

## 'We have had to put children on ventilators.' Children under 17 account for 30% of NC's COVID-19 cases

The latest data from the state Department of Health and Human Services show how coronavirus is impacting children.

Last week, children 17 years old and younger made up more than 30 percent of North Carolina's new COVID-19 cases. That's the highest percent of cases among children since the pandemic began.

The data comes as the Delta variant spreads and children turn to in-person learning.

A spokesperson for UNC Health reported on Thursday 10 COVID-19 pediatric patients at their children's hospital, with half of those children in the pediatric ICU. Duke Health said health care staff were treating five pediatric COVID-19 patients, while Cape Fear Valley Health in Fayetteville said they had a single child with COVID-19 on a ventilator.

Doctors said the cases can get serious, even in kids who were previously healthy.

"We have had to put children on ventilators. Many of the children are on oxygen," said Dr. Stephanie Duggins Davis, the physician in chief at UNC Children's Hospital. "They are also on other types of respiratory support, and these are children who have previously been healthy. They do not necessarily have co-morbidities. Previously healthy children are coming in and getting very sick and being admitted to intensive care units across the state."

At Duke Children's Hospital, Dr. Sameer Kamath it does not take many young patients to fill the limited number of pediatric ICU beds in the Triangle.

"The last three weeks have been a constant bed shuffle," said Kamath. "Where we have had to have a close eye on capacity and moving things around."

At times, there may be only a couple PICU beds available in the Triangle.

"When we see something traveling around our children and making them sick, we know we are going to be utilizing those resources and potentially put a strain on it," said Dr. Mandy Cohen, secretary of the state Department of Health and Human Services,

Health experts said keeping kids safe means getting them vaccinated if they are old enough and wearing masks. DHHS data shows 41.6 percent of kids 12 to 17 years old are vaccinated in the state, compared to 61 percent of adults.

## 'Get off social media, call your doctor,' Gov. Roy Cooper says to those skeptical about getting the COVID-19 vaccine

Gov. Cooper has been looking at North Carolina's COVID-19 trends to make decisions.

RALEIGH, N.C. — Gov. Roy Cooper and the COVID-19 task force said all counties in North Carolina are under a red alert for high COVID-19 spread across the state.

*“Get off social media and get on the phone with your doctor,”* Cooper said to those still skeptical about getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Cooper has pushed schools to require masks in classrooms in his previous briefings. He said **109 school districts across the state have issued mandatory mask mandates for students and staff.**

Schools in the Triad have dealt with hundreds of students and staff in isolation after reopening. All school districts in the Triad now require masks.

Cooper's speech comes hours before President Joe Biden is expected to announce stricter COVID-19 vaccine requirements for federal workers. The president originally allowed federal workers to get tested regularly if they didn't want the vaccine. Biden is expected to release a six-point plan to address the latest surge in cases.

State leaders said the climbing cases and hospitalizations nine months after vaccines rolled out are concerning.

**State Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mandy Cohen said case rates in our state are highest for children 17 and younger.**

She said for the week ending September 4th, that group made up almost one-third of the state's new COVID-19 cases, which is the highest since the pandemic began.

A little bit less than half of school-aged children, only the ones 12-17, are eligible right now to get vaccinated and the progress in that age group is slow, at only 35 percent.

Cooper has been looking at federal health recommendations and North Carolina's COVID-19 trends to make decisions for our state. So, let's take a look at the current numbers.

North Carolina is watching COVID-19 trends closely after Labor Day weekend. It's still too early to tell if we're seeing trends go up because of the holiday.

Health officials say symptoms of COVID-19 typically present themselves around day five after contracting the virus. Test results take about two days to come back. Plus, another day or so for the [NCDHHS dashboard](#) to update, so next week might reveal more.

Labs reported 6,290 new cases Thursday, but they made up 11.3% of recent COVID-19 tests - more than double the state's goal of 5% or lower.

## UNC Health Southeastern to require COVID-19 vaccination for most hospital visitors

Sep. 11—LUMBERTON — Proof of COVID-19 vaccination will be asked of visitors to UNC Health Southeastern's medical center starting Sept. 21, the health care system announced Friday.

"Our region's low vaccination rates and the recent surge in COVID-19 patients have forced us to adjust our visitor requirements," said Patrick Ebri, UNC Health Southeastern vice president and chief Engagement officer. "As the pandemic situation continues to evolve, we will make further changes as needed."

# Death risk 11 times higher for unvaccinated amid delta spread, CDC finds

Erica Carbajal - Friday, September 10th, 2021 [Print](#) | [Email](#)

Relative to vaccinated people, those who are unvaccinated and infected with COVID-19 face a 10 times higher risk of hospitalization and are 11 times more likely to die from the disease, the CDC's Sept. 10 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly [Report](#) found.

"Looking at cases over the past two months when the delta variant was the predominant variant circulating in this country, those who were unvaccinated were about **four and a half times more likely to get COVID-19, over 10 times more likely to be hospitalized and 11 times more likely to die from the disease,**" Rochelle Walensky, MD, CDC director, said of the study's results during a Sept. 10 news conference.

Researchers analyzed rates of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths among adults across 13 U.S. jurisdictions from April 4 to July 17, 2021.

The report showed that as the highly transmissible delta variant became more prevalent in the U.S., the risk of breakthrough cases also rose, though the vaccines were effective in preventing severe illness.

From April 4 to June 19, when delta prevalence was lower, fully vaccinated people accounted for 5 percent of COVID-19 cases, 7 percent of hospitalizations and 8 percent of deaths, overall.

When delta prevalence was higher from June 20 to July 17, vaccinated people accounted for 18 percent of cases, 14 percent of hospitalizations and 16 percent of deaths.

"Rates of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths were substantially higher in persons not fully vaccinated compared with those in fully vaccinated persons, similar to findings in other reports," the CDC said.

# Staff shortages limit use of last-resort COVID-19 treatment in South

Mackenzie Bean - Friday, September 10th, 2021 [Print](#) | [Email](#)

Many hospitals in the South are short on staff members trained to provide extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, or ECMO, a last-resort therapy for severely ill COVID-19 patients, [Kaiser Health News](#) reported Sept. 10.

ECMO entails using a machine to pump and oxygenate a patient's blood outside the body, allowing the heart and lungs to rest. **Less than 10 percent** of hospitals nationwide offer the treatment, as it requires expensive equipment and specially trained staff to provide one-on-one care and constant monitoring.

Demand for ECMO has far exceeded hospitals' ability to provide the therapy during the latest surge. As a result, some hospitals have been forced to make difficult decisions about which patients should receive treatment.

Many hospitals in the South have been waiting to transfer patients to large medical centers that can provide the therapy, but these facilities often have their own COVID-19 patients eligible for ECMO. Mani Daneshmand, MD, director of the ECMO and transplant programs at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, said his hospital is turning down multiple requests a day from facilities across the Southeast to accept patients who need ECMO.

"When you have a 30-year-old or 40-year-old or someone who has just become a parent, you're going to call. We've gotten calls for 18-year-olds," he told *Kaiser Health News*. "There are a lot of people who are very young who are needing a lot of support, and a lot of them are dying."

Updates from **Becker's Hospital Review**

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