



AMERICAN  
COLLEGE  
HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION

## ACHA COVID-19 Update: March 3, 2021

*These updates have been provided by ACHA's COVID-19 Task Force. Please forward this message to others on campus who may benefit. Non-members can subscribe to receive these and other messages [here](#). We will continue to update the [COVID-19 webpage](#) with important alerts and resources.*

### ACHA Updates

#### **Last Chance to Register! Let's Talk Campus Vaccines: Routine, COVID-19, and Everything in Between**

Friday, March 5 at 3:00 pm-4:00 pm ET

*Hosted by the American College Health Foundation with support from GlaxoSmithKline*

This webinar is a discussion on the state of vaccines on college and university campuses. This event will include expert perspectives on the anticipated rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines on college campuses, how the pandemic has affected routine vaccination and opportunities for catch up, and lessons learned from past infectious disease outbreaks that are applicable to the current moment. [Register here.](#)

#### **NEW WEBINAR! Advocating for Health Promotion in Higher Education During a COVID-19 Pandemic**

Wednesday, March 17 at 1:00 pm-2:00 pm ET

**CHES/MCHES credit is available!** A panel discussion with three health promotion directors will highlight the importance of advocating for health promotion in higher education during these unprecedented times of managing a COVID-19 pandemic. We will share how we have advocated for health promotion, the strengths and challenges experienced when advocating for health promotion, and what to expect when advocating is not successful to ensure success in your community. [Register here.](#)

#### **SAVE THE DATE—Hot Topic: Variants**

Friday, March 12 at 3:00 pm-4:00 pm ET --More details coming soon! Watch your inbox or visit the [ACHA Education Center](#).

#### **Recording Available! Addressing COVID-19 Mitigation at Rural, Small, and Medium Sized Institutions: Solutions from the Field**

In this webinar recorded on February 26, presenters discussed the unique challenges to implementing campus mitigation efforts at rural, small, and medium sized colleges and universities. Each presenter discussed the obstacles the pandemic has posed on their campuses and the innovative ways they overcame these challenges. [View the recording here.](#)

### CDC Updates

#### **CDC COVID-19 Partner Update: Expanding the COVID-19 Vaccination Toolbox**

CDC will [host](#) a partner call, "An Update on Johnson and Johnson's Janssen Vaccine EUA and New Federal Vaccination Programs," on Monday, March 8 at 3:00 pm ET.

## Data, Numbers, and Epidemiology

### When Could the U.S. Reach Herd Immunity?

This New York Times [article](#) includes a series of charts that estimate the timeline for the U.S. to achieve herd immunity (somewhere between 70-90% of the population having immunity) based on a model developed by a public health research group known as PHICOR. At the current rate of vaccination and immunity from confirmed infections, the U.S. could reach herd immunity by July. Increasing vaccinations to 3 million shots per day could get us to herd immunity by May. Relaxing social distancing could mean that it won't happen until October. The last scenario of variant strains makes it harder to predict.

### Massive Google-Funded COVID Database Will Track Variants and Immunity

This [article](#) in Nature describes an international repository created by 21 researchers at seven academic institutions in the U.S. and Europe with technical and financial support from Google and the Rockefeller Foundation. Launched on February 24, the repository houses anonymous information from 24 million patients across 150 countries, including up to 40 associated variables such as the date of first symptoms, date of a positive test, and travel history. This individual level data should assist epidemiologists and researchers "answer burning questions" regarding the spread of variants, how long immunity to SARS-CoV-2 lasts, and more. The hope is to eventually expand the COVID-19 database onto an adaptable platform to survey other diseases.

## Prevention and Treatment

### Why Opening Windows Is a Key to Reopening Schools

This New York Times [animated article](#) demonstrates the typical classroom from the pre-COVID era based on a real public school classroom in New York City. Since then, NYC schools have required masks, 6 feet of distance, and open windows. The animation depicts the potential transmission of infected aerosols with recirculated air in the classroom with windows closed, open, and a combination of HEPA filtration and ventilation fans and air cleaners.

### CDC Warns that Gym Sessions Without Masks Can Spread COVID-19

This Medscape [article](#) summarizes outbreaks in two gyms, [one in Hawaii](#) and [one in Chicago](#). In the Hawaiian gym, an infected cycling instructor taught classes for three days in a room where cycling stations were distanced greater than 6 feet apart. One of the cycling participants was also an instructor who taught kickboxing and held personal training sessions. No participants wore masks, and 21 gym members and instructors contracted COVID-19.

In the Chicago gym, 55 out of 81 participants in high-intensity fitness classes contracted COVID-19. Safety measures like limited class size, physical distancing, mask requirement upon entry, temperature checks, and screening for symptoms were implemented, but people were allowed to remove masks during exercise.

Both gyms were enclosed and indoors. In both cases, CDC linked the outbreaks to lack of mask use and poor ventilation. Recommendations include mask requirements, physical distancing, improving ventilation, decreasing class sizes, staying home when sick, and exercising outdoors or virtually.

## Vaccines

### CDC Launches Web Tool to Help Americans Find COVID-19 Vaccines

CDC, Boston Children's Hospital, and Castlight Health launched a [new tool](#) to help locate COVID-19 vaccine providers and whether they have vaccine in stock. The architect, John Brownstein, the Chief Information

Officer at Boston Children's Hospital, says, "The idea is to show where COVID-19 vaccine providers are that are open to the public—how to contact them, how to book an appointment, and try to show the daily inventory status so people are clear where there's vaccine and where there isn't."

### **ACIP Interim Recommendation for Use of Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine**

This [CDC MMWR](#) provides additional information related to the ACIP's recommendation for use of the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine in persons aged 18 and older. It is a single-dose 0.5 ml IM injection that is not interchangeable with other COVID-19 vaccines. Safety data showed an acceptable safety profile. Injection site reactions and systemic reactions were mostly mild to moderate and occurred within the first week of vaccination: pain at the injection site, headache, fatigue, muscle pain were most common. Overall efficacy is 66.3%, with 93% efficacy in preventing hospitalization  $\geq$  14 days post vaccination and 100% efficacy preventing hospitalization  $\geq$  28 days post vaccination. There is evidence that the vaccine may also protect against asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 transmission.

### **Manufacturing Collaboration Between Merck and Johnson & Johnson to Expand Production of COVID-19 Vaccines**

President Biden [announced](#) that his Administration has helped forge a historic manufacturing collaboration between two of the largest U.S. health care and pharmaceutical companies, Merck and Johnson & Johnson (J&J), to expand production of J&J's COVID-19 vaccine. The collaboration will increase manufacture of vaccine drug substance, as well as its fill-finish capacity – two of the biggest bottlenecks facing J&J in the production of its vaccine.

### **Comparing the Three Available COVID-19 Vaccines**

This STAT [article](#) provides a comparison of all three available vaccines regarding type, target population, efficacy data, doses, side effect profile, and storage requirements. Notably, J&J has thus far reported only one anaphylactic reaction post vaccination. Because it is a single-dose vaccine, expectations of a lower side effect profile are high. See also this STAT [article](#) covering the myth of “good” vs “bad” vaccines and how “news coverage and social media posts about clinical trial results are creating a hierarchy of Covid vaccines in the minds of much of the public right now.”

### **FDA Allows More Flexible Storage, Transportation Conditions for Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration [announced](#) that it is allowing undiluted frozen vials of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to be transported and stored at conventional temperatures commonly found in pharmaceutical freezers for a period of up to two weeks. This reflects an alternative to the preferred storage of the undiluted vials in an ultra-low temperature freezer between -80°C to -60°C (-112°F to -76°F). The change is being reflected in updates to the Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine (Vaccination Providers).

### **Novavax to Seek EUA for COVID-19 Vaccine as Early as April**

This Medscape [article](#) covers Novavax's intent to request EUA of its COVID-19 vaccine candidate, known as NVX-CoV2373, in the second quarter. In U.K. trials, the vaccine demonstrated 89% overall efficacy against the U.K. variant and 96% against the original strain. Other studies show 50-60% efficacy against the South African variant. Novavax just completed enrolling their target of 30,000 individuals in its main U.S. trial but must wait for 72 infections to occur after a second dose, which may take about six weeks. Novavax is on track to produce two billion doses of its vaccine candidate in 2021, and they are working on a combined influenza and COVID-19 vaccine.

## Moderna Variant-Specific Vaccine Ready to Study

Moderna has [completed](#) a version of its vaccine to prevent the South African variant 1.1.351. The company will send doses of this booster vaccine to the NIH for evaluation in a clinical trial that will compare the safety and efficacy of different boosting options, including:

- Boosting with the new vaccine in development
- Combining the booster with the existing vaccine in a single multivalent booster
- Administering a lower dose of the existing vaccine as a booster

Moderna also plans to study the new booster vaccine and multivalent vaccine as a primary means of immunization in seronegative people.

## What Are the Vaccine Roadblocks Where You Live?

The New York Times developed this [interactive tool](#) based on an index of 28 indicators, grouped into five categories accounting for access to health care, information and transportation, the county's medical workforce, and vaccine administration capacity among other measures. The [index](#) was created by the nonprofit health organization, Surgo Ventures. Rural Americans are nearly three times as likely as urban Americans to live in areas of high concern due to higher poverty rates, higher uninsured rates, and more health care deserts. Both hesitancy and access are impeding vaccination efforts especially in marginalized communities and both must be addressed simultaneously.

The report by Surgo Ventures, [The U.S. COVID-19 Vaccine Coverage Index: Leaving No Community Behind in the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout](#), explains in detail the COVID-19 Vaccine Coverage Index and includes a Vaccine Coverage Index Solution Set which lists targeted interventions for the five major themes/categories driving the level of concern for COVID-19 vaccines.

## Covering the Vaccine Rollout: How to Connect to Audiences

This webcast for health journalists provides more resources and guidance on how to reach audiences with some of the authors of the Vaccine Education Toolkit, a project geared for journalists. Created after a survey by the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute with help from the National Association of Broadcasters and the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, the toolkit lets you dig through survey findings and finding data sources, leading experts and more. The webcast can help you find stories and make deadlines. This [event](#) takes place March 17, 2021, at 2:00 pm ET.

## College Campuses

### Tracking Coronavirus Cases at U.S. Colleges and Universities

The New York Times has updated its [tracking of COVID-19 cases on campuses](#). 120,000 additional cases of COVID-19 are linked to colleges and universities since January 1, 2021, bringing the total to more than 530,000. These are self-reported numbers, so cases are likely much higher.

### Confident Universities Ready for In-Person Learning in Fall

This University Business [article](#) lists the major universities already announcing a return to in-person learning, full capacity housing, and a traditional fall semester, which includes full stadiums for fall football. With the vaccine rollout picking up and the anticipation that most faculty, staff, and students will be vaccinated by then, universities are moving full steam ahead. Health services must begin preparing for the scenario of protecting a campus that is at 100% occupancy.

## Campus Zero

This Inside Higher Ed [article](#) looks at Lake Washington Institute of Technology, a public technical college outside of Seattle that was most likely the first U.S. college to be affected by COVID-19. The article takes a look back at all the unknowns, the lack of testing, and the fear and uncertainty after faculty and nursing and physical therapy students who had clinicals at a local nursing home became exposed to residents who had COVID-19. Eventually 42 people associated with the nursing home died, and "the college was left scrambling." The article ends with President Amy Morrison's gratitude for the resilient community, saying "Twenty twenty was an incredibly humbling year. And one of which I am incredibly grateful for. I'm very grateful that the college hung in there together and to have the foresight to realize that we were the first, but we were not going to be the last college community impacted by COVID."

## Mental Health

### Global Student Survey

This [survey](#) of nearly 17,000 undergraduate students across 21 countries last fall asked questions about students' mental health, student debt, perceptions of online learning, and attitudes about their countries and their futures. The "Highlights for U.S.A" on page 69 of the report shows that despite the significant mental health impacts (75% feel their mental health has suffered), U.S. undergrads are surprisingly optimistic about their future careers and goals. Inside Higher Ed covers the report [here](#).

## Health Disparities

### CDC's Science Update: Special Focus on Inequities Among African Americans

CDC's [Science Update](#) for February 26 provided a collection of studies on the pandemic-related inequities faced by African Americans. Of special interest to the college health field is the study [Understanding drivers of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among Blacks](#). Key findings:

- COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy was high because of safety concerns due to rushed vaccine development process and limited data on short- and long-term side effects, historic racial injustice towards African American persons, and mistrust in the medical community.
- Facilitators toward getting the vaccine included reassuring record of vaccine safety and recommendation by a trusted health provider.

**Implications:** Vaccine mistrust might be a substantial barrier against COVID-19 vaccine uptake among African American persons. Recommendation by a trusted health provider was a key facilitator of vaccine uptake; both [Bajaj et al](#) and [Opel et al](#) highlight the importance of the physician-patient relationship, particularly clinicians of the same race, in outcomes for African American persons. Improved public health messaging from trusted messengers, particularly around vaccine safety, might also increase vaccine acceptance.

See all updates here: [https://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Topics/COVID-19\\_Update.aspx](https://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Topics/COVID-19_Update.aspx)

ACHA COVID-19 Page: <https://www.acha.org/COVID-19>



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