

CDC Director Walensky dismisses the seriousness of child COVID-19 hospitalizations

Benjamin Mateus
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In remarks made Wednesday morning on MSNBC and repeated in a similar form on four other morning interview programs, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), dismissed the significance of the skyrocketing number of children being infected with COVID-19 and hospitalized.

Asked about the dangers from the Omicron variant to children, she said, “Yeah, really important question. So, we are seeing higher numbers of children in the hospitals. Of course, this is a common time of year for children to be admitted in the hospitals. And some of the things we’re seeing in the trends is they’re not heading to the ICU more often, that we can tell. Many of them are actually coming in for another reason. But they happen to be tested when they come in and they’re found incidentally to have COVID. And third, and really importantly, most of those children are not yet vaccinated. So, the message here is get your children vaccinated.”

These deceptive remarks were made as Omicron runs wild, and the Biden administration washes its hands of the catastrophe. The US daily average number of cases has climbed to 267,305, and new infections have reached a single-day high of 380,751. Admissions for COVID-19 are rapidly rising, with close to 75,000 now hospitalized for complications of their illnesses.

Meanwhile, beleaguered health care systems are facing a repeated onslaught of patients. Atop these grim statistics closing the year, COVID-19 cases are fast approaching 55 million, and more than 844,000 have died, including more than 1,000 children.

The most obvious contradiction in Walensky’s statement stems from the fact that she acknowledges that the uncontrolled spread of Omicron has produced a significant increase in pediatric hospitalizations and that children also have much lower vaccination rates than any other age group. After conceding these objective facts, she then inserts a false corollary by suggesting that hospital admissions for all causes are seasonally high at this time of year, and due to diligence on the part of health care systems to test patients for COVID-19, more pediatric cases are being detected.

Last year, when the winter wave was ripping through communities, and COVID-19 vaccines were just being introduced, a massive wave of hospitalizations followed infections in every age category, including children. At the same time, former

President Trump continued with his usual ignorant claims that far too much testing was occurring. There is a revealing parallel to Walensky’s remarks.

In fact, during every surge of infections, there has been a surge in hospitalizations and death in every age category, including children. This is an established objective observation with SARS-CoV-2 infections and congruent with developing events in real time with Omicron. It is a dangerous pathogen that demands the mobilization of broad-based public health measures to protect and save lives. Yet, once more, children are facing the brunt of the COVID-19 tsunami while Walensky hides behind a carefully worded rationale.

Her attempt to deflect the cause of hospitalization to “other reasons” is not supported by any evidence on her part and highlights her reckless characterization of the situation and the complete disregard of the Biden administration for the safety and welfare of these innocent victims of the ruling elite’s “herd immunity” policy.

The Community Profile Report published on December 28, 2021, slide 29, published by the CDC, demonstrates that recent hospitalizations have been climbing for every age group over the previous week as a byproduct of a massive surge in community transmission. Specifically, for pediatric and young adult patients, the rates of hospitalizations have been the highest across almost every region in the country precisely because they are unvaccinated and have been attending schools and universities. These connections were exhaustively reviewed by principled scientists for many months and have received general acceptance by the community at large.

Since the beginning of December, when the first case of Omicron was detected in the US, pediatric cases have steadily been accelerating upwards from 132,000 infections the week ending December 2, 2021, to 199,000 the week ending December 23, 2021, a 51 percent rise in cases. The most significant jump was seen before Christmas weekend, and hospitalizations are now keeping pace with this trend.

The surge of new pediatric hospitalizations for the last two weeks in December is consistent with the surge of new admissions reported in mid-August, when the numbers of new pediatric COVID-19 cases were at a similar stage during the Delta wave. As expected, hospitalizations spiked in early September, lagging

COVID-19 cases by several weeks.

Additionally, in the Northeast, where the rise in infections among children is most dramatic, pediatric hospitalizations have jumped five-fold in New York City and doubled in Washington D.C. this month. Both these regions are facing an explosion of daily new cases. For example, the seven-day average of daily infections in New York has jumped from 7,000 on December 1 to over 38,500, while D.C. now has the highest per capita rate of COVID-19 infections across the country. The implication is clear that when infections rise, so will hospitalizations, a point that Dr. Walensky is attempting to dismiss.

A recent NBC News analysis of the Department of Health and Human Services data found that the average number of children hospitalized with COVID-19 rose from a low of 1,270 after the Thanksgiving break to 1,933 after the Christmas break, up 52 percent. It has since increased to 2,100 in just the last three days.

The states that have contributed the most to the rise in pediatric cases—Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York and Ohio—are also the states that the surge in infections has been most intense. Dr. Buddy Creech, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee, told NBC, “We saw similar things happen when the Delta variant came along. We had taken for granted that children were relatively under-affected by COVID, and we saw an uptick in the number of children infected and therefore admitted to the hospital with complications.”

Corresponding with the rise and fall in hospitalizations, the ebb and flow of pediatric COVID-19 deaths have also been consistent with surges of COVID-19 infections among children. Figure 2, based on data provided in the weekly report from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), deaths peaked in February 2021 after the last winter surge. Then at the end of summer, pediatric cases and hospitalizations surged again, with deaths peaking at the end of September and October. And with the current surge, deaths are climbing once more.

Of the 721 AAP reported deaths among children during the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 500 took place after Joe Biden was sworn in as president. Half of all pediatric COVID-19 deaths occurred in just the last five months, primarily due to a return to in-class instruction that paved the way to a massive surge in infections.

Dr. Stanley Spinner, chief medical officer at Texas Children’s Pediatrics & Urgent Care in Houston, speaking with CNN said, “I think we are going to see more numbers now than we have ever seen. Cases are continuing to rise between Christmas gatherings, and we’re going to continue to see more numbers this week from that.”

On average, there have been 305 children with COVID-19 in hospitals each day this week. This figure is 11 percent shy of the peaks at the end of August and early September, when 342 children were admitted on average. The current surge in admissions will surpass even this figure. Dr. Spinner continued, “Now we’re going to have New Year’s on top of that this coming weekend, with more people getting together—more exposures and then those numbers will continue to climb.”

Notably, Dr. Walensky’s comments were also aimed at

ameliorating concerns raised by school districts and universities to return to remote learning, considering the explosive rise in cases and the highly contagious nature of the Omicron variant.

District superintendent Kenneth Hamilton in Mount Vernon, a New York suburb, told the *Guardian*, “I have been very reluctant to close schools, but given the current trends in COVID cases, it would be risky not to do so.” The district is planning to remain virtual until at least January 18.

All students at Prince George’s County, Maryland, one of the largest school districts in the US, have switched back to virtual learning. Monica Goldson, chief executive for the school system, given the jump in infection rates, said, “Educators must be able to deliver in-person instruction and other activities in conditions that prioritize their own health, as well as the well-being of the school community. The increased positivity rates have significantly challenged the ability to do so, causing anxiety among many school communities and disruption to the school day.”

More than 300 schools in Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico and New York will remain closed after the winter break. Dan Domenech, the School Superintendents Association executive director, told *Newsweek*, “This is the third school year affected by this pandemic. Just when we thought this past October—when we had about 98 percent of kids back in schools in person—that things were moving in the right direction, here we are right back where we were last year.”

This characterization is correct, but the blame for this crisis rests directly on the policies adopted by the public health leadership that takes its marching orders from Wall Street executives. Dr. Walensky’s comments only serve to dismiss the dangers posed by the coronavirus to children in order to assure school districts across the country that it is safe to remain open.

This in turn means their parents can remain at work. Her remarks on children, just as much as the new CDC guidelines reducing isolation and quarantine, have the same purpose: to ensure the working class will continue producing profits for regardless of the status of their health or that of their children.



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