

Hospice and Palliative Care Resources for the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 08/18/21

NHPCO publishes the COVID-19 Update once a week on Wednesdays. Should there be breaking news of importance to the provider community, we will communicate that as needed.

*“No matter how much falls on us, we keep plowing ahead.
That’s the only way to keep the roads clear.” – Greg Kincaid*

Policy Updates

Joint Statement from HHS Public Health and Medical Experts on COVID-19 Booster Shots

“We have developed a plan to begin offering these booster shots this fall subject to FDA conducting an independent evaluation and determination of the safety and effectiveness of a third dose of the Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines and CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) issuing booster dose recommendations based on a thorough review of the evidence. We are prepared to offer booster shots for all Americans beginning the week of September 20 and starting 8 months after an individual’s second dose. At that time, the individuals who were fully vaccinated earliest in the vaccination rollout, including many health care providers, nursing home residents, and other seniors, will likely be eligible for a booster. We would also begin efforts to deliver booster shots directly to residents of long-term care facilities at that time, given the distribution of vaccines to this population early in the vaccine rollout and the continued increased risk that COVID-19 poses to them.”

“We also anticipate booster shots will likely be needed for people who received the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine. Administration of the J&J vaccine did not begin in the U.S. until March 2021, and we expect more data on J&J in the next few weeks. With those data in hand, we will keep the public informed with a timely plan for J&J booster shots as well.” [Read the release](#) on the CDC website.

Provider Update

U.S. COVID-19 Cases Back to Pre-Vaccination Levels

The [Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy](#) report, “For the first time since February, the United States reported more than 900,000 COVID-19 cases last week—with the country represented 20% of global cases—a sign the pandemic surge caused by the Delta (B1617.2) variant has stalled the progress made by an aggressive vaccine rollout that dampened cases this spring and summer. Cases are on the rise in 46 states according to USA Today. Hot spots continue in Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Oregon, Hawaii, and Mississippi. Oregon reported 11,564 cases in the week ending Friday, the paper said, topping its December pandemic peak by more than 7.2%.”

The number of children hospitalized in this country is now also at a new pandemic high, with confirmed and suspected pediatric hospitalizations at 1,902 on Aug 14, according to Department of Health and Human Services data, [Reuters reports](#). Though children currently make up about 2.4% of

hospitalizations, that percent is expected to climb as people 12 years and older are increasingly vaccinated, leaving younger children vulnerable to Delta.

Only 50.7% of the total US population is vaccinated against the virus, with 72% of Americans over 18 with at least one dose. In total, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [COVID Data Tracker](#) shows 415,957,645 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been delivered in the country and 356,433,665 have been administered.”

Rise of Delta Variant and Waning Immunity are Fueling Breakthrough Infections

“A growing number of studies suggest that coronavirus vaccines continue to provide strong protection against severe disease and hospitalization, but their ability to prevent mild illness is less robust today than the original clinical trial studies demonstrated a year ago. The virus has mutated. The delta variant is rampant. Some elements of immunity may be gradually waning for people who got shots many months ago. New research studies in the United States, Israel, Britain and Qatar have shown a partial erosion in the effectiveness of vaccines against mild to moderate infections. Immunocompromised people are winding up hospitalized despite being vaccinated.” Read more on [The Washington Post](#) website (subscription may be required).

Vaccines Show Declining Effectiveness Against Infection Overall but Strong Protection Against Hospitalization Amid Delta Variant

[The Washington Post reports](#), “Three studies published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that protection against the coronavirus from vaccines declined in the midsummer months when the more contagious delta variant rose to dominance in the United States. At the same time, protection against hospitalization was strong for weeks after vaccination, indicating the shots will generate immune fighters that stave off the worst effects of the virus and its current variations. Data from these studies persuaded the Biden administration to develop a plan for additional doses to bolster the immune systems of people vaccinated months earlier. The trio of reports, published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, the CDC’s scientific digest, also reinforce the idea that vaccines alone will be unable to lift the nation out of the pandemic.” (Subscription may be required to access article.)

Children Hospitalized with COVID-19 in U.S. Hits Record Number

[Reuters reports](#), “The number of children hospitalized with COVID-19 in the United States hit a record high of just over 1,900 on Saturday, as hospitals across the South were stretched to capacity fighting outbreaks caused by the highly transmissible Delta variant. The numbers of newly hospitalized COVID-19 patients aged 18-29, 30-39 and 40-49 also hit record highs this week, according to data from the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).”

Penicillin Allergy Linked to Worse COVID-19 Outcomes

“Patients with penicillin allergy had a higher risk for worse COVID-19 outcomes, according to study results published in The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice. These outcomes include hospitalization, ICU requirement, acute respiratory failure and mechanical ventilation. However, there were no differences in mortality risk between those with and without penicillin allergy, researchers noted.” Read more on the [Healio website](#).

Resources

FDA Update on Vaccination for Adolescents

A new FDA [Consumer Update highlights 5 Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccination for Adolescents](#). The FDA has authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for emergency use to prevent COVID-19 in people 12 and older. The CDC recommends COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 12 and older.

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