Idaho **H**ospital Association
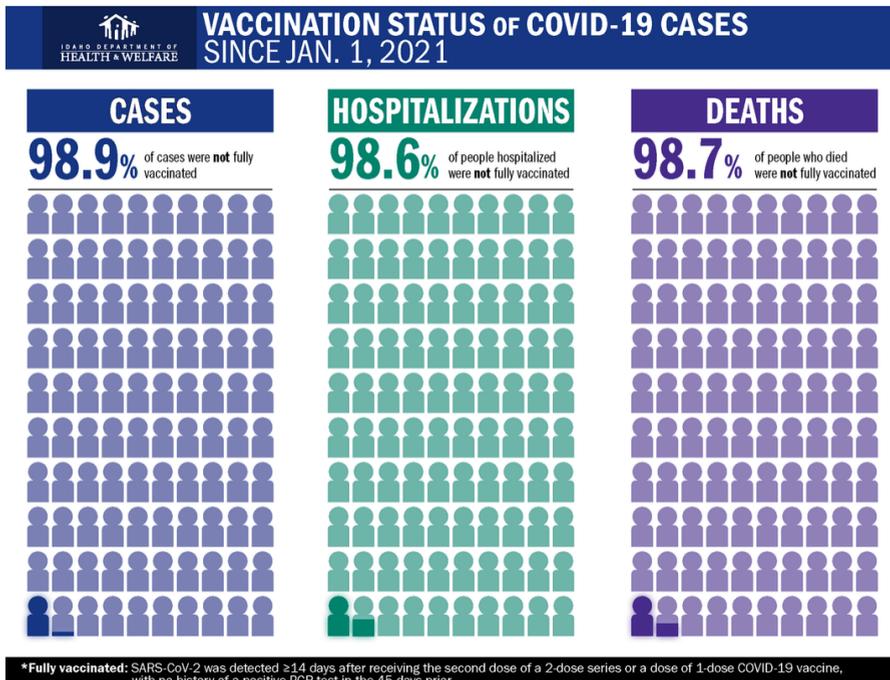
Quality & Patient Safety

What about the denominator?

Newly diagnosed COVID-19 cases are increasing across the country and across Idaho. The epidemiological term for newly diagnosed cases is "incidence," which can be expressed as counts or rates. Incidence rates are calculated as the number of new cases diagnosed during a certain timeframe divided by the person-time at risk. The units of the denominator, person-time, reflect the size of the population and the time they are at risk.

Currently, the vast majority of new cases and hospitalizations involve people who are not vaccinated. Further, there is evidence that prior infection with SARS-CoV-2 may confer durable immunity (e.g. **Long-term persistence of SARS-CoV-2 neutralizing antibody responses after infection and estimates of the duration of protection**). With vaccinations that strongly protect against SARS-CoV-2 infection, and with about 10% of Idaho's population having been reported as cases, the population at risk of getting COVID-19 is lower than population counts being used as the denominator for incidence rates – which means that current trends look a bit rosier than they really are. Ten incident cases in a population of 100 yields a rate of 10 per 100 population, while ten cases in an at-risk population of 50 yields a rate of 20 per 1000 population.

Reporters with the Washington Post have **calculated COVID-19 incidence rates adjusting for vaccination status** – using the unvaccinated population as the population at risk. Results show that for Idaho, the current COVID-19 incidence rate among unvaccinated residents is similar to the COVID-19 incidence rate for all residents on April 19.

The COVID-19 pandemic is currently being described as a pandemic of the unvaccinated. This is also true in Idaho, where unvaccinated persons account for 98.9% of new COVID-19 cases and 98.6% of COVID-19 hospitalizations since the beginning of the year. **Idaho ranks 6th lowest** among states in the proportion of the population that is fully vaccinated. If we were to publish estimates of COVID-19 rates for Idaho's unvaccinated population, how might the trends vary by Public Health District or county? Would this approach illuminate different hot spots? Would this information spur the unvaccinated to seek vaccinations?

VACCINATION STATUS OF COVID-19 CASES SINCE JAN. 1, 2021

CASES	HOSPITALIZATIONS	DEATHS
98.9% of cases were **not** fully vaccinated	**98.6%** of people hospitalized were **not** fully vaccinated	**98.7%** of people who died were **not** fully vaccinated

*Fully vaccinated: SARS-CoV-2 was detected ≥14 days after receiving the second dose of a 2-dose series or a dose of 1-dose COVID-19 vaccine, with no history of a positive PCR test in the 45 days prior.

Resources & Equipment

Customizable PSAs and vaccine resources

Today, the AHA released additional resources that hospitals and health systems can adapt to use in their vaccination efforts.

1. The **Ask Questions, Follow Science, Get Vaccinated** PSA features healthcare leaders from across the country discussing the safety and efficacy of the vaccines.
2. A **Serious Decision** is a PSA featuring people talking about how they've made their vaccine decisions. A Spanish version will be released soon.
3. The consumer-focused **vaccine webpage** addresses many of the concerns shared by those who've yet to be vaccinated, including the impact on pregnancy, preexisting conditions, and long-term effects.

Reimbursement & Policy

Feds extend emergency and offer rural health funding

Effective today, HHS has again extended the COVID-19 public health emergency for another 90 days. This action keeps in place the additional FMAP reimbursement as well all waivers and flexibilities currently in place.

HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) **announced** last week that small rural hospitals will be eligible to receive a portion of $398 million. Idaho will receive nearly $6 million which will be distributed to hospitals through the Bureau of Rural Health and Primary Care in the Department of Health and Welfare.

Click to get our COVID-19 Updates