

1. Monday COVID Snapshot - A Mixed Bag

Good News: Jurisdictions in a downward trajectory increased, hospitalizations and deaths decreased.

Bad News: jurisdictions in upward trajectory increased.

New Cases (based on 7-day rolling average):

- 35% of jurisdictions are in a **downward trajectory** (was 30% last week, 34% week before that)
- 7% are in **plateau** (was 23% last week & 25% the week before)
- 59% are in **upward trajectory** (was 47% last week & 41% the week before that)
- Big Picture: Since July 24 national peak, US has seen a more than 33.8% decrease in 7-day averages of new cases

National Positivity Rate

- 4.6% positive test rate (was 4.3% last week)

Hospitalizations from COVID

- 7% of inpatients have COVID (was 8% last week, down from a high in April of 24%)

Deaths

- 9% decrease in new deaths from previous week (was 5% increase from previous week last week)
- Deaths are down 40.3%, based on the 7-day average; peak: August 1.

2. Friday Secretary Azar Renewed the Public Health Emergency Designation: “As a result of the continued consequences of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, on this date and after consultation with public health officials as necessary, I, Alex M. Azar II, Secretary of Health and Human Services, pursuant to the authority vested in me under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act, do hereby renew, effective October 23, 2020, my January 31, 2020, determination, that I previously renewed on April 21, 2020 and July 23, 2020, that a public health emergency exists and has existed since January 27, 2020, nationwide.”



Secretary Alex Azar 
@SecAzar

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I just renewed the COVID-19 national public health emergency declaration, effective October 23, 2020.

We will continue our whole-of-America response to the virus and continue our work to ensure Americans have access to the care they need.

3:07 PM · Oct 2, 2020 · Twitter Web App

3. CDC: “COVID-19 can sometimes be spread by airborne transmission”: Today, CDC issued updated guidance to its [How COVID-19 Spreads](#) website, which includes information about the potential for airborne spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC continues to believe, based on current science, that people are more likely to become infected the longer and closer they are to a person with COVID-19. Today’s update acknowledges the existence of some published reports showing limited, uncommon circumstances where people with COVID-19 infected others who were more than 6 feet away or shortly after the COVID-19-positive person left an area. In these instances, transmission occurred in poorly ventilated and enclosed spaces that often involved activities that caused heavier breathing, like singing or exercise. Such environments and activities may contribute to the buildup of virus-carrying particles. CDC’s recommendations remain the same based on existing science and after a thorough technical review of the guidance. People can protect themselves from the virus that causes COVID-19 by staying at least 6 feet away from others, wearing a mask that covers their nose and mouth, washing their hands frequently, cleaning touched surfaces often and staying home when sick.

HHS Leadership Updates

Secretary Azar Testified in Front of House Select Committee on COVID-19 Crisis: On Friday, October 2, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. ET, the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis held a hybrid hearing with Secretary Alex Azar on HHS’s response to the coronavirus pandemic. You can watch the hearing and read Secretary Azar’s 3-page testimony [here](#).

HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Admiral Brett Giroir, M.D. to Participate in the World Health Organization Executive Board Special Session on COVID-19: The World Health Organization is hosting a special session of its Executive Board (EB) to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic and response. HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Admiral Brett Giroir, M.D., will [lead a small delegation from the United States attending the meeting through a virtual platform](#). In addition to HHS and the CDC, the Department of State and the USAID will participate in the EB Special Session. The EB Special Session agenda includes a report by the Director General and the Executive Director of the Health Emergencies Programme as well as other COVID-19-focused items.

Vaccine Update

FDA Commissioner to National Consumers League: The FDA posted a [transcript](#) of Dr. Stephen M. Hahn, M.D.’s remarks to the League about the vaccine review process. In addition to explaining the vaccine review process, he gave the following commitments:

“I want to commit to the American public several important things.

- *First, the FDA will not authorize or approve any COVID-19 vaccine before it has met the agency's rigorous expectations for safety and effectiveness. The FDA will not authorize or approve any vaccine that we will not feel comfortable giving to our own families.*
- *Second, decisions to authorize or approved any COVID-19 vaccine or therapeutic will be made by the dedicated career staff and scientists at FDA through our thorough review processes.*
- *And third, science will guide our decisions, FDA will not permit any pressure from anybody to change that.”* **FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn**

Provide Relief Funding Update

New Opportunity to Apply for Funding: On October 1, 2020, [HHS announced \\$20 billion](#) in new funding for providers on the frontlines of the coronavirus pandemic. Eligible providers include:

- Providers who previously received, rejected or accepted a General Distribution Provider Relief Fund payment. Providers that have already received payments of approximately 2% of annual revenue from patient care may submit more information to become eligible for an additional payment.
- Behavioral health providers, including those that previously received funding and new providers.
- Healthcare providers that began practicing January 1, 2020 through March 31, 2020. This includes Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, dentists, assisted living facilities and behavioral health providers.

The application period begins Monday, October 5, 2020 and ends Friday, November 6, 2020. The application can be found [here](#) and more information and tips for applying can be found at www.hhs.gov/providerrelief.

Latest Payments: As of the week of September 28, HHS made the following payments under the General and Targeted Distributions of the PRF program:

- \$105,112,569,973 in payments to 530,916 provider TINs.
- Of these payments, 346,420 providers (unique TINs) have attested to the Terms and Conditions for \$88,219,656,443 in payments.

A listing of PRF distributions to providers that have accepted the Terms and Conditions can be found at [here](#).

As of September 30, 2020, HHS has made COVID-19 Claims Reimbursement to Health Care Providers and Facilities for Testing and Treatment of the Uninsured payments to 22,335 providers including:

- Testing claims: \$482,097,869
- Treatment claims: \$881,033,078

A listing of health care entities that have agreed to the Terms and Conditions and received claims reimbursement can be found: [here](#).

Recently Added Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): The Provider Relief Fund issued or updated the following FAQs during the week of September 28. The below and the compendium of all FAQs can be found [here](#).

Testing and Treatment

HHS Teams Up with The Rockefeller Foundation to Share Best Practices for Increased COVID-19 Testing: HHS and The Rockefeller Foundation have signed an [agreement to identify and share effective approaches for using rapid point-of-care \(POC\) antigen tests](#) to screen for COVID-19 in communities, with a focus on safely reopening K-12 schools. The partnership establishes a pilot program with select

cities and states in The Rockefeller Foundation's Testing Solutions Group (TSG), a network of public officials devoted to rapidly scaling COVID-19 testing, tracing, and tracking in their communities. HHS will provide at least 120,000 Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card POC SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic tests to pilot sites. The initial pilot cities, selected collaboratively with The Rockefeller Foundation, are Louisville, Ky.; Los Angeles; New Orleans; and Tulsa, Okla. In addition, Rhode Island has been selected as a pilot state.

EUA Update for Veklury (Remdesivir): The FDA revised its Emergency Use Authorization ([EUA](#)) to reflect changes in the distribution and allocation of the antiviral drug Veklury (remdesivir). More information about the revised EUA can be found [here](#).

Warning Letter for Unapproved COVID-19 Products: The FDA has issued a [warning letter](#) to Kerri Rivera and her company KetoKerri, LLC, for the sale of unapproved and misbranded drugs related to the Coronavirus. Products “KK Black Seed Oil,” “KK Breakthrough Vitamin D with Chondroitin & Oleic”, “Stonebreaker,” “KK EDTA with Selenium and Minerals,” “Zeolite,” “Ultra Liquid Zeolite,” and “DR. FITT FIRE FIGHTERS” make fraudulent claims to mitigate, prevent, treat, or cure COVID-19 in people. The products are unapproved new drugs sold in violation of section 505(a) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act), 21 U.S.C. § 355(a), and are also misbranded under section 502 of the FD&C Act, 21 U.S.C. § 352.

Warning Letter for Nephron Product: The FDA has issued a [warning letter](#) to Nephron Pharmaceuticals Corporation (Nephron) due to emails Nephron’s CEO and a sales representative sent concerning its product Budesonide Inhalation Suspension, which were the subject of complaints submitted to the FDA Bad Ad Program. The emails provide evidence that Budesonide is intended for a new use for which it lacks approval, specifically the treatment of symptoms associated with COVID-19, and for which its labeling does not provide adequate directions for use.

Testing Updates: As of today, 267 tests are authorized by FDA under EUAs; these include 212 molecular tests, 51 antibody tests, and 4 antigen tests.

Reopening Information

Staffing Resources: CDC updated [staffing resources and guidance](#) to enhance frontline public health capacity in state, local, tribal, and territorial health departments to intensify the coordinated response to COVID-19.

Information for Specific Populations

Executive Order on Saving Lives Through Increased Support For Mental- and Behavioral-Health Needs: The Trump Administration released an [executive order on saving lives through increased support for mental- and behavioral-health needs](#). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated mental- and behavioral-health conditions as a result of stress from prolonged lockdown orders, lost employment, and social isolation. The executive order uses policy to prevent suicides, drug-related deaths, and poor behavioral-health outcomes, particularly those that are induced or made worse by prolonged State and local COVID-19 shutdown orders. There is also a [fact sheet](#) to go with this executive order.

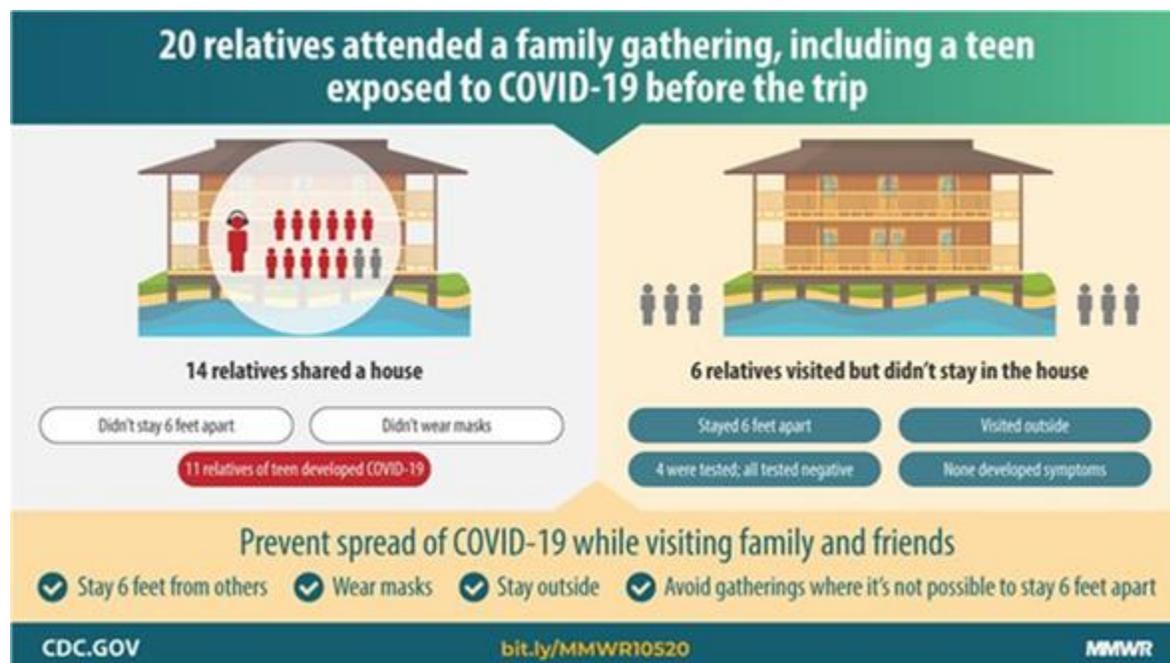
Hidden Consequences – How the COVID Pandemic is Impacting Children (Webinar Series): HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE), in collaboration with ASPR’s Pediatric Centers of Excellence

are collaborating on a [webinar series](#) focused on how the COVID-19 pandemic may affect children. The first webinar was on [child health and wellness](#), future topics will include child emotional and social effects, the impact of COVID-19 on children with special healthcare needs, and how secondary/other disasters may affect children during the pandemic.

Research Updates

Case Series of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Adults Associated with SARS-CoV-2 Infection: CDC released an MMWR on [Case Series of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Adults Associated with SARS-CoV-2 Infection](#) in the U.K. and U.S. between March and August, 2020. Cases reported to CDC and published case reports and series identify MIS-A in adults, who usually require intensive care and can have fatal outcomes. Antibody testing was required to identify SARS-CoV-2 infection in approximately one third of 27 cases. Clinical suspicion and indicated SARS-CoV-2 testing, including antibody testing, might be needed to recognize and treat adults with MIS-A. Further research is needed to understand the pathogenesis and long-term effects of this condition. Ultimately, the recognition of MIS-A reinforces the need for prevention efforts to limit spread of SARS-CoV-2.

Adolescent with COVID-19 as the Source of an Outbreak at a 3-Week Family Gathering: CDC released an MMWR on [Adolescent with COVID-19 as the Source of an Outbreak at a 3-Week Family Gathering](#) in four states during June and July, 2020. There is increasing evidence that children and adolescents can efficiently transmit SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) (1–3). During July–August 2020, four state health departments and CDC investigated a COVID-19 outbreak that occurred during a 3-week family gathering of five households in which an adolescent aged 13 years was the index and suspected primary patient; 11 subsequent cases occurred.



COVIDView Weekly Summary: CDC updated the COVIDView weekly surveillance summary of U.S. COVID-19 activity. Nationally, indicators that track COVID-19 activity continued to decline or remain stable (change of $\leq 0.1\%$); however, three regions reported an increase in the percentage of specimens

testing positive for SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing COVID-19, and two of those regions also reported an increase in the percentage of [visits for influenza-like illness \(ILI\) or COVID-like illness \(CLI\) to emergency departments](#) (EDs) or outpatient providers. Mortality attributed to COVID-19 declined but remains above the epidemic threshold.

Non-COVID Accolades: Today, NIH intramural researcher Dr. Harvey Alter was announced as the [recipient of the 2020 Nobel Prize](#) in Physiology or Medicine. Dr. Alter was awarded this accolade for his contributions to the discovery of the hepatitis C virus.



Secretary Alex Azar
@SecAzar

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Incredible news for the entire @NIH and @HHSGov family this morning: The NIH's Dr. Harvey Alter, along with two others, was awarded the 2020 @NobelPrize in Physiology or Medicine for the discovery of the Hepatitis C virus. Congratulations! #NobelPrize

 **The Nobel Prize** @NobelPrize · 10h

BREAKING NEWS:
The 2020 #NobelPrize in Physiology or Medicine has been awarded jointly to Harvey J. Alter, Michael Houghton and Charles M. Rice "for the discovery of Hepatitis C virus."



Harvey J. Alter	Michael Houghton	Charles M. Rice
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"for the discovery of Hepatitis C virus"

THE NOBEL ASSEMBLY AT KAROLINSKA INSTITUTET

9:50 AM · Oct 5, 2020 · Twitter Web App