



COVID-19 Communications

April 15, 2021

Things to Do

- CDPHE issued a [Health Alert Network \(HAN\) Broadcast](#) with an update on the **Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine pause**. The HAN provides guidance for providers for the potential adverse events that may be related to the vaccine and the unique treatment needed to address this specific type of blood clot. The CDC will host a Clinical Outreach and Community Activity (COCA) webinar at noon today to address early detection and treatment of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST). [Join the webinar here](#).
 - **All providers should pause the use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine until further notice.**
 - Anyone who received the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine within the last three weeks and who develops severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath should contact their health care provider.
 - **Health care providers should report any adverse events to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System](#) (VAERS).**

- **Providers who already have a Johnson & Johnson vaccine supply should keep it and continue to maintain [proper storage](#).** Mark the vaccine in inventory as “Do Not Use. Awaiting Guidance.”

What Has Changed Since Last Update

- **CDPHE issued a [HAN Broadcast](#) about the COVID-19 P.1 variant** (also known as the Brazilian variant). As of April 13, 16 cases of the P.1 variant have been identified in Colorado. The HAN notes that **the P.1 variant may be more contagious and may also be more likely to cause reinfection in individuals previously infected with COVID-19.** Clinical samples from individuals that are suspected of having the P.1 variant or other variants of concern should be sent to the CDPHE lab for sequencing.
- **CDPHE and the Colorado School of Public Health issued an [updated statewide modeling report](#), which estimates that about 1 in 196 Coloradans is currently infected with COVID-19.** The model notes that transmission control should be maintained at the same level for the next month to prevent a spike in hospitalizations and deaths.
- **CMS [ended](#) an emergency blanket waiver for Long-Term Care facilities** related to notification of resident room or roommate changes, transfer and discharge notification requirements, and the timeline for completing the resident assessment information.

Things to Know

- A [recent issue](#) of *The Exchange*, a publication from the HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) offers **resources for health care professional stress and resilience**, including understanding acute and chronic stressors in the health care worker population, identifying at-risk employees, and practices for building resilience.
- **Regeneron Pharmaceuticals [announced](#) that the monoclonal antibody therapy REGEN-COV (casirivimab with imdevimab) reduced the risk of symptomatic COVID-19 in household contacts of people with SARS-CoV-2 by 81 percent in a phase 3 clinical trial.** The FDA has authorized emergency use of the therapy for people at high risk of progressing to severe COVID-19 or hospitalization. The company plans to ask the agency to expand the EUA to include COVID-19 prevention.
- The **FDA released “[Vaccine Ready: Addressing COVID-19 Health Disparities among Racial and Ethnic Minority Communities](#),”** which provides details on how the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) and the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity (OMHHE) have focused on outreach and communication strategies to address health disparities.

- As of April 13, **more than 1,280 Colorado providers have administered 3,316,015 [COVID-19 vaccine doses](#)** for 2,200,603 people with first doses and 1,339,880 people who are fully immunized. The state’s percent positivity remains above 5 percent, with the three-day average at 6.46 percent.

Upcoming Webinars/Calls

- Noon-1 p.m., Thursday, April 15: CDC COCA – Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine and CVST – Update for Clinicians on Early Detection and Treatment. [Join webinar here.](#)
- 1-2 p.m., Thursday, April 22: Region VII Disaster Health Response Ecosystem – Exploring a Monoclonal Antibody Allocation Framework. [Register here.](#)

COVID Resources

[CDPHE COVID-19](#)

[CDC COVID-19](#)

COVID Coverage

[Colorado halts use of Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine after feds call for pause](#)

The Denver Post - Subscription required

At least one person is hospitalized in Colorado after receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, although the person is not one of the six individuals cited by federal health regulators. It’s unknown whether the patient developed blood clots or why they are hospitalized. A spokesman for Centura Health, which is treating the person, said the case is “under investigation” and declined to provide more information. The person did not receive the vaccine from Centura Health, which stopped administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine last week after almost a dozen patients experienced side effects from the shot within a short time period.

[FEMA pilot site in Pueblo addresses vaccine barriers for socially vulnerable communities](#)

The Pueblo Chieftain

Centura Health, which operated the community vaccination site from the time the state took it over from PDPHE on March 22, will continue its involvement in the site. Vaccination

appointments can be scheduled through Centura Health at centura.org/vaccine. “Don’t let those barriers that existed before still exist in people’s minds,” Dragani said. “Because if there’s a barrier out there and we don’t know about it, tell somebody here at this operation. We’ll work to resolve that barrier.”

[Rural Colorado county health official worries about vaccine hesitancy after J&J pause](#)

KUSA-TV (Denver)

Johnson & Johnson vaccines are on hold for now after the CDC and FDA recommended a pause on Tuesday to look into extremely rare blood clots. The announcement is forcing counties to cancel Johnson & Johnson clinics. "This is another curveball for all public health," said Dwayne Smith, Public Health Director in Elbert County.

[Already Got The Now-Paused Johnson & Johnson Vaccine? Here’s What You Should Know](#)

Colorado Public Radio

Dr. Ken Lyn-Kew, a pulmonary and critical care physician at National Jewish in Denver, told Colorado Matters on Wednesday that he was concerned the announcement would keep people from getting vaccinated. “We’ve already seen throughout the country, and also here in Colorado, a lot of vaccine hesitancy,” Lyn-Kew said. “People fear the unknown. And when we have these vaccines ... it’s very hard to separate the truth from what rapidly propagates on social media.”

[More COVID state shutdowns unlikely, despite CDC suggestion](#)

The Associated Press

In Colorado, a statewide mask mandate remains in effect until May 6. But Democratic Gov. Jared Polis plans to transfer decisions about other public health orders to county governments on Friday. That will put Colorado in line with some Republican-led states such as Missouri, which has left decisions about business shutdowns in the hands of local officials since last summer. Although Colorado has seen COVID-19 cases and deaths rise over the past two weeks, Polis said the lack of hospitalizations among older adults shows vaccines are working. The governor said he doesn’t think closures are necessary, but “people should honor that at the local level” if imposed.

[Colorado’s coronavirus dial system ends Friday. As hospitalizations spike, it will be up to counties to respond.](#)

The Colorado Sun

The final throes of the pandemic could play out very differently depending on how counties respond to the end of the dial and whether people keep their guard up. The virus is spreading at an exponential rate, according to the latest estimates. Mobility data suggest people are moving around in Colorado more now than they have at any point during the pandemic — including during the catastrophic late-fall and early-winter surge of cases, hospitalizations and deaths. Both of these factors lay the groundwork for potentially another massive surge in infections.

[Denver doctors react to loosening COVID restrictions](#)

KDVR-TV (Denver)

The chief medical officer at Presbyterian/St. Luke's Medical Center, Dr. Reginald Washington, agreed. "I think people are tired of COVID and anxious to get their lives back," Washington said. "So I certainly understand. And I think the timing is appropriate, with a few caveats." What restrictions will my county have when the COVID-19 dial ends in Colorado? Those caveats include people continuing to wear masks indoors, staying home if they don't feel well and getting vaccinated, according to Dr. Washington.

[Adams County man diagnosed with blood clot following J&J vaccination](#)

KDVR-TV (Denver)

Sweeney showed the FOX31 Problem Solvers medical documentation indicating he was treated at Centura Health's Saint Anthony North Health Campus from April 8 to April 11. He said he was diagnosed with pulmonary emboli (a blood clot in a lung) in his right lung. He first went to the hospital due to chest pain on April 1, just less than a month after getting the J&J vaccine. The man was inoculated against COVID-19 on March 6.

[Colorado nursing home outbreaks rising again as COVID-19 spread increases](#)

The Denver Post - Subscription required

COVID-19 outbreaks are rising again in Colorado's nursing homes and assisted living facilities, showing the vaccine has reduced, but not eliminated, the risk to older people. Overall outbreaks rose for a second week, as coronavirus hospitalizations reached their highest levels since Feb. 10. CDPHE reported 513 people were hospitalized with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 as of Wednesday afternoon. New infections were at late-January levels, and the percentage of tests coming positive remained high, suggesting the state could be missing some infections.

[CDC advisory panel delays decision on Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine](#)

STAT

The U.S. government's recommended pause on use of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine is unlikely to be lifted for at least another week or 10 days, after a committee of independent experts declined Wednesday to vote on whether use of the vaccine should resume. The FDA and the CDC urged states to stop using the J&J vaccine on Tuesday to seek advice from the expert panel on some rare but serious clotting problems seen in a small number of people who received the vaccine. Six cases have been identified — and J&J officials indicated a possible seventh is being investigated. One person has died.

[Fauci: J&J pause shows how seriously FDA takes vaccine safety](#)

Axios

President Biden's chief medical adviser Anthony Fauci suggested Wednesday that the decision to pause use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine could actually bolster vaccine

confidence, calling it "an affirmation that safety is a primary consideration when it comes to the FDA and CDC." Tuesday's decision to pause the J&J rollout has set off a chain reaction of fears — both about the safety of the vaccine and about whether the FDA is overreacting, considering that only six cases of rare blood clots have been reported out of 7 million vaccine doses administered.

[Sharpening resistance: States fret pause in J&J vaccine could drive up hesitancy](#)

Politico

The Biden administration says its decision to stop administering Johnson & Johnson's coronavirus shot should make Americans more confident vaccines are safe. A growing chorus of state officials says it could have just the opposite effect. Any interruption could harden skepticism among people who were ambivalent over getting vaccinated or scared about getting sick from side effects, some governors and state health officials say. That could make tamping down new outbreaks and ending the pandemic much harder, especially with public places reopening and travel on the rise.

[Moderna Says Covid Shot Remains 90% Effective After Six Months](#)

Bloomberg

Moderna Inc.'s coronavirus vaccine remained more than 90% effective after six months, according to a new analysis of data from the company's final-stage trial. Beginning two weeks after the second dose, the shot was more than 90% effective overall, and more than 95% effective at preventing severe cases, according to a statement. The company didn't release further details and said the follow-up results were preliminary as the study is continuing.

[Preventing opioid overprescribing during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Hospital Safety Insider

With fewer elective surgeries and limited ED visits, the prescriptions for opioids should have been limited, LaBorde thought. "My takeaway and hypothesis is that COVID has caused a huge mental strain," he says. "It doesn't surprise me at all that people would turn to a drug that has been abused for mental health reasons." The increases in prescriptions and overdoses support this hypothesis. "If you look at the chart of overall use, it looks like things are unchanged from pre-COVID," says LaBorde. "Those surgical cases involved were a baseline of appropriately prescribed opioid use. But remove that population, and that's where you see this troublesome increase."

[Inactivity increases risk of COVID-19 death, study suggests](#)

FOX News

A recent study of nearly 50,000 coronavirus patients found that those who were consistently inactive were at greater risk of death due to the virus than those who engaged in exercise. The study, which relied on the "Exercise Vital Sign" measurement developed by Kaiser Permanente Southern California, found that even those who were active on an inconsistent basis were at

lower odds for severe COVID-19 compared to those who were inactive. "This is a wake-up call for the importance of healthy lifestyles and especially physical activity," Robert E. Sallis, M.D., a family and sports medicine physician at the Kaiser Permanente Fontana Medical Center, said, in a news release posted to EurekAlert.org.

[Merck plans large outpatient trial of COVID-19 pill, stops study in hospitalized patients](#)

Reuters

Merck & Co Inc on Thursday said it plans a large study of what could become the first pill to target the coronavirus in people at risk of severe COVID-19, but will no longer pursue use of the experimental antiviral drug in hospitalized patients. The company said it would study the drug molnupiravir in a Phase 3 trial among COVID-19 patients out of hospitals who have at least one risk factor for poor outcomes, such as advanced age, obesity or diabetes. Trial participants can have had symptoms for no more than five days, shortened from seven days in a prior study.



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