- Governor Cuomo announced a mass vaccination site at Yankee Stadium is under development through a partnership between New York State, New York City, SOMOS Community Care, the New York National Guard and the New York Yankees. With the Bronx positivity rate currently at a concerning 7.6 percent, this site will be reserved specifically for Bronx residents. Information concerning the opening of the facility and scheduling process will be released in the coming days. Additionally, the Governor announced the deployment of ten more community vaccination kits to underserved communities. Specifically, kits are being deployed to four NYCHA Senior Housing Developments, two public housing sites in Rochester and Hempstead, and three church
and community center locations in the Bronx and Brooklyn. The establishment of the Yankee Stadium site, as well as the deployment of these ten community vaccination kits, bolster New York State’s efforts to equitably distribute the COVID-19 vaccine in communities that are underserved by traditional healthcare institutions.  


**New York State Department of Health (DOH)**

For the latest information about COVID-19 testing  
https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-testing#overview

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.  

For the latest COVID-19 information from NYS DOH  
https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home

---

**New Jersey**

- Following the Biden Administration’s health care action, Governor Phil Murphy announced the State is extending the health insurance enrollment period for uninsured residents to sign up for coverage through Get Covered New Jersey, the state’s official health insurance marketplace, in response to the coronavirus pandemic. “Ensuring that our residents have access to quality, affordable health insurance has been a top priority of our administration since day one,” said Governor Murphy. “As we continue our work to save lives and protect New Jerseyans in response to the pandemic, this action will expand opportunities for residents to get the coverage they need to maintain their health and wellbeing. I want to thank President Biden for taking this necessary step at the federal level to further complement the relief efforts of his American Rescue Plan.”  

**Connecticut**
Governor Ned Lamont announced that he plans to introduce legislation during the 2021 regular session of the Connecticut General Assembly with the goal of making broadband internet more accessible to Connecticut residents, particularly those in underserved households. The governor said that while broadband internet access has become more important in recent years than ever before, the COVID-19 pandemic has deepened the digital divide even further, preventing some residents from accessing critical resources. A survey conducted in 2018 found that 23 percent of Connecticut residents did not have internet access, including 21 percent of white households, 35 percent of Hispanic households, and 34 percent of African-American households. [https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2021/01-2021/Governor-Lamont-Announces-Legislative-Proposal-To-Make-Broadband-Internet-More-Accessible](https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2021/01-2021/Governor-Lamont-Announces-Legislative-Proposal-To-Make-Broadband-Internet-More-Accessible)
research projects already ongoing, such as preclinical trials for a vaccine, and projects in development.

For the latest updated NYBC information about 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

For NYC DOHMH updated COVID-19 data page
https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data.page

For NYC DOHMH updated guidance regarding COVID-19 vaccine
https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccines.page

The Vaccine Finder is a one-stop site for New Yorkers to find their nearest COVID-19 vaccination location. The Vaccine Finder can also provide New Yorkers with information to schedule vaccination appointments.
https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/

For the latest COVID-19 information from NYC DOHMH
https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-main.page

Westchester County Department of Health

For the latest breakdown of positive cases in Westchester County as of January 31, 2021
https://wcgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/280339d96db14efd9cc304dba0f3a71d

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 26, 2021-

For the latest COVID-19 information
https://www.putnamcountyny.com/health/coronavirus/

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

President Biden signed an Executive Order (EO) last week that reopens the Affordable Care Act (ACA)’s Federal insurance marketplace for a special enrollment period and removes barriers to enrollment in Medicaid and the health insurance marketplaces.

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/
New York Medical College Leadership News:
Coronavirus and Face Masks: Everything You Need to Know Right Now
Good Housekeeping
1/26/2021
Robert W. Amler, M.D., M.B.A., dean of the School of Health Sciences and Practice and vice president for government affairs

There Is No Vaccine for Selfishness
The Globe Post
1/29/2021
https://theglobepost.com/2021/01/29/no-vaccine-for-selfishness/
Edward C. Halperin, M.D., M.A., chancellor and chief executive officer

VERIFY: Will we need a booster vaccine for every new strain of coronavirus?
WUSA 9
1/28/2021
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:
Dr. Block on WNBC Discussing COVID-19 Vaccination and New Book, "Kelly Gets A Vaccine"
WNBC
1/23/2021
https://youtu.be/yibnlN3Vhdw
Adam E. Block, Ph.D., assistant professor of public health in the Division of Health Policy and Management

Every effort is made to provide accurate and complete information in this newsletter. However, New York Medical College cannot guarantee that there will be no errors. NYMC makes no claims, promises or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the contents of the newsletters or the articles linked herein and further expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions in the contents of this newsletter.

This newsletter is for informational purposes only; it does not constitute medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

New York Medical College
Center for Disaster Medicine
7 Dana Road Suite 511
Valhalla, New York 10595
914-594-1750
https://www.nymc.edu/center-for-disaster-medicine/