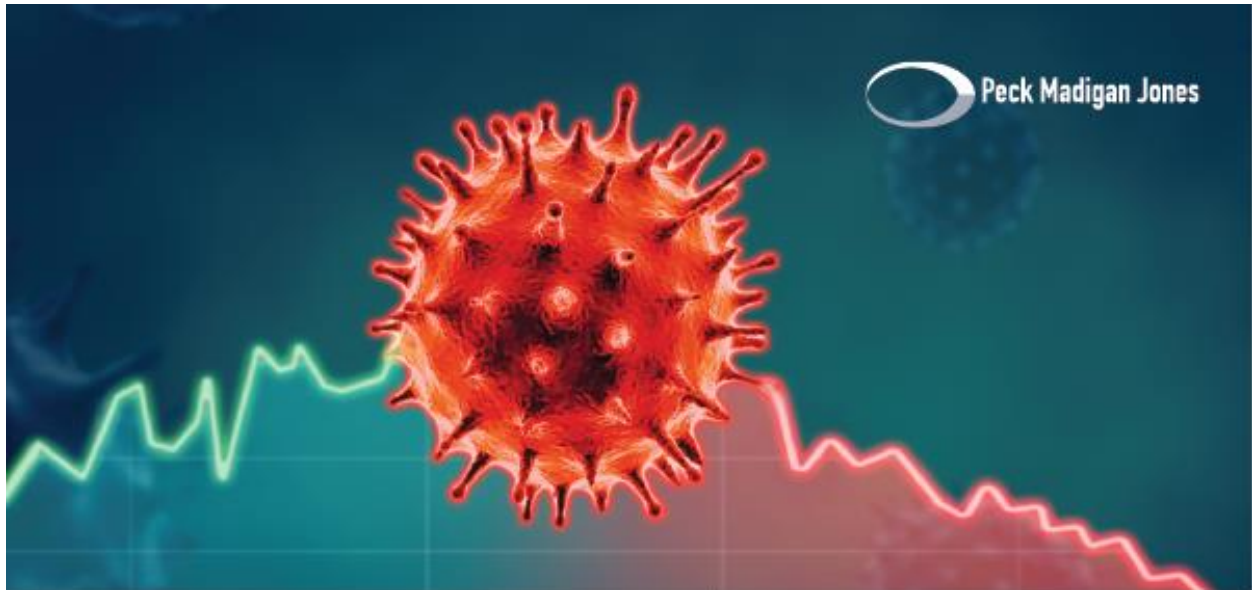




DAILY COVID-19 UPDATE

February 17, 2021

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY

Today, the Biden administration announced a series of new actions along with \$1.6 billion in funding to expand and improve coronavirus testing efforts. Specifically, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Defense (DOD) will invest \$650 million to enhance testing for K-8 schools and underserved, vulnerable populations such as those in homeless shelters; HHS and DOD will make a \$815 million investment to ramp up domestic production of testing supplies; and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will invest close to \$200 million to boost genome sequencing of the virus to study and prepare for new variants.

Last night, in a [CNN town hall](#), President Joe Biden stated that by the end of July, the U.S. will have over 600 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine available. However, President Biden noted he does not expect a return to reasonable normalcy until Christmas 2021. He added that by this time next year, he expects there will be

LATEST STATISTICS

72,423,125 COVID-19 vaccines have been distributed in the U.S and **40,268,009** Americans have received the first dose.

There are a total of **109,836,395** confirmed cases worldwide, 2,427,316 deaths and 61,798,025 people have recovered.

There are **27,811,617** confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. and 489,933 deaths.

LATEST PMJ RESOURCES

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

[Coronavirus State Reopening Tracker](#)

"significantly fewer people having to be socially distanced, hav[ing] to wear masks, etc...but we don't know for certain."

During the town hall, President Biden also signaled he is willing to negotiate on the \$15 minimum wage increase in the upcoming relief bill. He stated it is "totally legitimate for small-business owners to be concerned about" the minimum wage increase, adding he is open to a longer phase-in period than the current 2025 timeline.

Additionally, Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV), a centrist swing vote, told President Biden that he will not vote for passage of his \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief legislation if the package violates the Senate's Byrd rule and includes "extraneous" measures such as the \$15 minimum wage increase.

Meanwhile, House Budget Chairman John Yarmuth (D-KY) stated, "I think the minimum wage is a stretch to get through the Byrd Rule. I'm just not aware of how they do that." Rep. Yarmuth added that he expects his panel to clear the American Rescue Plan and send it to the House floor by the end of this week or next Monday.

Senate Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) announced the House will shift its schedule by one day next week to allow for longer bill preparation time. Leader Hoyer even cautioned members that the chamber may need to remain in session through the weekend to complete its work.

Notably, a CDC spokesperson, Kristen Nordlund, warned of "widespread delays" of shipments and deliveries of COVID-19 vaccines "over the next few days" as a result of the winter storms impacting a large portion of the country.

[President Biden EO Tracker](#)

[Lame Duck Preview Memo](#)

ECONOMIC UPDATE

Congressional

SENATE

- Senate Banking Committee Chairman Sherrod Brown (D-OH) lauded federal agencies' expansion and extension of COVID-19 homeowner relief.

- Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) pushed Congressional leaders to [include funding](#) in the next relief package to address variants of COVID-19.

Administration

FEDERAL RESERVE ("FED")

- The Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Open Market Committee [released the minutes](#) of the committee meeting held on January 26 to 27, 2021.

Articles of Interest

- 2/17 The Washington Post published an article titled, "[Biden indicates he's open to negotiation on \\$15 minimum wage.](#)"
- 2/17 The Washington Post published an article titled, "[Millions of jobs probably aren't coming back, even after the pandemic ends.](#)"

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Congressional

SENATE

- Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and 22 other senators sent a [letter](#) to Senate leadership urging the inclusion of a 7.35% increase to the Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) for Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) in the final coronavirus relief package.
- Sens. Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Tim Kaine (D-VA) announced the reintroduction of their [legislation](#), the Medicare-X Choice Act, which would create a public option by expanding on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Medicare.

Administration

THE WHITE HOUSE

- President Joe Biden [announced](#) new actions to expand and improve COVID-19 testing.
- The White House [posted](#) a transcript of remarks by President Biden in last night's CNN Town Hall.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- HHS [announced](#) new actions to expand U.S. COVID-19 testing capacity.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

- NIH [announced](#) it has funded a new study to evaluate the effects of remdesivir in pregnant women to treat COVID-19 and determine whether there are any potential side effects.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

- Jeff Shuren, Director, Center for Devices and Radiological Health and William Maisel, Director, Office of Product Evaluation and Quality penned an FDA

Voices [blog post](#) titled, "Reflections on a Record Year for Novel Device Innovation Despite COVID-19 Challenges."

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

- CDC published a [webpage](#) titled, "How CDC is responding to SARS-CoV-2 variants globally."
- CDC published a [webpage](#) titled, "Percent of Delivered First Vaccine Doses Administered by U.S. States and Territories." According to the agency, the majority of states and territories have administered at or above 90% of their first vaccine doses delivered.
- CDC published a [webpage](#) titled, "Selected Adverse Events Reported after COVID-19 Vaccination."

Articles of Interest

- 2/16 Politico published an article titled, [“Biden admin rushes to close virus-sequencing gap as variants spread.”](#)
- 2/16 AP News published an article titled, [“Crippling storm hampers vaccinations as FEMA opens new sites.”](#)
- 2/16 Los Angeles Times published an article titled, [“Fauci more cautious on COVID-19 vaccine rollout, pushing ‘open season’ to late May or June.”](#)
- 2/17 The New York Times published an article titled, [“Covid-Linked Syndrome in Children Is Growing, and Cases Are More Severe.”](#)
- 2/17 The Atlantic published an article titled, [“COVID-19 Cases Are Dropping Fast. Why?”](#)