

# IMMUNIZATION COVID-19 UPDATE

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COMPLETED  
VACCINE SERIES  
IN LOUISIANA

2,439,791\*

\*5,008,665 total doses  
administered in Louisiana

LOUISIANA'S  
COVID-19  
EMERGENCY ORDER  
EXPIRES

Gov. John Bel Edwards announced the expiration of Louisiana's COVID-19 emergency order this week. (Page 2)

LDH ANNOUNCES  
NEW COVID  
SUPPORT HOTLINE

LDH has introduced a consolidated hotline for the public to access COVID-19 information and resources. (Page 2)

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

**With the public health emergency order ending this week in Louisiana, what does that mean to providers and the public?**

Although the health emergency proclamation has expired, Gov. John Bel Edwards has emphasized this does not mean COVID-19 is over in Louisiana. He has stated that if the circumstances change for the worse, he will issue another emergency order.

In his [remarks to the Legislature, Gov. Edwards said](#), "Louisiana is no longer in a crisis, but we don't know what the future holds. If additional needs arise or the situation changes, I will revisit issuing an emergency order."

Most of Louisiana's parishes have a low risk for COVID-19 spread, according to new community risk models from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Even though experts believe this will continue, there is still work to do to encourage more people to get vaccinated and make sure the best therapeutics are widely available.

Gov. Edwards said the state will continue to support community vaccination and testing as the pandemic requires. COVID-19 testing and vaccinations will remain widely available at local pharmacies, primary care clinics, and FQHCs throughout the state. People are encouraged to call 211 to find a test site or vaccination location near you.

# WEEKLY COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

## Louisiana's COVID-19 emergency order is lifted

Louisiana's COVID-19 emergency order expired this week on March 16—two years after Gov. John Bel Edwards issued a proclamation activating the order. Gov. Edwards [announced the expiration on Monday, March 14, during his annual State of the State address, which take place at the onset of the regular legislative session.](#)

### Gov. Edwards said during his [remarks](#):

*It was exactly two years ago today that we marked the first death from COVID-19 in Louisiana. Since then, over 16,800 Louisianans have died, and more than 1.2 million cases have been confirmed.*

*But a lot has changed. We have safe and effective vaccines that are saving countless lives. We have better therapeutic treatments. High-quality masks are now a practical option for families.*

*Cases and hospitalizations have been steadily dropping since we emerged from the Omicron fueled surge this winter.*

*Parades rolled again this Mardi Gras. If that's not a Louisiana breeze of hope, I don't know what is.*

*On March 11, 2020 I signed a public health emergency for COVID-19. And while it changed to reflect the ebb and flow of the pandemic, it has remained in effect since then. This Wednesday, the order expires. And after 24 months, I will not be renewing it.*

*This decision was certainly not made lightly. I have met with the Division of Administration, GOHSEP, the Department of Health, and the Louisiana National Guard to ensure that there will be no federal aid repercussions or other adverse consequences from not renewing the proclamation.*

*Just because the proclamation is expiring doesn't mean COVID is over. If the circumstances call for it, I will not hesitate to declare another emergency. But God willing, we will never have to see such difficult mitigation measures in our state again.*

*I don't know what the future holds, but I do know that we are in a much better place today than we were two years ago.*

*That is in large part due to healthcare heroes around the state and the stalwart team at the Louisiana Department of Health, including State Health Officer Dr. Joe Kanter and Secretary Dr. Courtney Phillips. They may be weary, but they have not wavered in their efforts to save lives.*

Read Gov. Edwards' full remarks [here](#).

## LDH launches new COVID support hotline

The Louisiana Department of Health has launched its new COVID-19 Support Hotline, which merges the former contact tracing hotline and the COVID-19 vaccine hotline to provide the general public one convenient resource to get their COVID-19 and vaccine questions answered.

Residents can call the new COVID-19 Support Hotline at 1-855-453-0774 to:

- Schedule vaccine and booster appointments
- Schedule a homebound vaccination appointment
- Speak to a medical professional
- Get their questions answered on what to do next after becoming COVID positive or exposed
- Get connected to resources while in isolation or quarantine (assuming eligibility and availability)

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 may receive a text message with general information on isolation and quarantine guidance. Individuals who test positive or suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19 and have questions may call the COVID-19 Support Hotline at 1-855-453-0774.

All calls are confidential and phone menu options are listed in both English and Spanish. The hotline is available Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and on Sunday from noon to 8 p.m.

## Study examined COVID incidence in K-12 schools with mask requirements versus schools with optional mask policies

Researchers conducted a study between August 2021 to October 2021 to examine the effectiveness of masking in K-12 schools.

The study focused on K-12 schools in Arkansas with mask requirements compared to schools in the same state with optional mask policies. Districts that had a universal mask policy reported a "23% lower incidence of COVID-19 among staff members and students compared with districts without mask requirements."



The researchers concluded that masks remain a vital part of COVID-19 abatement strategies, particularly in areas that have high levels of COVID. Further, this study adds to the discussion regarding the impact of mask policies in school settings.

Visit [here](#) to read the full report.

## COVID Data Tracker gets a new home page

The CDC has published a new home page for the [COVID Data Tracker](#). The tool has new updates and features that provide information on how to protect yourself, your family and your community.



Upon visiting the COVID Data Tracker, site visitors will immediately see U.S. data for COVID cases, deaths, hospitalizations and vaccinations. The page also redirects to content relevant to basic COVID information, information for equity and special populations, and additional COVID data topics such as healthcare settings, social impact and prevention, variants and genomic surveillance, and wastewater surveillance.

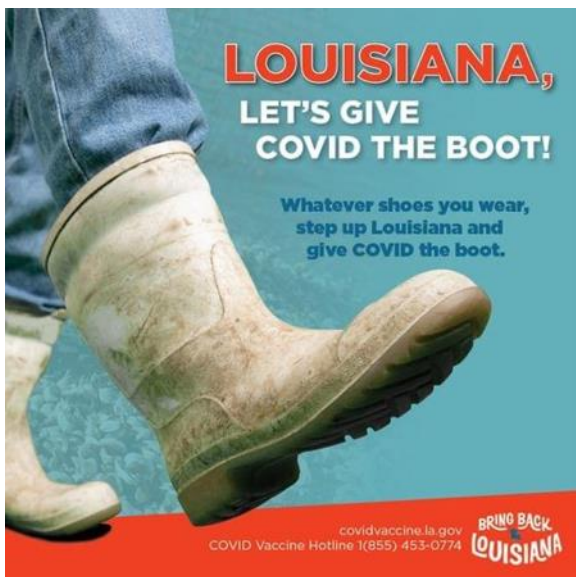
[COVID Data Tracker](#) updates daily with the most accurate and complete information from states, partners and other federal entities.

Since its launch in April 2020, CDC's COVID Data Tracker has had more than 284 million views from people in the United States and around the world. These critical data inform public health action to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and save lives.

## How to track community levels

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will update the [COVID-19 Community Level dashboard](#) every Thursday.

The information is provided to help counties make informed decisions and take appropriate public health actions. To view COVID-19 Community Level data, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>.



## LOUISIANA COVID-19 VACCINE DEMOGRAPHICS

### SERIES COMPLETED BY RACE:

- **White:** 56.8%
- **Black:** 32.6%
- **American Indian:** 0.4%
- **Asian:** 2.8%
- **Native Hawaiian:** 0.2%
- **Unknown:** 1.2%
- **Other:** 6%

### SERIES COMPLETED BY AGE:

- **5-17:** 8.6%
- **18-29:** 14.4%
- **30-39:** 14%
- **40-49:** 13.8%
- **50-59:** 15.6%
- **60-69:** 17%
- **70+:** 16.7 %

### SERIES COMPLETED BY GENDER:

- **Female:** 53.6%
- **Male:** 46.1%
- **Unknown:** 0.3%

All breakdowns shown here are for Louisiana residents only. Race data completeness is expected to improve as we continue our outreach with vaccine providers.

## Good Reads

We still don't know the risk of long COVID. The pandemic after the pandemic. [Read more at msn.com.](#)

How COVID treatments evolved over time from monoclonal antibodies to antiviral pills. [Read more at abcnews.go.com.](#)

What comes next in COVID fight two years into pandemic? [Read more at yahoo.com.](#)

Pfizer and BioNtech to seek authorization of second coronavirus booster shot for people 65 and older. [Read more at msn.com.](#)

U.S. sewer data warns of a new bump in COVID cases after lull. [Read more at seattletimes.com.](#)

As virus data mounts, the J & J vaccine holds its own. [Read more at nytimes.com.](#)