

COVID Update May 28, 2021

SC DHEC data show that the state remains mostly 'moderate' in case rates, but there are now 18 counties in the 'low' incidence category, and in Greenville County, it has fallen to 67.6 per 100,000 population over 2 weeks, the lowest it has been in many months. The cut-off for 'low' incidence is 50 cases per 100,000 population over 2 weeks

On Monday May 24, the percent positive for the past two weeks in SC was 3.4%. As of Monday May 24, 44% of adults have received one vaccination, and 36.1 % are fully vaccinated in the state..

The U.S. vaccination rate was reported by the White House on Thursday to have passed 50% for adults. The goal is for 70% of adults to be vaccinated by July 4.

Nationally, new cases and deaths continue to fall. On Tuesday, 385 COVID deaths were reported, compared to 3,555 reported at the peak on January 13.

Labcorp reported in a study published Monday that 87% of 39,086 individuals who had been previously infected with COVID-19 continue to show antibodies to the virus 10 months later. Previously it has been reported that antibody levels wane sharply 90 days after infection, and that the level of antibody cannot yet be correlated to immunity, but it was hopeful news that some long term protection may persist after infection.

There has been renewed interest in the possibility that the Sars-CoV2 virus escaped from a lab near the meat market in Wuhan that was originally thought to be the source of the pandemic after a recent US intelligence report that three researchers at the lab are now known to have fallen ill with COVID-19 in the fall of 2019.

Moderna announced on Tuesday that its COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective in 12-17 year olds, in a study of over 3,700 youngsters. There were no cases among the vaccinated, compared with 4 cases in those who received placebo, making it 93% effective in preventing disease 2 weeks after the second vaccine dose. The company will submit its data to the FDA for approval for use in that age group next month. The Pfizer vaccine is already approved down to age 12.

A new study reported on Tuesday says dogs can be trained to identify the unique odors associated with coronavirus infection, and the researchers say one dog can screen up to 250 people in an hour. The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Medical Detection Dogs and Durham University ran the study and say the next stage of research will involve screening infected people in real-world settings. "Then we will work with other experienced partners to scale-up our operations rapidly to deploy COVID-19 detection dogs in airports or other venues to screen large numbers of people, providing a rapid, non-invasive screening for COVID-19," the researchers said.