



DAILY COVID-19 UPDATE

March 22, 2021

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY

Last Friday, the House passed [H.R. 1868](#), legislation to avert spending cuts that otherwise would be triggered by the American Rescue Plan as well as continue the moratorium on the 2% Medicare sequester, set to expire on March 31, through the end of the year. Without the legislation, the \$1.9 trillion package would trigger \$381 billion in cuts annually for the next five fiscal years under the Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (PAYGO) rule, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). House Budget Committee Chairman John Yarmuth (D-KY) stated the legislation is "needed to avert painful and indiscriminate cuts to Medicare, farm support, and other programs."

Additionally, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) filed cloture on the PPP Extension Act of 2021 ([H.R. 1799](#)) and the chamber is expected to consider the bill this week before leaving for a two-week recess.

Over the weekend, NIAID Director Dr. Anthony Fauci warned that B.1.1.7, the COVID-19 variant first discovered in the U.K., may account for up to 30% of

LATEST STATISTICS

156,734,555 COVID-19 vaccines have been distributed in the U.S and **82,772,416** Americans have received the first dose.

There are a total of **123,531,524** confirmed cases worldwide, **2,719,936** deaths and **70,034,359** people have recovered.

There are **29,850,767** confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. and **542,653** deaths.

LATEST PMJ RESOURCES

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

[Coronavirus State Reopening Tracker](#)

new infections across the U.S. He also noted that this particular variant is 50% more transmissible and could result in a more severe infection than the original COVID-19 strain.

Notably, a phase 3 U.S. trial found that AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine is safe and 79% effective in preventing symptomatic infection. The company plans to apply for emergency use authorization (EUA) from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the first half of April.

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](#)

ECONOMIC UPDATE

Congressional

SENATE

- Senate Banking Committee Chairman Sherrod Brown (D-OH) [lauded](#) the Federal Reserve's announcement that it would not extend regulatory exemptions.
- Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Mike Crapo (R-ID) wrote an op-ed titled, ["Opinion: States Deserve Fiscal Flexibility."](#)

Administration

TREASURY

- The Department of the Treasury, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the Bureau of the Fiscal Service [announced](#) that the next batch of Economic Impact Payments will be issued to taxpayers this week.

FEDERAL RESERVE

- The Federal Reserve [released](#) the 2020 combined annual audited financial statements for Federal Reserve Banks, as well as statements for the 12 individual Federal Reserve Banks, the Board of Governors, and five limited liability companies that manage and operate some of the credit facilities established by the Board in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)

- The Small Business Administration [launched the portal](#) to begin accepting Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) applications on April 8.

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU (CFPB)

- The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) [released](#) the 2020 annual report to Congress on the administration of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA), the report highlights efforts by the CFPB and the Federal Trade

Commission (FTC) to protect consumers, particularly those affected financially by COVID-19.

Articles of Interest

- 3/22 Politico published an article titled, "[IRS sending 2nd batch of stimulus payments.](#)"
- 3/22 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, "[PPP loan changes came too late for smallest businesses.](#)"

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Administration

THE WHITE HOUSE

- The White House released a [transcript](#) from today's press briefing from the COVID-19 response team and public health officials.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

- The FDA issued an [emergency use authorization](#) (EUA) for the first machine learning-based COVID-19 non-diagnostic screening device that identifies certain biomarkers that are indicative of certain types of conditions, such as hypercoagulation.
- Dr. Janet Woodcock, Acting Commissioner of Food and Drugs and Judy McMeekin, Pharm. D., Associate Commissioner for Regulatory Affairs penned an FDA Voices [blog post](#) titled, "FDA's Ongoing Use of Inspectional Tools for Ensuring Access to Safe, Quality Food and Medical Products During the COVID-19 Pandemic."

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

- NIH announced that results from a large [clinical trial](#) in the U.S. and South America indicate that AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine, AZD1222, is well-tolerated and protects against symptomatic COVID-19 disease, including severe disease or hospitalization.

Articles of Interest

- 3/22 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, "[AstraZeneca's Covid-19 Vaccine Is Safe, 79% Effective in Late-Stage U.S. Trials.](#)"
- 3/22 The Washington Post published an article titled, "[Vaccinated mothers pass covid antibodies to babies in utero and through breastmilk, early studies show.](#)"
- 3/20 The Hill published an article titled, "[Fauci: COVID-19 variant likely accounts for up to 30 percent of US infections.](#)"
- 3/20 CNBC published an article titled, "[Covid cases are rising in 21 states as health officials warn against reopening too quickly.](#)"
- 3/19 The Atlantic published an article titled, "[Don't Be Surprised When Vaccinated People Get Infected.](#)"