



DAILY COVID-19 UPDATE

February 1, 2021

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY

Today, a group of 10 Republican senators **unveiled** the details of a \$600 billion COVID-19 relief proposal. Among other things, the plan includes \$35 billion for the Provider Relief Fund; boosted unemployment insurance at \$300 per week through the end of June; \$40 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program; and \$1000 in direct stimulus payments for individuals making up to \$50k per year or joint filers earning up to \$100k. The GOP counter-proposal echoes President Joe Biden's call for \$160 billion in more funding to boost vaccines and testing, as well as \$4 billion to enhance behavioral health and substance abuse services.

President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris are expected to **meet** with the group of Republican senators at 5 p.m. this evening to discuss their scaled-down alternative to the administration's \$1.9 trillion plan. White House press Secretary Jen Psaki stated the meeting is intended to be an "exchange of ideas," and noted President Biden will not "make or accept an offer." Psaki also reiterated that President Biden is committed to passing a larger relief bill, as

LATEST STATISTICS

49,936,450 COVID-19 vaccines have been distributed in the U.S and **26,023,153** Americans have received the first dose.

There are a total of **103,283,042** confirmed cases worldwide, 2,233,906 deaths and 57,232,822 people have recovered.

There are **26,268,048** confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. and 442,399 deaths.

LATEST PMJ RESOURCES

[Drug Shortage and Medical Supply Chain Tracker](#)

[Coronavirus State Reopening Tracker](#)

"the size of the package needs to be commensurate with the crises we are facing."

Incoming Senate Finance Committee Chairman Ron Wyden (D-OR) criticized the GOP package, calling it "far too small" and noting the "three-month extension of jobless benefits is a non-starter."

Meanwhile, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) [announced](#) they have filed a joint budget resolution for FY 2021. The budget resolution is the first step to potentially enacting a budget reconciliation bill, which is one legislative tool available to Congress to quickly pass bipartisan COVID relief legislation. If Congress passes the budget resolution, it can then begin work on the reconciliation bill. The Democratic leaders said their decision "is paving the way for the landmark Biden-Harris coronavirus package," and they hope "Republicans will work in a bipartisan manner to support assistance for their communities."

Notably, a recent [report](#) from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that the Trump administration did not implement 90% or 27 out of 31 recommendations it made around vaccine distribution and supply chain issues, among other things.

Since our last update, the Food and Drug Administration has released guidance related to the pandemic. Please see below for more details.

We have updated our Coronavirus State Reopening Tracker and the Drug Shortage and Medical Supply Chain Tracker. Both are linked under Latest PMJ Resources.

[Lame Duck Preview Memo](#)

[President Trump EO Tracker](#)

[COVID-19 Legislative Outlook](#)

[State Responses to EO on Unemployment Insurance](#)

[Healthcare Chart on COVID Legislation](#)

[Liability Reform State of Play](#)

[CARES Act State Funding](#)

[State and Local Funding Bills](#)

[COVID Legislative Tracker](#)

[Global COVID-19 Export Controls](#)

[Memo - Federal Reserve COVID-19 Announcements](#)

[Federal Reserve Lending Facilities Deck](#)

ECONOMIC UPDATE

Congressional

HOUSE

- House Ways and Means Select Measures Subcommittee Chair Mike Thompson (D-CA), and Reps. Mike Kelly (R-PA), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), and Steven Horsford (D-NV), [re-introduced](#) the *Keeping the Lights on Act* to provide federal support to small businesses by helping them pay essential fixed costs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Rep. Juan Vargas (D-CA) **introduced** the *Promoting Access to Credit for Homebuyers Act* to help low- and middle-income individuals access mortgage credit throughout the pandemic.

SENATE

- Senate Small Business Committee Ranking Member Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Senators Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) **introduced** the *Unlocking Opportunities in Emerging Markets Act* to make Small Business Administration programs more equitable.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE (CBO)

- The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) **released a report** titled, “An Overview of the Economic Outlook: 2021 to 2031.”

Articles of Interest

- 2/1 The New York Times published an article titled, **“The economy is improving faster than expected, the U.S. budget office says, adding another twist to stimulus talks.”**
- 2/1 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, **“U.S. economy expected to reach pre-pandemic peak by mid-2021.”**
- 2/1 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, **“Republicans propose \$618 billion Covid-19 stimulus plan.”**
- 1/31 The Washington Post published an article titled, **“Biden to meet with Senate Republicans offering covid relief counter-proposal.”**

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Congressional

HOUSE

- Reps. Brad Schneider (D-IL) and David McKinley (R-WV) **reintroduced** bipartisan legislation to prevent cuts to hospital payments through the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. H.R. 315, the *Medicare Sequester COVID Moratorium Act* would delay the Medicare sequester through the duration of the public health emergency, ensuring that providers can stay focused on treating and eradicating COVID-19 instead of worrying about their bottom line.
- Rep. Tony Cárdenas (D-CA) **released** the *Cárdenas HEART (Health Equity Access, Resources, and Treatment) Package*, a comprehensive COVID-focused legislative package that includes bills the Congressman has introduced and will introduce in the 117th Congress. This \$1 billion package focuses on a broad range of issues to address the racial health inequities exacerbated by the pandemic and targets relief for vulnerable and underserved communities.
- Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX) **announced** she will re-introduce her legislation to end surprise medical billing for COVID-19 tests. While Congress has passed legislation both to end surprise medical billing and to ensure COVID-19 tests are accessible and free, loopholes allow insurers to arbitrarily charge cost-shares. Fletcher’s *Stop Surprise Medical Billing for COVID-19 Tests Act* closes these loopholes by clarifying with insurance providers that individuals can get tested for any reason, directs federal health officials to issue guidance on how

to submit claims to protect patients from surprise bills, and provides transparency in testing pricing.

- Reps. Lauren Underwood (D-IL), Julia Brownley (D-CA), Lee Zeldin (D-NY), and Brian Fitzpatrick (D-PA) **introduced** bipartisan legislation to eliminate cost barriers to COVID-19 vaccinations for veterans. The *No Coronavirus Copays for Veterans Act* ensures that veterans who receive health care from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) are not liable for out-of-pocket costs for qualifying coronavirus preventive services, like COVID-19 vaccines.
- Reps. Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Diana DeGette (D-CO), Brendan Boyle (D-PA), and Mike Doyle (D-PA) **introduced** bipartisan legislation to ensure future Presidents cannot obstruct Americans' access to health coverage during an emergency.

SENATE

- Sens. Tina Smith (D-MN) and Chris Murphy (D-CT) **introduced** legislation to study and address how social, environmental, and economic conditions exacerbate health inequities in Black, Brown, Indigenous, and people of color. The senators said that black, brown, indigenous and people of color have been disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus pandemic due to the social determinants of health.

Administration

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

- The FDA **added** content to the question-and-answer appendix in its guidance titled "Conduct of Clinical Trials of Medical Products During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency." The updated guidance includes a new question-and-answer regarding whether FDA considers receipt of medical products authorized under an emergency use authorization for use in clinical care, such as a vaccine to prevent COVID-19, or a monoclonal antibody to treat COVID-19, to be receipt of "investigational" medical products.
- The FDA **updated** the immediately in effect guidance: Enforcement Policy for Coagulation Systems for Measurement of Viscoelastic Properties During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Public Health Emergency. The policy remains unchanged from the initial publication of this guidance; however, this update provides a minor clarification for one of the labeling recommendations.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

- On Saturday, January 30, CDC **implemented** provisions of President Biden's Executive Order on Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel and will require the wearing of masks by all travelers into, within, or out of the U.S., e.g., on airplanes, ships, ferries, trains, subways, buses, taxis, and ride-shares. The mask requirement also applies to travelers in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and seaports; train, bus, and subway stations; and any other areas that provide transportation.

Articles of Interest

- 1/29 The Hill published an article titled, "[Top FDA official: Agency working on 'streamlined' process for updating vaccines if needed.](#)"
- 1/30 CBS News published an article titled, "[FEMA asks Pentagon to ready as many as 10,000 troops to support nationwide vaccine push.](#)"

- 1/31 The New York Times published an article titled, **“Daily COVID Toll in U.S. Remains Enormous, but Cases Are Falling.”**
- 1/31 The Wall Street Journal published an op-ed penned by former FDA Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb titled, **“Another Promising Vaccine, This One From Johnson & Johnson.”**
- 2/1 NBC News published an article titled, **“Map: Track the spread of the Covid-19 variants across the United States.”**