

NC COVID Cases Rapidly Increasing; Don't Wait to Vaccinate + New Guidance for Schools



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COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) NC UPDATE

July 23, 2021

Rapid Increase in COVID-19 Cases -- Don't Wait to Vaccinate

North Carolina has seen a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations over the last three weeks since the emergence of the Delta variant. More than 94% of the cases in North Carolina are now in people who are not vaccinated.

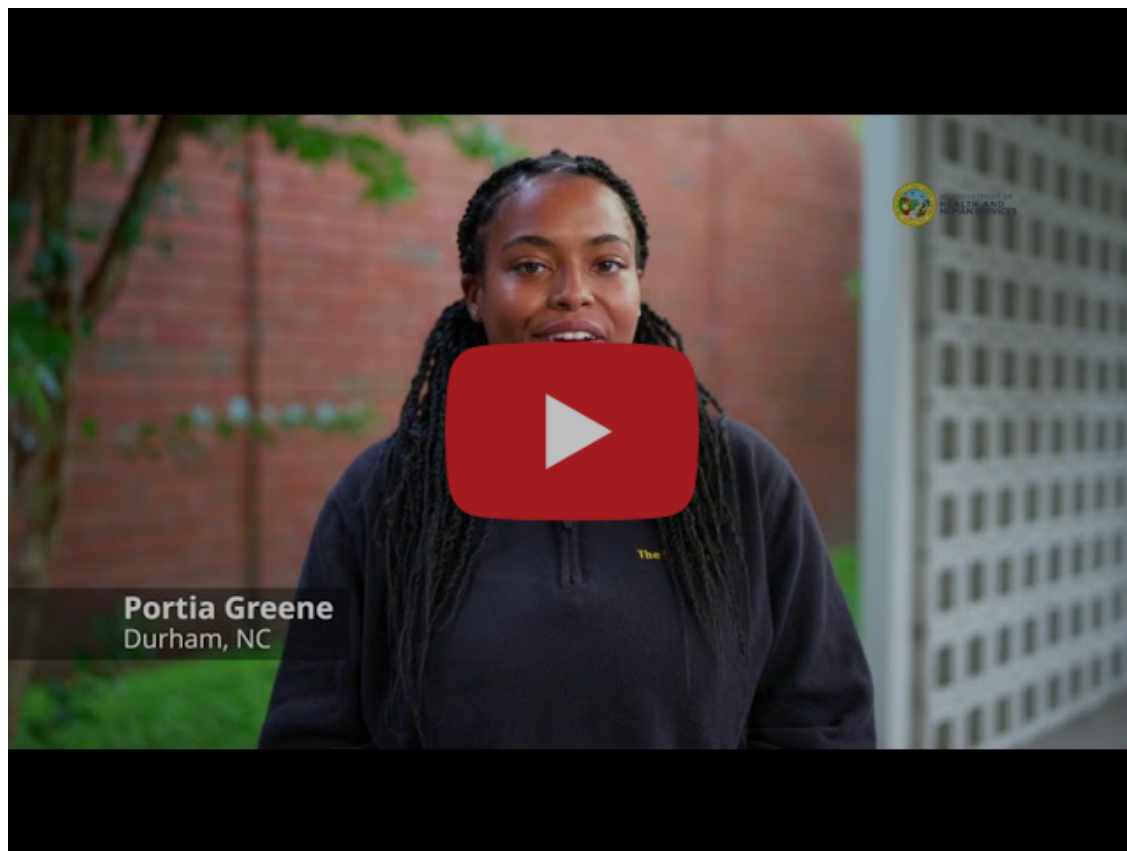
According to the latest [County Alert System](#) report, viral spread is increasing rapidly and 54 counties are now experiencing significant community spread or greater. The state's other key metrics are also increasing, including the number of people going to the emergency department with COVID-like symptoms and the percent of tests that are positive — which has been over 6% for the past week. **Areas with low vaccination rates have seen the largest increases in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths.**

"Unvaccinated North Carolinians are unnecessarily getting sick, being hospitalized and dying," said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. "Don't wait to vaccinate. And if you haven't gotten your shot, you need to wear a mask indoors at all times when you are in public spaces."

To date, 57% of the adult population in North Carolina are fully vaccinated. while 60% of adults have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

With the rise in cases, anyone who is experiencing [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, has been around people outside of their household or thinks they have been exposed to the virus should [get tested](#).

The best way to stop the virus from spreading is to get more people vaccinated. Don't wait, go to [MySpot.nc.gov](#) (English) or [Vacunate.nc.gov](#) (Spanish) to find a vaccine location near you or call the state's COVID-19 vaccine hotline at 888-675-4567. If you've already been vaccinated, encourage others to get their shot.



Nearly all new COVID-19 cases are in people who are not fully vaccinated. Unvaccinated people are vulnerable to the more contagious and dangerous Delta variant of COVID-19 that is spreading across North Carolina.

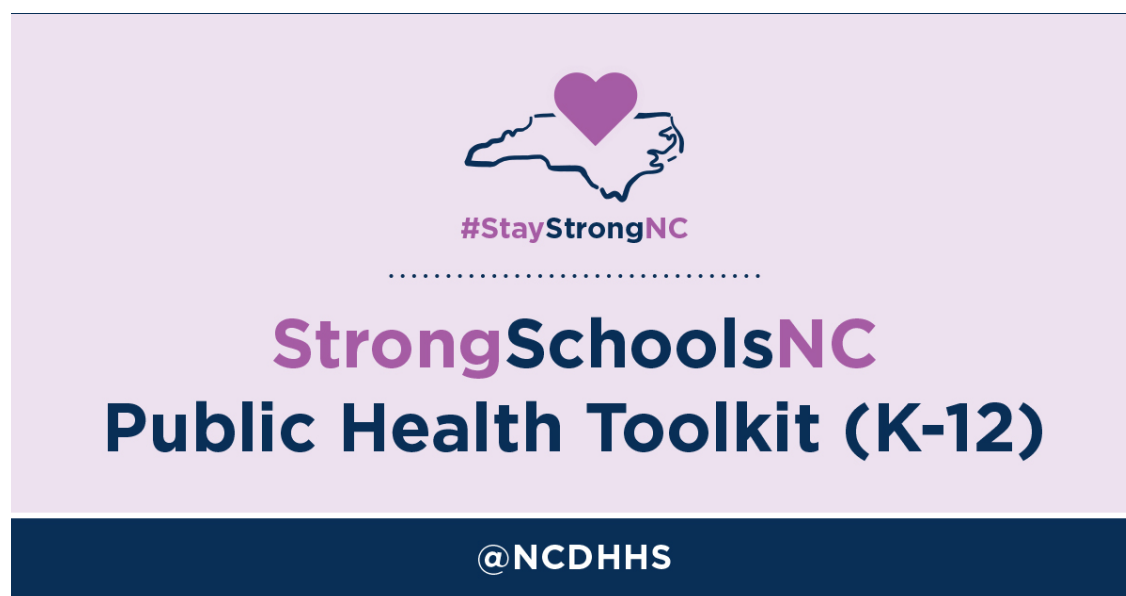
[North Carolina Healthcare Association Announces Support for COVID-19 Vaccine Requirements for Health Care Employees](#)

The North Carolina Healthcare Association (NCHA) [announced](#) its position supporting COVID-19 vaccination requirements for health care workers. Several of its member health systems intend to be first in the state to require COVID-19 vaccination for their

employees, including Atrium Health, Cone Health, Duke University Health System, Novant Health, Wake Forest Baptist Health and the following UNC Health hospitals – UNC Medical Center, UNC Rex, UNC Johnston, UNC Chatham, UNC Rockingham and UNC Southeastern.

"Thank you to the North Carolina Healthcare Association, and the health systems that are leading the way requiring vaccination for employees, for taking action to protect the health care workforce, their patients, our communities and the state," NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D., shared in a [statement](#). "Vaccinations are our way out of the pandemic. Don't wait to vaccinate."

[StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit Updated](#)



Governor Roy Cooper and NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen [announced](#) the release of the updated [StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit](#) to help schools across the state prepare for the upcoming school year. The toolkit has been updated to align with the CDC's latest [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#) and the American Academy of Pediatrics' [updated school guidance](#). It includes a number of preventive measures, including that all children and staff in kindergarten through eighth grade and all unvaccinated students and staff in 9th through 12th grades wear face coverings consistently when indoors.

In-person school is fundamental to children's development and well-being – especially for younger children. The changes in the toolkit aim to prioritize in-person learning for students, support working families, and provide more children with the opportunity to access other critical services provided in schools, including meals, regular physical activity, and developmentally appropriate social interaction.

The [toolkit](#) is available on the NCDHHS website, as well as a [summary](#) of the recent

changes.

Hotline Makes COVID-19 Vaccinations Accessible for Those Who Can't Leave Home

In its effort to provide everyone with access to safe and effective [COVID-19 vaccines](#), NCDHHS is partnering with Piedmont Triad Regional Council Area Agency on Aging (PTRC AAA) to provide free COVID-19 vaccinations to people with limited mobility who cannot leave their home. This initiative expands PTRC AAA's successful local at-home vaccination program to communities across the state.

The At-Home Vaccination Hotline at 1-866-303-0026 allows caregivers, providers and individuals across North Carolina to schedule an at-home vaccination. An online registration form is also available at www.ptrc.org/covid. A PTRC Vaccination Specialist will follow up to schedule an at-home vaccination.

There is increasing urgency for people to get vaccinated against COVID-19 as the highly contagious Delta variant is rapidly spreading in North Carolina. [Find out more information about at-home vaccination providers.](#)

NCDHHS Doubles Wastewater Monitoring Sites to Track COVID-19 Spread

NCDHHS has expanded the [North Carolina Wastewater Monitoring Network](#) from 10 to 19 sites to better identify areas where the virus is spreading.

Since May, data from 10 wastewater treatment facilities in North Carolina have been updated weekly on the wastewater monitoring dashboard. Measuring the virus that causes COVID-19 in wastewater allows NCDHHS to track COVID-19 trends in an entire community served by the same sewer system with one sample.

As the Delta variant emerges in North Carolina, it's more important than ever to use all available tools to track the spread of COVID-19. Wastewater monitoring detects virus shed by people who are symptomatic as well as people who are asymptomatic and can serve as an early warning sign about [increasing trends.](#)

Final Your Shot at \$1 Million Summer Cash Drawing

YOUR SHOT

AT \$1 MILLION

SUMMER CASH DRAWING

The final \$1 million and college scholarship drawing and getting will occur on Aug. 4. and getting your shot now gets you entered twice. New entries close at midnight on the Sunday prior to the Wednesday drawing.

North Carolinians 18 and over who have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, including people vaccinated at a pharmacy participating in the [Federal Retail Pharmacy Program](#), are automatically entered for a chance to win a \$1 million cash prize.

Youth between the ages of 12 and 17 who have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine are automatically entered to win \$125,000 toward post-secondary education, awarded by funding a savings account in the NC 529 Plan.

Some eligibility restrictions may apply. See the [official rules](#) for details. Learn more at [SummerVaxCash.com](#).

[COVID-19 Testing](#)

With COVID-19 cases on the rise it's important that anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19, has been around people outside of their household or thinks they have been exposed to the virus should get [tested](#). You can find testing sites by using the [Find My Testing Place](#) tool online.

For an up-to-date list of no-cost community testing events, visit the [No-Cost Testing Events](#) webpage. Additionally, all North Carolinians can request a free at-home COVID-19 testing kit. [Learn more](#).

[Get the Latest Information](#)

- Visit the [NCDHHS COVID-19 website](#) for information, a [data dashboard](#), [updates](#), [live briefings](#) and more.

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- Go to [North Carolina's COVID-19 Information Hub](#) for resources, information and assistance across state government, including the latest [news releases](#).
 - Check out [YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov](#) to learn more about [finding your spot](#) to get your shot, [videos](#) about the COVID-19 vaccine, and other resources.
 - Follow NCDHHS on [social media](#) for advance notice of press briefings and a recap.



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