

COVID-19 Report to Members ~ January 11, 2021

Reports are sent on Mondays and Thursdays, unless there's breaking news.

Reimbursement & Policy

HHS renews public health emergency.

Last week, HHS formally renewed the public health emergency declaration around COVID-19. The declaration was enacted January 13, 2020 and was renewed throughout 2020. The current 90-day extension begins January 21, 2021 and will be active into April.

For Idaho, this means an enhanced federal match rate for Medicaid for approximately 18 months. Through the first three fiscal quarters of 2020, Idaho received \$103 million in funding. Another \$34.4 million is expected for the October - December quarter. This extension will likely mean an additional \$70 million in federal support for Idaho's Medicaid program through April.

This funding will be critical to meet the budget needs of the Medicaid program. In his State of the State address today, Governor Little recommended that additional federal match funds be used to help cover increased Medicaid costs.

Quality & Patient Safety

Are we getting close to herd immunity?

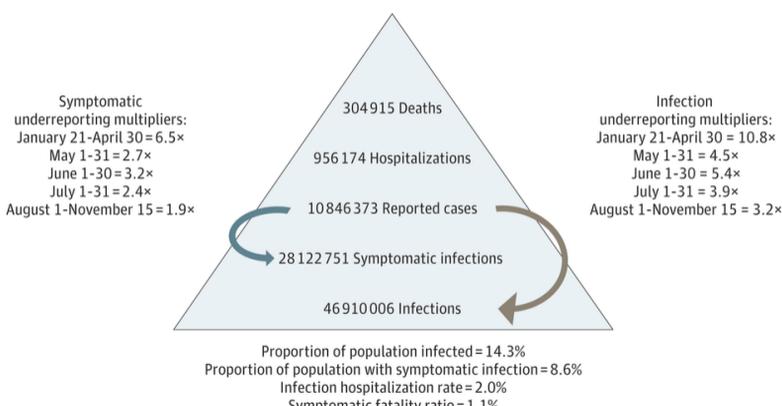
CDC reported 10,846,373 COVID-19 cases as of November 15. Because some persons with SARS-CoV-2 infections, both asymptomatic and symptomatic, are not tested, the true burden is higher.

An article published in JAMA Network Open on January 5, 2021 [provides estimates](#) of the numbers of SARS-CoV-2 infections, symptomatic infections, hospitalizations, and deaths in the U.S. as of November 15. The authors used cross-sectional data from five seroprevalence surveys to estimate underreporting multipliers, which were applied to the numbers of reported COVID-19 infections to estimate the total "true" SARS-CoV-2 burden.

Seroprevalence data can be used to monitor progress toward herd immunity, which is needed to fully reopen society. It is estimated that at least 60% of the population will need to have SARS-CoV-2 antibodies, resultant from either infection or immunization, in order to disrupt ongoing transmission.

Across the seroprevalence surveys, the median underreporting multiplier was 10.6x for SARS-CoV-2 infections and 6.4x for symptomatic COVID-19, with a decrease in the underreporting multipliers later in the pandemic (median among 47 states of 4.0x and 2.4x, respectively, for national seroprevalence survey conducted July 9-August 12, 2020). Adjusting for underreporting, the estimates were: 46,910,006 infections, 28,122,752 symptomatic infections, 956,174 hospitalizations, and 304,915 deaths in the U.S. through November 15, 2020.

"The SARS-CoV-2 disease burden may be much larger than reported COVID-19 cases owing to underreporting... An estimated 14.3% (IQR [interquartile range], 11.6%-18.5%) of the US population were infected by SARS-CoV-2 as of mid-November 2020... Findings of this study suggest that although more than 14% of the US population was infected with SARS-CoV-2 by mid-November, a substantial gap remains before herd immunity can be reached."



Resources & Equipment

State vaccination update

Last week, the Idaho Coronavirus Vaccine Advisory Committee (CVAC) elected to include Idahoans age 65 and older in phase 1B of vaccinations in a move that may help protect healthcare capacity. Initially this phase, which is estimated to start next month, included those 75 and older. Other essential workers are also part of Phase 1B, including: additional first responders, educators, correctional and detention facility staff, food and agricultural workers, National Guard, manufacturing, transit and postal workers.

The State also updated its [Coronavirus Dashboard](#) to include [vaccine information](#). The dashboard shows the total number of Idahoans who have received both the first and booster doses of one of the COVID vaccines by both county and public health district as well as by the dates administered. The information will be updated Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The group is also expected to consider how to best use additional federal funding to support vaccinations in Idaho. At the end of the year, Congress appropriated funds designed to increase vaccination capacity, improve safety, and provide education and outreach. Idaho is expected to receive \$16 million to help with COVID vaccination efforts.

Additional information on the status of vaccinations in Idaho will be presented at the Department of Health and Welfare's [weekly briefing](#) on Tuesday at 2:30p MTN / 1:30p PAC.

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