

CDC Studies: Child COVID-19 Hospitalizations Skyrocket

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COVID-19 hospitalizations among children and adolescents are significantly higher in communities with low vaccination rates, according to two new CDC studies.

The studies, which are slated for publication Friday, provide data that highlight the importance of getting vaccinated, said CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, MD.

"Both studies show one thing is clear: cases, emergency room visits, and hospitalizations are much lower among children and communities with higher vaccination rates," Walensky said at a Thursday briefing.

Researchers analyzed July data from hospitals in 99 counties across 14 states, which revealed that hospital rates among unvaccinated adolescents ages 12-17 were nearly 10 times higher than those who were fully vaccinated.

A second study found that August hospitalization rates for children and adolescents were nearly four times higher than they were for vaccinated people from the same age group.

"As a mother of three and as a physician, I deeply care about keeping our children safe at home and at school," Walensky said.

As the Delta variant continued to spread throughout the summer, cases among children and adolescents increased by nearly 10-fold, she reported.

The seven-day average of daily cases has increased to 149,000, with hospitalizations reaching 12,000 per day. Daily deaths have reached 953.

However, vaccination rates continue to increase. About 175 million U.S. residents have been fully vaccinated, up from 10 million just a month ago, the White House COVID-19 team reported.

Daily rates are hovering around one million per day, and first doses comprise half of those, Walensky said. Though the full FDA approval of Pfizer's two-dose vaccine "has definitely had some impact," she said, it is difficult to know what has accounted for that increase.

Walensky said the new data underscores the importance of protective measures, including masking and distancing, particularly for children attending school.

White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Jeff Zients also announced a \$3 billion investment in vaccine manufacturing, which he said will enable companies to add new facilities and production lines.

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