

Government Relations

Top News Lines

Federal

- President Biden used his Fourth of July speech to declare the nation's emergence from its pandemic nightmare a collective victory — and urged Americans to do their patriotic duty by getting vaccinated. More info [here](#).
- According to the NY Times, Twenty states and the District of Columbia have met President Joe Biden's Fourth of July goal of vaccinating 70% or more of adults with at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Puerto Rico and Guam have also met the goal. California, Illinois, and New York have all met the goal. Vermont remains the national leader in vaccination. More info [here](#).
- White House pandemic response coordinator Jeff Zients noted that the U.S. government is ready to deploy booster shots if scientists and health officials determine they're needed in the fight against Covid-19. With increases in cases in parts of the U.S. linked to low vaccination rates and the more-contagious delta variant that's spreading throughout the nation, Zients said the administration will push ahead with encouraging young people and others to get shots. More info [here](#).
- Dr. Anthony Fauci noted that more than 99 percent of the people who died from COVID-19 in June were not vaccinated, calling the loss of life "avoidable and preventable." "If you look at the number of deaths, about 99.2 percent of them are unvaccinated. About 0.8 percent are vaccinated" More info [here](#).
- In the past two weeks, medical experts started to question whether the Johnson & Johnson vaccine would be as effective as the two-dose Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine in protecting against the delta variant that is poised to become the dominant strain in the U.S. But data released Thursday night by Johnson & Johnson showed that the vaccine remains highly protective against the delta variant and immunity may be long-lasting. More info [here](#).

State

- According to the state's variant tracker, the delta variant has gained momentum and accounted for 35.6% of cases sequenced in June. That's a big jump from May, when it accounted for only 5.6% of cases sequenced, and April, at 2.1%. Until now, the alpha variant was the dominant variant. More info [here](#).
- California's highest COVID infection rates shift to rural counties. Counties with relatively low rates of vaccination reported much higher rates of covid infections and deaths in May and June than counties with high vaccination rates. More info [here](#).

Local

LA County

- Coronavirus case and hospitalization rates are worsening for Los Angeles County's Black residents, a troubling sign less than a month after California fully reopened its economy. Between mid-May and mid-June, the COVID-19 case rate over a two-week-period rose 18% among Black residents but declined 4% for Latino residents, 6% for white residents and 25% for Asian Americans. And the hospitalization rate for Black residents — who are less likely than other racial and ethnic groups to be vaccinated — grew by 11% while declining for Asian American residents by 12%, Latino residents by 29% and white residents by 37%. More info [here](#).
- In LA County, over 68% of those 16 and over have received at least one dose of the vaccine, while 87% of those 65 and older have received at least one dose of the vaccine. More info [here](#).

Orange County

- In Orange County, 1.7 million people are fully vaccinated. Data from this weekend is not yet in, so this number may increase. More info [here](#).

Infection Prevention Medical Director

- Last July 4th there was a higher baseline COVID-19 rate. Following the holiday, there was an increase of 40% in the case rate and an increase of 20% in the positivity rate. A way to combat this is by having trusted primary healthcare and community leaders endorsing the vaccine. Hoping that this will help increase the vaccination rate amongst the Black community.
- It is important to take any opportunity to get our patients vaccinated. There has been a decrease in the hospitalization and vaccination rate in the Latino community at this time but the Latino community also has a lower vaccination rate than white and Asian communities.
- Coronavirus has historically not provided very long lasting immunity for natural infection and the Delta variant is no exception. The spike protein is what is changing with these new variants and the immunity from prior infections is not strong enough to overcome this variant.
- It is very important that individuals who have had a natural infection get vaccinated.
- Those that have had long lasting COVID symptoms can have an improvement in their symptoms after vaccination.
- It is very important that we discuss with our patients how they can obtain the vaccine right then and there at their clinic.
- Please make sure that front office, back office, and all of the providers know the steps that need to be taken. We can vaccinate patients and any family members that may need to be vaccinated.
- This last week we saw a jump to about 4% in the positivity rate from about 1%. This is much lower than what was seen in the surge which was about 50% but is still an increase so this is concerning.
- Please ensure that you are screening patients effectively. Anyone that has COVID symptoms or that has been exposed to COVID needs to be in an isolation room.
- In all healthcare facilities we need to be sure to stay very vigilant. We have not changed any of our masking/personal protective equipment yet. We need to be very careful with breaks — taking all the precautions. It is preferable to take breaks outside. The majority of older individuals have been vaccinated — the majority of hospitalizations and deaths that we are seeing at this point are in younger individuals and in those who have not been vaccinated. We need to ensure that everyone is vaccinated.

Human Resources

- Q3 Mandatory training was launched this week and includes the Code of Conduct; HIPAA; General Compliance & Fraud, Waste, and Abuse; and the Conflict of Interest modules. Please make sure your staff completes by the deadline of September 10.
 - Please remind your employees if they are experiencing symptoms of illness, they should be calling or emailing Employee Health and not coming in person to see them. Symptomatic people need to be honest when completing the Qualtrics survey and follow the instructions that pop up to not report to work and contact Employee Health.
 - Employees who want to get a COVID vaccine should contact Employee Health (Employeehealth@altamed.org) or 323-765-6153 to schedule an appointment. If you have submitted the declination but have changed your mind and want to receive a vaccine, please contact Employee Health.
-
- On AltaMed's end, we have not changed the symptoms since the start of the pandemic. However, Dr. Brown will take a look and will update anything that needs to be updated.