

COVID-19 UPDATE – MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2021

Dear Members of the DoM Community,

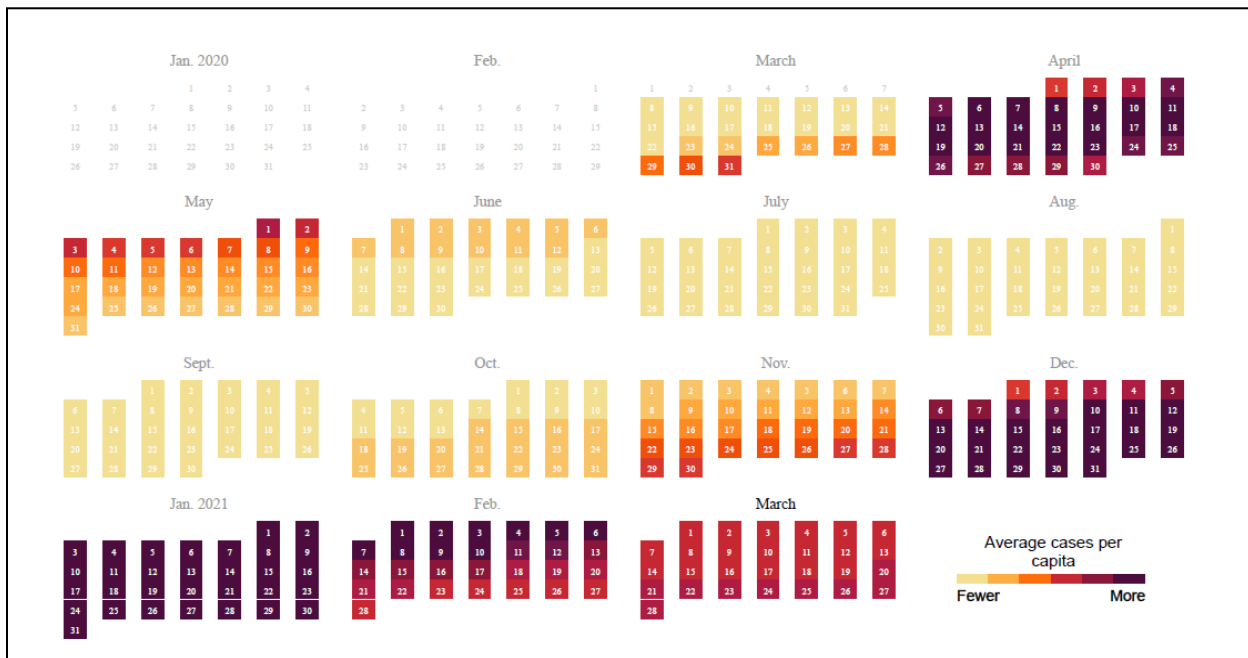
Good morning to you on this last Monday of March. It has been a little over 14 months since the first case of COVID-19 was reported on U.S. soil (it was January 20, 2020, in Washington State). Today the pandemic continues to linger on although the ramp up in vaccination should eventually curtail the infection and render life normal again. Here are the updates on the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope they keep you informed on the pandemic’s status.

1. Cases are on the rise in the U.S., New York State, and Long Island.

	# CASES ON MAR 28	7-DAY AVERAGE	7-DAY AVG CASES PER 100,000	14-DAY CHANGE	TOTAL REPORTED
U.S.	45,552	63,199	19	+15%	30,285,445
New York State	8,852	9,452	49	+42%	1,849,490
Nassau County	690	625	46	+5%	165,785
Suffolk County	797	685	46	+13%	180,321

2. New case numbers in Suffolk County has returned to extremely high risk level at a 7-day average of 46 per 100,000 population.

This is reflected by the darkening of the red color over the last week in the graph below.



COVID-19 Testing in Suffolk County on March 28:

- 15,943 COVID-19 tests were administered.
- 797 new cases were reported.; 7-day average = 685, an **increase of 1** from a week ago.
- 180,321 total cases have been reported since March of 2020.
- 5.0% tested positive; 7-day average = 4.4%, same as last week.

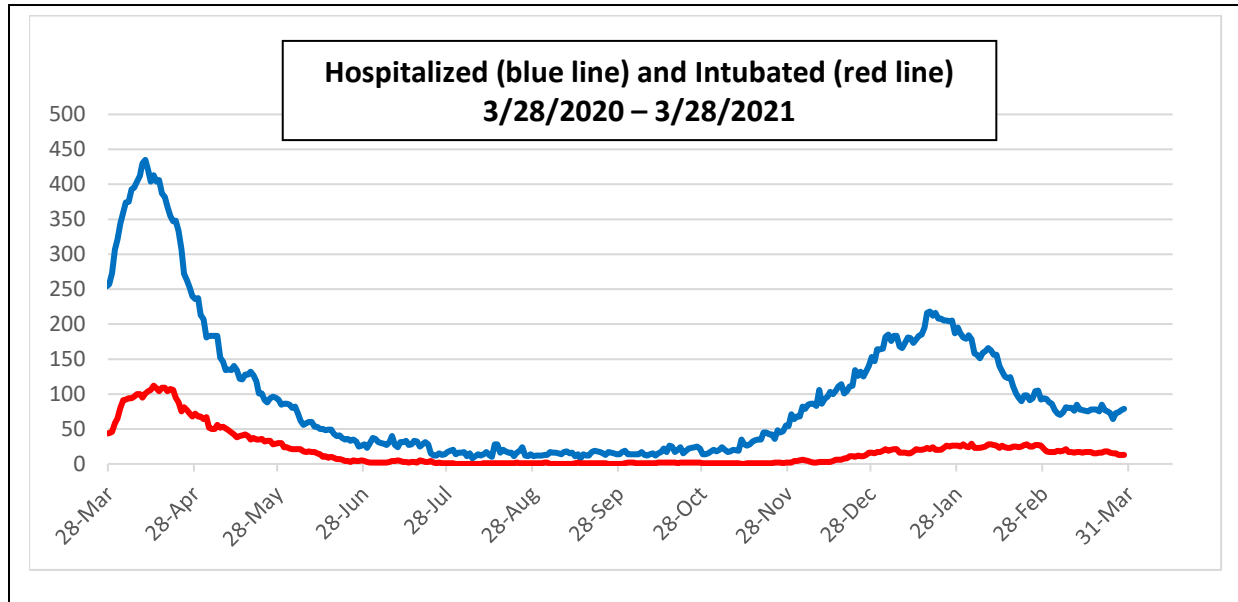
Fatalities:

- 3,232 total fatalities, an **increase of 30** from one week before.

COVID-19 Hospitalizations:

- 391 individuals were hospitalized, an **increase of 3** from one week before.
- 76 patients were in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), same as a week ago.

3. Daily COVID-19 Hospitalization Data in SBUH



At midnight Sunday, March 28, SBUH census is as follows (see figure above for all-time trend of hospitalization).

- 72 COVID + inpatients, an increase of 2 compared to one week before.
 - 16 patients were in ICU level of care; 13 on ventilators; 16 in ICR.
 - COVID admissions on Sunday = 9.
 - COVID live discharges = 10.
 - COVID-related deaths = 2.
- Total hospital census = 645; Med/Surg = 520 (118%).

4. SARS-CoV-2 Viral Variants Update (source = CDC and NYC Health)

- Variant Classification scheme that defines three classes of SARS-CoV-2 variants:
 - Variant of Interest - A variant with specific genetic markers that have been associated with changes to receptor binding, reduced neutralization by antibodies generated against previous infection or vaccination, reduced efficacy of treatments, potential diagnostic impact, or predicted increase in transmissibility or disease severity.
 - Variant of Concern – defined as a variant for which there is evidence of an increase in transmissibility, more severe disease (increased hospitalizations or deaths), significant reduction in neutralization by antibodies generated during previous infection or vaccination, reduced effectiveness of treatments or vaccines, or diagnostic detection failures.
 - Variant of High Consequence - A variant of high consequence has clear evidence that prevention measures or medical countermeasures (MCMs) have significantly reduced effectiveness relative to previously circulating variants. **Currently there are no SARS-CoV-2 variants that rise to the level of high consequence.**

- **COVID cases caused by variants in New York City**

(<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/covid/covid-19-data-variants-032321.pdf>)

Data pulled 3/23/21 from GISAID; variants available in GISAID for NYC residents, cumulative*

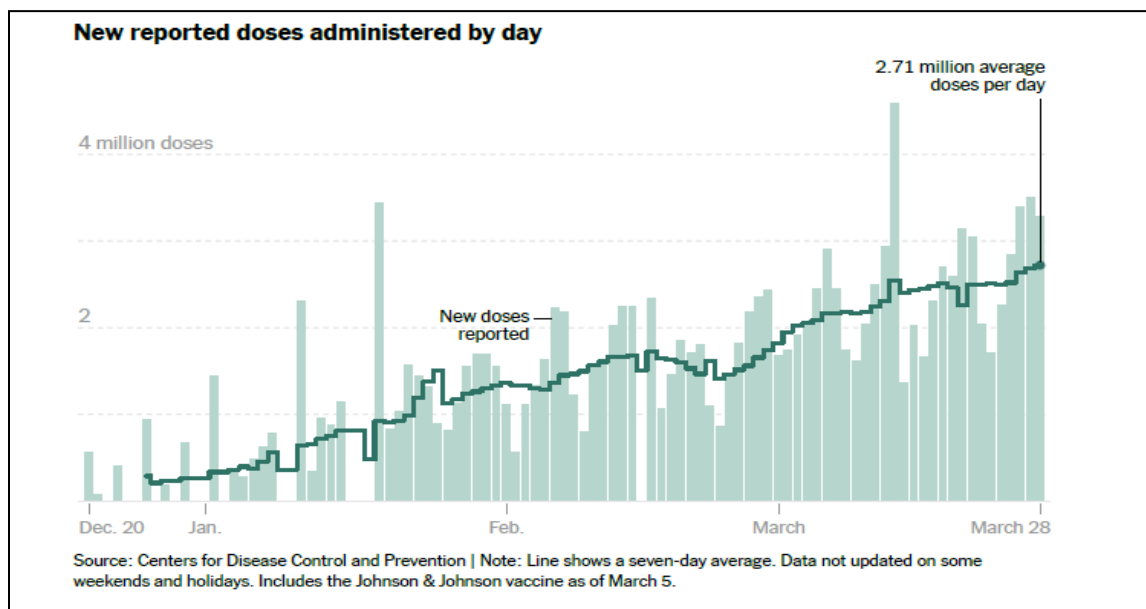
Variants of concern that are being monitored by CDC	
B.1.1.7 ("UK variant")	590
B.1.351 ("South African variant")	2
B.1.429 ("Californian variant")	105
B.1.427 ("Californian variant")	44
P.1 ("Brazilian variant")	1
Other variants being monitored by NYC	
B.1.526 ("New York City variant")	1800
B.1.525	10
P.2	11
Number of genome sequences from specimens from NYC residents in GISAID, cumulative*	7078

Trends based on a sample of specimens submitted to Pandemic Response Lab, as of 3/21

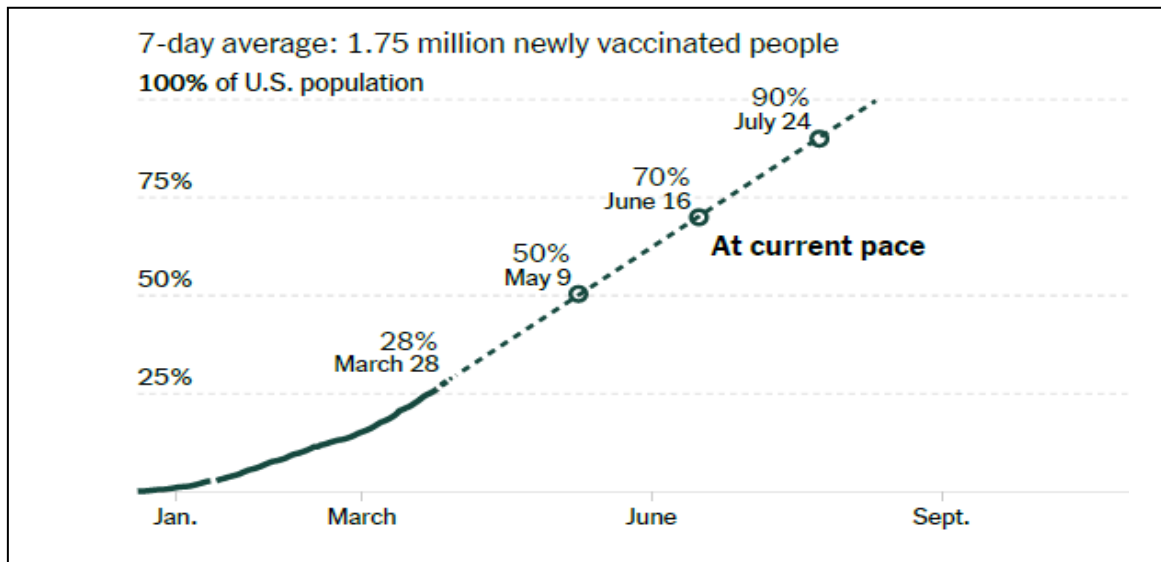
Specimen collection date, week	Total specimens sequenced by PRL	B.1.1.7 (N, %)	B.1.351 (N, %)	B.1.429 (N, %)	B.1.427 (N, %)	P.1 (N, %)	B.1.526 (N, %)		B.1.525 (N, %)	P.2 (N, %)
							S:E484K+ (N, %)	S:E484K- (N, %)		
Feb 8 - 14	734	52 (7.1%)	0 (0%)	9 (1.2%)	4 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	111 (15.1%)	103 (14%)	1 (0.1%)	3 (0.4%)
Feb 15 - 21	826	69 (8.4%)	2 (0.2%)	5 (0.6%)	8 (1.0%)	0 (0%)	133 (16.1%)	121 (14.6%)	1 (0.1%)	0 (0%)
Feb 22 - 28	990	118 (11.9%)	0 (0%)	12 (1.2%)	4 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	207 (20.9%)	178 (18%)	4 (0.4%)	2 (0.2%)
March 1 - 7	715	125 (17.5%)	0 (0%)	14 (2.0%)	3 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	168 (23.5%)	153 (21.4%)	1 (0.1%)	0 (0%)
March 8 - 14	1481	141 (9.5%)	0 (0%)	13 (0.9%)	2 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)	227 (15.3%)	254 (17.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

5. Vaccination Program Update (sources = CDC, NYS DOH, and NYT)

On March 28, the 7-day average of COVID vaccine administered in the U.S. was 2.71 million, for a total of 143+ million doses administered since the beginning of the rollout.



28% of the U.S. population have received at least one dose (NY State is at 30% and Suffolk County, 28%). At the current rate of administration, about half of the population would be at least partially vaccinated around early-May, and nearly all in July, assuming supply pledges are met, and vaccines are eventually available to children.



6. Governor Cuomo announces launch of Excelsior’s Pass on March 26 (<https://epass.ny.gov/terms>)

- Digital pass offers free, voluntary way to share COVID-19 vaccination or negative COVID-19 test status in accordance with New York State guidelines.
- Proven, secure technology developed in partnership with IBM following successful pilot.
- As part of initial launch, Excelsior Pass can be used by participating New Yorkers at theaters, major stadiums and arenas, weddings receptions, catered events & other events in accordance with New York State guidelines.
- Madison Square Garden and Times Union Center to implement Excelsior Pass; additional locations will begin utilizing this platform as program expands.
- Interested New Yorkers can opt In to use Excelsior Pass and learn more [Here](#); interested businesses can opt In and learn more [Here](#).
- Images of Excelsior Pass are available [Here](#).

7. Please Continue to Keep Us Safe

With more people getting vaccinated, certain relaxing CDC restrictions and warmer weather tempting a lot of us to perhaps ‘drop our guard’ a little in the COVID-19 battle, please don’t. We stayed open, and accomplished all we did, by practicing healthy habits and following important protocols. And that will be our best path forward. Even if you are vaccinated, [we still require ongoing testing](#) to ensure the health and well-being of our entire campus community. We also continue to emphasize the importance of all of the following ‘best practices’ until SUNY guidance suggests otherwise:

- Wash your hands or use sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Maintain a physical distance of at least six feet from other people.
- Always wear a mask, including in classrooms, conference rooms and other spaces, even when six feet social distancing exists.
- Cover coughs and sneezes and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in your workplace every day.
- Avoid using other people's phones, desks, offices, tools, and equipment.

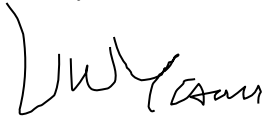
- Sanitize shared items after use.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid large gatherings.

8. Department of Medicine meeting to feature Dr. Bill Wertheim, Interim Dean of RSOM

- Quarterly Department Meeting on Wednesday, March 31 at 8 AM via Zoom. The meeting will feature a presentation by Dr. Bill Wertheim, Interim Dean, who will share with us his plan and vision for the Renaissance School of Medicine.
- Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://stonybrook.zoom.us/j/94429774364?pwd=TVZDMFN1b3dyWDg5NTUvQnpXL3ZLQT09>
- Meeting ID: 944 2977 4364#; Passcode: 766349
- Dial by your location #1-646-876-9923

Once again, I hope the information provided here is useful to you in keeping track of the progression of the pandemic. While the increasing rollout of COVID vaccines is an encouraging trend, we are still not out of the woods. It is important for everyone to remain vigilant until the storm passes. Please keep safe and healthy.

Sincerely Yours,



Vincent W. Yang, MD, PhD
Simons Chair of Medicine
Professor of Medicine, Biomedical Informatics, and Physiology and Biophysics
Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook University