

Outbreak Breakdown

October 16, 2020

This weekly report is provided as an informal information resource for certain AdvaMed member work groups. Content is provided by staff and is not to be construed as conveying AdvaMed viewpoints or endorsement. Newsletter Editors: [Andy Fish](#), Chief Strategy Officer and [Kristina Shultz](#), Manager, Strategy & Policy. Inquiries about AdvaMed's COVID-19 response can be directed to [Chris White](#), AdvaMed COVID Action Team Leader, COO & General Counsel.

AdvaMed Notes

AdvaMed White Paper on Digital Health Coverage: The increased use of telehealth and remote monitoring during the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be of significant interest to AdvaMed members and other stakeholders. AdvaMed has released a new white paper, [Modernizing Medicare Coverage of Digital Health Technologies](#), that outlines current barriers to Medicare coverage of digital health technologies and makes specific policy recommendations to expand access to those technologies and the services they support.

CMS Expanded List of Telehealth Services: CMS [announced yesterday](#) that it will expand the list of telehealth services that Medicare Fee-For-Service will pay for during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE).

CMS Reimbursement for COVID-19 Tests: CMS [announced yesterday](#) that it will incentivize “prompt testing turnaround times” by reducing payment for diagnostic tests performed using high throughput technologies from \$100 to \$75, unless the test can be turned around in two days, in which case the payment will be the full \$100.

MedTech Conference: AdvaMed’s annual MedTech Conference will conclude next week. Panel session and other events can be rewatched until Friday, October 23. Visit the [conference website](#) for more information.

AdvaMed Resources:

[COVID Testing Supply Registry](#)

[PPE Sourcing Program](#)

[MedTech Responds](#)

Something Completely Different

We were reminded of our [risqué history with Neanderthals](#) by the finding that a DNA sequence traced to [Neanderthal](#) ancestors is [linked to risk of more severe COVID-19 illness](#). We gave Neanderthals [herpes](#), they gave us [HPV](#), we [wiped out their Y chromosome](#), and finally an [asymmetric disease burden](#) and [bad luck](#) left us with only their genetic [echoes](#) and an undeserved [superiority complex](#).

Pandemic Snapshot

Global: Current Cases: [39,001,100](#) Deaths: [1,098,900](#)

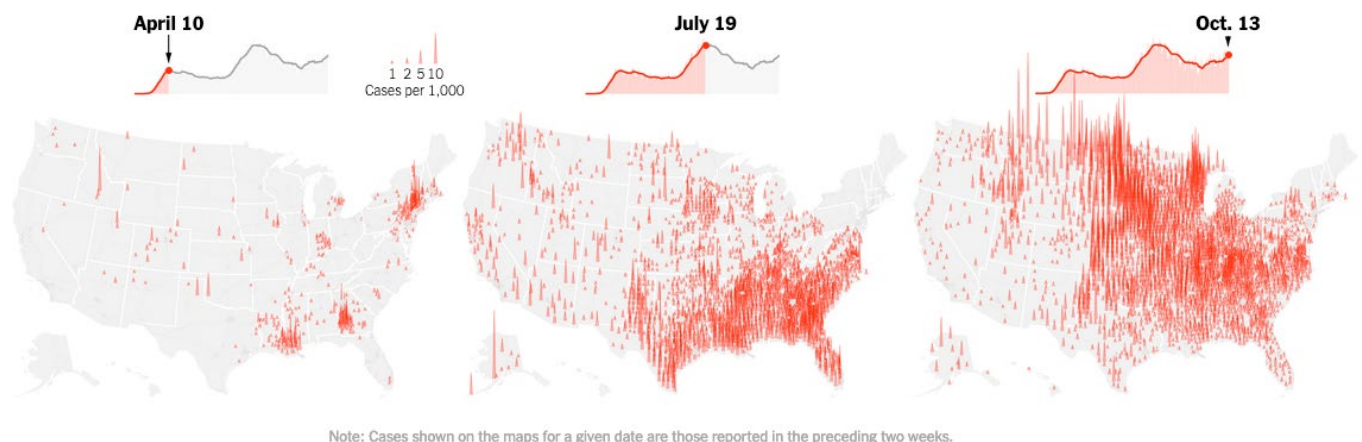
- For the first time since March, Europe recorded [more new cases per capita](#) this week than the U.S. Many new cases are in the U.K., France, and Spain, however concern is growing that the

virus is spreading unchecked through Central Europe, where hospital beds and skilled healthcare workers are both [in short supply](#).

United States: Current Cases: [8,020,100](#) Deaths: [217,585](#)

- Cases in the U.S. are climbing towards their third peak and are rising in 41 states. 9 states are holding steady. 17 states are reporting more new cases than ever before in the pandemic (primarily states in the Midwest/Mountain West). Yesterday, new cases surpassed 64,000 in a single day for the first time since late July.
- CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield reportedly [told governors](#) on a call this week that small household gatherings are increasingly a source of transmission.
- Hospitalizations are increasing in 42 states, including in states that experienced major outbreaks earlier in the pandemic (including New York, New Jersey, and Texas).

Unlike the previous two surges, this new wave of infections is spread out across the country rather than in concentrated geographic areas:



Source: [New York Times](#)

[Johns Hopkins Daily COVID-19 Situation Reports](#)
[AdvaMed COVID-19 Modeling & Data Visualization Resources](#)

News & Insights

U.S. Death Rate Higher Than Other Countries: A [study](#) published this week in JAMA analyzed the per capita death rates in the U.S. and 18 other high-income countries and found that per capita deaths, from both COVID-19 and other causes, were much higher in the U.S. Researchers reported that deaths in the U.S. from just COVID-19 were, on average, [50% higher than any other country](#) in the study after adjusting for population size (including 29% higher than Sweden, which made headlines for refusing to order strict social restrictions or lockdowns).

Transmission in Day Care Settings: A new [study](#) out of Yale this week found [little evidence](#) that child care programs contributed to the transmission of COVID-19 during the first few months of the U.S. pandemic. The authors noted that the child care programs evaluated in the study reported very high rates of infection mitigation protocols (handwashing, symptom screening, small groups sizes, etc.).

In contrast to those findings, another [study](#) in Poland found that very young children (under the age of three) who were asymptomatic may effectively spread SARS-CoV-2 to older children and adults. A cluster of high spread was reported in a single nursery that had mitigation measures (e.g. mask-wearing by caregivers) in place. The contrasting results from these two studies indicate that the role of young children in the spread of SARS-CoV-2 is still unclear.

Transmission From Young to Old: In this week’s CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), researchers [analyzed SARS-CoV-2 transmission](#) in 767 counties identified as hotspots in June and July. The researchers found that test positivity increased in young people first before progressively increasing in older age groups. The report highlights the importance of protecting young age groups in order to protect older and more vulnerable portions of the population.

Trials Put on Pause: This week, Johnson & Johnson announced the Phase III trial of its SARS-CoV-2 vaccine candidate had been [put on pause](#) to investigate an illness in a participant. Eli Lilly also announced [a pause in the clinical trial](#) of its monoclonal antibody treatment due to a “potential safety concern.” No further details have been announced.

Mask-Wearing in Arizona: Arizona health officials and CDC researchers [published an analysis](#) of the effectiveness of SARS-CoV-2 mitigation measures, including mask wearing, in Arizona. The number of positive cases in Arizona stabilized and then decreased after mitigation measures – including mask mandates and statewide closures of certain venues - were put in place midway through the summer. These findings underscore the effectiveness of such interventions.

New Guidance for Testing in Schools: The Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy and Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, with support from The Rockefeller Foundation, [released a report](#) this week to provide guidance to school administrators on how best to use diagnostic tests to reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in schools.

[America’s Newest Wave of COVID-19 Cases, Explained](#) | Vox, October 16

[‘Nobody Has Very Clear Answers for Them’: Doctors Search for Treatments for COVID-19 Long-Haulers](#) | Washington Post, October 16

[In the US, 50 States Could Mean 50 Vaccine Rollout Strategies](#) | Wired, October 16

[City in China Tests 10 Million People After 13 COVID-19 Cases Are Found](#) | NPR, October 16

[As COVID-19 Cases Surge, Global Study Paints Grim Picture for Elder-Care Homes](#) | Washington Post, October 16

[COVID-19 Outbreaks Led to Dangerous Delay in Cancer Diagnoses](#) | Wall Street Journal, October 15

[Trump May Be Immune to the Coronavirus. But For How Long?](#) | New York Times, October 14

[What’s Your Blood Type? It May Affect Your Risk for COVID-19](#) | NBC News, October 14

[Europe, Which It Had the Virus Tamed, Faces a Resurgence](#) | New York Times, October 14

[Coronavirus Reinfections Are Real but Very, Very Rare](#) | New York Times, October 13

[The COVID-19 Fall Surge Is Here. We Can Stop It.](#) | The Atlantic, October 12

More News

[MIT Technology Review Coronavirus Coverage](#)

[Tulane Outbreak Daily](#)

[Prevent Epidemics Weekly Science Review](#)

[Helio COVID-19 Resource Center](#)

[Johns Hopkins Novel Coronavirus Research Compendium](#)