

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

18th Sep 2022

Lockdown Exit

How did Pfizer vaccine fare against Omicron in NZ?

New Zealand confronted Omicron as one of the most vaccinated populations on the planet – so what difference did that make in blunting the worst impacts? That's what researchers plan to find out in a new study exploring the effectiveness of multiple doses of the Pfizer vaccine against the variant, in what was also one of the world's few "infection-naïve" populations. Study leaders Dr Anna Howe and Dr Matt Hobbs also aim to answer another critical question: what protection the vaccine gave Māori, Pasifika and other high-risk groups. By the time the Omicron outbreak forced the whole of New Zealand into the red traffic light setting on January 23, about 93 per cent of our eligible adult population – that's 3,910,251 people – had already received at least two doses of Pfizer's Comirnaty vaccine

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-how-did-pfizer-vaccine-fare-against-omicron-in-new-zealand/WPYH7243X42P02MYBFP2SWMVTE/>

Australians believe life is improving after lockdowns and are more confident in government, survey finds

Australians believe their life is improving and are more confident in the government compared with last year, with much of this wellbeing boost being reported among young people, the results of a national survey suggest. The latest Covid Impact Monitoring survey of more than 3,510 adults, completed in August, found the 18 to 24 age group in particular are feeling more positive about their lives. This is despite being the age group to suffer some of the greatest psychological distress during the peak of the pandemic. "That does not mean that Australia has returned to pre-pandemic levels of wellbeing and mental health," the results of the latest survey, published on Wednesday, found.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/sep/15/australians-believe-life-is-improving-after-lockdowns-and-are-more-confident-in-government-survey-finds>

UK Covid-19 inquiry delayed by two weeks to respect national mourning period

The UK Covid-19 inquiry has been delayed by two weeks out of respect for the national mourning period following the Queen's death, officials have said. The inquiry, which will investigate decisions made by Boris Johnson's government during the pandemic, was due to begin on September 20, but has been postponed until October 4. It will begin with a preliminary hearing, which will outline how the inquiry will develop and what it will investigate. During this hearing, inquiry chair Baroness Heather Hallett will hold a short period of silence to commemorate the impact of the pandemic on people's lives.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/government-queen-london-b1025967.html>

China Covid lockdowns leave residents short of food and essential items

Residents under Covid lockdowns in areas across China are complaining of shortages of food and essential items. Tens of millions of people in at least 30 regions have been ordered to stay at home under partial or full lockdowns. "It's been 15 days, we are out of flour, rice, eggs. From days ago, we run out of milk for kids," said one resident in western Xinjiang. Authorities are scrambling to contain local outbreaks ahead of the Communist party's congress in October. China's zero-Covid policy requires strict lockdowns – even if just a handful of cases are reported. On Monday China recorded 949 new Covid cases across the entire country.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-62830326>

China's Chengdu exits full citywide COVID lockdown on Thursday

The Chinese city of Chengdu will on Thursday lift a full COVID-19 lockdown in all districts still facing strict movement curbs as a recent outbreak comes under control, local authorities said. Chengdu, the capital of southwestern China's Sichuan province, was locked down on Sept. 1 after COVID cases were detected, becoming the largest Chinese metropolis hit with curbs since Shanghai's lockdown in April and May. Some districts in Chengdu, a city of more than 21 million people, have already started to exit from a full lockdown since Sept. 8.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-chengdu-lift-citywide-covid-lockdown-thursday-2022-09-14/>

WHO Saying Pandemic End in Sight Falls Flat in Covid Zero China

Article reports that the World Health Organization chief's comment that the end of the pandemic is within reach sparked lively online debate -- and some censorship -- in China, the only major country still trying to stop the spread of the virus. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Wednesday that "we have never been in a better position to end the pandemic. We are not there yet, but the end is in sight." China Newsweek and popular online media outlet Guancha.cn reported on Tedros's remark and shared videos on social media platform Weibo, but those were removed in the afternoon. A hashtag on Tedros's comments that gathered some 4.5 million views also appeared to have been removed, and Chinese media disabled the comment function on Weibo posts sharing the news.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-15/who-saying-pandemic-end-in-sight-falls-flat-in-covid-zero-china?srnd=premium>

Nigeria Strikes Deal with Serum Institute of India

Nigeria will start building a vaccine plant by end of the year after signing a contract manufacturing agreement with the Serum Institute of India for local production of the jabs, the country's health minister said. The country struck the deal with the world's biggest vaccine manufacturer on Wednesday, Health Minister Osagie Ehanire said at a briefing in the capital, Abuja. The plant should be producing routine vaccines -- initially against polio, measles and yellow fever, among others -- by 2028, he added.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-14/nigeria-strikes-deal-with-serum-institute-of-india>

Malaysia to purchase updated COVID-19 vaccines tailored for new variants: Khairy

The Malaysian government will procure new COVID-19 vaccines which are tailored to fight new strains of the virus, said Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin. The vaccines will be administered free of charge to high-risk groups such as the elderly and those with serious comorbidities, the Malaysian media quoted Mr Khairy as saying on Tuesday. "A decision on this procurement will be announced later along with the vaccines for children under five," he said at a press conference after launching the Record Breaking COVID-19 Vaccination Report: Public-Private Partnership, according to Bernama.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/malaysia-updated-covid-19-vaccine-khairy-pfizer-covax-2937406>

Vietnam appreciates Thailand's support in COVID-19 fight: Ambassador

The Vietnamese Government appreciated the contributions of the Thailand-Vietnam Friendship Association (TVFA) and five Thai corporations as well as their efforts to call for donations of medical equipment and materials to Vietnam during the fight against COVID-19 last year, said Vietnamese Ambassador to Thailand Phan Chi Thanh. Thanh made the statement during a ceremony in Bangkok on September 14 to present the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' certificates of merit to the TVFA and Thai corporations, including Thai Beverage, SCG, Berli Jucker, Amata Vietnam and B.Grimm Power, in recognition of their assistance in calling for medical equipment and supplies in the fight against COVID-19 in Vietnam in 2021, when the two countries celebrated the 45th

anniversary of bilateral diplomatic ties.

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam-appreciates-thailands-support-in-covid19-fight-ambassador/237350.vnp>

We Are Failing to Use What We've Learned About COVID

Podcast - This is Eric Topol for Medscape. I'm with my co-host Abraham Verghese for a new edition of Medicine and the Machine. We have an extraordinary guest today, Professor Christina Pagel. She is a force — a professor at University College London with an extraordinary background in math, physics, and even interplanetary space. We've never had a guest with such a diverse background. Welcome, Christina.

<https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/978637>

Exit Strategies

Singapore to begin giving Covid-19 vaccines to children under 5

Roll-out expected to be timed for end-October or early November given. Singapore's 'relatively low' caseload, Health Minister Ong Ye Kung says City state also plans to introduce bivalent jabs targeting both the wildtype virus and its circulating variants, Ong adds

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/health-environment/article/3192357/singapore-begin-giving-covid-19-vaccines-children>

Desperation grows in hard-hit Chengdu's indefinite Covid lockdown

China's city of 21 million has endured heatwaves, power cuts, quarantine and a deadly earthquake, while panic also simmers in a neighbouring province

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/12/desperation-grows-in-hard-hit-chengdu-s-indefinite-covid-lockdown?fbclid=IwAR1t-NnRVbMn9bR_xM9WRe1TER6SjbojMIiy78w6J_AIH74OyBNKY9zcXc

Less than 50 payments made for adverse reactions to COVID-19 vaccines

Less than 50 payments have been made to compensate Australians who have had adverse reactions to COVID-19 vaccines, representing a miniscule percentage of the total number of doses administered. Government Services Minister Bill Shorten seized upon the figures to criticise "fringe operators who spread misinformation" about COVID vaccines.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/less-than-50-payments-made-for-adverse-reactions-to-covid-19-vaccines-20220915-p5bigu.html>

Uyghurs living under COVID-19 lockdowns in Xinjiang face food shortages, family separations

Last week, at least 33 cities were reportedly put in lockdown as China continues to pursue its COVID-zero policy. But unlike lockdowns in other major cities in China, lockdowns in Xinjiang are rarely discussed publicly and face strict censorship on the Chinese internet. Chinese language media reported that censors in Xinjiang have been asked to "dilute discussions" about Ili's lockdown, by posting videos and pictures of "lifestyle, baby matters, and food". The Xinjiang lockdowns come as outgoing United Nations human rights commissioner Michelle Bachelet recently released a report detailing serious allegations of human rights abuses against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in China's Xinjiang region.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-15/uyghur-australians-call-for-attention-on-lockdown-in-xinjiang/101435940>

Australians might be 'living with Covid' but aged care residents are still dying with it. Where is the outrage and grief?

Across Australia, more than 3,000 people living in residential aged care have died with Covid-19 this year. This is three times more than in the first two years of the pandemic when tight lockdowns prevented families from spending precious time together and negatively impacted mental health, cognitive and physical wellbeing. To what end?

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/sep/15/australians-might-be-living-with-covid-but-aged-care-resid>

[ents-are-still-dying-with-it-where-is-the-outrage-and-grief](#)

Nigeria Strikes Deal with Serum Institute of India

Nigeria will start building a vaccine plant by end of the year after signing a contract manufacturing agreement with the Serum Institute of India for local production of the jabs, the country's health minister said. The country struck the deal with the world's biggest vaccine manufacturer on Wednesday, Health Minister Osagie Ehanire said at a briefing in the capital, Abuja. The plant should be producing routine vaccines -- initially against polio, measles and yellow fever, among others -- by 2028, he added.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-14/nigeria-strikes-deal-with-serum-institute-of-india>

Japan Approves Pfizer, Moderna Covid Omicron Vaccine Boosters for Use

Pfizer Inc. and Moderna Inc.'s Covid-19 vaccines targeting the omicron variant were approved by Japan's health ministry late Monday, paving the way for them to be rolled out in the world's third-largest health-care market. The ministry endorsed the shots shortly after an expert panel advised deploying the boosters. Pfizer's omicron booster can be administered to Japanese aged 12 and over, the panel advised, while Moderna's should be limited to those 18 and above. Japan is the latest country to sign off on the targeted boosters following similar approvals by the US, UK and Australia in the past couple of months.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-12/japan-drug-panel-backs-backs-pfizer-moderna-omicron-boosters>

Gusher of pandemic aid averted global depression, but left a bad hangover

Economists around the world, from the most liberal free-spenders to fiscal conservative deficit hawks, largely agreed the coronavirus pandemic required a go-big, go-fast policy response to avoid an outright global depression.

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/finance/topstories/gusher-of-pandemic-aid-averted-global-depression-but-left-a-bad-hangover/ar-AA11jdBu>

Covid-19 Illnesses Are Keeping at Least 500,000 Workers Out of U.S. Labor Force, Study Says

Illness caused by Covid-19 shrank the U.S. labor force by around 500,000 people, a hit that is likely to continue if the virus continues to sicken workers at current rates, according to a new study released Monday. Millions of people left the labor force—the number of people working or looking for work—during the pandemic for various reasons, including retirement, lack of child care and fear of Covid. The total size of the labor force reached 164.7 million people in August, exceeding the February 2020 prepandemic level for the first time. The labor force would have 500,000 more members if not for the people sickened by Covid, according to the study's authors, economists Gopi Shah Goda of Stanford University and Evan J. Soltas, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-illnesses-are-keeping-at-least-500-000-workers-out-of-u-s-labor-force-study-says-11662955321>

BOJ set to end COVID-relief scheme, but no change to loose policy

The Bank of Japan is expected to end as scheduled a pandemic-relief funding scheme this month and discuss adjustments to a policy guidance that flags the COVID-19 pandemic as the top economic risk, three sources familiar with its thinking say. A final decision will be made at the BOJ's policy meeting on Sept. 21-22, when the board will scrutinise data to ensure Japan's persistently high coronavirus cases do not lead to a sharp drop in economic activity, the sources said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/boj-set-end-covid-relief-scheme-no-change-loose-policy-2022-09-12/>

Partisan Exits

Jacinda Ardern's Feted Covid Response Could Yet Be Her Undoing

The pandemic response that swept Jacinda Ardern to a second term as New Zealand's prime minister may end up costing her a third. Ardern this week scrapped what was left of the rules she deployed to battle Covid-19, bringing an end to two-and-a-half years of tough restrictions that initially served the country well. But their removal hasn't come soon enough for some voters, who have grown tired of controls on daily life and are deserting Ardern's Labour Party ahead of the 2023 general election. An economic slowdown also looms next year as the full impact of pandemic measures such as the closed border plays out.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-15/jacinda-ardern-s-feted-covid-response-could-yet-be-her-undoing>

The Truth About Those Viral Tweets Questioning the Omicron Boosters' Safety

So far, enthusiasm for the Omicron-specific Covid boosters is just so-so. In a University of Michigan poll conducted last month among adults over age 50, just 61 percent of those surveyed said they were "very likely" to get the new booster this fall, and 23 percent of adults ages 50 to 64 said they were "not likely" to get it. There are likely many reasons for this tepid reception, including the fact that many people have recently recovered from Covid and are waiting a few months before getting boosted in order to optimize protection. But there's another factor, too—one that we've seen before. Influential physicians who have opposed Covid protections since the beginning of the pandemic continue to downplay the effectiveness of vaccines.

<https://www.motherjones.com/media/2022/09/the-truth-about-those-viral-tweets-questioning-the-omicron-boosters-safety/>

'Untrustworthy and ineffective': Panel blasts governments' covid response

In a 45-page editorial, the Lancet Covid-19 Commission warned that many governments proved "untrustworthy and ineffective" as the pandemic tore across the world, citing examples such as richer nations hoarding vaccine doses and failing to fund global response efforts, and politicians such as former U.S. president Donald Trump and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro playing down the virus's risks, even as hundreds of thousands of their citizens died of it. "What we saw — rather than a cooperative global strategy — was basically each country on its own," Jeffrey Sachs, a Columbia University economist who chaired the commission, told reporters in a briefing convened by the respected medical journal.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/09/14/lancet-covid-commission-report-who/>

Members of New York Times, NBC News Digital Unions Defy Return-to-Office Plans

Some union members of the New York Times and NBC News's digital properties vowed not to come to the office this week and instead work remotely, defying their respective employers' back-to-the-office plans. Starting this week, the Times and NBC News expect employees to return to the office at least part of the week, both news organizations have told staff in recent memos. The Times union on Sunday said it has more than 1,280 signatures from members pledging to stay home, some of which come from a coordinated effort with the Times's tech and Wirecutter unions. The three Times unions collectively have around 2,000 members. A Times spokeswoman said the news organization believes a hybrid work environment best suits the New York Times at this moment. She also said a collaborative work environment is a driver of success.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/members-of-new-york-times-nbc-news-digital-unions-defy-return-to-office-plans-11663021373>

Scientific Viewpoint

Reflecting on the implementation of genomic surveillance for COVID-19 and beyond in the African Region

WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO) convened a meeting of COVID-19 epidemiology focal points from ministries of health of selected high-risk countries in Brazzaville (Republic of the Congo) which

took place between 10 to 13 August 2022. The aim was to discuss initiatives aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of COVID-19 surveillance, including genomic surveillance. The Regional Virologist at WHO AFRO set the scene: "Currently, 40 out of the 47 Member States (85%) in the African Region have in-country capabilities for genomic sequencing and 46 Member States (98%) are sharing their genetic sequence data through a publicly accessible database. The Region has established a coordinated mechanism to sustain and strengthen these gains and has set up three centres of excellence for genomic surveillance, developed standardized guidance documents, offered capacity building for Ministries of Health's personnel and set up laboratory infrastructure for routine pathogen genomic surveillance, including wastewater surveillance."

<https://www.who.int/news/item/16-09-2022-reflecting-on-the-implementation-of-genomic-surveillance-for-COVID-19-and-beyond-in-the-african-region>

Step up hunt for origins of Covid-19, Lancet panel urges

An international expert panel on Covid-19 has called for continued investigation into the origins of the coronavirus, saying the pathogen could have either spilled over from nature or an infection of a laboratory worker. In its final report this week, the Lancet Commission on Covid-19 led by Columbia University professor Jeffrey Sachs said the virus could well have had a natural origin, but the commission could not rule out it could have passed to humans during laboratory research in Wuhan, the Chinese city where the virus was first detected, or elsewhere. Even if it was a laboratory leak, it could well be a natural virus or a bioengineered virus, the report said, adding investigation and better monitoring of such research was needed.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3192821/step-hunt-origins-covid-19-lancet-panel-urges>

GSK, Regeneron Covid Antibody Drugs Unlikely to Work for Omicron, WHO Says

The antibody drugs GSK Plc and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. developed against Covid don't appear to work for omicron and its subvariants, a panel of experts advising the World Health Organization said, recommending against the use of the medicines. The group's decision comes amid "evidence from laboratory studies that these drugs are not likely to work against currently circulating variants," the panel said in the medical journal BMJ Friday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-15/who-panel-advises-against-gsk-regeneron-antibodies-for-covid>

WHO 'strongly advises against' use of two COVID treatments

Two COVID-19 antibody therapies are no longer recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), on the basis that Omicron and the variant's latest offshoots have likely rendered them obsolete. The two therapies - which are designed to work by binding to the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 to neutralise the virus' ability to infect cells - were some of the first medicines developed early in the pandemic. The virus has since evolved, and mounting evidence from lab tests suggests the two therapies - sotrovimab as well as casirivimab-imdevimab - have limited clinical activity against the latest iterations of the virus. As a result, they have also fallen out of favour with the U.S. health regulator. On Thursday, WHO experts said they strongly advised against the use of the two therapies in patients with COVID-19, reversing previous conditional recommendations endorsing them, as part of a suite of recommendations published in the British Medical Journal.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-strongly-advises-against-use-two-covid-treatments-2022-09-15/>

EU regulator backs wider use of AstraZeneca COVID therapy

Europe's medicines regulator has backed using AstraZeneca's preventative COVID-19 therapy as a treatment for the disease and also endorsed another medicine as preventative option for another common virus. The regulator's recommendations are usually followed by the European Commission when it takes a final decision on drug approvals. AstraZeneca said on Friday the European Medicines Agency (EMA) had backed Evusheld as a treatment for adults and adolescents with COVID who do

not need supplemental oxygen and who are at increased risk of their disease worsening.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/astrazeneca-says-antibody-cocktail-backed-treating-covid-eu-2022-09-16/>

'Eighth wave of Covid imminent in France' says health ministry

Covid appears to be making a comeback in France, after cases jumped by 55.5% over the past seven days, and 41,850 cases were reported in the last 24 hours. The figures from the Health Ministry and health authority Santé publique France, released on September 13, show a significant rise in infections. The daily average over the past seven days is around 17,000, but rising. The Health Ministry has warned that “an eighth wave” appears to be imminent and Health Minister François Braun has called on people in France to take “responsibility” and think about bringing back their social distancing and hygiene measures where appropriate.

<https://www.connexionfrance.com/article/French-news/Covid-19/Eighth-wave-of-Covid-19-imminent-in-France-says-French-health-ministry>

Singapore grants interim authorisation for first bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccine

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) on Wednesday (Sep 14) granted interim authorisation for the first bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccine in the country. The Spikevax Bivalent Original/Omicron COVID-19 jab by Moderna comprises two components that target the original SARS-CoV-2 strain and the Omicron BA.1 variant respectively.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/covid-19-first-bivalent-vaccine-moderna-hsa-spikevax-omicron-2937321>

Moderna open to supplying COVID vaccines to China, CEO says

Moderna Inc has held talks with the Chinese government about supplying COVID-19 vaccines, but no decision has yet been made, CEO Stephane Bancel told Reuters on Wednesday. As the rest of the world gradually lifts COVID restrictions, China continues to lock down enormous parts of society and conduct mass testing to eradicate the coronavirus. It has not approved any foreign COVID vaccines and relies on several domestically developed shots.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-believed-pandemic-beginning-that-biontech-violated-patent-ceo-2022-09-14/>

New bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccine doses expected to be available in Singapore by end-Sep: Moderna

Moderna's new bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccine is expected to be available in Singapore by end of this month. “We hope to have hundreds of thousands of doses available in Singapore before the end of the month,” the pharmaceutical firm's senior vice president of commercial vaccines Patrick Bergstedt told CNA on Wednesday (Sep 14). His comments came after the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) announced that it granted interim authorisation for Moderna's Spikevax Bivalent Original/Omicron jab, the first bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccine in the country. Official vaccination recommendations using this booster will be issued by the Expert Committee on COVID-19 Vaccination and the Ministry of Health (MOH) in due time, HSA said.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/moderna-bivalent-covid-19-vaccine-booster-expected-available-end-september-2940001>

Another new COVID variant is spreading - here's what we know about omicron BA.4.6

BA.4.6, a subvariant of the omicron COVID variant which has been quickly gaining traction in the US, is now confirmed to be spreading in the UK. The latest briefing document on COVID variants from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) noted that during the week beginning August 14, BA.4.6 accounted for 3.3% of samples in the UK. It has since grown to make up around 9% of sequenced cases. Similarly, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, BA.4.6 now accounts for more than 9% of recent cases across the US. The variant has also been identified in several other countries around the world.

<https://theconversation.com/another-new-covid-variant-is-spreading-heres-what-we-know-about-omicron-ba-4-6-189939>

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[https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-12/japan-drug-panel-backs-backs-pfizer-moderna-boosters?srnd=premium-uk](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-12/japan-drug-panel-backs-backs-pfizer-moderna-omicron-boosters?srnd=premium-uk)

Covid-19 fast becoming endemic in Thailand, says top virologist

He added that he expects Covid-19 cases to start dropping from late September to mid-December but start spreading again in the cool season from late December to early March and then again in the rainy season. He pointed out that most people in Thailand catch flu and other respiratory viruses during the rainy season. "However, Covid-19 infections are currently on a downward trajectory," he said, adding that public health agencies should launch vaccination drives for Covid-19 and other viruses before the start of the rainy season every year.

<https://www.nationthailand.com/life/health-beauty/40019711>

Coronavirus Resurgence

'Understaffed and overworked': Thousands of Minnesota nurses go on strike

Some 15,000 nurses in Minnesota walked off the job on Monday to protest hospital understaffing that their union says has harmed patient care and exhausted health workers as they negotiate a new contract with hospital executives. The strike, slated to last three days and described by the Minnesota Nurses Association as one of the largest in United States history, highlights nationwide health worker shortages that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/understaffed-overworked-thousands-minnesota-nurses-go-strike-2022-09-12/>

U.S. COVID cases continue to decline, as Minnesota nurses stage 3-day walkout over pay and understaffing

U.S. known cases of COVID are continuing to ease and now stand at their lowest level since early May, although the true tally is likely higher given how many people are testing at home, where the data are not being collected. The daily average for new cases stood at 66,159 on Sunday, according to a New York Times tracker, down 25% from two weeks ago. Cases are now rising in just three states: South Carolina, Missouri and Texas. They are flat in West Virginia and falling everywhere else, the tracker shows. The daily average for hospitalizations was down 8% at 35,249, while the daily average for deaths is down 22% to 375. In Minnesota, thousands of nurses launched a three-day walkout on Monday in protest over issues of pay and understaffing that they say has got worse because of the pandemic, the Associated Press reported.

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/u-s-covid-cases-continue-to-decline-as-minnesota-nurses-stage-3-day-walkout-over-pay-and-understaffing-11662990912>

Covid-19 Is Still Killing Hundreds of Americans Daily

Mark Pfundheller promptly got his first two Covid-19 shots and a booster, his family said, knowing the disease was a threat related to treatment for an inflammatory disorder that compromised his immune system. The 66-year-old former aviation consultant for Wisconsin's Transportation Department caught the virus in April at a family wedding near his home in southern Wisconsin, where many guests were infected. Mr. Pfundheller died in a Madison, Wis., hospital on July 2 after an illness including time on a ventilator. His was one of nearly 200,000 Covid-19 deaths in the U.S. this

year, according to death-certificate data. While the virus has become less risky for many thanks in part to immunity from vaccines and prior infections, it is still killing hundreds each day. Most are older people, and many have underlying health conditions and compromised immune systems, doctors said.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-is-still-killing-hundreds-of-americans-daily-11662888600>