



COVID-19 Survey Summary: June 4, 2021

The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past week, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network ([SEAN](#)). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

[Sign up](#) for notice of these weekly summaries each Friday morning.

Americans are going out, meeting up, making travel plans, attending religious services and generally re-emerging at levels unseen since the start of the pandemic, even as vaccination rates have stalled. Accordingly, economic conditions have improved for individuals and small businesses alike, and reported symptoms of depression and anxiety continue to ease.

Newly released pandemic-related results also emphasize that that severe COVID-19 can occur in all age groups, including children age 12-17; suggest that stimulus transfers may have helped ease food insecurity, financial hardship and mental health symptoms; indicate that the disparity in vaccination rates on the basis of social vulnerability worsened as more Americans became eligible to get vaccinated; and find that an increase in drug overdoses during the pandemic occurred disproportionately among Black and Latinx people.

In addition to U.S.-based surveys, we cover survey results from 10 other countries this week, including Brazil, Chile, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, India, Mexico, the Philippines, Russia and Thailand.

Vaccine Uptake

Longitudinal tracking continues to show that about three-quarters of Americans have been vaccinated (63 percent) or are very or somewhat likely to get a shot, unchanged in recent weeks ([USC UAS 6/2](#)). (The figure on adult vaccinations to date matches [CDC estimates](#).)

In a different poll, more – 77 percent – reported last week having received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, also similar to what it was two weeks prior (75 percent) ([U.S. Census Bureau 5/12-5/24](#)).

Vaccine Distribution

A question fielded last month finds that two-thirds of Americans think the United States should play a leading (27 percent) or major (39 percent) role in distributing COVID-19 vaccines to other countries, aligning with the Biden administration's announcement this week of its plan to distribute 80 million vaccinations globally this month.

There are partisan differences – nearly nine in 10 Democrats think the United States should play at least a major role, while most Republicans think it should play a minor role or none at all.

Views move in favor of greater involvement when people are given positive arguments – i.e., that distributing vaccines in other countries will not hurt the U.S. supply; that the outbreak is worse in other countries and they need the vaccines to stop the spread of the virus; or that providing vaccines to other countries could help the United States achieve the immunity needed to halt the pandemic ([KFF 5/18-5/22](#)).

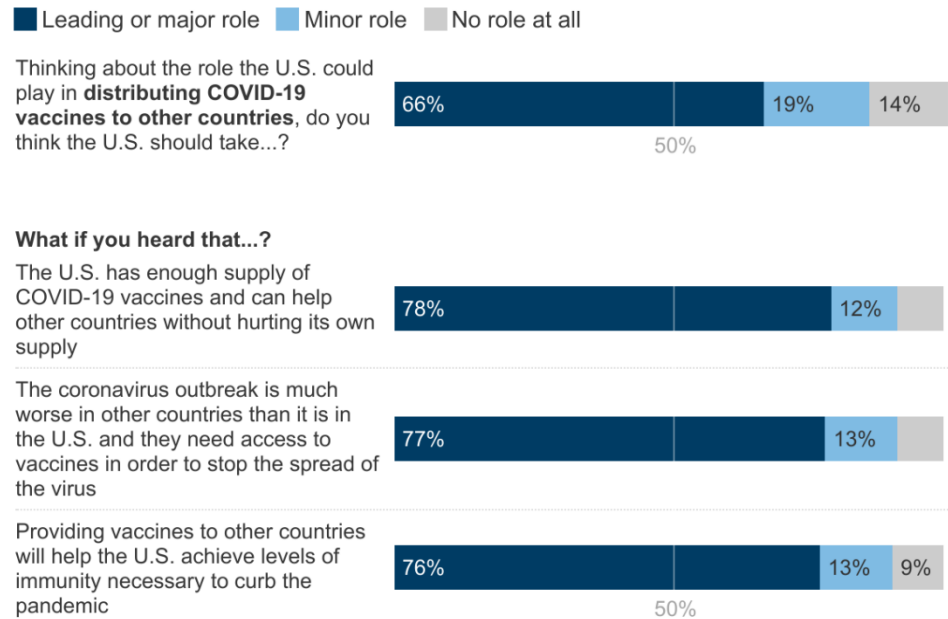
Vaccination Coverage and Social Vulnerability

A new CDC report finds that disparities in vaccination rates on the basis of social vulnerability increased as more people became eligible to receive the vaccine. As of May 1, vaccination coverage was 17 percentage points lower in the counties in the lowest quartile of socioeconomic status compared with the highest SES counties (44 vs. 61 percent) and 18 points lower in counties with the highest percentages of households with children, single parents and people with disabilities (42 vs. 60 percent). The study extends [previous findings](#) that counties with high social vulnerability had lower vaccination coverage during the first two and a half months of the vaccine rollout. The authors stress the need for greater outreach efforts ([CDC 12/14/20-5/1/21](#)).

Daily Life

Aligning with results reported [last week](#), longitudinal tracking documents Americans’ reemergence into public life. Reporting on activities in the past week:

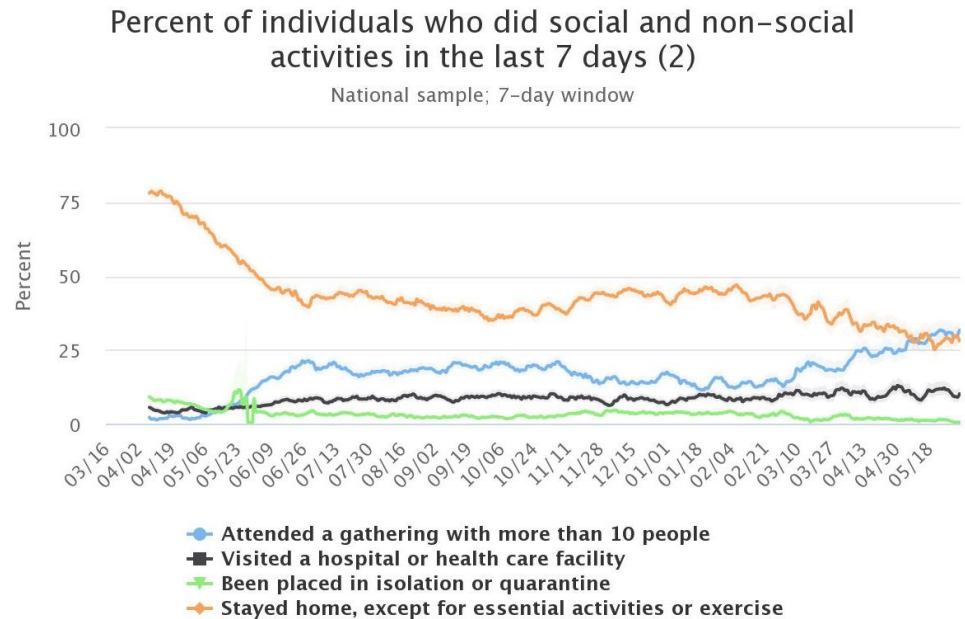
About Eight In Ten Say The U.S. Should Take A Leading Or Major Role in Distributing COVID-19 Vaccines To Countries That Need Them After Hearing Arguments



NOTE: The 3 questions following "What if you heard...?" were asked among those who said the U.S. should take less than a major role. Data reported among total. See topline for full question wording. SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (May 18-25, 2021).



- Three-quarters say they've had close contact with non-household members, up from about six in 10 in late February.
- Fifty-seven percent have visited a friend, neighbor or relative, up 10 points since late April and 20 points since February.
- Fifty-four percent have had visitors at their home, compared with fewer than four in 10 in late February.
- Roughly three in 10 have attended a gathering with more than 10 people, more than double the share who reported doing so in February.
- Twenty-eight percent stayed home except for essential activities or exercise, down from more than four in 10 in February.
- Two in 10 visited a bar, club or other gathering place, roughly double the share in February ([USC UAS 6/2](#))



Americans also increasingly are returning to in-person religious services. Two in 10 say they attended a place of worship in the past week, up from 3 percent a year ago and 13 percent in December. An additional 10 percent say they participated virtually, down from 28 percent a year ago and 16 percent in December ([Gallup 5/3-5/18](#))

Travel plans have increased as well. A third say they're planning to take an overnight trip or a trip to a place more than 100 miles away in the next four weeks, up from 25 percent a month ago ([U.S. Census Bureau 5/12-5/24](#)).

All told, two-thirds of Americans say their lives are somewhat (57 percent) or completely (9 percent) back to normal. In October, fewer than four in 10 said the same. Fifty-six percent now think the best advice for healthy people is to lead their normal lives as much as possible rather than stay home as much as possible to avoid contracting the coronavirus (44 percent). At the start of the year, two-thirds still thought it was best for healthy people to stay home.

Just 20 percent are now very or somewhat worried about catching the coronavirus, down 37 points from the end of last year ([Gallup 5/18-5/23](#)). That may help explain flattening vaccination rates; infection concerns are one of the key indicators of intended uptake.

Economic Impacts

A variety of economic indicators also continue to show improvement. For example:

- Fourteen percent of Americans expect someone in their household will have a loss of employment income in the next four weeks, a pandemic low. In December, more than twice as many anticipated a loss of income.
- Six percent are not current on their rent or mortgage payment and have little or no confidence they can pay next month's payment on time, matching the low in available data since last August.
- Since mid-March, fewer than one in 10 have said there sometimes or often was not enough to eat in their household in the previous seven days. Food insufficiency peaked in December at 14 percent of households.
- Roughly a quarter say they've had difficulty paying for usual household expenses in the last seven days, essentially unchanged in the past month. In December, 38 percent said they were having difficulty paying their usual expenses ([U.S. Census Bureau 5/12-5/24](#)).

Hiring accelerated in May, with employers added 559,000 jobs, roughly double the April numbers ([BLS](#)). And consumer sentiment advanced this week to a new pandemic high, boosted by improved views of the national economy and the buying climate and continued robust ratings of personal finances, back to their pre-pandemic levels ([CCI 5/30](#)).

Small Business Impacts

The small business climate also continues to show signs of improvement. While a quarter of small businesses say the pandemic has had a large negative effect on their business, that's the fewest since the pandemic began. Forty-three percent say the pandemic has had a moderate negative effect, 23 percent report little or no effect and roughly one in 10 see a positive impact.

Eighteen percent of small businesses say they've returned to their normal level of operations, a high in available data since August. A third say it'll take more than six months to return to normal, the fewest since May 2020. Fifteen percent say they'll need financial assistance or additional capital in the next six months, down from a third in early January to a pandemic low.

One in 10 reports increases in the number of paid employees (10 percent) and total hours worked by paid employees (11 percent) in the past week, the most since last summer.

Echoing results for personal travel, business travel plans also have increased – 35 percent of small businesses anticipate having travel expenditures for air, rail, car rental or lodging in the next six months, up from 27 percent in mid-February ([U.S. Census Bureau 5/24-5/30](#)).

Health Impacts

The number of Americans reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression continues to fall, now to 30 percent, down 11 points since the beginning of the year. Twenty-six percent report symptoms of anxiety, down from 36 percent in January; 22 percent show symptoms of depression, down from 28 percent. However, these remain far above pre-pandemic levels – in 2019, 8 percent of adults had symptoms of an anxiety disorder and 7 percent had symptoms of depression.

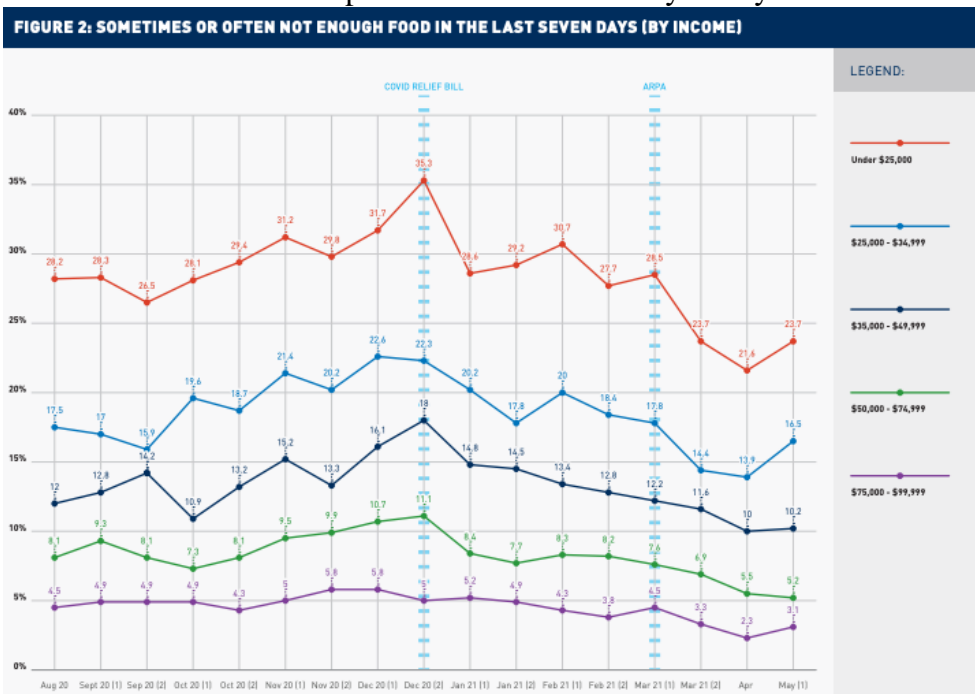
In another improving trend, the share of Americans who say they delayed or skipped needed medical care in the past four weeks, 22 percent, is its lowest since the pandemic began. Last June more than twice as many (46 percent) said they had delayed or skipped needed care ([NCHS](#); [U.S. Census Bureau 5/12-5/24](#)).

A new CDC study stresses that cases of COVID-19 requiring hospitalization occur in all age groups, including 12- to 17-year-olds, although this is most prevalent among older adults. From January to March, among 204 adolescents sick enough to be hospitalized, three in 10 were admitted to an ICU and 5 percent required mechanical ventilation. None died. A majority were either Black (35.8 percent) or Hispanic (31.4 percent) youngsters. Seven in 10 had underlying conditions, led by obesity and chronic lung disease including asthma ([MMWR 6/4](#)).

Stimulus Impacts

A new analysis of [Household Pulse Survey](#) data from the U.S. Census Bureau suggests that the two rounds of stimulus aid in the last six months improved Americans’ ability to buy food and pay household expenses and alleviated mental health symptoms, with the largest benefits among low-income households and those with children.

For example, in households with children, food insufficiency and the number reporting that it was very difficult to pay for usual household expenses both fell by more than



40 percent from December to April. In all households, frequent symptoms of anxiety and depression fell by more than 20 percent.

Although causality cannot be established, the sharpest declines in all three indicators occurred immediately after the passage of the two relief bills (one in late December, the other in March), coinciding with the delivery of cash-based income transfers. And the gains were greatest among the lowest-income households ([Cooney & Shaefer, 2021](#)).

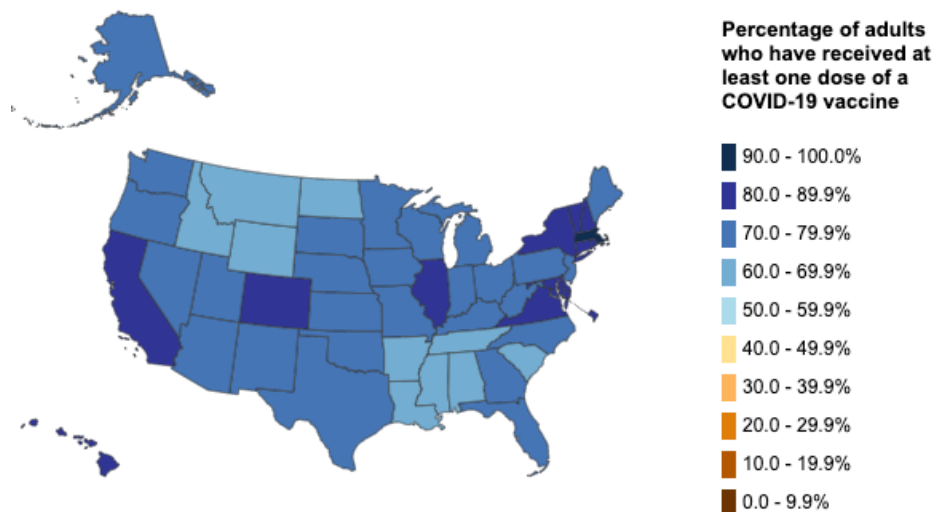
Overdose Deaths

Using Emergency Medical Services records, a new analysis suggests that an increase in overdoses during the pandemic ([described previously](#)) occurred disproportionately among Latinx and Black people. EMS records from 11,000 agencies in 49 states (accounting for 87 percent of EMS activations nationally) indicate that the proportion of EMS activations for overdose-related cardiac arrests was 42.1 percent higher nationwide in 2020 compared with baseline values from 2018 and 2019 (60.1 per 100,000 EMS activations in 2020 vs. 42.3 per 100,000 EMS activations at baseline). This included a 49.7 percent increase in overdose-related cardiac events among Latinx people (from 38.8 to 58.1 per 100,000 activations) and a 50.3 percent increase among Black people (from 21.5 to 32.3 per 100,000 activations). Increases also occurred disproportionately in impoverished neighborhoods and in the Pacific census division ([Friedman et al., 2021](#)).

State Results

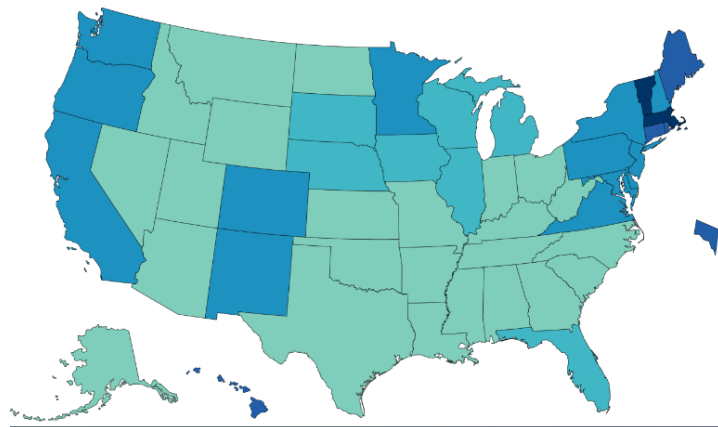
Statewide variability in vaccination rates persists. According to the [Household Pulse Survey](#), coverage is particularly high in New England, California, Hawaii, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, but lags in several states in the Southeast and Mountain West ([U.S. Census Bureau 5/12-5/24](#)).

Estimated Vaccination Rates by State: May 12–24, 2021
Hover over a state to view the percentage of vaccinated adults in that state.



CDC data, for their part, show the highest rates in Vermont and Massachusetts, followed by the District of Columbia, Connecticut, Maine and Rhode Island, then New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Minnesota, Colorado, New Mexico, California, Oregon and Washington state ([CDC](#)).

Total Doses Administered Reported to the CDC by State/Territory and for Select Federal Entities per 100,000 of the Total Population



Economic indicators also differ considerably by state:

- Roughly two in 10 in Hawaii, California and Nevada expect that someone in their household will lose employment income in the next four weeks, compared with a low of 6 percent in Utah.
- Fifteen percent of households in Mississippi and Alabama say there sometimes or often was not enough to eat in the past seven days, compared with fewer than 5 percent in New Hampshire and Delaware.
- Difficulty paying for usual household expenses also peaks in Mississippi (37 percent) and Alabama (32 percent). It drops lowest in Utah and Minnesota (both 18 percent) ([U.S. Census Bureau 5/12-5/24](#)).

International Results

In Greece, the share who say they will get vaccinated has increased steadily from 37 percent in November to 69 percent now, and just 6 percent now say they definitely will not get vaccinated, down 10 points. Sixty-three percent rate the course and development of vaccinations in the country positively and two-thirds positively rate the vaccination rollout organization and process. Half are concerned about new coronavirus mutations ([PulseRC 5/31-6/2](#)).

In India, a quarter say they have gotten at least one dose of a vaccine and an additional 58 percent plan to be vaccinated. One in 10 says they won't get vaccinated; 7 percent have yet to decide. There's been growth since January in Indians' agreement that a vaccine's country of manufacture will not impact their uptake and that vaccines are compatible with their religious beliefs.

Fourteen percent report seeing flu-like symptoms in themselves, their family or their neighbors, down slightly from a recent peak of 18 percent in mid-May. Twenty-seven percent say someone in their family or area has been infected with the virus, also down from a mid-May peak. Five percent now say someone in their family or surroundings has an active case of COVID-19, down from 11 percent.

Fifty-five percent agree that they are afraid that they or someone in their family may catch the coronavirus, essentially unchanged in recent weeks. Fewer than half agree that the threat from the virus is exaggerated, steady since mid-May. Seven in 10 agree that the Indian government is handling the coronavirus well, up 6 points from its recent low in mid-May, but still below the more than eight in 10 who said so before the recent surge ([CVoter 5/31](#)).

In Mexico, nearly six in 10 have a favorable opinion of the government's management of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. Just 9 percent view the coronavirus as the main problem facing the country, down 18 points since March to the fewest since February 2020 ([El Financiero 5/14-5/30](#)).

In Thailand, 62 percent say they would be willing to receive a free COVID-19 vaccination from the government and 16 percent would be willing to pay for an alternative vaccine at a private hospital. Eighteen percent say they would not get any COVID-19 vaccine. More than half – 53 percent – are not satisfied with the government's handling of the pandemic ([NIDA 5/17-5/28](#)).

In Chile, 68 percent have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and 56 percent say they've received two doses. By a slim margin, 52-45 percent, more disagree than agree with the government's implementation of mobility pass allowing people who are fully vaccinated to move freely in areas under quarantine. Overall approval of how the government is handling the pandemic dropped 8 points in the past week to 37 percent ([Cadem 5/26-5/28](#)).

In Brazil, 62 percent say their job or source of income has been affected by the pandemic, down 6 points from a month ago. Six in 10 say they failed to pay any bills in the last month because of the pandemic, down 7 points in the same period. Two-thirds are following the investigations and testimonies in the Senate about the use of federal funds during the pandemic; among them, 62 percent are in favor of impeaching President Jair Bolsonaro ([PoderData 5/24-5/26](#)).

In Russia, 11 percent say they've been vaccinated against COVID-19, about the same number as said so in a different question in April. A quarter say they've had COVID-19, although most (17 percent) did not have an official diagnosis. Fifty-five percent say they are not afraid of contracting the virus, essentially unchanged in recent months ([Levada 5/20-5/26](#)).

In Great Britain, three-quarters have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and nearly all (95 percent) either have been or plan to get vaccinated. The share who report maintaining social distance with people outside their household continues to decline – 74 percent say they're doing this, compared with 88 percent in mid-April. Seventy-seven percent have avoided physical contact when outside their home, down 8 points in the same period. Four in 10 say they've met up indoors with someone not in their household in the past week, nearly double the number who said so last week ([Office for National Statistics 5/19-5/23](#)).

In the Philippines, additional results from a poll covered [last week](#) show that eight in 10 think the real cause of the current spread of COVID-19 in the country are those who do not follow health protocols about masking, hand-washing and social distancing; 11 percent think the spread is due to the governments lack of preparation and 10 percent blame new COVID-19 variants. Asked who is most responsible for stopping the spread, a third say "myself," 31 percent say the national

government, 15 percent say members of their local community, 9 percent pick local government, 8 percent say their family and 4 percent say healthcare workers ([SWS 4/28-5/2](#)).

In Italy, an analysis of 1,579 patients who tested positive during the first wave (February to July 2020) at four hospitals in Lombardy found that just 5 (0.3 percent) were reinfected with COVID-19 in the year after initial infection. By contrast, among the 13,496 who tested negative, 528 (3.9 percent) subsequently were infected. The authors suggest this indicates that for most people, natural immunity from COVID-19 likely lasts at least a year ([Vitale et al., 2021](#)).

Additional U.S. and international poll results are available at the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

Summary for SEAN by [Langer Research Associates](#).