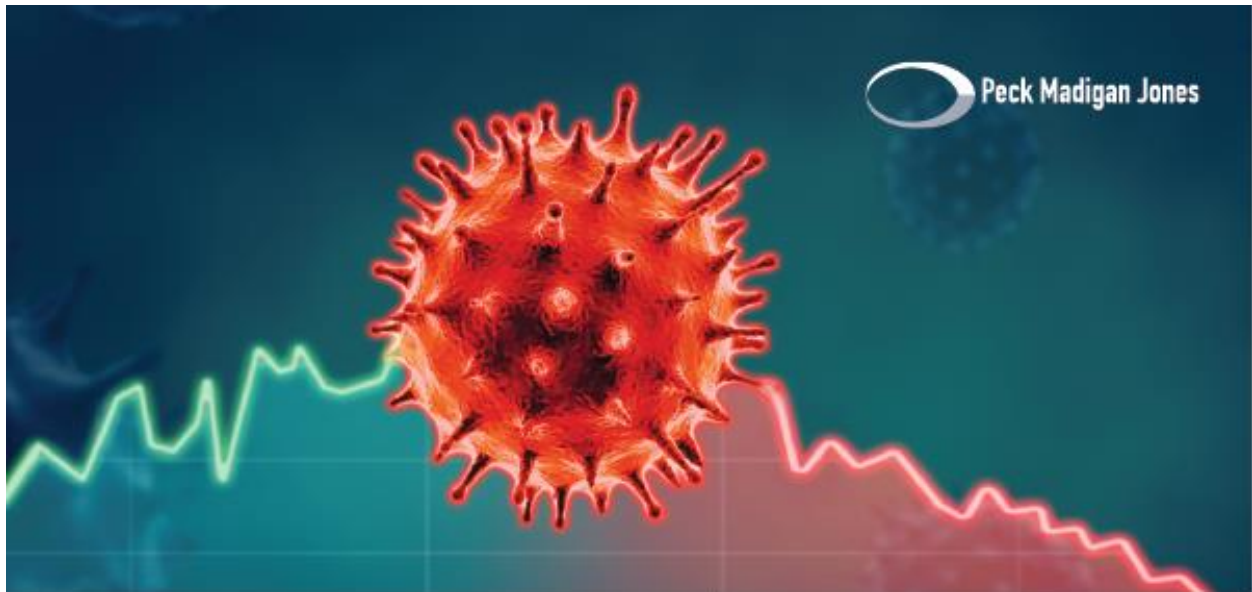




DAILY COVID-19 UPDATE

February 18, 2021

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY

Today, the House Budget Committee announced it will markup the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package, on Monday, February 22. The panel's press release stated it will combine all the committees of jurisdiction's provisions into a single measure "without substantive changes."

While the House is in the final stages of bringing its complete budget resolution to the floor, Republican lawmakers are pointing to unused, already allocated COVID-relief funds as a reason to scale back the almost \$2 trillion package. House Budget Committee Ranking Member Jason Smith (R-MO) stated there is "approximately \$1 trillion in existing COVID-19 funding" that has not been spent yet. He called for a "thorough and accurate accounting" of the remaining funds before Congress passes additional stimulus.

However, President Joe Biden has remained firm on his intent to "go big" on additional relief. He reiterated this week that "now is the time [Congress and the Administration] should be spending" to grow the economy, in the short- and long-term.

LATEST STATISTICS

73,377,450 COVID-19 vaccines have been distributed in the U.S and **41,021,049** Americans have received the first dose.

There are a total of **110,174,357** confirmed cases worldwide, 2,436,744 deaths and 61,798,025 people have recovered.

There are **27,876,525** confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. and 492,302 deaths.

LATEST PMJ RESOURCES

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

[Coronavirus State Reopening Tracker](#)

The Federal Reserve, according to the minutes of its late January meetings, projected the \$900 billion federal stimulus approved in December 2020, the anticipated additional fiscal support, and ongoing vaccine distribution "would lead to a sizable boost in economic activity this year."

We have updated our Drug Shortage and Medical Supply Chain Tracker. It is linked under Latest PMJ Resources.

[President Biden EO Tracker](#)

[Lame Duck Preview Memo](#)

ECONOMIC UPDATE

Congressional

SENATE

- Senate Banking Committee Chairman Sherrod Brown (D-OH), along with Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Mark Warner (D-VA), [are calling](#) for the Department of Labor to revise its policy that has limited the ability of workers, whose hours have been reduced, from receiving unemployment benefits through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program.
- Chairman Brown is working to [include a provision](#) that would provide financial assistance to save multiemployer pension plans in the upcoming COVID-19 relief package.
- Senator Shaheen, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, [reintroduced legislation](#) to create a \$75 billion Homeowner Assistance Fund to help protect struggling homeowners and communities by preventing avoidable foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs.
- Senate Banking Committee Ranking Member Pat Toomey's (R-PA) [opening statement](#) at the committee's hearing on COVID-19 and the economy.

Articles of Interest

- 2/18 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, ["U.S. unemployment claims rise, pausing recent downward trend."](#)
- 2/17 The Washington Post published an article titled, ["Mostly united over covid relief, Democrats face division over Biden's massive second economic plan."](#)
- 2/17 The Washington Post published an article titled, ["From vaccines to masks, Fed's prescription for the economy ventures far beyond interest rates."](#)

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Congressional

HOUSE

- Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-FL) sent a [letter](#) to President Joe Biden regarding American manufacturers' efforts to produce and distribute N95 masks.

Administration

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

- NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins penned a [blog post](#) titled, "South Africa Study Shows Power of Genomic Surveillance Amid COVID-19 Pandemic."

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

- Acting FDA Commissioner Dr. Janet Woodcock [issued](#) a statement to emphasize the fact that there is no credible evidence of food or food packaging associated with or as a likely source of viral transmission of COVID-19.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

- CDC [published](#) a webpage titled, "How COVID-19 Vaccines Get to You."
- CDC [published](#) a webpage titled, "Understanding Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines."

Articles of Interest

- 2/17 The New York Times published an article titled, "[Scientists Call on C.D.C. to Set Air Standards for Workplaces, Now.](#)"
 - 2/17 NBC News published an article titled, "[The looming question': Fauci says studies suggest vaccines slow virus spread.](#)"
 - 2/17 Reuters published an article titled, "[Johnson & Johnson has only a few million COVID-19 vaccine doses in stock as likely launch nears.](#)"
 - 2/17 The Hill published an article titled, "[Biden officials announce funds to track virus variants.](#)"
 - 2/18 Politico published an article titled, "[9 states getting it right.](#)"
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LABOR UPDATE

Administration

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

- DOL [released](#) its Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report for the week ending February 13.