

US coronavirus cases rise as Biden, media declare pandemic over

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Confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the United States rose 17 percent during the two weeks leading up to the July 4 holiday weekend, figures which belie the ongoing campaign by the Biden administration and US media to declare the country's "independence" from the pandemic.

As in numerous other countries, including Russia, South Africa and the United Kingdom, the renewed spread of the disease in the US has been caused by the Delta variant. An analysis from the *Financial Times* notes that an estimated "three out of five cases nationally" are from infections of the new variant. In some states, the proportions are even worse: 90 percent of cases in Missouri are from the Delta variant, 89 percent in Arkansas, 87 percent in Utah, 79 percent in Kansas and 78 percent in Colorado, as well as 72 percent in California, 69 percent in Texas, and 65 percent in New York.

In the words of World Health Organization Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, "We're in a very dangerous period of this pandemic. ... Delta has been detected in at least 98 countries and is spreading quickly in countries with low and high vaccination coverage."

Such comments are in sharp contrast to Biden's actions over the weekend, which have been to visit the Traverse City National Cherry Festival and then to stop for ice cream, all while promoting the lie that "America's Back Together" and that the pandemic is essentially at an end. The president is also hosting a 1000-person event at the White House, giving an implicit go-ahead to other such events across the country. First Lady Jill Biden declared at a rally, "Doesn't the air just smell so much sweeter without our masks?"

Biden's Coronavirus Response Coordinator Jeff

Zients had a particularly callous comment, claiming that the country has "a lot to celebrate." No doubt Wall Street oligarchs and corporate executives will be celebrating the stock market, where the Dow Jones Industrial Average has increased by about 5,000 points since January. The working class on the other hand, whatever immediate celebrations that are being held, is remembering the nearly 35 million cases of the pandemic in the United States and the more than 621,000 dead.

Moreover, the spread of the Delta variant has raised many concerns about the decrease in vaccination rates across the country. The CDC estimates that 156 million people are fully vaccinated in the United States, just under 47 percent, and that about two-thirds have received at least one dose. And a recent Kaiser Family Foundation report found that very few who haven't gotten vaccinated currently plan to do so.

In other words, through a combination of the fact that the pandemic was allowed to spread so far and mutate so much in the first place and the anti-scientific conceptions and cultural backwardness in the population engendered by the American ruling elite, coronavirus vaccines will not be enough to halt the pandemic.

The spike in Missouri in particular underscores the dangers of the Delta variant as hospitalizations in some areas have increased by as much as 225 percent since June 1. Of those hospitalized, 37 percent are less than 45 years old, and daily new cases have doubled since May. "Missouri is pretty much the epicentre of the Delta variant in the US right now," Alexander Garza, health official for the St. Louis area, told the *Financial Times*. Only 39 percent of the population in Missouri has been fully vaccinated.

And as the international situation shows, what is

happening in the US now is only the precursor of what is to come. There are now more than 23,000 daily cases in the United Kingdom and rising, more than 10 times the case count before the Delta variant began spreading. Deaths in Britain have also begun to rise, doubling over the past month to 17 every day.

Hospitalizations in the UK are also rising. Dr. Eric Feigl-Ding noted on Twitter that, “hospitalizations in England due to #DeltaVariant are now accelerating upward even faster than before, according to new data compiled by @COVID19actuary.” Hospital admissions spiked above 250 a day at the end of June, the highest levels since March, despite about half of the population being fully vaccinated.

In Russia, new cases have tripled since the beginning of June, and deaths have spiked to 654, nearly double what they were, in the sharpest increase in known deaths in that country since the pandemic began. As a result of the spread, the country has begun to require vaccinations for those that work in government offices, health care, education, retail and other service industries.

The surge in cases in South Africa is among the most troubling. Daily case counts since April have increased almost 19-fold and have exceeded the peaks in January. An increase in deaths followed, with daily fatalities currently at 247, four times what they were in April and May. Less than one percent of the country’s population is fully vaccinated, according to Our World in Data.

Many other countries face a similar predicament, which led Dr. Tedros on Friday to renew his call to “equitably share protective gear, oxygen, tests, treatments and vaccines” in order to save lives around the world. He also made clear the continued necessity for fundamental epidemiological measures. “Public health and social measures like strong surveillance, strategic testing, early case detection, isolation and clinical care remain critical as well as masking, physical distance, avoiding crowded places and keeping indoor areas well-ventilated are the basis for the response.”

Such measures continue to be critical, especially as scientific research continues to show that the coronavirus is airborne and spreads easily. An article in *Infection & Chemotherapy* traced transmission through two people that visited the same unventilated bathroom 40 minutes apart and followed up with CCTV footage

and genomic sequencing of the virus, further confirming just how infectious the coronavirus is, particularly the variants, and how necessary public health measures are to save lives.

Workers and youth must take heed, especially as they are forced back into workplaces and schools in the final phases of the reopening drive of governments in the US and the world over. The coronavirus pandemic is far from over and the official celebrations this weekend are aimed at both papering over the immense suffering of the past 18 months and concealing the dangers of the weeks and months to come.



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