

Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Sept. 6, 2021

Read *AMA Morning Rounds*®' most popular stories in medicine and public health from the week of Sept. 6, 2021–Sept. 10, 2021.

U.S. booster shot plan may include just Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine initially, officials say

The New York Times (9/3, A1, LaFraniere, Weiland) reported, "Top federal health officials have told the White House to scale back a plan to offer coronavirus booster shots to the general public this month, saying that regulators need more time to collect and review all the necessary data, according to people familiar with the discussion." FDA and CDC heads "warned the White House on Thursday that their agencies may be able to determine in the coming weeks whether to recommend boosters only for recipients of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine—and possibly just some of them to start." Health officials will likely need more time to make a decision regarding Moderna's vaccine.

According to the Wall Street Journal (9/3, Schwartz, Parti, Subscription Publication), the White House said it is waiting for a full review together with FDA clearance and a CDC recommendation.

The Washington Post (9/3, A1, Pager, McGinley) reported acting FDA commissioner Janet Woodcock "said the agency did not have all the data it needs but that it was clear protection from vaccines wanes."

Medical journals call for swift action to combat climate change

The New York Times (9/7, Choi-Schagrin) reports, "A collection of leading health and medical journals called this week for swift action to combat climate change, calling on governments to cooperate and invest in the environmental crisis with the degree of funding and urgency they used to confront the coronavirus pandemic." In the editorial (The Lancet) "published in more than 200 medical and health journals worldwide, the authors declared a 1.5-degree-Celsius rise in global temperatures the 'greatest threat to global public health,'" writing, "The science is unequivocal; a global increase of 1.5°C above the preindustrial average and the continued loss of biodiversity risk catastrophic harm to

health that will be impossible to reverse.”

Some public health experts raise concerns of further SARS-CoV-2 spread in the fall

The Wall Street Journal (9/8, A1, Kamp, Abbott, DeBarros, Subscription Publication) reports that despite what appears to be the peak of the Delta coronavirus variant’s spread in several states, some public health experts say the return of unvaccinated children to school, cold weather in Northern states, and the holiday season could provide new avenues for SARS-CoV-2 to spread.

According to the AP (9/8, Perrone, Durbin), “The summer that was supposed to mark America’s independence from COVID-19 is instead drawing to a close with the U.S. more firmly under the tyranny of the virus, with deaths per day back up to where they were in March.” The Delta variant has filled some hospitals, sickened “alarming numbers of children,” and driven “coronavirus deaths in some places to the highest levels of the entire pandemic.”

Biden announces COVID-19 vaccine mandate for federal workers, contractors, private companies with more than 100 workers

The New York Times (9/9, Stolberg, Rogers) reports, “President Biden on Thursday used the full force of his presidency to push two-thirds of American workers to get vaccinated against the coronavirus, reaching into the private sector to mandate that all companies with more than 100 workers require vaccination or weekly testing.” The President “also moved to mandate shots for health care workers, federal contractors and the vast majority of federal workers, who could face disciplinary measures if they refuse.”

The Wall Street Journal (9/9, A1, Armour, Siddiqui, Subscription Publication) reports the administration also will require vaccinations for most health care workers at facilities that receive federal funding. Reuters (9/9, Hunnicutt, Mason, Aboulenein) says, “The new vaccination requirements cover about 100 million workers, or about two-thirds of all workers in the United States, officials said.”

The AP (9/9, Miller) reports that “there were strong words of praise for Biden’s efforts to get the nation vaccinated from the American Medical Association,” among others.

Editor's Note: Read the AMA's statement on the administration's COVID-19 plan.

FDA announces delay in decision on e-cigarette products

The Wall Street Journal (9/9, Maloney, Subscription Publication) reports the FDA has announced it needs to extend its deadline for deciding whether or not e-cigarette products by Juul and other top brands can stay on the U.S. market. The original deadline was Thursday, September 9. The agency reported it has acted on 93% of all e-cigarette applications so far.

The AP (9/9, Perrone) reports the FDA "said it rejected applications for nearly 950,000 e-cigarettes and related products, mainly due to their potential appeal to underage teens" but has yet to rule on Juul, the most popular brand. In a statement, the agency said, "There's more work to be done to complete our remaining reviews and ensure that we continue taking appropriate action to protect our nation's youth from the dangers of all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes."

Reuters (9/9, Banerjee, Kirkham) reports the FDA "continues to 'work expeditiously on the remaining applications,' adding many are 'in the final stages of review.'"

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