

COVID-19 Update Oct 30, 2020

COVID-19 cases have continued to climb this past week in the US, with almost all states reporting higher numbers than previously. Cases grew twice as fast in Illinois as the week before. On Friday Oct 23, the US experienced its single highest daily case count at 83,757 new infections, and the daily count has remained near 90,000 since. Nationally, new cases are up 21.3%, deaths are up 2.2%, and hospitalizations are up 12.7%. However, tests reported rose 32.7% and the percent positive nationwide is down to 5.2%. There have now been 8,983,000 cases reported, and at least 228,000 deaths as of October 30 at noon.

On Friday Oct 30, SC DHEC reported 918 new cases statewide, with the highest numbers in Greenville (130) and Spartanburg (76) counties. The SC seven day rolling average is up 12%.

It is estimated that 1 in 50 Chicagoans have now had COVID. Philadelphia is having such a high surge that case contact tracers are no longer able to reach out to every newly positive patient.

Eli Lilly halted its monoclonal antibody study in advanced illness but will continue testing it in early disease.

Although cases are surging in Europe and parts of the US, the fatality rate is much lower. This is probably due to younger people being diagnosed with COVID, and more widespread testing detecting asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic individuals, rather than a change in the virus. However, in the US, the average deaths per day did increase 10% this past week compared to two weeks before.

The mayor of Juarez, Mexico has asked his government to block US citizens from crossing the border into his town, due to the recent rise in COVID in the region.

Ireland implemented another total lockdown on Friday Oct 23 for six weeks, closing non-essential businesses, limiting restaurants to take out only, and restricting individuals to travel no more than 3 miles from home. Spain, France and Italy also implemented curfews and new restrictions on Wednesday Oct 28. Germany on Sunday Oct. 25 reported twice as many new daily cases as the week before.

Moderna has recruited all 30,000 individuals it needed for its vaccine trial and almost 37% of them are nonwhite. Recruitment of participants was postponed for several weeks in September so that at-risk individuals could be signed up. 10% are black, 20% Hispanic, 4% Asian, 17% at increased risk due to co-morbidities, and 25% are 65 or older.

Researchers from the University of Washington's School of Medicine predicted that current state strategies surrounding social distancing, phased re-openings and mask mandates could lead to 511,373 deaths by Feb. 28, 2021, according to a study published Friday in the journal Nature Medicine. However, scientists also predicted nearly 130,000 lives could be saved from the end of September through the end of February if at least 95% of the population wore masks in public. If only 85% wore masks, still nearly 96,000 deaths could be prevented.

Clemson was announced to have the highest COVID cumulative cases of any university in the country, and plans to continue robust routine testing through the spring. Every one of the 26,000 students has been tested three times, and they will continue to test 8,000 students per week.