

Things to Do

- **HHS is updating the TeleTracking requirements for hospitals, including updating reporting requirements for the combined bamlanivimab / etesevimab therapeutic product amounts on hand and courses administered within the last week.** In addition, HHS has converted some of the PPE data fields from mandatory to optional. The upload template is [available here](#). In addition to those new fields, there are several clarifications within the new [Hospital Reporting FAQ](#).
 - TeleTracking's Technical Support team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist with questions. Contact TeleTracking Technical Support at 877.570.6903 or the HHS Protect Service desk at Protect-ServiceDesk@hhs.gov.

What Has Changed Since Last Update

- The **Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) is now reimbursing vaccine providers \$41.18 to administer each dose of COVID-19 vaccine.** The updated rates can be found on [HCPF's website](#) under the Immunization Rate Schedule section.
- The **White House announced a \$10 billion investment in promoting public confidence in COVID-19 vaccines, particularly among the hardest-hit and highest-risk communities.** The initiative includes a \$6 billion investment in community health centers to expand access to vaccines in underserved communities, along with \$3 billion to strengthen vaccine confidence through the CDC, and \$330 million for community health workers.
- FEMA [announced](#) that additional disaster assistance will be made available for all 50 states. Specifically, **FEMA will amend the disaster declarations to pay 100 percent federal funding for the costs of activities that have been determined as eligible expenses.** Previously, federal funding was made at 75 percent of total eligible costs. For additional information:
 - [Informational video](#) from Colorado about applying for funds
 - [Details from FEMA for health care-related entities](#)

Things to Know

- **Cynosure Health**, CHA's partner for the Hospital Quality Improvement Contractors (HQIC) Initiative, **recently released a 23-page toolkit designed to equip hospital leaders with information, strategies, and tools to increase vaccine acceptance among health care workers.** The toolkit includes ideas and best practices for identifying, training, and building the knowledge capacities of influencers. For more information, contact Toni Foos, CHA manager of infection prevention and clinical quality, at toni.foos@cha.com.
- **CDPHE's quality assurance system added 514 hospitalization cases to the state's data dashboard, dating back to June,** due to a coding issue at some hospitals. The state noted that the coding issues did not affect the calculation of dial metrics, which do not require that hospitalizations be matched to a previously reported case.
- **AstraZeneca revised its data on its COVID-19 vaccine candidate, stating that its AZD1222 vaccine showed a 76 percent efficacy in preventing symptomatic COVID-19.**

The drug maker previously said its two-dose candidate is 79 percent effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19. AstraZeneca also changed its estimated efficacy in people over 65, increasing it from 80 percent to 85 percent. All revisions were attributed to “pre-specified interim analysis,” which had sparked concerns from the Data and Safety Monitoring Board, which monitors AstraZeneca’s phase 3 clinical trial.

- **The HHS Office of Inspector General reported findings from a survey of hospital leaders on their most difficult challenges responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, greatest concerns going forward and how the government could best help.** The survey results noted significant clinical challenges in treating COVID-19 patients and concerns about other patients delaying or forgoing routine health care; the increased need for behavioral and mental health care; worsening access and financial challenges; unreliable access to necessary supplies; worsening disparities; benefits staffing shortages; burnout and trauma and more.
- **The HHS Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) released several issue briefs that discuss health disparities,** including:
 - [Health Disparities by Race and Ethnicity During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Current Evidence and Policy Approaches](#)
 - [Risk of COVID-19 Infections, Hospitalization, and Death in Fee-For-Service Medicare](#)
 - [The Remaining Uninsured: Geographic and Demographic Variation](#)
- As of March 24, **more than 1,140 Colorado providers have administered 2,357,675 COVID-19 vaccine doses** for 1,464,099 people with first doses and 906,837 people who are fully immunized.

Upcoming Webinars/Calls

- 10 a.m., Tuesday, March 30: AHA – How Innovative Partnerships Accelerate COVID-19 Vaccinations. [Register here.](#)
- 11 a.m., Tuesday, March 30: Baldrige Foundation – Health Care Cybersecurity in a Post-Pandemic World. [Register here.](#)
- April 13-15: ASPR 2021 Virtual Preparedness Summit. [Register here.](#)

COVID Resources

CDPHE COVID-19

CDC COVID-19

COVID Coverage

Colorado loosens COVID restrictions across most of state in major — and likely final — revision of dial

The Denver Post

Colorado's health department moved 26 counties to the lowest level on the state's color-coded COVID-19 dial Wednesday, eliminating most public health restrictions in those less-populated areas now at Level Green — including all caps on dining capacity at restaurants. The “Dial 3.0” changes that took effect Wednesday also remove all limits statewide on the size of personal gatherings. And they allow bars to reopen, at limited capacity, for the first time since last summer in counties at Level Blue, which, in the metro area, include Jefferson and Arapahoe. Last call for alcohol in those counties returns to 2 a.m., as well.

Ready Or Not, Colorado's COVID-19 Dial 3.0 Is Here (And We Might Not Be Ready)

Colorado Public Radio

“I think we're at this very uncertain point in terms of COVID-19 in Colorado right now,” said Beth Carlton, an associate professor for the school at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus and member of the Colorado COVID-19 Modeling Team that provides epidemiological modeling for the state. Carlton noted many more Coloradans have been vaccinated, especially those over 65, and the state's positivity rate has remained below the desired 5 percent figure.

Colorado State Fairgrounds vaccine site reopens Friday, faces initial problems

KRDO-TV (Colorado Springs)

The new regional mass vaccination clinic at the Colorado State Fairgrounds in Pueblo is set to reopen on Friday with progress toward a lofty vaccination goal. Centura Health and COVIDCheck Colorado are running the clinic. Starting at 10 a.m., the clinic will begin providing first doses to those that qualify to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Colorado. The clinic first opened its doors on Monday, providing doses only to those who already received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at the Pueblo Mall vaccination site.

Vaccine Program Expanded To Homebound Patients

KCNC-TV (Denver)

Starting a few days ago, a Denver Health nurse began driving around the city and administering COVID-19 vaccine doses. The hope is more nurses or even teams of EMTs from Denver Fire can help the program grow. The city posted on Facebook on Wednesday urging more people to get appointments, “Sign up by calling the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment at 720-865-3005 and press Option 4 for at-home vaccination. This service is available in English and Spanish, as well as other languages through a phone interpreter.”

U.S. Covid Cases Are Rising Again, Reversing Months of Progress

Bloomberg

Covid cases in the U.S. are rising again, reversing course after months of decline and threatening another setback in the return to normality. The seven-day average of new cases jumped to 57,695 Wednesday, 9.5% above the prior week, marking the biggest increase since Jan. 12, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

COVID-19 sinks not-for-profit hospitals' operating margins

Modern Healthcare - Subscription required

While COVID-19 relief measures boosted not-for-profit hospitals' cash on hand, the pandemic sunk their median operating margin, according to a new report. Not-for-profit hospitals recorded a median operating margin of 0.5% and operating cash flow margin of 6.7% in fiscal 2020, which were down 2.4% and 8.4% respectively year over year, according to Moody's Investors Service preliminary median report that gathered data from June 30 and Sept. 30 of last year. Medicare advanced payments, deferral of payroll taxes, suspension of retirement contributions and deferral of capital spending led to substantially higher median days cash on hand, which rose from 44 days to 246.9 days.

U.S. on pace to clear Biden's new goal of 200 million coronavirus shots in his first 100 days

The Washington Post - Subscription required

President Biden's first vaccine promise — 100 million shots in his first 100 days — was met 42 days early. So on Thursday he doubled it, saying 200 million doses will have been administered under his presidency by April 30. The nation is already poised to meet the revised target, as the seven-day average of daily vaccinations surpasses 2.5 million. Vaccine supply is also expected to expand in April, prompting numerous states to throw open eligibility to everyone 16 and older.

HHS to give community health centers \$6 billion for vaccine programs

Modern Healthcare - Subscription required

The Biden administration on Thursday said HHS will give approximately 1,400 community health centers across the country \$6 billion to expand COVID-19 vaccinations, testing and treatment to vulnerable populations. The funding, which Congress appropriated through the most recent relief bill, will be distributed by HHS starting next month as part of the Biden administration's efforts to ensure communities of color, low-income populations and people living in rural areas receive COVID-19 vaccines, testing and treatment.

Pfizer and BioNTech to begin testing Covid-19 vaccine in children

STAT

Pfizer and BioNTech said Thursday they are beginning a study aimed at showing their Covid-19 vaccine can be used in children as young as 6 months. The study follows the launch of a separate and ongoing trial in children ages 12 to 15, which was fully enrolled in January. That study could lead to results by the end of the first half of the year, depending on the data, and then to an emergency use authorization. That will depend on the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The vaccine already has an EUA for people 16 and older.

The new vaccine waiting game

Axios

Congratulations! You're about to be eligible to ... wait some more for the vaccine. The big picture: States are expanding eligibility for COVID vaccines by broad age groups — and some are opening it

to all adults. But that doesn't always mean they have enough vaccine supplies to offer appointments to everyone in the new groups.

HHS stops shipping Eli Lilly's solo COVID-19 antibody treatment, now only ships its antibody cocktail

Becker's Hospital Review

The U.S. government has stopped its distribution of Eli Lilly's COVID-19 antibody bamlanivimab alone, saying that the increasing emergence of coronavirus variants has made the treatment ineffective, according to a March 25 Endpoints News report. The U.S. government is still distributing Eli Lilly's COVID-19 antibody cocktail, just not bamlanivimab alone. On Feb. 26, the U.S. purchased 100,000 doses of the antibody cocktail for \$210 million.

Vaccines alone won't end Covid. Biden's new testing strategy could help finish the job.

Politico

The Biden administration is trying to transform the United States' Covid-19 testing system — shifting focus from diagnosing people who suspect they're infected to regularly screening millions of Americans at school or work. The White House announced last week that it would spend \$10 billion on screening programs for K-12 students as part of a broader national effort to return kids to classrooms. The administration has also inked deals with several manufacturers of rapid tests designed for at-home use.



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