



COVID-19 Survey Summary: August 27, 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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Polls this week find growing public concern about the coronavirus pandemic, with worries about becoming infected returning to levels last seen in January and more Americans now saying the worst is yet to come than saying it's behind us, a sharp shift from midsummer.

Despite the wide spread of the Delta variant, one pandemic-related poll this week finds little change since June in Americans' precautionary behaviors. The vast majority of unvaccinated adults remain resistant to getting a shot.

Most Americans support vaccine mandates for specific groups, to travel by plane or to attend crowded public events. Six in 10 support universal mask mandates in K-12 schools and as many favor requiring teachers to get vaccinated.

Among other results, assessments of Joe Biden's handling of the situation have worsened amid rising cases, hospitalizations and deaths. Half say they've been getting at least some information about vaccines on social media and four in 10 call it an important source of vaccine news. And several analyses suggest moderately reduced effectiveness of coronavirus vaccines at preventing infections amid the Delta surge, but continued efficacy at preventing severe illness.

This week's summary also covers results from states including New Jersey, New Hampshire, Minnesota and Florida, as well as international results from Brazil, Canada, Chile, Great Britain and South Korea.

Vaccine Intentions

According to [CDC estimates](#), 74 percent of adults have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, up 1 percentage point since last week. Most pandemic-related polls released this week have similar results. (Some use the CDC figure as a weighting variable.) ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#); [CDC 8/8-8/14](#); [NBC News 8/14-8/17](#)).

Estimated uptake has been consistently higher, now 82 percent, in one survey, conducted online by the U.S. Census Bureau. The authors suggest that noncoverage of non-internet households

may exclude some vaccine-hesitant rural Americans, and theorize noncoverage of people with low institutional trust ([U.S. Census Bureau 8/4-8/16](#); [Bradley et al., 2021](#)).

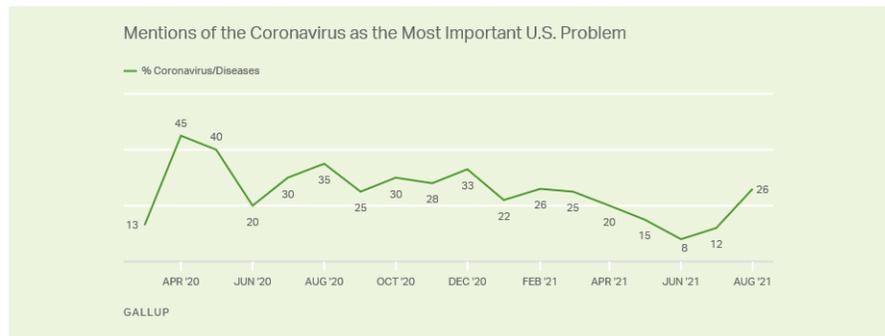
Polls find continued broad resistance among the unvaccinated. Eight in 10 unvaccinated adults say they're unlikely to get a shot, including half who rule it out completely, a high in data since January. Just two in 10 say they definitely (3 percent) or probably (18 percent) will get vaccinated; that's 6 percent of Americans overall ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#)).

In another survey, among all adults, 3 percent are unvaccinated and definitely plan to get a shot; 9 percent say they probably will or are unsure; and 16 percent say they're unlikely to get the vaccine ([CDC 8/8-8/14](#)). In a third, 2 percent say they'll get vaccinated as soon as possible, 10 percent will wait, 3 percent will get it only if required and 13 percent rule it out completely.

Most unvaccinated adults say they won't be swayed by vaccine mandates: Three-quarters say they would not get a shot if their employer required it and 83 percent say the same for vaccine mandates issued by federal, state or local governments ([NBC News 8/14-8/17](#)).

Concerns & Outlooks

The coronavirus has re-emerged as the most important problem facing the United States, with 26 percent citing it in an open-ended question, up sharply from 12 percent in mid-July and 8 percent in June. This includes four in 10 Democrats and a quarter of independents, both at least doubled since July, vs. 12 percent of Republicans, essentially unchanged ([Gallup 8/2-8/17](#)).



Forty-two percent overall say the worst of the pandemic is yet to come, up from 19 percent in April. Thirty-seven percent think the worst is behind us, down from 61 percent ([NBC News 8/14-8/17](#)).

Forty-one percent are extremely or very worried that they or a family member will be infected, up 20 points since June to the most since late January. An additional 29 percent are somewhat worried. And while two-thirds are at least somewhat confident in the vaccines' effectiveness against new variants, that includes relatively few, 26 percent, who are highly confident ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#)).

Coronavirus Precautions

Despite increased concerns, a new survey finds little change in Americans' precautionary behaviors since June – results that differ from a separate poll reported [last week](#). (Last week's study asked about behaviors in this past week; the new one doesn't specify.) It finds:

- Fifty-eight percent say they’re always or often staying away from large groups, virtually the same as in June and down from 77 percent in late February.
- Half are mostly avoiding unessential travel, similarly unchanged in two months. It was 72 percent in late February.
- Forty-three percent say they’re avoiding other people as much as possible, again about the same as in June and down from two-thirds in late February.

Another behavior, always or often wearing a mask when around other people outside the home, has eased since June, down 5 points to 51 percent, vs. 82 percent in late February. The share who always wear masks, 30 percent, is down 7 points since June ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#)).

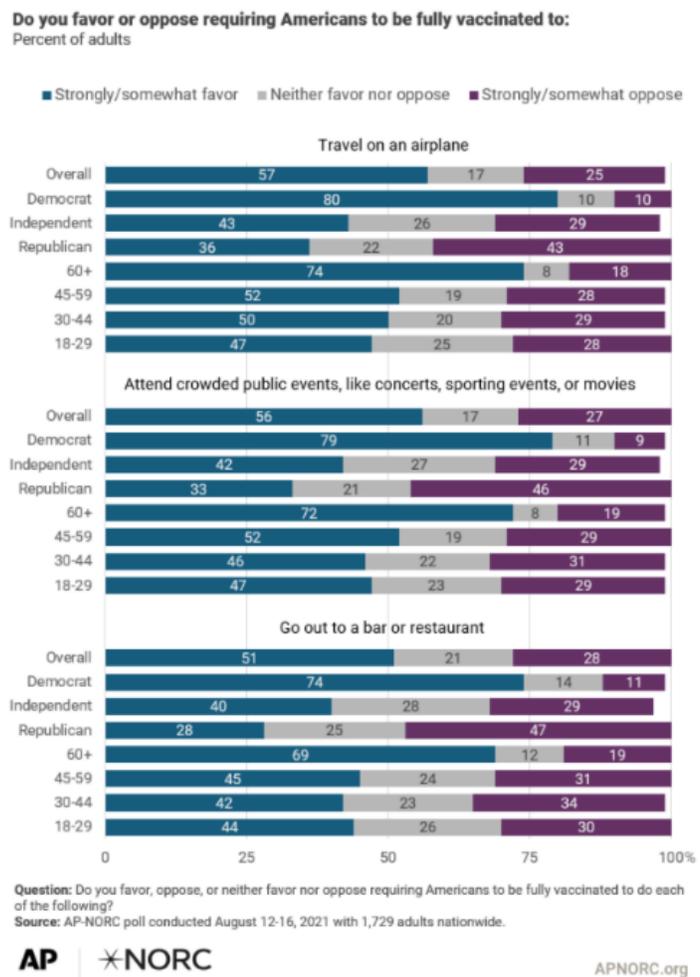
Vaccine & Mask Mandates

Majorities support vaccine mandates for certain groups or in specific situations. Sixty-two percent favor requiring hospital or healthcare workers to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, more than three times the share who are opposed, and mandates for public-facing workers are favored by 58-21 percent.

Fifty-five to 57 percent favor requiring vaccines for air travel or to attend crowded public events, for government workers or for members of the military. Opposition is far lower, about a quarter for air travel or to attend crowded events and one in five for government workers or the military, with the rest neutral.

Among groups, three-quarters or more of Democrats favor vaccine mandates across the items tested, compared with about four in 10 or fewer Republicans. At least seven in 10 adults age 60 or older support vaccine requirements in each instance, vs. no more than half of 18- to 29-year-olds.

Fifty-five percent overall favor requiring face masks when around people outside of one’s home, down from three-quarters before vaccines were widely available. This rises to 62 percent in favor of mask mandates for people with public-facing jobs.



On one remaining item, 51 percent overall favor requiring vaccines in restaurants or bars, with 28 percent opposed and 21 percent neutral ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#)).

Another poll finds Americans split, 48-50 percent, favor-oppose, on a nationwide mandate requiring vaccinations for all eligible people. (No neutral midpoint was offered.) ([NBC News 8/14-8/17](#)).

K-12 Education

Similar to previous [surveys](#), about six in 10 adults favor requiring teachers and students to wear masks. This declines to about half of K-12 parents.

As many Americans overall, 59 percent, support vaccine requirements for teachers and 55 percent favor mandating vaccines for students age 12 and older. These drop among parents to 44 and 42 percent, respectively. ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#)).

In a survey of 14- to 18-year-olds, half say the pandemic has had a negative impact on their academics, while a third report no impact and 18 percent see a positive one. Teenagers also are more apt to say the pandemic has had a negative rather than positive impact on their mental health, 45 vs. 10 percent, and their relationships with friends, 40 vs. 18 percent.

Far fewer, 11 percent, say the pandemic has had a negative impact on their relationship with their parents; here 37 percent instead report a positive impact, 52 percent no effect ([Washington Post-Ipsos 5/7-6/15](#)).

Government Response

Coinciding with the Delta surge, approval of Biden's handling of the pandemic is 54 percent in one poll, down 12 points in a month, and 53 percent in another, down 16 points since April. That includes a 28-point drop in the past month among independents (to 44 percent approval) and 11 points among Republicans (to 21 percent), vs. essentially no change among Democrats (with 86 percent approving) ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#), [NBC News 8/14-8/17](#)).

People divide on whether the COVID relief legislation passed in March is helping to improve the economy or will do so in the future (35 percent) or won't help or will hurt the economy (38 percent). Twenty-seven percent have no opinion or are unsure ([NBC News 8/14-8/17](#)).

Pandemic & Work

Half of working Americans favor a vaccine requirement for employees to work in person. About as many, 52 percent, favor requiring masks at their workplace for all employees ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#)).

Few employers are imposing vaccine mandates. Among small businesses, just 9 percent require their employees to show proof of vaccination before returning to the workplace, up 3 points in a

month ([U.S. Census Bureau 8/16-8/22](#)). (Results [last week](#) also found few businesses requiring employee vaccinations to return to work.)

On other workplace matters, four in 10 workers say their employer has increased their flexibility in work arrangements and schedules since the start of the pandemic; half say this has stayed about the same, 9 percent, decreased. Twenty-seven percent report a wage or salary increase, vs. 7 percent a decrease and the rest no change ([AP-NORC 8/12-8/16](#)).

Social Media & Vaccine Information

About half of Americans say they've been getting a lot (18 percent) or some (30 percent) information about vaccines on social media. Nearly four in 10 say it's an important way to keep up with news about the vaccines, though just 6 percent call it the most important way.

Among people who regularly use Facebook for news generally (three in 10 Americans), about eight in 10 say they get at least some vaccine-related information on social media and 67 percent say it's an important source of such information. Among people who regularly use YouTube for news (22 percent), 68 percent get vaccine information on social media and six in 10 call it important for this purpose. Other social media sites, such as Twitter, Instagram and Reddit, are used regularly for news by 13 percent of adults or fewer ([Pew 7/26-8/8](#)).

Small Business Impacts

After months of progress, more small businesses report negative pandemic-related impacts.

- Twenty-four percent have experienced decreased revenues in the past week, up from 18 percent in early July.
- Twelve percent have cut the number of employees on their payroll, up 4 points since early July.
- Fourteen percent have reduced the total number of hours worked by employees, up from 10 percent in early July.
- Supply chain issues have risen. Forty-three percent experienced domestic supplier delays in the past week, up 4 points in a month and 12 points since mid-April; and 25 percent say they've had delays in delivery or shipping to customers, up 6 points since mid-April.

Roughly half of Americans get at least some news about COVID-19 vaccines on social media...

% of U.S. adults who say they have been getting ___ news and information about COVID-19 vaccines on social media



...still, most don't see social media as an important way of keeping up with this news

% of U.S. adults who say social media is ___ of keeping up with news about COVID-19 vaccines



Source: Survey conducted July 26-Aug. 8, 2021.

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Twenty-nine percent of small businesses say they're operating with fewer employees compared with normal pre-pandemic levels, vs. 9 percent more. Four in 10 expect it will take more than six months for their business to return to its normal level of operation, up from a third in mid-July to the most since March ([U.S. Census Bureau 8/16-8/22](#)).

Economic Impacts

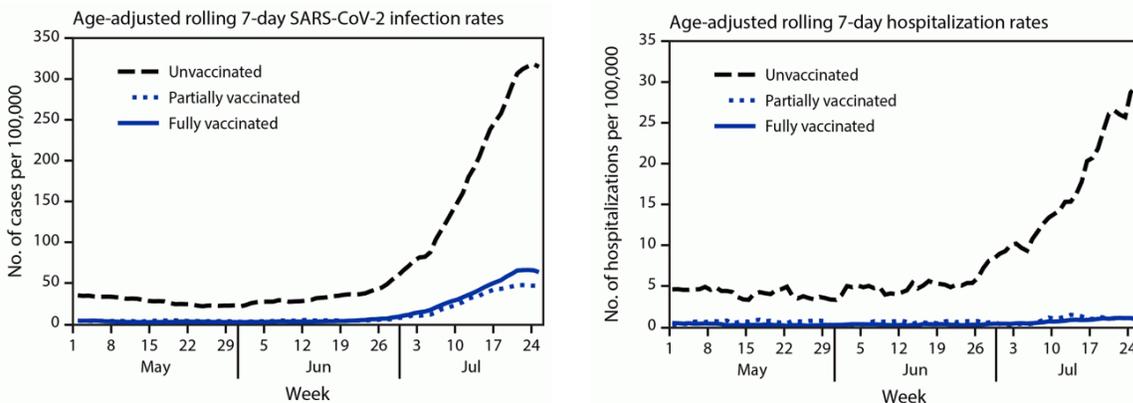
In a signal of economic strength, 71 percent of Americans say their personal finances are either excellent or good, matching its high in 35 years of ongoing weekly data and up 18 points since May. About half give positive ratings to the national economy and the buying climate, each at or near pandemic-era highs despite the rapid spread of the Delta variant ([CCI 7/27-8/22](#)).

Other gauges point toward economic healing, while illustrating the extent of financial insecurity. Eight percent say there sometimes or often was not enough to eat in their household in the past week, down from 14 percent in December to match its pandemic low. Twenty-seven percent report having difficulty paying regular household expenses, down from 38 percent in December and matching its pandemic low in early May ([U.S. Census Bureau 8/4-8/16](#)).

Vaccine Efficacy

A CDC analysis finds that effectiveness of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines against infection (as opposed to hospitalizations and deaths) declined from April to August, likely because of the Delta surge and waning efficacy over time. Using weekly testing data from more than 4,000 health care personnel, first responders and other frontline workers in eight locations across six states, the authors find that the vaccines' effectiveness at preventing infection declined from 91 percent in the months before the Delta variant became the dominant strain to 66 percent in the months after ([CDC 12/14/20-8/14/21](#)).

At the same time, a newly released analysis of residents in Los Angeles County finds that fully vaccinated people were 29.2 times less likely than unvaccinated people to be hospitalized for the virus, as well as 4.9 times less likely to become infected ([CDC 5/1-7/25](#)).



Data from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene finds that from Jan. 17-Aug. 7, 96.1 percent of coronavirus cases, 96.9 percent of hospitalizations and 97.3 percent of

deaths in the city were among unvaccinated or partially vaccinated people. While the rate of infections among vaccinated people rose in tandem with increased cases overall, the case rate among unvaccinated people remained 3.1 times higher than for those who were fully vaccinated ([NYC Health 8/23](#)). ([Previous](#) CDC studies also point to continued effectiveness of the vaccines in preventing hospitalizations and deaths.)

State Results

In hard-hit Florida, 46 percent think Gov. Ron DeSantis is hurting efforts to slow the spread of the virus, while 41 percent think he's helping. About three-quarters call the current surge in the state a serious problem; six in 10 apiece think it's out of control and was preventable.

Majorities support requiring vaccines for cruise ship passengers (63 percent), healthcare workers (62 percent) and teachers (60 percent). Half support employer mandates; fewer, 42 percent, support indoor businesses requiring customers to be vaccinated.

Six in 10 apiece support mask mandates for indoor public spaces and for students, teachers and staff in schools. Seven in 10 think the governor's proposal to withhold school leaders' salaries if they require masks is a bad idea ([Quinnipiac 8/17-8/21](#)).

In New Jersey, 45 percent of registered voters think measures taken by the state to slow the spread of the virus have been appropriate; a quarter apiece think they've gone too far or not far enough. About six in 10 support reinstating face mask and social distancing guidelines in general and two-thirds approve of the state's school mask mandate.

Fifty-three percent support requiring vaccines for children 12 and older to attend school in person; fewer, 45 percent, would support it for children under 12 if a vaccine is approved for their age group. In terms of learning modes, 48 percent think New Jersey schools should open for fully in-person instruction, down 8 points since May. Four in 10 prefer a mix of remote and in-person learning; about one in 10, fully remote.

Six in 10 think Gov. Phil Murphy has done a good job dealing with the pandemic, essentially steady since May. Half think New Jersey is doing better than other states in dealing with it; 17 percent worse and 27 percent about the same. Sixty-eight percent are very or somewhat concerned about someone in their family becoming seriously ill from the virus, up a slight 5 points since May ([Monmouth 8/11-8/16](#)).

In newly released results from a poll conducted from April to June, eight in 10 Minnesotans said the state had done an excellent or good job distributing vaccines, including 87 percent of Democrats and seven in 10 Republicans and independents. Among impacts, three in 10 said their mental health worsened during the pandemic and two in 10 said their personal financial situation worsened. Financial impacts peaked among those with household incomes less than \$40,000 ([APM Research Lab 4/29-6/14](#)).

In New Hampshire, 78 percent report having received at least one vaccine dose, up 5 points since June. An additional 2 percent indicate they'll almost certainly or probably get vaccinated, while

two in 10 say they're unlikely to get a vaccine, including 16 percent who say they almost certainly will not. Top reasons for not wanting to get a shot include concerns about safety (79 percent), efficacy (76 percent) and distrust of the pharmaceutical companies that manufactured the vaccines (70 percent). Just 23 percent of people who don't want to get vaccinated say they'll do so if their employer mandates it; 47 percent say they'd leave their job, with 30 percent unsure.

Fifty-one percent approve of Biden's handling of the pandemic, down from 59 percent in June. Gov. Chris Sununu earns more positive assessments, with 68 percent approval, down 8 points since July. Most residents, 68 percent, think mask mandates should be decided by local school districts; 29 percent think the state should decide ([UNH 8/19-8/23](#)).

International Results

In Chile, a broad 90 percent say they're vaccinated and 5 percent report having received a booster shot. Confidence in the vaccines' ability to protect the vaccinated has risen 11 points since June to 61 percent; confidence the vaccines will stop the pandemic has risen 18 points to 54 percent. Half are worried about catching the virus and 57 percent fear the Delta variant in particular. Approval of the government's handling of the pandemic, 57 percent, is down 7 points from its peak one week ago ([Cadem 8/18-8/20](#)).

In Brazil, 89 percent are willing to get a vaccine; about six in 10 have received at least one dose as of Aug. 19, per data released by state health departments. Just 6 percent don't plan to be vaccinated, down from 16 percent in January. Uptake peaks among more educated and wealthier Brazilians, those in the Southeast and men. Seventy percent overall think the coronavirus situation will improve ([PoderData 8/16-8/18](#)).

About nine in 10 British adults have gotten at least one dose of a vaccine and 87 percent say they'd be likely to have a booster shot if offered. (That exceeds the 63 percent likely to get a flu shot this winter.) Forty-six percent are worried about the impact of the coronavirus on their lives, down a slight 3 points in the past week. The number often or always wearing masks when outside their home held essentially steady this week, at 86 percent. Those who are social distancing slipped by a slight 3 points to 46 percent and the share avoiding physical contact when outside the house fell 5 points to 59 percent ([Office for National Statistics 8/11-8/15](#)).

In South Korea, 52 percent say they've received at least one vaccine dose, ranging from 91 percent of those in their 60s to a quarter in their 20s, consistent with the country's age-based rollout. People are split 47-46 percent on the government's coronavirus response, with a 17-point drop in approval from mid-June, now 6 points above its low in February 2020. Of those who disapprove, 43 percent cite vaccine supply problems ([Gallup Korea 8/10-8/12](#)).

A new release of an early August poll in Canada shows widespread acceptance of vaccine requirements. Eighty-five percent say they're at least somewhat comfortable with requiring proof of vaccination for air travel; about eight in 10 say the same for taking long-distance trains or attending large events.

Nearly three-quarters would be uncomfortable going to a hospital where some health care workers were not fully vaccinated. Roughly two-thirds would be uncomfortable showing up to work with unvaccinated colleagues or sending children to school if some students were unvaccinated. Seven in 10 are uneasy about sending students to school if some teachers were unvaccinated.

In their daily lives, 46 percent of Canadians say if they disagreed with a good friend on vaccinations they'd avoid the topic and continue to hang out. People age 18-34 are more likely to say so (54 percent) than those 55 or older (38 percent) ([Nanos 7/30-8/2](#)).

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

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