

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 8th Jun 2022

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **BA.4, BA.5 Variants Rise Among U.S. Covid-19 Cases**

Omicron Covid-19 variants BA.4 and BA.5 are on the rise in the U.S., adding two more highly contagious versions of the virus to the mix that has fueled a springtime surge in cases. The closely related subvariants represented a combined 13% of U.S. cases for the week ended June 4, according to estimates the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released on Tuesday. Evidence suggests the variants are yet-more contagious versions of Omicron, public-health experts said, that may be able to evade some of the immune protections people built up from infections triggered by another version of Omicron during the winter. The spread of the subvariants could at least prolong the time it takes to emerge from the current wave fueled by other versions of Omicron, some health experts said. "BA.4 and 5 may end up becoming the dominant Omicron lineages in the coming weeks or months," said Nathan Grubaugh, an associate professor of epidemiology at Yale University's School of Public Health.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/ba-4-ba-5-variants-rise-among-u-s-covid-19-cases-11654616069>

#### **US has thrown out more than 82m Covid vaccine doses**

The United States has thrown out 82.1m Covid vaccine doses from December 2020 to the middle of last month, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control. That number of wasted vaccines accounts for more than 11 per cent of the doses distributed by the federal government during the pandemic, reports NBC News. Retail pharmacy chains CVS and Walmart were responsible for more than a quarter of the discarded doses in the US during the time period. This is a reflection of the volume of doses each company handled, said the report. The wasted vaccines were caused by a variety of factors, including doses that expired at pharmacies before they could be used, power cuts, broken freezer storage and open vials being thrown out at the end of business days unused. CVS wasted nearly 11.8m doses, or about 13 per cent of the 89.9m it received.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-covid-vaccine-doses-thrown-away-b2095123.html>

#### **Flu cases rise in Canada amid eased COVID-19 restrictions**

The easing of public health restrictions that were aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19 has led to a surge in cases of another virus, experts say. Since the start of April, Canada has seen a sharp increase in cases of influenza, something not typically seen in the spring. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) most recent FluWatch report, there were 1,580 laboratory-confirmed cases of the flu between May 22 and May 28. This is down from the peak of 2,121 flu cases seen during the week of May 8 to 14, but PHAC warns that the number of flu cases "remains above the epidemic threshold." Last year, the period between May 23 and June 19 saw just one laboratory-confirmed flu case. Prior to the pandemic, a five-week period in May and June 2019 saw 864 laboratory-confirmed cases, an average of 172.8 cases per week.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/influenza-cases-in-canada-see-rare-spring-surge-amid-eased-covid-19-restrictions-1.5936226>

#### **Universal Beijing Resort to reopen on June 15 as COVID curbs ease**

The Universal Beijing Resort said on Tuesday it will reopen on June 15 after being closed more than a month to comply with China's COVID-19 prevention measures, but it will cap the number of visitors at no more than 75% of capacity. The resort, which includes a retail district, two hotels and the

Universal Studios theme park, was shut on May 1. After it reopens, all visitors must show a negative PCR test taken within the past 72 hours and wear masks at all times, in line with city-wide measures. The resort will also test its employees daily and carry out regular disinfection, it added.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/universal-beijing-resort-reopen-june-15-2022-06-07/>

### **Japan to open to tourists after COVID, with masks, insurance and chaperones required**

Foreign tourists visiting Japan will be required to wear masks, take out private medical insurance and be chaperoned throughout their stay, the government said on Tuesday, as it plans a gradual opening from two years of COVID-19 restrictions. Only visitors on package tours will be allowed in during the first phase of reopening, from June 10, the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) said, adding that travel agency guides accompanying visitors will have to ensure they wear their masks. "Tour guides should frequently remind tour participants of necessary infection prevention measures, including wearing and removing masks, at each stage of the tour," the JTA said in its guidelines.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-open-tourists-after-two-years-only-with-masks-insurance-guides-2022-06-07/>

### **U.S. Open called off due to COVID-related organisational complications**

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) said on Tuesday this year's U.S. Open has been cancelled due to organisational complications caused by COVID-19. The U.S. Open, a Super 300 tournament on the BWF World Tour, was due to take place from Oct. 4-9. "USA Badminton concluded that it was no longer feasible for them to host their tournament this year due to organisational complications coming out of COVID-19," badminton's governing body said in a statement. This is the third straight edition of the tournament to have been cancelled due to COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/us-open-called-off-due-covid-related-organisational-complications-2022-06-07/>

### **Long Covid patients face lottery over treatment**

Patients with long Covid are facing a postcode lottery across the UK when it comes to getting care, nurses say. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) said treatment varied hugely with some services treating it as a physical condition, but others as psychological. The union also highlighted long waits in parts of England, which has a network of specialist clinics. It warned that patients in Scotland and Wales may be missing out because of a lack of dedicated clinics. But officials there say patients are getting support via core NHS services.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-61711913>

### **Care for 2m Britons with long Covid 'woefully inadequate', say top nurses**

NHS services for the 2 million Britons struggling with long Covid are "woefully inadequate" given how many people are being diagnosed with the condition, nurses' leaders have warned. There are too few specialist clinics to handle the soaring demand for treatment, with only a tiny number of sufferers receiving any help, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) said. The Office for National Statistics estimated last week that the number of people in the UK suffering with continuing symptoms of Covid such as fatigue, muscle pain and breathing problems has doubled in a year from 1 million in May 2021 to 2 million last month.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jun/07/care-for-2m-britons-with-long-covid-woefully-inadequate-say-top-nurses>

### **Washington hospitals again strained by COVID-19 spread**

Hospital officials in Washington are warning that facilities are heading toward another COVID-19 case peak amid high spread in the community. Washington State Hospital Association CEO Cassie Sauer on Monday said at the end of last week, almost 600 people with COVID-19 were in hospitals across the state with about 20-25 patients a day on ventilators, The News Tribune reported. That compares with an average of around 230 hospitalized cases in the daily census in April and 1,700 in

February during the Omicron wave. In response to the rising hospitalizations, officials on a media briefing call Monday implored people to wear high-quality masks indoors in crowded, public spaces, and to get COVID-19 booster shots on top of vaccinations.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-washington-e6aa4e7cd230eb8ae11c961854edff30>

### **COVID amid food insecurity: A perfect storm is brewing in N Korea**

On May 12, North Korea reported the country's first COVID outbreak, a significant public admission after two and a half years of stringent lockdowns and border closures. Since then, the country has seen its infection rates soar with over two million cases of "fever" recorded. North Korea has remained unyielding in its stance towards foreign aid, declining COVAX (the global vaccine sharing scheme) and providing no response to the offer of medicines and vaccines from South Korea. While its leader, Kim Jong Un, has declared that the virus is under control, the true scale of North Korea's cases remains unclear.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/6/2/covid-amid-food-insecurity-a-perfect-storm-is-brewing-in-n-korea>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **French medics protest hospital crisis, deepened by COVID**

Health workers protested Tuesday around France to demand more hiring and better salaries in public hospitals, after years of cost cuts that left medics submerged when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and are now forcing emergency rooms to cut services. Nine unions and collectives organized a day of protest, including a demonstration outside the Health Ministry in Paris and in dozens of other towns and cities, to call the government's attention to growing concerns about staff shortages. President Emmanuel Macron has promised a rethink of the public hospital system and commissioned an urgent review by July 1. Protesters hope to pressure the government as France heads into two rounds of legislative elections starting Sunday.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/emmanuel-macron-ap-protesters-covid-french-b2095940.html>

### **Hong Kong School, Bar Clusters Send Cases to Six-Week High**

Hong Kong reported a surge of Covid-19 cases in local schools, shutting some classes and sending the number of new infections to a six-week high. The city had 204 cases from schools, bringing total infections on Monday to 543, the most since April 22. Some classes will be suspended until next week, health official Chuang Shuk-kwan said at a briefing. There were also 31 new cases linked to bar clusters, adding to the more than 200 cases originating at a handful of nightclubs in the financial hub's Central district.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-05/hong-kong-sees-most-covid-cases-in-six-weeks-amid-bar-clusters>

### **Beijing, Shanghai Reopenings Speed Up: China Lockdown Tracker**

China's worst Covid-19 outbreak is ending, with cases continuing to fall, all major cities loosening restrictions and daily life mostly returning to normal. Infections are trending down nationwide, thanks to the ebbing outbreaks in Shanghai and Beijing. Of China's top 50 cities by economic size, none currently have widespread restrictions in place. Tianjin hasn't reported any local cases for the past 3 days and most public transport has resumed, while Beijing is resuming dine-in services and reopening parks and entertainment venues.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-06/beijing-shanghai-reopenings-speed-up-china-lockdown-tracker>

### **Novavax says COVID vaccine for U.S. to be manufactured by India's Serum**

Novavax Inc said on Tuesday that its COVID-19 vaccine initially available in the United States, if authorized, will be manufactured by the Serum Institute of India. "So all vaccines that are being distributed globally commercially are being made in a single facility by our partners (the Serum Institute in India) that includes the vaccines which are being deployed around the world as well as

the ones that will be initially deployed in the U.S.," said Chief Medical Officer Filip Dubovsky.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novavax-says-covid-vaccine-us-be-manufactured-by-in-dias-serum-2022-06-07/>

### **EI-Sisi launches initiative to provide 30 million coronavirus vaccines to African countries**

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has announced an Egyptian initiative to provide 30 million doses of coronavirus vaccine to African countries, in coordination with the African Union. During his participation in the dialogue session of the African health medical conference and exhibition "African Health ExCon," El-Sisi said that "the capabilities of Egypt are available to the African brothers." El-Sisi was speaking at the launch of the conference, held at the Egypt International Exhibition Center (Al-Manara Center for International Conferences) in the Fifth Settlement in New Cairo.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2097856/middle-east>

### **Don't Wait to Get Your Kid Vaccinated**

Ocwieja knows that her excitement puts her in a minority. An April poll conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that less than a fifth of parents of kids under 5 are eager to vaccinate them right away; of the rest, about half say they definitely won't sign their children up for shots, or will do so only if required. Plenty of parents still harbor worries over the shots' safety, fretting that the injections might be more dangerous than the disease. And many who watched their kids contract the coronavirus, sometimes repeatedly, no longer feel much urgency about tacking on immunization—especially now that American society has opened back up, and nearly all mitigation measures have been dropped, signaling that the crisis has passed.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2022/06/kids-under-5-covid-vaccine-fda-authorization/661200/>

### **China offers Covid vaccine insurance to win over jab sceptics**

China has devised a new incentive to boost elderly vaccinations to levels that could finally allow the country to relax its zero-Covid strategy and revive the economy: insurance packages for people worried about jab-related side effects. Dozens of cities across the country have begun offering people aged 60 and older free insurance that pays out up to Rmb500,000 (\$75,000) if they fall ill — or worse — because of Covid-19 vaccines. The packages also promise payouts to families if it can be proven that a loved one's death was related to receiving a jab. In Beijing alone, about 60,000 seniors have signed up for the coverage since April.

<https://www.ft.com/content/a191cbdf-218c-4968-a494-36082e350018>

### **Children's COVID-19 vaccinations stall, as experts warn of health threat**

COVID-19 vaccination rates for children have stalled due to bookings being disrupted by illness and isolation rules, as experts urge parents to complete their child's course alongside their flu shot. Just eight Sydney councils have more than half of primary school-aged children vaccinated against COVID-19, data published by the federal government this week shows, with kids in the city's south-west least likely to have completed their shots.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/children-s-covid-19-vaccinations-stall-as-experts-warn-of-health-threat-20220606-p5aris.html>

### **Analysis: China's consumers keep their wallets in lockdown as COVID curbs ease**

China is moving to spur spending that was depressed by COVID curbs in some of its biggest cities, but piecemeal measures such as vouchers, subsidies for car buyers and digital yuan payments have been modest compared with other big global economies. Policymakers have instead stuck to their preferred approach to stimulus, which focuses on businesses and infrastructure.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-consumers-keep-their-wallets-lockdown-covid-curbs-ease-2022-06-07/>

### **Novavax's Covid-19 Vaccine Backed by FDA Advisers**

Vaccine experts advising the Food and Drug Administration endorsed Novavax Inc.'s Covid-19

vaccine, voting overwhelmingly that the shot's benefits outweighed its risks. The outside panel's 21-0 vote, with one abstention, on Tuesday moves the shot one step closer to becoming available in the U.S. The FDA must next make a decision on authorizing the vaccine, after months of manufacturing-related delays and an agency review that found the shots effective but raised a safety concern. An FDA decision could take weeks. FDA staff said, in their review of Novavax's application, that the agency must sign off on the company's latest manufacturing processes.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/novavax-covid-19-vaccine-faces-fda-advisers-scrutiny-11654594200>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Reasons behind COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and efficient strategies to address it**

This article was exclusively written for The European Sting by Mr. Olivier Sibomana, an enthusiastic and highly committed medical student at University of Rwanda (UR), college of medicine and health sciences, department of general medicine and surgery. He is affiliated with the International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA), cordial partner of The Sting. The opinions expressed in this piece belong strictly to the writers and do not necessarily reflect IFMSA's view on the topic, nor The European Sting's one.

<https://europeansting.com/2022/06/07/reasons-behind-covid-19-vaccine-hesitancy-and-efficient-strategies-to-address-it/>

### **GOP-appointed judges less likely to require masks during COVID - study**

Chief federal district judges appointed by Republican presidents were less likely to require masks in court as a response to COVID-19, but more likely to suspend in-person trials, according to a new study by four law professors. The study, made public Thursday, comes from Adam Chilton of the University of Chicago Law School, Christopher Cotropia of the University of Richmond School of Law, Kyle Rozema of the Washington University School of Law and David Schwartz of the Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law.

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/gop-appointed-judges-less-likely-require-masks-during-covid-study-2022-06-06/>

### **U.K. should have done better on COVID-19: IATA director general**

A top airline industry official on Tuesday said the U.K. should have responded "a hell of a lot better" to COVID-19 and argued aviation should have been more forceful in challenging government-mandated border closures during the pandemic. Willie Walsh, director general of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), also defended airlines' handling of a rebound in traffic that is driving long lines at some airports, while blasting the COVID-19 response of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who survived a confidence vote on Monday

<https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/uk-should-have-done-better-covid-19-iata-director-general-2022-06-07/>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **How to Compare COVID Deaths for Vaccinated and Unvaccinated People**

Looking at COVID data in recent months, it may appear that a significant proportion of the people who have died of COVID were vaccinated against the disease. But it is important to put those numbers in context. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has compiled data from 28 geographically representative state and local health departments that keep track of COVID death rates among people age 12 and older in relation to their vaccination status, including whether or not they got a booster dose, and age group. Each week in March, on average, a reported 644 people in this data set died of COVID. Of them, 261 were vaccinated with either just a primary round of shots—two doses of an mRNA vaccine or a single dose of Johnson & Johnson's vaccine—or with that primary series and at least one shot of a booster.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-compare-covid-deaths-for-vaccinated-and-unvaccinated-people/>

### **FDA advisers meeting on Novavax, a latecomer in COVID-19 vaccine race**

A federal advisory committee Tuesday will vote on whether regulators should authorize a COVID-19 vaccine made by Novavax, an early beneficiary of the government's Operation Warp Speed program. The experts to the Food and Drug Administration will base their recommendation on the company's clinical trial data, which is strong. But before the agency could authorize the shots, the FDA would also need to sign off on Novavax's manufacturing process, which has stumbled repeatedly over the course of two years. If the FDA authorizes the Novavax two-dose vaccine, it would become the fourth shot to win clearance for adults in the United States. But even if the company does get the green light, it is unclear when or how widely the vaccine might be available. Shots from Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson have been authorized for well over a year, and the country is not short of doses. And in a number of countries where Novavax has already earned authorization, uptake has been low.

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/nation-world/ct-aud-nw-nyt-novavax-fda-covid-vaccine-20220607-piykwmevmbd3pdhoqjeslm7egq-story.html>

### **Study: Ineffective blood oxygen readers have endangered Black and Latino Covid-19 patients**

Black and Latino patients experienced significant delays in obtaining life-saving Covid-19 treatments due to a popular medical device that inaccurately reads darker skin tones, according to a study released last week in JAMA Internal Medicine. The report shows that pulse oximeters, a device that clips onto a person's fingertips and reads oxygen levels, is more likely to produce inaccurate results in Black, Latino and Asian Americans than in white patients. The device can make patients of color appear healthier than they actually are, researchers said. "Not only less accurate, but in particular, more optimistic," Tianshi David Wu, a co-lead author of the study and assistant professor of pulmonary medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Texas, told NBC News. "In this study we found that minority patients appeared healthier than they really were based on this bias in pulse oximetry."

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/study-ineffective-blood-oxygen-readers-endangered-black-latino-covid-1-rcna31498>

### **Influenza vaccination rates of health and aged care facility staff during the COVID-19 pandemic**

In a recent study published in the Medical Journal of Australia, researchers assessed the impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on influenza vaccination. The target rate for the influenza vaccine uptake to be received by healthcare workers was 75% in 2014, which increased to 92% in 2021. Moreover, staff of the residential aged care services (RACS) were compulsorily required to be vaccinated against influenza from May 2020 throughout Australia.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220607/Influenza-vaccination-rates-of-health-and-aged-care-facility-staff-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.aspx>

### **Imatinib yields sustained clinical benefit in patients with hypoxemic COVID-19**

Treatment with imatinib resulted in a sustained clinical benefit after 90 days in hospitalized patients with hypoxemic COVID-19, according to results of the CounterCOVID study. At the American Thoracic Society International Conference, Job R. Schippers, MD-PhD candidate for pulmonary medicine at Amsterdam University Medical Center, presented long-term clinical outcomes at 90 days after treatment with imatinib.

<https://www.healio.com/news/pulmonology/20220607/imatinib-yields-sustained-clinical-benefit-in-patients-with-hypoxemic-covid19>

### **U.S. FDA expert panel weighs Novavax COVID vaccine**

Advisers to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday will vote on whether to recommend

authorizing Novavax Inc's COVID-19 vaccine, which the drugmaker hopes can become the shot of choice among some American vaccine skeptics. The shot being considered by the FDA panel of outside experts is a more traditional type of vaccine employing technology that has been used for decades to combat diseases including Hepatitis B and influenza.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/novavax-covid-vaccine-heads-us-fda-advisory-committee-2022-06-07/>

### **J&J gives notice to terminate Emergent manufacturing deal for COVID vaccine**

Johnson & Johnson said on Monday it had formally informed Emergent BioSolutions Inc of its decision to terminate agreement with the contract manufacturer to make COVID-19 vaccine for the drugmaker. The termination notice comes about a week after J&J had initially informed Emergent of its intent to end the pact based on the contract manufacturer's breaches, including failure to supply COVID-19 vaccine drug substance, J&J said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/contract-manufacturer-emergent-says-jj-breached-vaccine-contract-2022-06-06/>

### **Experts predict increase in Covid hospital admissions and another wave**

A new Covid wave could be looming in England, experts say, as Covid hospital admissions stop falling. Admissions of people to hospital with Covid in England have stopped declining, according to an analysis of new NHS figures by John Roberts a leading actuary from the Covid actuaries group. When asked if the UK was heading into another wave Mr Roberts, told The Independent said "yes we could be but...how big that wave and how serious it will be in terms of admissions and deaths is very, very difficult to judge at this stage." His comments come after experts in Europe warned there will be a new wave driven by growth of the BA.5 and BA. Covid variants.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/covid-wave-hospital-england-b2095556.html>

### **Novavax COVID shot, aimed at vaccine skeptics, overwhelmingly backed by FDA panel**

Advisers to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday voted overwhelmingly to recommend that the agency authorize Novavax Inc's COVID-19 vaccine for use in adults, which the drugmaker hopes can become the shot of choice among some American vaccine skeptics. The panel of outside vaccine experts voted 21-0 with one abstention in favor of the vaccine for those 18 and older after discussing whether the shot's benefits outweigh risks, including rare occurrences of heart inflammation that may be associated with the vaccine.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/novavax-covid-vaccine-heads-us-fda-advisory-committee-2022-06-07/>

### **U.S. CDC removes mask recommendation from monkeypox travel notice to avoid confusion**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Tuesday it had removed a mask recommendation from its monkeypox travel notice to avoid "confusion" over the disease, which primarily spreads through direct contact. "Late yesterday, CDC removed the mask recommendation from the monkeypox Travel Health Notice because it caused confusion," a CDC spokesperson said on Tuesday. The agency had earlier suggested that travellers wear masks as it can help protect against "many diseases, including monkeypox"

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-cdc-removes-mask-recommendation-monkeypox-travel-notice-avoid-confusion-2022-06-07/>

### **FDA advisers back Novavax COVID shots as 4th US option**

American adults who haven't yet gotten vaccinated against COVID-19 may soon get another choice, as advisers to the Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday backed a more traditional type of shot. Next, the FDA must decide whether to authorize the protein vaccine made by latecomer Novavax as the nation's fourth coronavirus shot for adults. It's made with more conventional technology than today's dominant Pfizer and Moderna shots and the lesser-used Johnson & Johnson option. Novavax shots are already available in Australia, Canada, parts of Europe and multiple other countries, either

for initial vaccinations or as mix-and-match boosters. But U.S. clearance is a key hurdle for the Maryland-based company. FDA's vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks said another choice in the U.S. may entice at least some vaccine holdouts -- whatever their reason -- to consider rolling up their sleeves.

<https://apnews.com/99366fca038e009d7b73a453db39c565>

### **Novavax coronavirus vaccine would be fourth authorized in United States**

More than a year after people began rolling up their sleeves for cutting-edge coronavirus shots, a new vaccine, this one based on a classic decades-old technology, is expected to begin rolling out in the United States this summer. Advisers to the Food and Drug Administration are scheduled to debate Tuesday whether a shot developed by the Maryland biotechnology company Novavax, an underdog in the vaccine race, is safe and effective. If the shot gets the green light, it will become the fourth coronavirus vaccine in the nation. For most people, some already on their third or fourth messenger RNA coronavirus shot from Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech, it looks like a puzzle: A new vaccine? Why bother? But for a small contingent of holdouts who have closely tracked the progress of the Novavax vaccine, this is a moment of truth.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/06/05/novavax-coronavirus-vaccine-fda/>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Omicron sub-variants BA.4 and BA.5 account for up to 13% of COVID variants in U.S. - CDC**

The BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants of Omicron are estimated to make up nearly 5% and 8% of the coronavirus variants in the United States as of June 4, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Tuesday. The two sublineages, which were added to the World Health Organization's monitoring list in March and designated as variants of concern by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), were present in all U.S. regions.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/omicron-sub-variants-ba4-ba5-account-up-13-covid-variants-us-cdc-2022-06-07/>

### **N.Korea reports 61730 more people with fever amid COVID outbreak -KCNA**

North Korea reported 61,730 more people with fever symptoms amid its first-ever coronavirus outbreak, North Korean state media KCNA said on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nkorea-reports-61730-more-people-with-fever-amid-covid-outbreak-kcna-2022-06-06/>

### **Washington hospitals again strained by COVID-19 spread**

Hospital officials in Washington are warning that facilities are heading toward another COVID-19 case peak amid high spread in the community. Washington State Hospital Association CEO Cassie Sauer on Monday said at the end of last week, almost 600 people with COVID-19 were in hospitals across the state with about 20-25 patients a day on ventilators, The News Tribune reported. That compares with an average of around 230 hospitalized cases in the daily census in April and 1,700 in February during the Omicron wave. In response to the rising hospitalizations, officials on a media briefing call Monday implored people to wear high-quality masks indoors in crowded, public spaces, and to get COVID-19 booster shots on top of vaccinations. "It's still something you don't want to get and we want to urge you to do everything you can to protect yourself," said Cassie Sauer, Washington State Hospital Association CEO. Community spread is also affecting health care workers and straining hospital staffing levels, officials said.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-washington-e6aa4e7cd230eb8ae11c961854edff30>

### **U.S. Treasury approves first state projects from \$10 bln COVID broadband fund**

The U.S. Treasury on Tuesday announced the first state awards from a \$10 billion COVID-19 aid program aimed at boosting broadband internet access in underserved communities, funding \$583 million worth of projects in Virginia, West Virginia, Louisiana and New Hampshire. The Coronavirus

Capital Projects Fund, a relatively unheralded portion of President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act, provides money for broadband infrastructure and other projects that enable work, education and healthcare monitoring.

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/us-treasury-approves-first-state-projects-10-blb-covid-broadband-fund-2022-06-07/>

### **US, other nations track shifts in COVID-19 activity**

The 7-day average for new daily COVID-19 cases is 105,576, with 269 daily deaths, according to the Washington Post tracker. Over the past week, cases dropped 1% after rising slowly since about the middle of April. Hospitalizations over the past week rose 8%, while deaths dropped 27%. The nation faces an uncertain summer, with the more transmissible BA.2.12.1 Omicron subvariant—first seen in New York—becoming the dominant strain over the past 2 weeks. Officials are closely watching two other more transmissible subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, that recently triggered a modest wave in South Africa and have been linked to a fresh rise in cases in Portugal.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/06/us-other-nations-track-shifts-covid-19-activity>