

# New US coronavirus surge is growing faster than the spring and summer waves of 2020

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A horrific new surge of COVID-19 cases is sweeping across the US, driven by the highly contagious and deadly Delta variant of the virus as well as the reactionary response of the government at the federal and state levels.

The count of daily cases in the US reached 92,405 on Thursday, approximately the same peak number during the surge in spring when vaccinations stood at just 20 percent of the population. Meanwhile, both hospitalizations and deaths are rising again.

The seven-day averages of all three metrics show a precipitous increase across the US as the Delta variant is targeting unvaccinated sections of the population. According to the health sciences news website STAT, the month of July has seen the fastest increase in cases in the US since last winter. In an analysis published on Monday, STAT said a new analysis of COVID-19 case data “reveals this new wave is already outpacing the spring and summer waves of 2020.”

STAT’s analysis brings together data from the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University and Our World in Data, along with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data to calculate the rate of weekly case acceleration. The new method measures the rate at which the daily number of cases is speeding up nationally and by each state.

STAT points to the alarming situation, “This view of the data reveals that the United States is currently in the midst of a fifth wave of cases and that this new wave is growing faster than the first and second waves ... ”

In response to the surge, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new, thoroughly inadequate recommendations on Tuesday, calling for mask wearing, including by vaccinated individuals. The CDC itself was responsible for many states completely removing any mask requirements in May when it said

that vaccinated people did not need to wear masks.

The policy of the CDC was in direct defiance of the warnings being made by leading epidemiologists who said that another catastrophic wave was imminent. For example, on March 7, Michael Osterholm said on NBC’s *Meet the Press*, “Let me just say we are in the eye of the hurricane right now... So right now, we do have to keep America as safe as we can from this virus, by not letting up on any of the public health measures we’ve taken, and we need to get people vaccinated as quickly as we can.”

The STAT analysis shows that states with the fastest expansion of the pandemic—such as Louisiana, Florida, Missouri, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas—have vaccination rates below the national average.

Of the situation in Louisiana, where only 36 percent of the population has been vaccinated, the STAT report showed the highest rate of case acceleration of any state. Louisiana, Florida and Arkansas have case acceleration rates that are many multiples of the rates of three-quarters of the other states.

A report in the *Texas Tribune* on Thursday said that hospital officials worry that the “staggering and frightening” hospitalization rates are pushing facilities to capacity while “staffing is short and workers are exhausted.” Some hospitals in rural Texas are reaching capacity and are on high alert. The *Tribune* report said, “hospitalizations in Bexar County rose by nearly 8 percent” in one night as “almost 100 people were admitted with severe COVID to local facilities on Tuesday alone.”

Meanwhile, the report went on, “In Dallas County, COVID hospitalizations have increased by 99 percent over the past two weeks, reaching 376 earlier this week. The local numbers are expected to hit between 800 and

1,000 by mid-August, according to forecasters at UT-Southwestern Medical Center,” and, “the rising hospitalizations rates have spread outside of the heavily populated metro areas that first began to report increases a few weeks ago. Now they are being seen in all corners of the state, triggering pleas from hospitals for state-backed staffing help to handle the increasing pressure.”

As July 27, 43.4 percent of Texans had been vaccinated. Texas was one of the first states to remove all restrictions, including its mask mandate, last March. Republican Governor Greg Abbott said at the time, “With this executive order, we are ensuring that all businesses and families in Texas have the freedom to determine their own destiny.”

In Arkansas, Republican Governor Asa Hutchinson declared a public health emergency on Thursday as the state recorded 2,843 new cases and one of the largest single day increases since the beginning of the pandemic. Hutchinson said that the White House was sending federal assistance to help bring health care workers into the state to staff medical facilities handling the surge.

Arkansas has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the US at approximately 35 percent. While the governor is calling for a special legislative session to overturn a law that he signed himself in April that prohibits state and local mask mandates, he also said there would not be another statewide mask rule or new restrictions on business.

In Missouri, statewide hospitalizations for COVID-19 have more than doubled and the number of ICU patients has more than tripled since the beginning of June. A report in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* on Wednesday said that there is alarming increase in the number of cases among children under the age of 12 in Southwest Missouri.

The *Post-Dispatch* report quoted Springfield-Greene County Health Director Katie Towns who said, “We’ve seen a rise in cases in that 0-11 age group, and we’ve also seen outbreaks in settings like day cares and camps. We’ve moved to prioritize those types of cases so we can hopefully control disease spread among those who are most vulnerable.” The vaccination rate in Missouri is 41.1 percent.

Projections by the COVID-19 Scenario Modeling Hub predict that the nationwide surge will accelerate

throughout the remainder of the summer and into the fall before peaking in mid-October. The hub’s “ensemble” projection combines ten different models from academic institutions and outlines four scenarios based on the Delta variant’s spread and US vaccination rates.

The model predicts approximately 60,000 cases and 850 deaths each day in the US. The model forecasts that the death rate will drop to approximately 300 per day, the current death level in the US. This means that somewhere between 100,000 and 120,000 Americans will die from the coronavirus between now and the end of the year.

Justin Lessler, PhD, an epidemiologist at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill who is on the scenario consortium, responded to the severity of these projections. “What’s going on in the country with the virus is matching our most pessimistic scenarios. We might be seeing synergistic effects of people becoming less cautious in addition to the impacts of the Delta variant.”

The present surge—along with the previous waves of the pandemic that have now killed more than 600,000 people in the US and more than 4 million internationally—is the responsibility of the capitalist ruling elites and their political representatives in the Democratic and Republican parties who have, from the beginning, placed the accumulation of wealth above the health of the public.



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