



## COVID-19 Survey Summary: April 9, 2021

*The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past week, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network ([SEAN](#)). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).*

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The public's outlook on the coronavirus pandemic has brightened considerably, with views of its trajectory improving, risk perceptions declining, more Americans socializing and the fewest since last May showing symptoms of mental distress.

Pandemic-related surveys this week show sharply rising vaccinations, but with some continued hesitancy. They also find that strict adherence to mask-wearing and social distancing has eased – a concern with case rates on the rise again.

Other new studies show further signs that the economic situation is improving for small businesses and individuals alike, with a new pandemic high in consumer sentiment; detail the pandemic's toll on frontline healthcare workers; suggest a link between COVID-19 and neuropsychiatric symptoms, particularly among those with more severe cases; and explore COVID-19 transmission in correctional facilities and on American Indian reservations.

### Pandemic Outlook

Seventy-seven percent of Americans say the coronavirus situation in the United States is getting better, up from 60 percent in February and 33 percent in January to the most by far since the pandemic began. Only 7 percent perceive the situation as worsening, a pandemic low.

Personal concerns also have eased. Roughly a third (35 percent) are very or somewhat worried about contracting COVID-19, down 14 percentage points since mid-February to a low in data since last April. Twenty-two percent are worried about access to hospital services and treatment; 14 percent, about access to COVID-19 tests – also lows since April ([Gallup 3/15-3/21](#)).

Similarly, just 19 percent now say they're extremely concerned about the outbreak, the fewest since mid-March last year. Still, 78 percent are at least somewhat concerned, essentially unchanged in recent weeks ([Axios/Ipsos 4/2-4/5](#)).

In line with these gains, the [National Center for Health Statistics](#) finds the number of Americans showing symptoms of mental health issues declining steadily. Thirty-five percent report symptoms of depression or anxiety in the past seven days, down 8 points from its mid-November

peak to the fewest since last May. This includes three in 10 who show symptoms of anxiety, down from 37 percent in mid-November; and a quarter with symptoms of depression, down from 29 percent. Despite these declines, the number showing symptoms remains more than triple pre-pandemic levels ([U.S. Census Bureau 3/17-3/29](#)).

## Vaccines

Nearly half of Americans – 47 percent – now say they’ve received a COVID-19 vaccine, a sharp 13-point increase from just two weeks ago. Another quarter say they definitely will get vaccinated and 12 percent say they probably will. Sixteen percent say they probably or definitely will not, down slightly from 19 percent a month ago ([U.S. Census Bureau 3/17-3/29](#)).

Another poll likewise finds that 47 percent have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, 64 percent of whom are fully vaccinated. An additional 15 percent say they plan to get vaccinated as soon as they can. The combined 62 percent who are vaccinated or plan to be as soon as they can is little changed from 60 percent in mid-March, but up from 50 percent two months ago. An additional 18 percent plan to wait before getting the vaccine; 19 percent don’t plan to get it at all, largely unchanged in recent months.

The actual vaccination rate is a bit lower; 43 percent have had at least one dose, per [CDC data](#), possibly reflecting social engagement bias in survey participation.

While vaccination among adults advances, parents express significant hesitancy about a vaccine for children, which is yet to be approved. Just about half of parents (52 percent) say they’re at least somewhat likely to have their child vaccinated as soon as it’s available to their age group, including just 27 percent who say this is very likely ([Axios/Ipsos 4/2-4/5](#)).

## Vaccination Among Rural Americans

Fifty-four percent of Americans living in rural areas say they have received at least one dose of a vaccine or plan to get it as soon as possible. However, the share who intend to get a shot as soon as possible, 16 percent, is lower than in suburban (28 percent) or urban (35 percent) areas. And 21 percent of rural residents say they definitely will not get vaccinated, vs. 13 percent in suburbs and 10 percent of urban residents.

This largely reflects the fact that rural Americans are more likely to be Republicans and white evangelicals; as noted [last week](#), these groups are particularly vaccine hesitant. Indeed, nearly three-quarters of the rural residents who say they definitely will not get vaccinated are Republicans or lean that way, and four in 10 identify as white evangelical Christians.

Although in general rural residents are more likely than urban and suburban residents to say their area has enough vaccines and locations to get vaccinated, fewer Black rural residents say this, compared with white or Hispanic people in rural areas ([KFF 3/15-3/29](#)).

## Daily Life

Fifty-five percent of Americans say they've visited with friends or family in the past week, up 7 points in two weeks to a pandemic high. Forty-five percent have gone out to eat in the past week, matching the high hit two weeks ago, and – with spring finally here – 37 percent have visited a park, beach or other outdoor space, up 13 points since February ([Axios/Ipsos 4/2-4/5](#)).

Daily tracking echoes these results. Fifty-two percent say they visited a friend, neighbor or relative in the past week and 49 percent have had visitors in their home, up from about four in 10 apiece in early March. More than three-quarters went outside to walk, hike or exercise in the past week, compared with about two-thirds in early March. Twenty-four percent have attended a gathering with more than 10 people, up 11 points in the same period, and 15 percent have visited a bar, club or other gathering place, up from about one in 10 ([USC UAS](#)).

Concurrently, perceptions of the risk of engaging in several public activities have declined. Fifty-one percent view in-person gatherings of friends and family outside their household as a large or moderate risk to their health and well-being, down 7 points in two weeks to a pandemic low. Fifty-five percent see dining in a restaurant as at least moderately risky, also a low in available data.

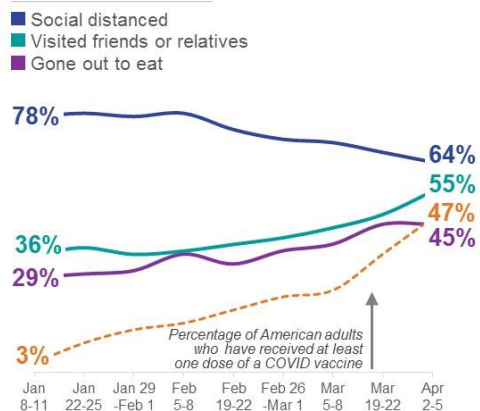
Most – 71 percent – still see traveling by airplane or mass transit as at least a moderate risk, but that's down from 80 percent two months ago. Similarly, while close to six in 10 still view taking a vacation as risky, that's down from 73 percent last June, the last time the question was asked.

Twenty-eight percent of working adults say they've worked remotely instead of their normal workplace in the last few weeks, the fewest since the pandemic began. Thirty-seven percent see returning to their normal place of work as a large or moderate risk to their health, down from 56 percent in September to a low in data since May.

### Americans getting back to their lives, not quite back to normal

As the vaccination rate rises, more Americans are going out in public, and the perceived risk of "regular" activities is declining

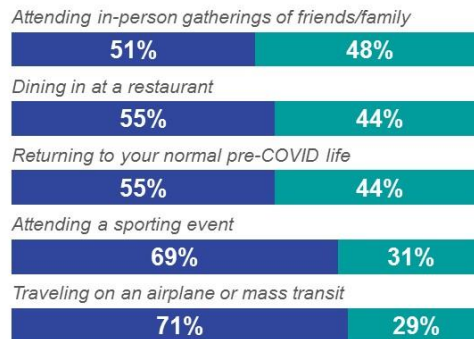
#### Percentage of Americans who have \_\_\_\_\_ in the last week



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#### How much of a risk to your health and well-being do you think the following activities are right now?

■ Large or moderate risk ■ Small or no risk



Ipsos

Overall, 55 percent say that returning to the pre-coronavirus life right now would be a large or moderate risk, the fewest in data since April. And while 64 percent say they've stayed at home and avoided others as much as possible in the past week, that's another pandemic low ([Axios/Ipsos 4/2-4/5](#)).

### Impacts on Education

Nearly half of parents of children younger than 18 – 48 percent – say they have sent their child to school for in-person classes in the past week, up from 33 percent in early October ([Axios/Ipsos 4/2-4/5](#)).

However, as of February, there was little progress in the share of fourth- and eighth-grade public-school students receiving fully in-person instruction. Thirty-nine percent of fourth graders and 29 percent of eighth graders were enrolled in fully in-person instruction at that time, essentially unchanged from January ([Institute of Education Sciences 3/17-3/30](#)).

### Masks & Distancing

Sixty-eight percent of Americans say they're wearing a mask at all times when leaving home, off its peak of about three-quarters in January. Forty-five percent say they're maintaining a distance of six feet from other people at all times, about 10 points fewer than in December and January.

That said, majorities plan to continue wearing a mask in public (79 percent), social distancing (63 percent) and frequently washing or sanitizing their hands (86 percent) even after receiving the vaccine ([Axios/Ipsos 4/2-4/5](#)).

### Economic Impacts

Echoing results [reported last week](#), several economic indicators continue to show improvement. For example:

- A weekly measure of consumer confidence reached a pandemic high, driven by improving views of personal finances, the buying climate and the national economy alike ([CCI 4/3](#)).
- The share of Americans who expect that someone in their household will lose employment income in the next four weeks has declined steadily since December, to 17 percent, a low in available data since last spring.
- Twenty-nine percent report difficulties paying for usual household expenses amid the pandemic, down 9 points since December to the fewest in data since August.
- Nine percent say there was sometimes or often not enough to eat in their household in the past week, a pandemic low.

- Six percent are not current on rent or mortgage payments and lack confidence that they can make next month's payment on time, also a low. Of those who are not current on rent or mortgage, the number who say eviction or foreclosure is likely in the next two months – 28 percent – is its lowest since mid-August ([U.S. Census Bureau 3/17-3/29](#)).

The small business climate also continued to improve. Thirteen percent of small businesses report an increase in revenues in the past week, the most since June; 21 percent report a decline in revenues, the fewest since the pandemic began. Nine percent report an increase in the number of hours worked by paid employees and 8 percent report an increase in their number of paid employees, the most since June. Eighteen percent say they will need to obtain financial assistance or additional capital in the next six months, a pandemic low.

Thirty-one percent of small businesses expect they will have travel expenditures in the next six months (e.g., for air, rail, car rental or lodging), up from 27 percent when first asked in mid-February ([U.S. Census Bureau 3/22-3/28](#)).

### Stimulus Spending

Sixty-three percent of Americans say they've received stimulus money from the government in the last few weeks. Among those who've received it, 40 percent have put at least some of it in savings, 30 percent used some or all of it to pay off debts, 27 percent used some for food and basic household needs, 15 percent paid rent or mortgage and an identical share have not spent it yet, but plan to ([Axios/Ipsos 4/2-4/5](#)).

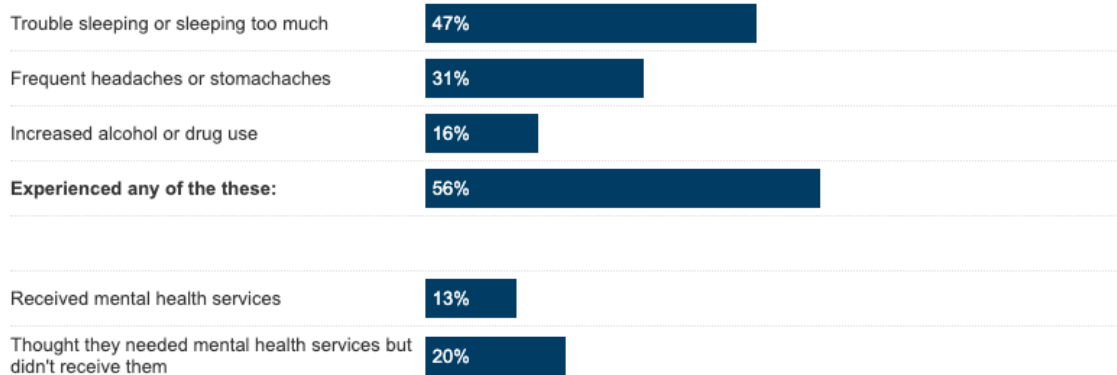
### Frontline Healthcare Workers

Additional results from a poll in February and early March among frontline healthcare workers shows the pandemic's toll on their mental and physical health. For example:

- Sixty-two percent said worry or stress related to COVID-19 had negatively impacted their mental health. Forty-seven percent said it's caused them to experience sleep troubles, 31 percent have had frequent headaches or stomachaches and 16 percent increased alcohol or drug use.
- Half said worry or stress related to COVID-19 impacted their physical health. Roughly four in 10 said it negatively impacted their relationships with family members (42 percent) and coworkers (41 percent).
- Thirteen percent said they had received mental health services or medication specifically because of worry or stress related to COVID-19; an additional 18 percent thought they needed these services but did not get them. Top reasons for not getting needed care included being too busy (27 percent), being afraid or embarrassed (17 percent), not being able to afford it (16 percent) and not being able to get time off work (14 percent).

## More Than Half Of Frontline Health Care Workers Say Worry And Stress Related to COVID-19 Has Led To Adverse Health Impacts, One-Third Have Needed Mental Health Care

Percent of frontline health care workers who say worry or stress related to COVID-19 has led to each of the following:



NOTE: See topline for full question wording

SOURCE: KFF/Washington Post Frontline Health Care Workers Survey (Feb. 11-March 7, 2021) • PNG

KFF The Washington Post

- As in the general population overall, younger healthcare workers (age 18-29) were particularly hard hit – three-quarters said coronavirus-related stress or worry negatively impacted their mental health and seven in 10 said they felt “burned out” about work (compared with 55 percent of healthcare workers overall). Thirteen percent of these workers said they’d had at least 10 patients in their direct care who died from COVID-19.
- Eight in 10 frontline healthcare workers said concern about exposing others in their household to COVID-19 was a major or minor source of stress, and a similar share said the same of concern about personal exposure. When asked to convey in their own words what was the hardest part of working during the pandemic, one in five mentioned concerns about exposure for themselves or their family.
- One in six frontline healthcare workers said they had tested positive for COVID-19, including 24 percent of those working at nursing homes or assisted care facilities.

Among hospital healthcare workers, 56 percent said their workplace exceeded its capacity of ICU beds. Among hospital or nursing home workers, a third said that at some point during the pandemic their workplace ran out of personal protective equipment for its employees.

In terms of workplace satisfaction, majorities said their employer is doing about the right amount or “going above and beyond” when it comes to ensuring employees have the ability to get vaccinated (88 percent) and providing sick leave to employees who had COVID-19 (66 percent). However, more than half (56 percent) said they were falling short when it comes to providing additional pay for employees who are working in the most high-risk situations.

Eight in 10 thought the outbreak was at least somewhat under control, though just about a quarter (23 percent) said it was mostly or completely controlled. Six in 10 did not think most Americans were taking enough precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Nearly as many – 58



percent – thought it would take until at least early 2022 for the outbreak to be controlled enough that people can safely resume normal life ([KFF/Post 2/11-3/7](#)).

### Testing on College Campuses

As of mid-March, roughly half of four-year colleges and universities in the United States with available data (899 of 1,849) provided some type of COVID-19 testing for asymptomatic students. Among the institutions providing testing, 43 percent required periodic testing for various subgroups (e.g., athletes, fraternity and sorority activity participants, random samples of students), 32 percent mandated that all students receive testing (ranging from every other day to once a week) and 18 percent did not mention a protocol on their websites ([CDC 3/17](#)).

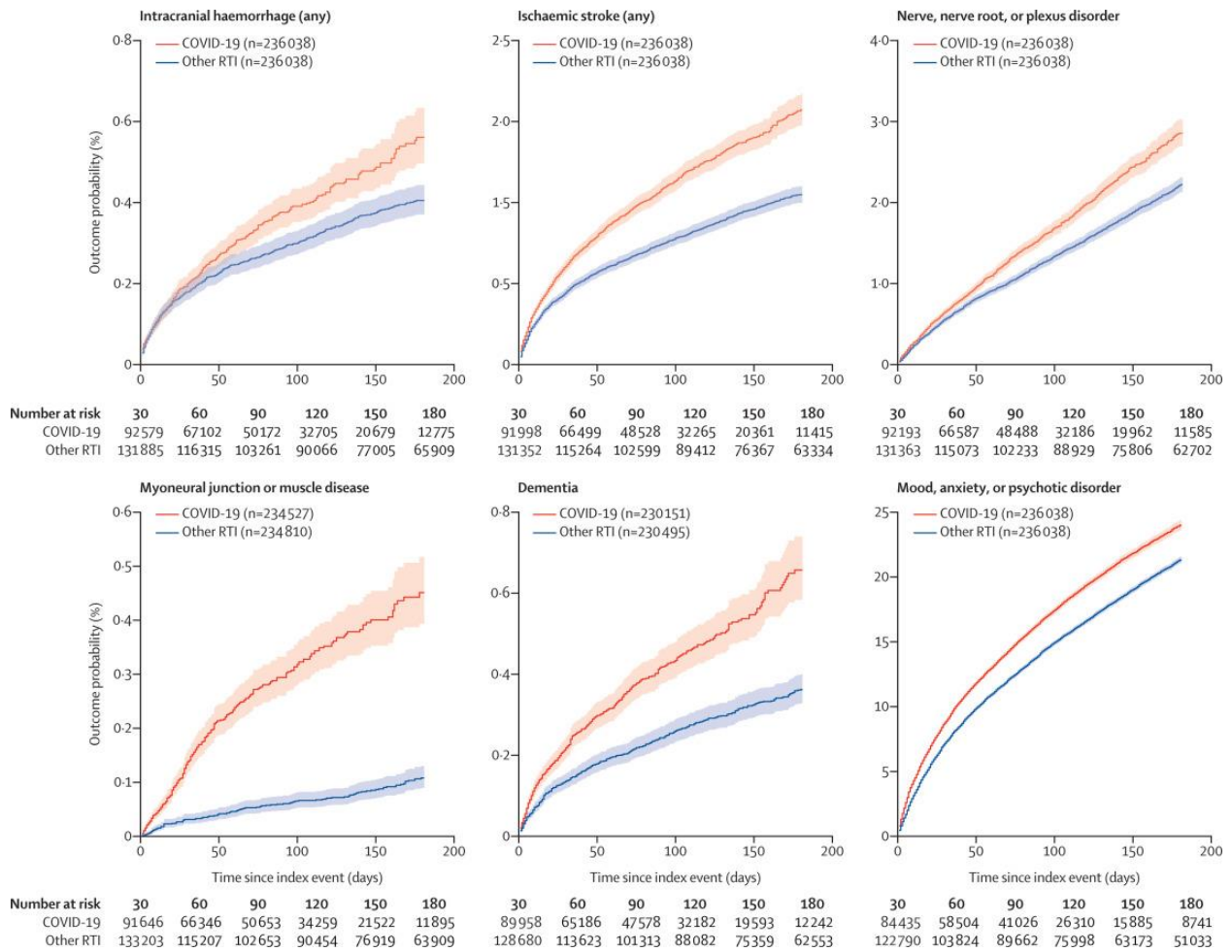
### Neuropsychiatric Outcomes

A new analysis looks at neurological and psychiatric outcomes for 236,379 patients diagnosed with COVID-19. In the six months following a COVID-19 diagnosis, one-third received a neurological or psychiatric diagnosis, and for 13 percent this was their first such diagnosis.

Outcomes were worse for those with more severe COVID-19 cases, even after controlling for other factors (e.g., age, previous cerebrovascular disease). Among patients who were hospitalized for COVID-19, 39 percent subsequently received a neurological or psychiatric diagnosis; for those who were admitted to an intensive care unit, 46 percent received such a diagnosis; and for COVID-19 patients who were diagnosed with delirium or other forms of altered mental status around the time of their COVID-19 diagnosis (i.e., from four days before to two weeks after), 62 percent subsequently received a neurological or psychiatric diagnosis.

Of the specific diagnoses examined, 17 percent of COVID-19 patients subsequently received a diagnosis for an anxiety disorder, 14 percent received a diagnosis for a mood disorder, 7 percent for substance use disorder, 5 percent for insomnia and 1 percent for a psychotic disorder. Three percent received a diagnosis for a nerve, nerve root, or nerve plexus disorder and 2 percent had an ischemic stroke. Fewer than one percent were diagnosed with an intracranial hemorrhage, parkinsonism, Guillain-Barré syndrome, myoneural junction or muscle disease or dementia.

Compared with matched control groups of patients who had been diagnosed with the flu or respiratory tract infection (RTI) during the same period, COVID-19 patients were more likely than RTI patients to be diagnosed with all 14 of the conditions, and were more likely than flu patients to be diagnosed with 12 of the 14 conditions (all but Parkinsonism and Guillain-Barré syndrome). Again, those with more severe COVID-19 cases (e.g., those admitted to intensive care) were particularly likely to receive a subsequent diagnosis ([Taquet et al., 2021](#)).



However, a recent meta-analysis suggests the relationship between COVID-19 and mental health diagnoses works both ways. Across 16 studies and 634,338 patients, results found that those with a previous diagnosis of mental illness were at increased risk of COVID-19 mortality and severe COVID-19 (i.e., requiring intensive care or mechanical ventilation), and that this relationship held after controlling for confounding variables. In the fully adjusted model, patients with mental health diagnoses had a 60 percent higher risk of severe COVID-19 or death ([Toubasi et al., 2021](#)).

### Transmission in Correctional Facilities

A newly released CDC investigation of a coronavirus outbreak in a Wisconsin state prison finds that insufficient quarantine of newly transferred inmates resulted in widespread infection. Last August, six inmates tested positive for COVID-19 shortly after they were transferred to the state prison. These inmates were housed with susceptible prisoners undergoing a 14-day quarantine. However, the quarantine period of susceptible prisoners did not restart after their initial exposure to the infected prisoners, resulting in rapid spread of the virus throughout the facility.

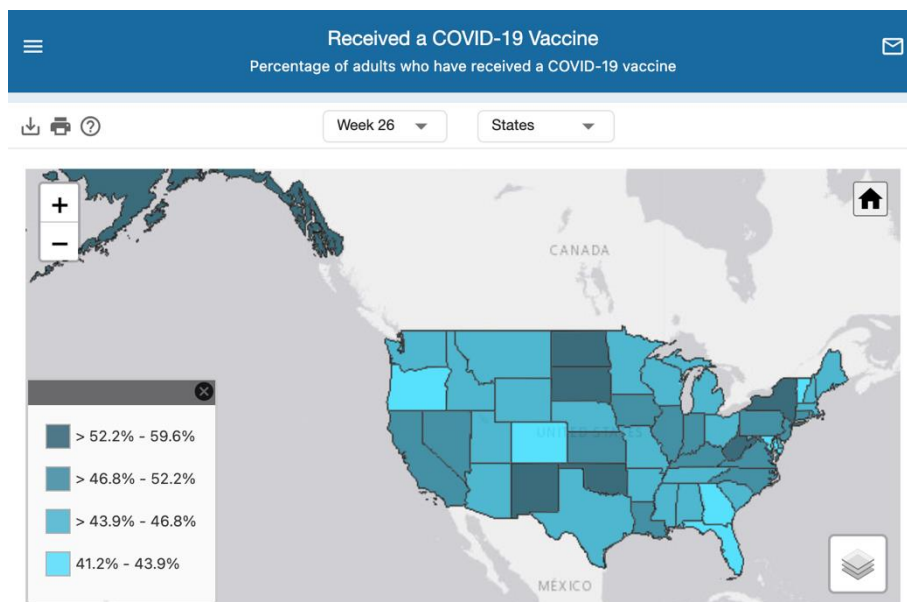


From Aug. 14 to Oct. 22, 79 percent of the prison’s 1,095 inmates and 23 percent of its 305 staff members tested positive for the coronavirus. Genome sequencing from 172 infected prisoners showed that all cases were clustered around the same lineage, suggesting that transferred inmates seeded the spread of the virus. The authors stress the importance of implementing adequate testing and quarantine procedures in correctional facilities ([CDC 8/14/20-10/22/20](#)).

A separate CDC analysis linked a coronavirus outbreak in a Utah correctional facility last fall to exposure from people in the outside community. Three inmates tested positive for the virus shortly after one inmate received treatment from an infected dental health care provider Sept. 14. Six staff members also tested positive around that time. An outbreak was identified in the next several weeks, and by the end of January, 52 percent of the 2,632 inmates and 16 percent of the 550 staff members had tested positive. The investigators conclude that regular testing and screening of staff members and visitors could prevent spread of the disease, as well as adopting other social distancing measures and vaccinating incarcerated people ([CDC 9/14/20-1/31/21](#)).

### State Results

More than half in Alaska (60 percent), South Dakota (58 percent), West Virginia (57 percent), Hawaii and North Dakota (both 56 percent), Oklahoma (55 percent), New Mexico and New York (both 53 percent) and Connecticut (52 percent) say they have received a COVID-19 vaccine. At the other end of the list are Maryland (41 percent), Oregon and Colorado (42 percent each) and Florida (43 percent).

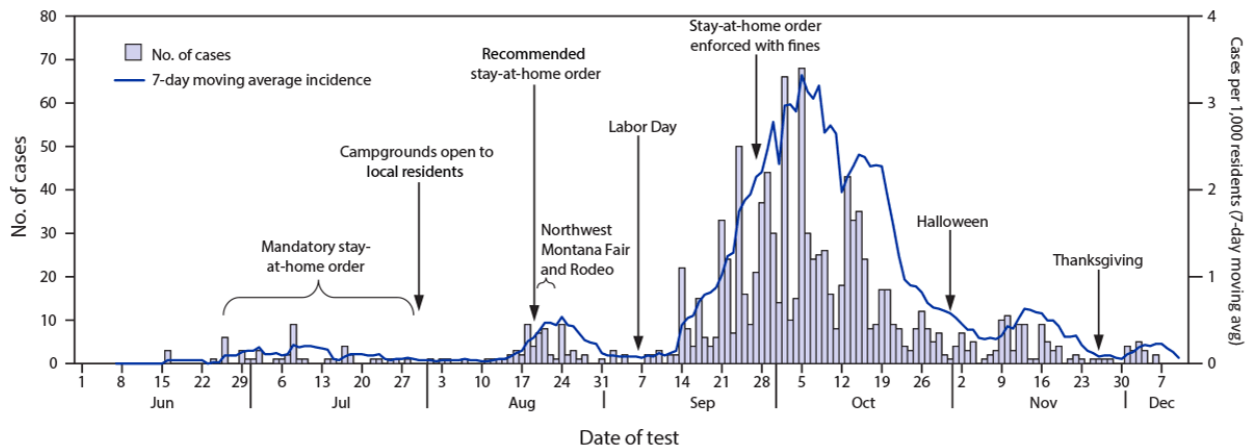


Compared with the first half of March, the largest jump in vaccination rates occurred in West Virginia (+20 points to 57 percent), the District of Columbia (+19 points to 49 percent), New York and South Dakota a (+18 points each to 53 and 58 percent, respectively) and Nevada and North Dakota (+17 points to 50 and 56 percent) ([U.S. Census Bureau 3/17-3/29](#)).

In Montana, a new CDC report shows that from March to November, the estimated cumulative COVID-19 incidence among American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN) people was 2.2 times the rate among white people, and the COVID-19-related mortality rate was 3.8 times higher. There were 29.4 deaths per 1,000 COVID-19 cases among AI/AN people versus 17 deaths per

1,000 cases among whites. The median age of AI/AN people who died from COVID-19 was 68, compared with 82 among white people who died ([CDC 3/13/20-11/30/20](#)).

Also in Montana, a CDC report investigates the impact of strict stay-at-home orders and a mask mandate at the Blackfeet Tribal Reservation. After cases rose sharply on the reservation following the opening of local campgrounds and Labor Day weekend gatherings, an enforced stay-at-home order was issued Sept. 28, with penalties for breaking quarantine or isolation potentially resulting in up to three years jail and a fine of \$5,000. In the wake of this order, COVID-19 incidence decreased from a peak of 6.4 cases per 1,000 residents per day on Oct. 5 to just 0.19 on Nov. 7, a more than thirtyfold reduction ([CDC 6/16/20-12/10/20](#)).



In Louisiana, a poll conducted mostly in February found that 17 percent had received a vaccine, 41 percent planned to get vaccinated as soon as they could and 32 percent did not intend to get vaccinated. Three in 10 had lost their job or income because of the pandemic, eight in 10 personally knew someone who had tested positive for COVID-19 and 48 percent knew someone who had died of it. Forty-nine percent approved of the state’s handling of the outbreak; 38 percent disapproved. Three-quarters viewed mandatory masks in public places as important to reduce the spread of the virus while a quarter called it an unnecessary violation of personal freedom.

More than half of parents of school-aged children in the state thought their child learned less over the past year because of the pandemic; nonetheless, 77 percent were satisfied with the instruction provided by their child’s school. Echoing national results, there was a vast racial gap in the type of instruction being provided – 82 percent of white K-12 parents said their child was learning entirely in person, compared with 45 percent of Black parents ([LSU 1/4-3/1](#)).

In Illinois, an investigation by the state Department of Public Health and local health department officials found a link between an event at a rural bar and a broader coronavirus outbreak in the community. The nine-hour event, which celebrated the opening of the bar, took place indoors with no outside air flow in a space that accommodated approximately 100 people. Local health department officials identified 29 COVID-19 cases among bar patrons and employees and 17 cases among people who came into close contact with a bar attendee.

Secondary cases spread to household members, long-term care facilities and school contacts, resulting in a hospitalization of one person and a two-week school closure. The CDC report concludes that the lack of physical distancing and limited mask use in bars can contribute to spread in the entire community. The authors stress that as businesses reopen, adopting measures such as occupancy limits and increased ventilation can curb further spread ([CDC 2/16-2/26](#)).

### International Results

In Chile, where cases are rising, approval of the government's management of the pandemic declined to 38 percent, down 20 points from five weeks ago. However, nearly half – 47 percent – say they have received a vaccine and 84 percent approve of the mass vaccination plan. Nearly three-quarters agree with the postponement of the April elections until mid-May. Eighty-five percent think it'll take more than six months for life to return to normal ([Cadem 3/30-4/1](#)).

In South Korea, seven in 10 say they will be vaccinated, unchanged since February. Sixty-eight percent have at least some trust in the Pfizer vaccine. Trust is lower for the Moderna (49 percent) and AstraZeneca (42 percent) vaccines ([Gallup Korea 3/30-4/1](#)).

In Brazil, where cases have surged, seven in 10 say they or someone close to them has gotten sick with COVID-19, up 9 points since early March to a new high. Eighty-four percent know someone who has died of COVID-19. Three-quarters are in favor of new social distancing measures to contain the pandemic, up 5 points since early February. Forty-four percent think President Jair Bolsonaro is primarily responsible for the current crisis in Brazil; 23 percent primarily blame those who do not respect the COVID-19 restrictions and 16 percent view the governor of their state as mainly responsible.

Two-thirds have had their employment or income harmed because of the pandemic and 64 percent say they stopped paying bills in the past month because of the coronavirus crisis. Thirty-six percent say they have started to eat less than usual (29 percent) or went hungry (7 percent) during the pandemic. Most – 82 percent – view the new, reduced emergency aid payments as too low, while 15 percent say they are sufficient ([PoderData 3/29-3/31](#)).

In Germany, dissatisfaction with the government's management of the pandemic is at a high – eight in 10 are less satisfied or not at all satisfied, up 23 points since February. Nearly half – 48 percent – think current measures to contain the virus do not go far enough, up 16 points since mid-March. Two-thirds support a plea from intensive care physicians that there should be more stringent restrictions on social life for the next two to three weeks to avoid hospitals from being overloaded.

Eighty-three percent are dissatisfied with the management of the vaccine rollout; 74 percent are dissatisfied with how school and day care operations have been managed, 72 percent are dissatisfied with politicians' explanations of coronavirus measures, 65 percent are unhappy with how help for companies and the self-employed has been managed and 63 are dissatisfied with the use of rapid testing.

More than three-quarters agree that the federal government repeatedly has made promises during the pandemic it could not keep. Two-thirds agree the government has done too little for the most vulnerable during the pandemic. Sixty-three percent agree they have lost track of what is currently allowed and what is prohibited. Just a third agree that the pandemic shows that, all in all, the country can cope well with a crisis ([ARD-Infratest Dimap 3/29-3/30](#)).

In Sweden, the share who say they never use a face covering has dropped from 77 percent at the end of November to 30 percent. Forty-seven percent now wear a mask at least sometimes, up from 9 percent in the same period. Seven in 10 keep their distance from others at all times when they are outside the home. Roughly a third are very or quite worried about being infected with the coronavirus ([Novus 3/22-3/28](#)).

In Great Britain, nearly six in 10 have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, up from 52 percent last week. Thirty-six percent met up with someone outside of their household or bubble. That compares with about a quarter who said so last week (in a differently worded question). More than half of working adults report leaving home for work in the past week, essentially unchanged since last week but up from 44 percent in mid-February. However, the share who think life will return to normal in six months or fewer dropped from 29 to 23 percent since last week. Twenty-eight percent think it will take more than a year, up from 23 percent.

In England, twice-weekly rapid testing for secondary and college students was introduced March 8. Nearly seven in 10 parents say their child took part in this kind of testing in school; 85 percent felt comfortable with their child doing so. Thirty-two percent said their child did not take part in the testing, and among this group far fewer – 54 percent – were comfortable with it. Among those not comfortable with the testing, the most common worry was concern about the test being uncomfortable for their child (62 percent) ([Office for National Statistics 3/24-3/28](#)).

In Mexico, 5 percent have received a COVID-19 vaccine, 16 percent say a family member living in their home has gotten it and 3 percent say both they and a family member have received it. Forty-three percent have a favorable view of how the government is handling vaccination, down from 48 percent in February. Favorable views of how the government is handling health issues in general also declined, from 42 to 31 percent in the same period ([El Financiero 3/12-3/13; 3/26-3/27](#)).

Additional U.S. and international poll results are available at the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

*Summary for SEAN by [Langer Research Associates](#).*