



# COVID-19 Communications

May 18, 2021

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## Things To Do:

- To assist in clarifying new and existing masking and screening requirements for hospitals, CHA has developed a [crosswalk of state and federal guidance pertaining to requirements for hospital staff, visitors, and patients](#).
- CDPHE has **doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine intended for patients being discharged from emergency departments**. Facilities with the capacity to distribute these doses quickly should contact Jennifer Yara-Zelenski at [jennifer.yara-zelenski@state.co.us](mailto:jennifer.yara-zelenski@state.co.us) with the quantities the organization can use. This is available for one-time orders – for future orders, please continue to use the [CIIS site](#).

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## What's Changed Since the Last Update:

- On May 13, the CDC updated its [interim recommendations](#) for fully vaccinated people in non-health care settings. The CDC's masking guidance for health care personnel has

not changed since the [April 27 update](#). Among other changes, the update specifies that in non-health care settings:

- That fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance; and
  - Fully vaccinated people can refrain from testing following a known exposure unless they are residents or employees of a correctional or detention facility or a homeless shelter.
- The American Hospital Association received **clarification from the CDC on the May 13 update on masking guidance, which emphasized that the new changes do not apply to health care settings**. “This means that staff, patients, residents and visitors should continue to wear masks as recommended in all healthcare facilities,” the agency said in an email.
  - A new [CDC study](#) found that the **Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are 94 percent effective among health care personnel**. The study, conducted January through March in 33 sites across the country, found a single dose of either vaccine to be 82 percent effective against symptomatic COVID-19 and two doses to be 94 percent effective.
  - The **FDA has updated the emergency use authorizations** of the patient selection criteria and safety summary for the monoclonal antibodies bamlanivimab and etesevimab administered together, and the patient selection criteria for the monoclonal antibodies casirivimab with imdevimab (REGEN-CON) administered together. See the updated FDA fact sheets for [bamlanivimab and etesevimab](#) and [REGEN-COV](#).

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## Things To Know:

- [New modeling](#) from the state shows that infections and hospitalization numbers will continue to go down if current level of transmission control is maintained. According to the release, “the modeling indicates that the course of the epidemic curve into summer depends on the success of vaccinating Coloradans in the weeks ahead and on the level of transmission control that is maintained.”
- As of May 16, **1,432 Colorado providers have administered 5,027,860 COVID-19 vaccine doses** for 2,823,103 people with first doses and 2,356,402 people who are fully immunized.
- The state’s percent positivity increased slightly, with a three-day moving average of 4.07 percent.
- Statewide COVID-19 hospitalizations are at 530, down from 566 on May 17.

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## Upcoming Calls/Webinars:

- Noon, Thursday, May 20 – **How Faith-based and Community-based Organizations are Making COVID-19 Vaccination More Equitable and Strengthening their Communities.** [Register here.](#)
- 1-2 p.m., Thursday, May 20 – **Region VII DHRE COVID-19 Preparedness: Vaccine Hesitancy.** [Register here.](#)
- 11 a.m. – noon., Tuesday, May 25 - **A Systematic, Big Data Approach to Reducing Burnout and Violence.** [Register here.](#)
- 10 a.m., Wednesday, May 26 – **Advocating for the Asian American Community during COVID-19.** [Register here.](#)

## COVID Resources

[CDPHE COVID-19](#)

[CDC COVID-19](#)

## COVID Coverage

### [Wall Of Photos Shows Health Care Heroes In A Different Light](#)

*KCNC-TV* (Denver)

A new employee recognition wall at UHealth Highlands Ranch shows the COVID-19 warriors in a different light. “Thank you for your hard work and taking such good care of our patients,” said Diane Cookson, President and CEO of UHealth Highlands Ranch. Cookson said the wall is a reminder, “We just have to remember about the extraordinary people that we work with every day.”

### [Could relaxed mask guidance cause spike in COVID-19 cases?](#)

*KDVR-TV* (Denver)

“I think people have to proceed with caution,” said Dr. Eric Lung, Chief Medical Officer at Sky Ridge Medical Center. Lung said loosening mask guidance is an encouraging step in the pandemic recovery process, but worries it could possibly lead to a rise in COVID-19 cases. “To have people in society not wearing a mask — whether they’re vaccinated or not — I thought could cause another surge,” said Lung.

### [Covid-19 Hospital Patients Tend to Be Younger Now](#)

*The Wall Street Journal* – Subscription required

Michelle Barron, a Covid-19 expert at UCHealth, said she started to notice a disproportionate rise in younger people with Covid-19 needing to be hospitalized in March. “We suspect that it is both the inclement rise and spread of variants of concern, including the U.K. variant, and also the fact that the majority of patients that are being hospitalized at present are not vaccinated,” said Dr. Barron, who is also a professor specializing in infectious diseases at the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine.

### [Unvaccinated Kids Should Continue Health Practices, Health Experts Say](#)

*KCNC-TV* (Denver)

Dr. Joshua Williams, a pediatrician at Denver Health, says children under 12 should continue to follow best health practices like masks and social distancing. While their symptoms aren’t severe, kids can still infect others. “I think public health guidelines are going to continue to be important because we’re not going to be able to know who’s vaccinated and who’s not,” said Williams. “We need to still be really careful about children contracting COVID.”

### [Will the CDC’s latest guidance on masks encourage more Coloradans to get vaccinated?](#)

*KMGH-TV* (Denver)

Dr. Michelle Barron, the medical director of infection control and prevention at UCHealth University of Colorado Hospital, said the latest guidance from the CDC was meant to show people who are still on the fence about getting the vaccine some of the benefits that come with it, besides protecting yourself from COVID-19, though she admitted she was a bit nervous about how people were going to take the information.

### [The CDC Says Fully Vaccinated People Don’t Need Masks Anymore. Here’s What That Means In Colorado](#)

*Colorado Public Radio*

Dr. David Wyles, who heads the infectious diseases division at Denver Health, echoes what many federal and local health officials and President Joe Biden have said. “The medical science is clear that the vaccinated people are really very safe,” Wyles said. “The problem is people who aren’t vaccinated.” But the CDC’s latest advice could make for a tricky public health situation, he adds.

## [How A Class Of Manual High Students Made Health Care At Their School A Lot More Equitable](#)

*Colorado Public Radio*

"And in the end the medical leaders running the clinics concluded, 'Hey these students are right!'" said Denver Health youth program coordinator Tara Melinkovich. "They were amazing and insightful and brought such real experience to a form that I don't think we give a lot of thought to," Melinkovich said. Based on the efforts of the Manual students, Denver Health is changing the forms. The new ones are better formatted, with bigger font.

## [As restrictions loosen, some people are hesitant about returning to pre-pandemic life](#)

*Summit Daily (Frisco)*

As the county quickly drops restrictions that have become a part of everyday life for the past 14 months, some residents, including Stephanie Trasatti, are taking pause and wondering if this is the right move. Trasatti is a nurse who works at St. Anthony Summit Medical Center and has helped take care of COVID-19 patients. Because of her job, and because she has underlying health conditions, she said she has significantly reduced her social circle over the past 14 months and limited how much she's in public.

## [Mask controversy spurs CDC to rethink its pandemic response](#)

*Politico*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Rochelle Walensky is shaking up the agency's Covid-19 response to consolidate oversight amid mounting criticism over its guidance for vaccinated people, according to three senior health officials with the knowledge of the situation. At the same time, the agency is weathering its first high-level departures during the pandemic.

## [New CDC mask guidance 'should not send message pandemic is over,' expert group says](#)

*Fox News*

While applauding the guidance as "an important step, signifying our capability to eventually end the pandemic," the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) emphasized that the recommendations "make no change to mask-wearing guidance in health care settings, schools and public high-traffic areas including airports, as well as on airplanes, buses and other forms of public transportation."

## ['What if it was your kid?': Parents of young children feel forgotten as CDC loosens mask restrictions](#)

*USA TODAY*

Emily Smith, assistant professor of epidemiology at Baylor University, said the new CDC guidelines have been "hard and confusing" for parents who are fatigued by making constant difficult decisions to protect their children from the virus. "The new guidelines add a new dimension to that fatigue for families with littles who have not gotten their vaccines yet," she said.

### [About 60% of American adults have had at least one dose of Covid-19 vaccine, including more people of color](#)

*CNN*

The US has reached a "landmark day" in the Covid-19 pandemic as 60% of American adults have gotten at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, the director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. In addition, more than 4.1 million young people ages 12 to 17 have received their first dose, Dr. Rochelle Walensky said. And more people of color are getting vaccinated -- marking "encouraging national trends," said White House Covid-19 Response Team senior adviser Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith.

### [Coronavirus variant that first appeared in India arrives in the US. Here's what to know.](#)

*USA TODAY*

The B.1.617 coronavirus variant devastating India right now has arrived in the United States. Experts say it's not likely to cause much harm here because of high vaccination rates and because the health care system is not under stress. But with a virus that has defied expectations and the variant infecting hundreds of thousands of Indians every day, researchers are keeping an eye on it.

### [Covid Testing Has Turned Into a Financial Windfall for Hospitals and Other Providers](#)

*Kaiser Health News*

Hospitals are charging up to \$650 for a simple, molecular covid test that costs \$50 or less to run, according to Medicare claims analyzed for KHN by Hospital Pricing Specialists (HPS). Charges by large health systems range from \$20 to \$1,419 per test, a new national survey by KFF shows. And some free-standing emergency rooms are charging more than \$1,000 per test.

### [Safety-nets Were Already Financially Stressed Pre-pandemic](#)

*HealthLeaders Media*

An analysis by America's Essential Hospitals of its more than 300 member hospitals – which represent about 5% of all hospitals – finds that they provided 17% of uncompensated care in 2019 and operated with an average margin of 2.9%, compared with margins averaging 8.8% for other hospitals. "These numbers speak to the remarkable commitment and resiliency of essential hospitals in the fight against COVID-19," AEH President and CEO Bruce Siegel, MD, said in a media release.



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