

# US hospitalizations for COVID-19 rapidly closing in on pandemic high

Benjamin Mateus  
7 January 2022

According to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), as of January 7, 2022, inpatient beds in use for COVID-19 have reached 132,000. The highest peak in admissions occurred on January 14, 2021, when over 142,000 people were admitted for COVID-19. Intensive care units are presently operating at over 82 percent capacity nationwide, and one in five is at 95 percent capacity. More than a quarter of all patient admissions to these highly specialized treatment units are for COVID-19.

Hospital admits are climbing for every age category, but are highest for those 60 years and older, whose admission numbers have doubled since Christmas Eve. This age group is the most prone to complications despite vaccination status.

Health officials indicate that admissions are expected to continue to surge. What differentiates recent hospitalizations from last winter's is that the explosive upswing in admissions is placing such a tremendous strain on the national health infrastructure, operating with a much-reduced workforce. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, around 450,000 health care workers have quit during the pandemic.

In little over one month, the US has added 10 million more cases of COVID infection to its ledger, which will surpass 60 million this weekend. The number of active infections has ballooned to over 16.6 million, implying that an astounding one in 20 people in the US are currently positive on testing and considered infective. One in four tests in the US are positive for COVID-19 infection, indicating that there is a vast undertesting of the population.

Yesterday, more than three-quarters of a million people were confirmed infected. The seven-day average of daily infections, continuing its meteoric rise, has reached 610,173. The daily COVID-19 death toll is

also steadily trending upwards. More than 2,140 people died from their infection, raising the cumulative death toll to 856,000, according to the Worldometer dashboard.

The present infection level has led to an unprecedented number of health care workers calling in sick or isolating due to exposure to the coronavirus. Many are being forced to work despite knowing they are infected, with the attendant risk of infecting their patients, leading to growing frustration and resentment.

Emergency first responders in Los Angeles and New York City are out by the hundreds. Staffing shortages are becoming dire at several major health systems in California, Florida, Texas and New York, creating massive gridlock and delays for patients, many of whom are waiting hours for their nurse or caregiver to reach their room.

As hospital administrators across the country shift gears to employ damage-control measures, elective surgeries are once more being postponed to redirect their limited workforce to the care of patients infected with COVID-19. However, the term elective only hides the reality that these procedures are still essential for the health of these patients. Their postponement can have significant ramifications for their well-being.

As Cynthia Cox, vice president at Kaiser Family Foundations, explained, such surgeries can still be crucial. During the pandemic, tens of thousands of people have needlessly died from non-COVID-19 causes because of these delays in care. "It's often cancer surgeries," she noted to Reuters, "or other kinds of care that still need to happen in a very timely manner for people's safety and health."

In the face of the human catastrophe that is playing out in the corridors of emergency departments and hospitals, even the Director of the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC), Dr. Rochelle Walensky, had to concede Friday on NBC News' Today Show, "I don't believe we've seen the peak yet here in the United States."

Walensky, rather than acknowledging the bankruptcy of the White House and CDC's coordinated criminal and deadly policies to keep America open, has resorted to private meetings with "prominent Democratic media consultant Mandy Grunwald to improve her communication skills," according to CNN. Even scientists at the CDC are growing frustrated over her handling of the pandemic, as she crafts guidance exclusively with a select circle of top advisers. In several news interviews she openly stated that the isolation guidelines "really had a lot to do with what we thought people would be able to tolerate."

Clearly, the *people* in her statement refers to the CEOs and bankers who determine the pandemic response plan, as evidenced by the letter sent to Walensky from Delta Airlines CEO Ed Bastian on December 21, 2021, demanding that isolation periods be reduced from 10 days to five.

As one CDC scientist, speaking on condition of anonymity, told CNN, "She's dispensing with this consultative process that we've always had in place that sort of allowed us to make sure that our science was good. The lack of engagement and consultation on that obviously contributed to a lot of the outrage."

In other words, Walensky is taking her marching orders from top Democratic Party advisers who have direct connections with the Biden administration and the financial elite, and is not being guided by the scientists and the science she claims to follow.

The deadly implications of the reckless guidelines she continues to advance have garnered the enmity of principled epidemiologists, public health experts and the working class in general.

On January 5, the CDC quietly published its forecast of COVID-19 deaths, without any media announcement to warn the public of the dangers posed by the supposedly not-so-severe Omicron. It expects that by the end of the month, COVID-19 deaths will likely increase from their current levels at around 9,000 to 10,000 per week to around 20,000 to 30,000 per week, or around 2,850 to 4,280 deaths per day.

This level of death will match last winter's deadliest wave, refuting the lies spread by the media that

Omicron is mild and nothing to worry about. On the contrary, the current iteration of the coronavirus has been able to emerge and cause massive symptomatic infection despite a population with a significant level of immunity. Omicron possesses a high degree of infectivity, making it a far more dangerous pathogen than any previous variant.

Rather than sounding a clarion call to warn the population of the dangers this level of infection will have, the CDC director and the Biden administration are doubling down on claims that Omicron is only a mild concern and no alarms need be raised.

Rejecting the Democrats' homicidal approach to the pandemic, the working class must look after its own interests and demand an immediate lockdown and closure of all schools and non-essential businesses, with full compensation to workers and small business owners.

All necessary resources must be made available to health and emergency medical services to assist health systems with the tsunami of patients, which is making it impossible for health care workers to do their jobs safely. The lockdowns must be extended until control of the pandemic has been achieved and the elimination strategy can be fully implemented. Otherwise, the pandemic will continue to rage, with each wave bringing forth a potentially even more elusive and dangerous variant.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**