

Frontline News

1199 MEMBERS ON THE FRONT LINES OF THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

VACCINES ARE THE BEST PROTECTION AGAINST DELTA VARIANT



The delta variant is creating a surge of new COVID-19 cases across the country, particularly in states and regions where fewer people are vaccinated. The variant now accounts for over 82 percent of all new cases. The good news is all three vaccines available in the United States are effective against the variant—particularly with preventing serious illness from the virus. Recent studies show the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were over 90 percent effective in preventing hospitalization in adults while the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is 85 percent effective. Data from several states over the past several months suggests that 99.5 percent of COVID-19-related deaths occurred among unvaccinated people. The data suggests the vaccines are slightly less effective in preventing minor infections. This is also one reason the Biden Administration recently updated its

MOST 1199 MEMBERS LIVE IN COUNTIES WITH SUBSTANTIAL OR HIGH TRANSMISSION LEVELS.

guidance for mask wearing and is now advising all people, regardless of vaccination status, to mask up in such places if they are in areas reporting “substantial” or “high” transmission of the virus. Right now, most 1199 members live in counties with substantial or high transmission levels.

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK

Q: *What is the real risk of “breakthrough” infection after vaccination?*

A: Breakthrough infections (infections among vaccinated people) make headlines, but they remain uncommon. The rate of breakthrough cases reported among those fully vaccinated is well below one percent in all reporting states according to a recent survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation. This number could be higher because the symptoms are typically mild, and people may not report them or get tested. Big, crowded events pose a higher risk that a vaccinated person will cross paths with an infected person carrying a high viral load, so it is best to avoid these situations.

Q: *When should I wear a mask?*

A: The CDC has a color-coded map of [Covid-19 outbreaks](#) in the United States. Blue and yellow zones show relatively low levels of infections, while orange and red zones indicate areas where cases in the past week were above 50 cases per 100,000 people. The agency advises people to wear masks if they live in an orange or red zone—which now accounts for about 80% of the counties in the United States.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION MEETS VACCINE MILESTONES

President Biden set a goal of 70 percent of the U.S. adult population receiving at least one COVID-19 vaccination by July 4. Though we didn’t reach that July milestone, we are there now.

The 70 percent goal is seen by federal health officials as a crucial step toward reaching herd immunity—when enough people in a given community have antibodies against a specific disease. Because of the delta variant, Biden Administration health officials are pushing for 80 percent of the population to get vaccinated in order to reach some form of herd immunity.

In another milestone, more than half the entire U.S. population is now fully vaccinated, according to data recently released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York—all 1199SEIU regions—are leading the way, with all having nearly 60 percent of their population fully vaccinated. We have more work to do, though, and we need to continue reaching out to friends, family, and co-workers who have yet to take the vaccine. You can help by connecting with them and sharing facts and genuinely listening to them about their concerns. One thing we know for sure is that the delta variant is especially contagious and particularly dangerous to the unvaccinated. By getting vaccinated we can protect ourselves, our families, and our patients.

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