



## DAILY COVID-19 UPDATE

March 16, 2021

### WHAT HAPPENED TODAY

In [remarks](#) at the White House yesterday, President Joe Biden announced that in the next 10 days, his administration will reach the goal of administering 100 million COVID-19 vaccine doses at the same time that 100 million stimulus checks are distributed under the American Rescue Plan.

Also, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced that for coronavirus vaccines administered on or after March 15, Medicare will increase the reimbursement from \$28 per shot to \$40 for single-dose vaccines and \$45 to \$80 for a two-dose regimen. This higher payment rate is part of an effort to ramp up the number of COVID-19 vaccines being administered each day, boost the number of healthcare providers that can administer the vaccine, and increase the number of vaccination sites.

Additionally, the Federal Reserve ("Fed") is expected to release its updated economic projections this Wednesday. The Fed will likely note improving economic conditions, while continuing its current level of interest rates and bond purchases.

### LATEST STATISTICS

**142,918,525** COVID-19 vaccines have been distributed in the U.S and **72,135,616** Americans have received the first dose.

There are a total of **120,520,156** confirmed cases worldwide, **2,665,874** deaths and **68,353,073** people have recovered.

There are **29,534,162** confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. and **536,622** deaths.

### LATEST PMJ RESOURCES

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

[Coronavirus State Reopening Tracker](#)

Notably, Moderna has begun testing its COVID-19 vaccine in [children](#) between 6 months and 12 years of age.

We have updated our Coronavirus State Reopening Tracker. It is linked under Latest PMJ Resources.

[Biden Administration Transition Tracker](#)

[President Biden EO Tracker](#)

[Policy Outlook for the Biden Administration and 117th Congress](#)

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## ECONOMIC UPDATE

### *Congressional*

#### SENATE

- Senate Banking Committee Chairman Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) [sent a letter](#) to David Solomon, Chairman and CEO of Goldman Sachs, pressing him for answers related to the bank's support of lowered capital requirements.
- Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Senator Jim Risch (R-ID) [introduced](#) the State Fiscal Flexibility Act ([S. 743](#)) to eliminate a provision in the American Rescue Plan that prevents states from using relief funds to lower taxes.

### *Administration*

#### SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)

- An internal Small Business Administration (SBA) watchdog [announced](#) the agency mistakenly paid \$692 million in duplicate Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan.

#### Articles of Interest

- 3/16 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, [“Fed seen standing firm on interest rates, bond purchases.”](#)
- 3/15 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, [“Biden says Covid-19 stimulus ‘already doing what it was designed to do.’”](#)
- 3/15 Politico published an article titled, [“IRS partially shield some stimulus payments from debt reductions.”](#)

## PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

### *Congressional*

#### HOUSE

- Reps. Don Beyer (D-VA), Mark Pocan (D-WI) and Scott Peters (D-CA) sent a [letter](#) to Jeffrey Zients, Response Coordinator of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, urging the Biden administration to develop a plan to

share surplus vaccines for the coronavirus with low- and middle-income countries and the World Health Organization's COVAX initiative.

## SENATE

- Sens. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) introduced the Medicare Sequester Relief Act, bipartisan [legislation](#) that would prevent substantial payment cuts to Medicare payments to healthcare providers from taking effect during the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Steve Scalise (R-LA), Tim Scott (R-SC), Ted Cruz (R-TX), Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Josh Hawley (R-MO) sent a [letter](#) to Attorney General Merrick Garland, calling on the Department of Justice to continue its probe into whether state officials failed to comply with federal guidelines or requirements for participation in federal programs in their response to coronavirus infections among seniors and nursing home residents.

## *Administration*

### THE WHITE HOUSE

- The White House released a transcript of [remarks](#) by President Joe Biden on implementation of the American Rescue Plan.
- The White House released a transcript of yesterday's [press briefing](#) by the COVID-19 Response Team and public health officials.

### CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES

- CMS [announced](#) that as of March 15, Medicare will increase the reimbursement for COVID-19 vaccines from \$28 per shot to \$40 for single-dose vaccines and \$45 to \$80 for the administration of COVID-19 vaccines requiring two doses.

### NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

- NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins penned a [blog post](#) titled, "CRISPR-Based Anti-Viral Therapy Could One Day Foil the Flu - and COVID-19."

### Articles of Interest

- 3/16 CNN published an article titled, "[A concerning variant is about to become dominant in the US, experts say, and how Americans act could help fuel or curb a surge.](#)"
- 3/16 Axios published an article titled, "[European countries suspend AstraZeneca vaccinations amid reports of blood clots.](#)"
- 3/15 The Atlantic published an article titled, "[Why the Pandemic Experts Failed.](#)"
- 3/15 The Washington Post published an article titled, "[CDC identifies public-health guidance from the Trump administration that downplayed pandemic severity.](#)"
- 3/15 The Hill published an article titled, "[Former coronavirus testing czar says it's 'very important' for Trump to encourage followers to get vaccinated.](#)"