

# 10th COVID wave now surging in the US, amid total silence in the corporate media

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The latest wastewater surveillance data show that the COVID-19 pandemic has entered its tenth wave in the United States. Last week's spike in wastewater was the highest percentage increase in transmission in almost three years, though these figures could be revised downwards and the full severity of the wave will only become clear in the coming weeks. One reason for the rapid jump appears to be a later start for the "winter surge" than is typical, and thus the virus could be quickly rising to a level that has now become typical for this time of year.

The Pandemic Mitigation Collaborative (PMC) model estimates that 1.6 percent of Americans are presently infected and capable of transmitting the virus to others. That is 1 in 64 people and represents nearly 750,000 new COVID-19 cases per day. That means that on a flight of 100 people, there is an 80 percent chance that at least one person is infectious; on a flight of 300 people that rises to a 99 percent chance.

This level of transmission exceeds the levels for 73 percent of the duration of the pandemic to date. Given the known incidence of Long COVID, the current levels of transmission are generating an estimated 200,000 new cases of Long COVID per week.

Not a word about this latest COVID-19 wave has been uttered by the Biden administration or any major outlet in the corporate media. The entire political establishment is in agreement on the need to enforce the pro-corporate policy of "forever COVID," in which the working class and broad layers of society as a whole are condemned to unending waves of mass infection, death and debilitation with Long COVID.

The PMC model projects that the current winter surge could peak between New Year's Day and January 7. Because COVID-19 transmission followed a completely different pattern in 2024 than any other year

of the pandemic, it is more difficult to forecast transmission during the current surge. This year's summer surge was unusually late and sustained, while also declining abnormally rapidly, and the lull between the summer and winter surges was atypically long.

The latest data on test positivity and emergency department visits from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show both these indicators on the increase. Hospitalizations and deaths are typically lagging indicators, and although they have not yet increased, they are likely to rise as well in the coming week or two.

The new XEC variant continues to increase as a percentage of COVID-19 infections, now estimated at 44 percent, compared to 33 percent a week ago. It is now the most common variant, having surpassed the KP3.1.1 variant per the most recent data.

Given the total absence of governmental support for the renovation of infrastructure to ensure that indoor air is purified in public spaces, the only defenses against COVID-19 continue to be vaccines and non-pharmaceutical measures, such as social distancing and masking. Vaccination additionally protects against the most adverse outcomes of COVID-19, including death and hospitalization, while providing moderate protection against Long COVID.

Unfortunately, misinformation coupled with the potential expense of paying for a costly vaccine have resulted in extremely low vaccination rates for COVID-19. Per the latest CDC data, only 21.0 percent of American adults reported that they have received the latest vaccine released at the beginning of the Fall. Coverage of children is even worse at 10.6 percent, or approximately half the rate of adults.

Dr. Alexander Sloboda, medical director of immunizations for the Chicago Department of Public

Health, said:

There's still a lot of misinformation, disinformation, particularly around the COVID vaccine, so just trying to overcome the misinformation, disinformation that's out there with correct information is what we're trying to do. Obviously, it's a kind of an uphill battle.

In another development this week related to the science of COVID-19 treatment, a study from 2020 that purported to show that hydroxychloroquine was an effective treatment was finally retracted. According to the journal's retraction notice, the paper was pulled because of ethical transgressions and major flaws in methodology.

Even though numerous scientists immediately spotted and exposed the flaws of the study, it took four years of campaigning before the journal editors finally relented and retracted the paper this month. In fact, a lead author on the study, Didier Raoult, at one point threatened legal action against the whistleblowers who challenged the study. One of the journal editors was a co-author of the study, likely a factor in the long time period between the paper being discredited and it being retracted.

The scientific discourse over the study included subsequent identification of additional serious methodological flaws in 2023. Recently, three of the study's authors wrote a letter to the journal requesting a retraction, acknowledging that no confidence could be placed in the "results" and stating explicitly that they no longer wished to be associated with the paper.

Notably, Raoult has so far had 28 papers retracted, including this one. Raoult leads the French Hospital Institute of Marseille Mediterranean Infection (IHU). Overall, 32 papers authored by IHU members, including Raoult, have been retracted. Investigations are underway on at least 100 more papers by this group, mostly due to concerns that the studies violated ethical standards.

The discredited hydroxychloroquine study spawned massive misinformation promoting the drug as a treatment for COVID-19. The most infamous episodes involved then-President Donald Trump, who in a

period of two months in 2020 made 11 tweets about unproven therapies for COVID-19 and mentioned them 65 times in White House briefings. Trump repeatedly referenced this now-retracted study, even after it had been discredited. During that time, purchases of hydroxychloroquine on Amazon surged by 200 percent.

With Trump returning to the presidency and having nominated a slate of anti-science quacks to every public health-related leadership position in the federal government—overseen by the notorious purveyor of anti-vaccine disinformation Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.—the working class must heighten its vigilance against medical misinformation and follow the advice of principled scientists. Any one of Trump's nominees is damaging, but collectively it will be catastrophic when their pseudo-science becomes official policy.

Official policy under Biden already is criminally permitting the pandemic to continue to cause death and disability virtually unchecked. The constant emergence of new variants, including at least three major new variants this year alone, is a product of the dismantling of public health measures to contain the virus. Protecting the public's health requires more than just vigilance. The working class must organize on its own political program to replace capitalism with socialism, a social system that prioritizes human health over private profit.



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