

US states shut down daily COVID-19 death reporting

Andre Damon
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With public attention preoccupied with the war in Ukraine, the US public health system is systematically shutting down the daily reporting of COVID-19 cases and deaths.

In a span of just three days, four states have announced the end of daily COVID-19 data reporting, joining six other states that have ended daily reporting of cases and deaths.

This nationwide rollback has been carried out with no public awareness, and there has not been a single national news report, in any major US news outlet, on these moves to shut down regular reporting.

Scientists have warned that the cutoff of daily reporting has no basis in public health.

“I don’t think there is any scientific reason to reduce disease reporting from the poor levels of today,” said Dr. William Ku, a data scientist and previously a senior lecturer and researcher at Columbia University and MIT.

“We have already seen that Omicron can spread rapidly with a doubling time of fewer than 2 days. In a week, cases can grow 10X making it extremely difficult for governments to warn the public to mitigate the spread effectively.”

On Wednesday, March 9, the Hawaii Department of Health announced it is “transitioning from daily to weekly COVID-19 data reporting effective immediately.”

On Thursday, March 10, Ohio Department of Health Director Bruce Vanderhoff “announced today that the state of Ohio will transition from daily to weekly COVID-19 data reporting at coronavirus.ohio.gov beginning next week.”

“Ohio [was] one of only a handful of states that is still reporting COVID-19 data daily,” Vanderhoff said.

That same day, Nevada announced that it would end

daily COVID-19 reporting, as well as “the removal of the county tracker on the state COVID-19 Dashboard site and an end to detailed investigations of all positive cases,” according to the Associated Press.

On Friday, March 11, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) announced that the state “will transition to reporting COVID-19 data once a week on Tuesdays.”

The state “will continue to gradually close its COVID-19 testing vendor sites in several more counties across the state.”

The announcement added, “Beginning Tuesday, DHEC’s page on breakthrough cases, and its page showing cases among those who are vaccinated and unvaccinated, will no longer be available.”

The moves by these states followed the announcement by Arizona on February 18 that the state’s “COVID-19 data reporting is transitioning from daily to weekly reporting beginning March 2.”

The *Santa Fe New Mexican* reported that New Mexico’s health department “starting next week no longer will issue daily reports on coronavirus data.” But the health department clarified it would still publish the information Monday through Friday.

Just eight states—North Dakota, Texas, Arkansas, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware—still report cases seven days per week.

With states ending daily case and death reporting, BNO Newsroom, one of the most widely cited trackers seen by many scientists as the timeliest data aggregator, announced on Twitter this week, “Our daily COVID tracker for the U.S. will end.”

As an explanation, it declared, “we’re now in a different stage of the pandemic.”

On February 2, the United States ended the Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS)

nationwide system reporting daily COVID-19 deaths at hospitals. The only remaining system relies on reporting by state health departments, which are systematically ending daily COVID-19 case and death reporting.

Piece by piece, the US system to track COVID-19 is being dismantled, leaving scientists and the general population flying blind as a new global surge of COVID-19, driven by the BA.2 subvariant, takes hold.

The BA.2 subvariant has driven daily new COVID-19 cases in China to the highest level ever, and many countries in Europe are reporting surging case rates. And in the United States, wastewater surveillance systems are reporting troubling rises in concentrations of COVID-19.

There is nothing scientific about ending daily reporting of new COVID infections. Rather, the aim of this campaign is entirely political. Dr. Monica Gandhi, a school reopening advocate with close ties to the White House, spelled out the motives for shutting down data collection in a recent *New York Times* podcast: “Telling people the cases every day is really scary, I think, and can look really scary. So, I think it’s important to stop reporting cases out to the public.”

In other words, telling the public the true number of people getting sick would lead them to take precautions, which would have negative consequences for the economy and corporate profits.

The efforts by states to cover up mass infection are being coordinated by the Biden White House, which in January initiated a plan to create a “new normal” of continuous mass infection and death with COVID-19.

In February, *Politico* reported that “The Biden administration is plotting a new phase of the pandemic” aimed at “conditioning Americans to live with” COVID-19.

The administration planned a “conscious messaging shift meant to get people comfortable with a scenario where the virus remains widespread,” *Politico* reported.

In order to “condition” public sentiment and make the public “feel differently” about the pandemic, the Biden administration has determined that “the best political strategy is not to have it dominate the news every day,” *Politico* wrote.

On January 15, the *World Socialist Web Site* was the first, and only, US publication to raise the alarm over the fact that HHS would no longer track and report the

number of daily in-hospital COVID-19 deaths.

Our reporting was immediately attacked on the grounds that the HHS system is one of two systems for reporting COVID-19 cases and deaths, and the system based on state reporting was still in operation.

Erin Kissane, a journalist at the *Atlantic* and co-founder of the COVID Tracking Project, which shut down on March 7 last year, replied that “hospitals no longer reporting covid deaths to daily HHS doesn’t mean that all covid deaths don’t have to be reported to local/state health authorities, who report them to CDC. We’re still counting deaths.”

Likewise, BNO Newsroom, which has shut down its US COVID-19 tracker, tweeted, “Contrary to some tweets, the U.S. is not ending daily reporting on deaths from COVID-19. Health departments will continue to provide updates as usual.”

Citing the statement by Kissane, *Business Insider* published an article entitled, “A claim that the government is going to stop tracking COVID-19 deaths is going viral — even though it’s misleading.”

Responding to these statements, we warned that the end of COVID-19 case and death reporting by HHS was one prong in a systematic effort to cover up the pandemic, and would be accompanied by the end of daily reporting by states.

With the headlong rush by states to end daily reporting, the WSWS’s warnings have been fully confirmed. None of the publications or individuals cited above have clarified their earlier statements.



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