

Americans didn't avoid travel over holiday, despite CDC warning; total US COVID-19 cases hit 40M

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Despite CDC officials recommending unvaccinated Americans stay home, [data](#) from the Transportation Security Administration shows similar Labor Day travel numbers this year compared to two years ago.

During an Aug. 31 White House [news briefing](#), Rochelle Walensky, MD, director of the CDC, [said](#) unvaccinated people should avoid travel for Labor Day.

"Throughout the pandemic, we have seen that the vast majority of transmission takes place among unvaccinated people in closed, indoor settings," Dr. Walensky said, adding that gatherings among vaccinated Americans should occur outdoors.

However, TSA checkpoints recorded 2.02 million travelers through U.S. airports Sept. 6, similar to the 2.29 million travelers on the same day two years ago.

Daily infections reported were also **higher than last year**, with **316 percent more** new daily COVID-19 cases reported on Labor Day this year compared to 2020, according to Baltimore-based Johns Hopkins' data cited by [USA Today](#). **Daily virus deaths were almost twice as high, and hospitalizations were up 158 percent compared to the same time in 2020**, [USA Today](#) reported.

According to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, total U.S. COVID-19 cases ever [reported](#) have surpassed **40 million**, accounting for nearly a fifth of the known global total.

Florida teen who was hospitalized with Covid-19 wants to get vaccinated and says others should get the shot too

CNN: Randi Kaye
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(CNN)A Florida teen who spent 11 days on a ventilator after she contracted [Covid-19](#) has a message for her peers and others.

"My message, technically is: If you're eligible to get the vaccine, please do," [Paulina Velasquez](#) told CNN from her home in Coral Springs, Florida. "I plan on getting vaccinated as soon as my doctor lets us know when I can."

Paulina, 15, had intended earlier this summer to get vaccinated. But then she got a runny nose, and then came headaches. She lost her sense of taste and smell. Breathing became hard.

On July 11 she tested positive for the [coronavirus](#). Less than a week later, the healthy, energetic high school sophomore was in a Fort Lauderdale hospital emergency room struggling to breathe normally. It was very scary, she said.

Because her oxygen levels were low, doctors immediately put her on a ventilator.

"That was the scariest moment when they told me because I didn't know what to expect," Agnes Velasquez said. At first, she didn't want her daughter on a ventilator but she was told her daughter's condition could get worse. Then she told the medical staff: "Just do what you can do to save my daughter's life."

Paulina also had pneumonia and was put in a medically induced coma. Mom made the decision to stay in her daughter's room, where she was told she couldn't come out.

Agnes Velasquez told CNN last month that she told her daughter every day to, "Fight for your life."

Paulina's doctor, Dr. Venu Devabhaktuni, the medical director for Broward Health's pediatric ICU, said in August that the teen was "kind of touch and go" while she was on a ventilator.

"Things could have gone bad quickly, but she recovered because she's one young, healthy child. That, I think that was in favor of her recovering," Devabhaktuni said.

After almost a month, Paulina was well enough to go home from the Broward Health Medical Center.

She is doing physical therapy to get stronger. Her arms and legs are still weak but she is now able to walk on her own.

She also has to work on learning how to pick things up and hold things.

Paulina said she is improving every day and she wants others to avoid a similar experience.

"It is a very serious virus. This virus does not pick and choose who to infect," she said, her words aimed at the unvaccinated. "It could hit you as hard as it hit me. And I don't want anybody to go through what I went through."

Doctors say when Paulina is strong enough she can get vaccinated.



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