



What Has Changed Since Last Update

- Gov. Polis announced that **Phase 1.B4 – which includes Coloradans 50+, essential workers, and Coloradans with one high-risk health condition – will now be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine starting on Friday, March 19.** He said that more information will be provided this Wednesday, March 17, about how people will be able to sign up.
- CMS [announced](#) that it is increasing the Medicare payment amount for administering the COVID-19 vaccine. **Effective for COVID-19 vaccines administered on or after March 15, 2021, the national average payment rate for physicians, hospitals, pharmacies, and others will be \$40 to administer each dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.** This represents an increase from approximately \$28 to \$40 for the administration of single-dose vaccines, and an increase from approximately \$45 to \$80 for the administration of COVID-19 vaccines requiring two doses.
- Cities, counties, and other local governments may apply through April 20 for grants to work with community-based organizations to encourage COVID-19 safety and vaccination in vulnerable and underserved populations. The **\$250 million initiative — Advancing Health Literacy to Enhance Equitable Community Responses to COVID-19 — expects to fund about 30 urban and 43 rural communities for two years.** Recipients will develop and implement a plan to better reach racial, ethnic, and other vulnerable populations with COVID-19 public health information and services.

Things to Know

- As of March 13, **more than 1,000 Colorado providers have administered 1,846,905 COVID-19 vaccine doses** for 1,212,577 people with first doses and 737,903 people who are fully immunized.
- **CMS updated its guidance, in partnership with the CDC, for safe visitation in nursing homes during the COVID-19 public health emergency.** The changes reflect the impact of vaccinations on COVID-19 infections in nursing homes.

Upcoming Webinars/Calls

- 11 a.m. – noon, Tuesday, March 16 – Health Management Associates: Improving COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence in Underserved Populations. [Register here.](#)
- 2 p.m., Tuesday, March 16 – Florida Hospital Association: Patient and Family Engagement During the Era of COVID-19. [Register here.](#)
- 3-4:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 17 - COVID-19 Conversations: Variants and Vaccines. [Register here.](#)
- Noon – 1 p.m., Wednesday, March 24 - It's OK Not to Be OK: Physician Burnout and Mental Health. [Register here.](#)
- April 13-15: ASPR 2021 Virtual Preparedness Summit. [Register here.](#)

COVID Resources

[CDPHE COVID-19](#)

[CDC COVID-19](#)

COVID Coverage

Only 2 Coronavirus Patients On Friday In Denver Health's ICU, Hospitalizations Down Statewide

KCNC-TV (Denver)

As the vaccine rolls out, hospitalizations due to COVID-19 are dropping dramatically in Colorado. On Friday, there were 303 hospitalized patients with confirmed cases of COVID-19, compared to 1,847 on Dec. 1 2020, and 888 on April 14, 2020. Friday at Denver Health, there were only two COVID-19 patients in the hospital's intensive care unit, and 12 COVID-19 patients total. Those numbers are a relief for hospital staff.

'Like you're not all there': Long-haul COVID-19 patients can't seem to bounce back

The Pueblo Chieftain

"As time goes on, through the medical community there's more and more opportunities to learn about this," said Dr. Rebecca Keith, a pulmonologist at National Jewish Health who works in the hospital's Center for Post-COVID-19 Care and Recovery. "Just like anything new, providers need to learn about it, reach out to other providers in the community and try to adjust their practice for patients who are suffering from this kind of long-haul COVID."

COVID's long-haul legacy leads to months of suffering for some Valley patients

The Aspen Times

Aspen Valley Hospital and Valley View Hospital in Glenwood Springs are starting multi-disciplinary clinics to help area residents, according to Aspen Valley CEO Dave Ressler and Dr. David Brooks, chief medical officer at Valley View. "We're setting up a network of experts to support patients in our

community who are still suffering from COVID symptoms,” Ressler said. “It’s very clear the community will need some support.”

All Coloradans will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccine by mid-April

KUSA-TV (Denver)

The general population of Colorado will be eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine by mid-April, the governor announced Friday, depending on the vaccine supply. "What we're able to say today, is that we have a very high degree of confidence and we're willing to say that by mid-April every Coloradan will be eligible," Gov. Jared Polis (D-Colorado) said.

Governors of Colorado, Oregon ask FDA to approve COVID-19 vaccine pooling

KUSA-TV (Denver)

“Right now... we’re able to get the [extra] 6th dose in the Pfizer vial, sometimes able to get that [extra] 11th dose out of Moderna. But even after you get those doses, there’s still some medication left in the vials,” said Dr. Melissa Miller, Director of Pharmacy at North Suburban Medical Center in Thornton. “You’re looking at ‘liquid gold,’ essentially, something that is priceless. To say, well, I’m going to throw it out even though I know there is enough extra there to get additional doses is just so hard.”

Boulder Community Health partners with county to launch mobile vaccine unit

Daily Camera (Boulder)

Boulder Community Health is partnering with Boulder County Public Health to provide mobile vaccine clinics aimed at connecting with minority and harder-to-reach communities. The county also reported 69 new COVID-19 cases, one new death and nine new hospitalizations. The 69 new cases bring the county’s total cases to 19,514 and the county’s death toll is now 249. The nine new hospitalizations brings the county’s total to 618, with 13 residents currently hospitalized with coronavirus. Two residents were discharged Friday after receiving COVID-19 treatment.

Pandemic Fatigue Stings, But Colorado Is Asking Restriction-Weary Residents Wait Just A Little Longer — And Please Get Vaccinated

Colorado Public Radio

A chorus of other public health experts echoed the urge for a slow-but-steady approach to win the pandemic race. Key metrics, like cases, hospitalizations, deaths and transmission have all been trending downward since last fall’s big wave, though there have been some signs of plateauing in recent weeks. “There’s a tricky point of balance,” said Dr. Jon Samet, an epidemiologist and the dean at Colorado’s School of Public Health, who directs COVID-19 modeling for the state. “I’d feel more comfortable if the epidemic curve, the trajectory, were a little steeper downward. But we’re not in a dangerous place.”

COVID: The Longest Year

The Gazette (Colorado Springs)

A study of people discharged from March through September last year from UCHHealth Memorial Hospital's Central and North locations found that about one-third of respondents still had symptoms up to six weeks later, according to Dr. Robert Lam, an assistant professor at the University of Colorado School of Medicine who helped lead the study. "It's really a time to really stay vigilant," Lam said. "Because we know that - as we continue to still have high numbers of patients who are infected with COVID-19 - a portion of them will probably still have this long-haul journey."

Dr. Robert Vissers: One year of coronavirus pandemic marks tragic milestone for Boulder community

Daily Camera (Boulder) - Opinion

I'm happy to report that a year into this pandemic, Boulder is in a relatively stable place in terms of case numbers, hospitalizations, mortality and vaccine administration. Boulder Community Health has learned a great deal about the COVID-19 virus over the past year. We stand on much firmer ground in successfully treating patients with severe illness thanks to proven techniques for managing oxygen supplementation and updated guidelines for optimal medication management. As a result, hospital patients are experiencing shorter stays and better outcomes.

'When we care for each other, we can still live extraordinary lives'

Steamboat Pilot & Today - Opinion

Countless emotions have been felt within the walls of UHealth Yampa Valley Medical Center — fear, uncertainty, exhaustion, frustration, loneliness. But we've also felt encouragement and gratitude. It's what got us through the most difficult days. Thank you to everyone in the Yampa Valley for supporting YVMC's staff, providers and patients.

Hospitals may have solved COVID-19 vax distribution problems

Modern Healthcare - Subscription required

For the most part, health systems' involvement varies widely county by county, as do distribution guidelines. The effort is a strong example of how local healthcare really is. It's also an example of how a fragmented system affects community access, as hospitals created their own distribution playbooks in the absence of a national version early on. But hospitals do have lessons learned and best practices for moving forward even as they're still learning.

The White House is set to unveil a wide-reaching, billion-dollar campaign aimed at convincing every American to get vaccinated

STAT

The White House will soon unveil a wide-reaching public relations campaign aimed at boosting vaccine confidence and uptake across the U.S. This television, radio, and digital advertising blitz, set to kick off within weeks, will focus on Americans outright skeptical of vaccines' safety or effectiveness as well as those who are potentially more willing to seek a Covid-19 immunization but don't yet know where, when, or how. Specifically, the campaign will target three groups in which access, apathy, or outright skepticism may pose a barrier to vaccinations: young people, people of color, and conservatives, according to a Biden aide.

'Silver lining': Hospitals keep practices born in COVID rush

Modern Healthcare - Subscription required

Jacqueline Moran, the director of Northwell's Centralized Transfer Center, said the hospital can dial up its approach to move patients in response to emergencies, for example in the case a facility must be evacuated because of a fire or a flood. "Thanks to COVID, the silver lining is now we know how to move this seamlessly from a high incident to a low incident on a daily basis," Moran said.

The vaccines are working. That's why we shouldn't panic about variants.

NBC News

While it's likely that other variants will continue to emerge as pockets of outbreaks simmer around the country, Kamil said that alone isn't cause for alarm. Rather than fret over each new strain that is identified, he said the most important thing Americans can do now is try to contain the virus by staying safe and getting vaccinated, particularly because the vaccines are so effective at preventing hospitalizations and deaths. "There are certain variants that are more transmissible, and we have strong data on that, but the thing people should take away from the variant story is just: Don't let your guard down," said Kamil.

Infectious diseases expert: COVID variants are a "whole new ballgame"

Axios

The U.S. is playing a "whole new ballgame" in terms of controlling the coronavirus now that variants are spreading across the country, Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota. Osterholm said the U.S. could face another surge from the B.1.1.7 variant, which was first identified in the United Kingdom and has since been detected throughout the U.S. Multiple studies have suggested that it likely spreads more easily than the original strain of the virus.

Regular booster vaccines are the future in battle with COVID-19 virus, top genome expert says

Reuters

Regular booster vaccines against the novel coronavirus will be needed because of mutations that make it more transmissible and better able to evade human immunity, the head of Britain's effort to sequence the virus's genomes told Reuters. The novel coronavirus, which has killed 2.65 million people globally since it emerged in China in late 2019, mutates around once every two weeks, slower than influenza or HIV, but enough to require tweaks to vaccines.