



**NEVADA
HEALTH
RESPONSE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2, 2021

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COVID-19 Press Bulletin for September 2, 2021

Carson City, NV — Today, Candice McDaniel, Deputy Director of Programs for the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, Dr. Chris Lake, Executive Director of Resilience for the Nevada Hospital Association, and Dr. Ellie Graeden of Talus Analytics provided information on Nevada's ongoing COVID-19 response and vaccination efforts during a call with members of the media.

This bulletin provides facts, figures, and informational items from the call. As a reminder, data is provided in a dashboard on the home page of the [Nevada Health Response](https://www.nvhealthresponse.nv.gov) website.

SUMMARY:

- As of Tuesday, August 31, there was an average of 812 new COVID-19 cases in Nevada. Cases continue to slow and new cases are currently 6% lower than two weeks ago in mid-August.
- Nationally, COVID-19 cases across the US continue to increase and are 14% higher over the same time period.
- Test positivity is about 12%, compared to 15.2% two weeks ago, however, this decrease is partially because the number of tests taken has increased nearly 23% in the past two weeks.

- More Nevadans are getting their first dose in the state due to robust immunization efforts, with more than 1.5% of unvaccinated Nevadans choosing to get their first dose last week, 17% higher than rates one month ago.

JANSSEN VACCINE:

- A limited number of Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) doses are available nationwide.
- The Nevada State Immunization Program is working strategically with partners to transfer the State's available doses to providers to ensure every dose is used.
- The State of California has been a great partner and the State of Nevada has received some doses from California to support Nevada's efforts.
- The State continues to work with, and receive updates from, the CDC and expects additional Janssen doses in the fall.

CLINICS:

- Last week the State announced COVID-19 vaccination is available after hours and on weekends at three Las Vegas Department of Motor Vehicles sites.
- Through the Southern Nevada partnerships the State is able to offer vaccination for DMV patrons at the Flamingo, Decatur and Sahara locations during business hours, and for the general public Friday through Monday, evening and weekend hours.

MASKS:

- Every week the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention update is reviewed to see which counties are showing a high or substantial transmission rate.
- This information is used to announce what counties are required to wear masks.

- As of today, according to the CDC tracker, nationwide, 94% of counties have a high transmission rate, 2.7% are substantial and just about 100 communities nationwide are showing a low or moderate transmission rate.

NEVADA HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION:

- Like much of the country, Nevada hospitals are experiencing a severe shortage of nurses and other practitioners.
- This shortage has created a situation whereby many hospital beds throughout the state cannot be adequately staffed.
- Due to this, the hospitals in Nevada are experiencing extreme occupancy loads when compared to staffed beds.
- Many hospitals, particularly in the northern region, are close to 100% of available capacity.
- This is a supply-side problem, predominately with nursing, creating a situation where there are fewer staffed beds due to these shortages than licensed hospital beds.
- The situation is compounded by the number of unvaccinated COVID-19 patients who continue to require hospital and ICU level treatments, and to a lesser degree, the fire in South Lake Tahoe and the need to evacuate 10s of thousands of people including a hospital.
- Unvaccinated patients account for approximately 90% of the COVID cases hospitalized and account for about 30% of the occupied ICU beds throughout the state.
- There are downstream effects in the community that are the results of the personnel shortages.
- Hospitals may need to go on diversion or stop accepting ambulances, forcing patients to go to an out-of-network facility.
- Paramedic ambulances may have to travel to distant facilities, taking that ambulance far outside their normal response areas.
- Paramedics may have to wait with patients at the hospital until there is an available nurse, taking the ambulance out-of-service and unable to respond to other calls for help; and patients may need to be

transferred to another hospital, often great distances or to other states for definitive care.

- The nursing supply issue will need a long-term solution.
- Nevada entered the pandemic in a shortage, and this has been increasing as nurses leave the profession with each subsequent wave of illness.
- In the short-term people can do their part to stay healthy by avoiding crowds, maintaining social distancing, wearing a mask and above all else by getting vaccinated.
- Over 97% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients nationally are unvaccinated, and the average cost of each stay is over \$20,000. The vaccine is free.
- The vaccine has protected against severe breakthrough cases more than 99% of the time in Nevada.
- Vaccines are incredibly safe. The risk of adverse reaction is 0.003% for Johnson and Johnson, and 0.0002% for Moderna and Pfizer, lower than the risk of severe reaction to common antibiotics, insulin, or anti-seizure medications.

FIRES:

- A recent study from researchers at the University of Nevada, Reno found that wildfires accelerated the spread of COVID-19 in Reno by 6% last summer because smoke inhalation weakened immune response and facilitated the transport of virus into the lungs.
- Therefore, as the Caldor Fire continues to burn, Nevadans in Tahoe, Reno, and other affected areas should limit physical activity outdoors.
- People who have asthma, smoke, or have other respiratory conditions are especially vulnerable and need to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

- The lungs get inflamed when exposed to high levels of wildfire smoke and when paired with pre-existing conditions, may be too weak to fight against COVID-19.
- While regular cloth masks will not protect you from smoke exposure, KN95 or P100 masks will, as they filter out smaller particulates.

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING:

- The [State Board of Health](#) will meet at 9 a.m. on September 10 to review COVID-19 vaccination requirements for Nevada Department of Health and Human Services and Nevada Department of Corrections employees working in certain programs.
- If accepted, State staff and contracted employees working with vulnerable populations in licensed health care facilities, state correctional centers or state facilities for the detention of children, will be required to be fully vaccinated to maintain employment.

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