

# As COVID-19 cases rise, no time to let guard down on prevention

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**Kevin B. O'Reilly**

News Editor

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**What's the news:** The AMA is reminding American patients not to let their guard down on vigilance against the coronavirus as 21 states have reportedly seen upticks in the daily average number of new COVID-19 cases this week, compared with last week.

The seven-day average rose 92% in Alabama, for example. Other states seeing big increases in COVID-19 cases are Oregon (84% rise in seven-day average) and South Carolina, where the seven-day average rose 60%.

“In far too many states—in rural and urban locations—we are seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases that could lead to further illness, deaths and other potentially dangerous impacts on health systems across the country,” said AMA President Susan R. Bailey, MD.

“Physicians, scientists and public health experts are learning more every day about COVID-19, but we already know what stops the spread of the virus—wearing a face mask, maintaining physical distancing, and washing your hands regularly for 20 seconds. Adhering to these simple steps is the most effective way to prevent deaths and safely allow reopening to continue.”

“America’s physicians and the men and women on the front lines of this health care crisis urge you: do not confuse reopening with returning to normal,” Dr. Bailey added. “Acting as though COVID-19 is behind us now will lead to another surge of COVID-19 cases. We appreciate that many people have been taking steps over the last several months to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but we urge the public to continue to be vigilant in taking steps to mitigate the spread of the virus.”

Learn about the four signposts states should follow to safely reopen.

**Why it's important:** Dramatic increases in the number of COVID-19 cases pose obvious dangers to those infected, their loved ones and any other people they may expose to the deadly respiratory illness caused by SARS-CoV-2. But the danger doesn't end there, Dr. Bailey noted.

“Personal protective equipment [PPE] shortages remain an ongoing challenge and a significant hurdle that is preventing physician practices from reopening,” she said. “With PPE still in short supply, a second surge in COVID-19 cases not only risks additional lives—it jeopardizes routine medical care and procedures and endangers our health care workers.”

The AMA is urging the Trump administration “to implement a national coordinated strategy on the production, acquisition and distribution of PPE supplies to both ensure that the extreme shortages faced by front-line providers during the initial COVID-19 surges will not recur and help non-hospital health care practices to re-open safely for routine patient care,” Dr. Bailey said.

Read about reopening practices that need access to PPE, infection-control supplies.

**Learn more:** Stay up to speed on the AMA’s COVID-19 advocacy efforts and track the fast-moving pandemic with the AMA’s COVID-19 resource center, which offers a library of the most up-to-date resources from JAMA Network™, the CDC, and the World Health Organization.

Find out how, in the COVID-19 crisis, the AMA’s powerful voice has rung out to save lives.