

COVID-19 cases across the US have more than doubled in the last two weeks

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In her typically hypocritical and insensitive manner, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) director Dr. Rochelle Walensky, after admitting that "we are going to continue to see preventable cases, hospitalization and, sadly, deaths among the unvaccinated," sought to blame this on the poor choices of those have not yet been vaccinated.

We're having "a pandemic of the unvaccinated," she said, as though there was no connection between the evident failure of the Biden administration's vaccination campaign and its broader effort to push workers back to their jobs and students back to school, regardless of the mounting danger of infection from the highly transmissible Delta variant of the coronavirus.

The unvaccinated, on whom she blames the pandemic, also includes 40 million school children for whom there is no vaccine as yet, but who will be fully exposed to the risks of coronavirus when public schools reopen, either now, during the summer months, or in August and September, when the regular school sessions begin.

Instead, Walensky reiterated the demand that schools be fully reopened for the fall and the advice that fully vaccinated individuals need not wear masks, while claiming, "things can still get worse, which is why we're doing everything we can now to make sure that that doesn't happen," a patent falsehood.

As a teacher on the Facebook group Teachers Against Dying appropriately noted, "[That] Walensky is shifting the blame is epic! The unvaccinated did not cause, nor are they perpetuating, the pandemic. The CDC is wildly culpable for massive death and illness and continues with their 'shitty' and baseless advice."

Teachers and parents should note that the CDC has confirmed the role children play as vectors of transmission. In yet-to-be-published data from June 10, 2021, during a presentation on the epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2 in children and adolescents, Dr. Hannah Kirking warned that "kids transmit as efficiently as adults and are infected at rates similar to adults." This information has continued to be suppressed by the CDC and the media, which continue to endorse school reopenings.

Speaking on CNBC's "Squawk Box" on Wednesday, former head of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Scott Gottlieb offered a more compelling and starker reminder that

the pandemic is far from being over even for those fully vaccinated. He said, "If you're in a location where there is dense spread, and there are parts of the country where it's very dense right now, I think people need to start taking precautions, including people who are fully vaccinated if you're a vulnerable individual."

He added, "The Delta variant is going to move its way through the country over the course of August and September, maybe into October. That's what the modeling shows, that's what we expected, that the peak of this epidemic would really be sometime around the end of September, back-to-school season...It's going to get worse before it gets better in terms of the spread of these infections right now."

Despite the CDC's insistence that face coverings are not required for vaccinated individuals, Los Angeles County, where about 52 percent of the residents are fully vaccinated, has reinstated the indoor mask mandate in the face of rising infections.

On Saturday, 1,800 new COVID-19 cases were reported in the county. Barbara Ferrer, the local public health director, said in a statement, "Given the increased intermingling among unmasked people where vaccination status is unknown, the millions of people still unvaccinated, and the increased circulation of the highly transmissible Delta variant, we are seeing a rapid increase in COVID-19 infections."

The number of new COVID-19 cases across the United States has been accelerating since reaching its low point near the end of June. The seven-day moving average has climbed to more than 31,000 new infections per day, a 135 percent rise compared to 14 days ago.

All states across the country, even those with high vaccination rates, are seeing a rise in infections. Twenty-eight states had cases climb more than 100 percent in a two-week period. In conjunction with these new surges, hospitalizations for the treatment of severe COVID-19 infections have also risen to a seven-day moving average of over 21,400, a 33 percent increase from the lows in June. Twenty-five percent of those hospitalizations are in intensive care units.

The US will reach the milestone of 35 million cumulative COVID-19 cases early this week, with 625,000 reported deaths attributed to complications with the infections since the

pandemic. These figures remain the highest in any country across the globe.

Attesting to the benefits offered by vaccinations, the rise in hospitalizations and fatalities associated with COVID-19 complications is essentially occurring among unvaccinated patients, hence predominately among younger people. However, their youth does not provide a guarantee against the danger of more severe and even life-threatening consequences. Health officials are growing concerned that younger unvaccinated people are accessing healthcare with severe COVID-19 symptoms, necessitating admission into hospitals for treatment more frequently than in the earlier period of the pandemic.

Dr. Dana Hawkinson, an infectious disease specialist at the University of Kansas Health System, remarked, “We are seeing patients in their 20s and 30s who are otherwise healthy who are coming because of worsening symptoms ... today, in the hospital, in the ICU, who are needing to have ventilator and high oxygen support.”

Dr. Faisal Khan, director of St. Louis County’s public health department, said on MSNBC, “Two weeks ago there were 89 patients admitted to ICU beds for COVID-related conditions across the St. Louis metro area. Each of these individuals was unvaccinated, and they were from the relatively younger age group between 18 to 50.”

At Miami’s Baptist Hospital, COVID-19 patient numbers are growing exponentially, with now more than 70 people being treated for their infections. Dr. Sergio Segarra, the chief medical officer, speaking with CNN, reminisced, “I remember seeing articles in the news about hospitals in California with empty COVID units, and I longed for that experience. It’s an experience we were working our way towards that, unfortunately, has taken a rather sad turn.” He explained that many are very young, in their 20s and 30s, who are critically ill and dying.

What makes the situation particularly dire is that the US vaccination campaign has slowed dramatically, with only 48.5 percent of its people fully vaccinated. The seven-day average of inoculations has remained barely over 500,000 per day for more than a week. Biden’s goal of 70 percent of adults receiving at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccines by July 4, a meaningless target given that a single dose offers minimal protection against the present strain, has been pushed back to mid-August.

Breaking this down by age groups, about 84 percent of adults 65 and older have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccines. Almost 72 percent have been fully vaccinated, accounting for the most significant proportion by age group. COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted the elderly. Though they account for 16 percent of the population, they make up 80 percent of all those that have died from COVID-19 during the pandemic so far.

Approximately 66 percent of those between the ages of 50

and 64 have been fully vaccinated, while for those aged 40 to 49, 56.4 percent have been fully vaccinated. Less than half of adults between 25 to 39 have been fully inoculated. That drops to 42 percent for 18 to 24. Only 10 percent of people 12-17 have been fully vaccinated, and no vaccines are available yet for children under 12.

There are enormous geographic variations: states in the Southeast and parts of the Midwest and Rocky Mountain areas that won’t see the “70 percent of adults fully vaccinated” well into winter or next year. States like Wyoming, Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, Alaska, Ohio, Indiana, and Louisiana, which are below the national averages, are also seeing the pace of vaccination declining from the previous week.

According to Kaiser Family Foundation, regions that rank high on the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), along with higher poverty levels, also have lower vaccination rates. In areas where the share of people 65 and older living in poverty is greater than 11 percent, only 58.8 percent are vaccinated compared to 69 percent vaccinated where fewer than seven percent of the elderly are in poverty.

The Axios website, in a survey of adults on their vaccination status, conducted June 9-21, found that those earning less than \$50,000 by household income accounted for 52.7 percent of all unvaccinated Americans. Though political affiliations, media misinformation, and religious backwardness all play a role, the socioeconomic factors appear decisive.

Julia Raifman, a health policy professor at Boston University, told Axios, “A lot of low-income workers are working hard to provide food and housing. That may mean it’s hard for them to find a time to get vaccinated.” The issue of unpaid time off is a concern, given vaccine side effects. Companies are not always making it easy for workers to get these life-saving treatments despite many low-income workers still wanting to get vaccinated.

Even the CDC noted that although vaccine eligibility has expanded, “vaccination coverage among adults was lower among those living in counties with lower socioeconomic status and with a higher percentage of households with children, single parents, and persons with disabilities.”

It should be noted that since Joe Biden took his oath of office in January, close to 200,000 people have died from COVID-19. His administration, the CDC, and both Democratic and Republican state governments have been working furiously to dismantle the safeguards of public health measures that have saved lives, in order to push workers back to their jobs. Vaccines have been used to declare the pandemic over and demand a return to capitalist exploitation as usual.



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