



CURRENT NEWS ON ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS AND GLOBAL HEALTH

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August 19,

HI, Two days ago I had lunch with a friend who shares my passion for international development and solidarity with those more vulnerable and marginalized, especially in Africa. We hadn't met since before covid and had a great catchup, with him planning to return to Burundi in a couple of months. While I don't have any plans yet for a return to my previous volunteer activities, our discussion gave us both inspiration and a push to keep up our activities. It also made me consider about how the pandemic has so much interrupted our relationships, collaborations and solidarity with those we previously worked with overseas, how it has interrupted our life-long passion and how it has likely affected the whole enterprise of international development, including global health (for me) and agricultural development (for him). With now a year and a half or more since any in-person collaboration has taken place in general, what now remains?

Assuming that the pandemic will end in the next year (sincerely hoping), assuming more accessibility and great uptake of the Covid vaccines, and assuming that governments, NGOs and others will continue to implement and foster these relationships, what will be the state of affairs once we try to get going again? It is a big question for me, hoping that the answer will be a type of return to 'normal' and back to the collaborations we had before. I also know, though, that the pandemic has also seriously interrupted educational processes holding back a new generation of global health activists. From this past January to May I oversaw 26 York University students doing a virtual global health elective. It was far from the ideal that I had been part of for so much of my life, having facilitated and supervised hundreds of students who went overseas as part of their foundational development. How can we ensure that when we do resume with international collaborations that there will be no return to colonial type interventions, but rather true partnerships based on solidarity and mutual and equal respect? I am worried that such relationships will not happen soon and so much history, time and preparation may be lost.

While trying to build back better, we can't forget that before Covid there was not an equal world. Working in the global health sector most of my life, I was fully aware of the huge imbalances in resources and outcomes of both personal and population health. Injustice has reigned for decades and centuries. The poverty of

so many nations and millions of people is nothing new. Serious food insecurity affects about 1/3 of all people on Earth. Let's hope we will learn something from the pandemic, from our sacrifices and responses, and follow our 'higher' ambitions for something better in the future.

That's a great challenge, especially with the environment, and one's that reflected in the stories in today's ***Planetary Health Weekly*** (#33 of 2021):

- IPCC report's verdict on climate crimes of humanity: guilty as hell,
- Climate models now showing implausibly fast warming (summary of evidence),
- Observational evidence of increasing global radiative forcing,
- CORONAVIRUS UPDATES (fewer today as so much climate news to report):
 - Canada's federal government to require vaccinations for all public servants, air and train passengers,
 - Scientists' pandemic response could be even faster next time, and
 - Tokyo's Olympic bubble? Wait till you see Beijing's, THEN
- Emerging economies must leapfrog to renewables – and they already are,
- How Canada intends to achieve its 2030 emissions targets,
- Satellite images reveal a climate crisis nightmare in Siberia (where the fires are greater than in all the rest of world together),
- Smoke from Siberia wildfires reaches north pole in historic first,
- Preliminary analysis concludes Pacific Northwest heat wave was a 1000-year event...hopefully,
- Heat waves to drastically worsen in Northern Hemisphere,
- Coastal ecosystems are being 'burned' by double whammy of rising temperatures and ocean acidification,
- The countries of the Middle East and north Africa are parched,
- A new green air-conditioning system manages without nasty gases,
- Floating wind turbines could rise to great heights,
- Why do we honour companies that create hunger?
- Soil nutrients increase long-term soil carbon gains threefold on retired farmland,
- Biden administration will pay farmers more money not to farm,
- Grassy Narrows funding pact for mercury-poisoning care home spurs joy and bitter memories,
- Quote on Greenland's current giant ice melt,
- Let's keep vaccine misinformation problem in perspective,
- The New York Times profiles the 'most influential' purveyor of online Covid vaccine misinformation (Joseph Mercola),
- Everyone will lose unless humanity makes 'peace with the planet' declares UN Chief Guterres,
- The Planetary Emergency: what is it and how healthcare workers can take action,
- How Canada's biggest bank (RBC) is funding the global climate crisis,
- New book: "Spike: The Virus v. The People – The Inside Story" by Jeremy Farrar,

- China makes mental health courses compulsory for undergraduates, and
- ENDSHOTS of a “Sunset Cruise on Parry Sound” amid the latest Covid-19 stats and charts from Canada and around the world.

Do keep reading.

Best, david

David Zakus, Editor and Publisher



**Sunset on Parry Sound (Georgian Bay, Lake Huron), Ontario
August 13, 2021**

IPCC Report's Verdict On Climate Crimes Of Humanity: Guilty As Hell



As a verdict on the climate crimes of humanity, the new Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report could not be clearer: guilty as hell.

The repeatedly ignored warnings of scientists over past decades have now become reality. Humanity, through its actions, or lack of action, has unequivocally overheated the planet. Nowhere on Earth is escaping rising temperatures, worse floods, hotter wildfires or more searing droughts.

The future [looks worse](#). "If we do not halt our emissions soon, our future climate could well become some kind of hell on Earth," says Prof Tim Palmer at the University of Oxford. This would be the sentence for these climate crimes, but it has yet to be passed down. The world can avoid the harshest punishment, but only just. Immediate repentance for the delays that have brought the world to the brink is required in the form of immediate and deep emissions cuts.

The key aspect of the IPCC report is that the 42-page summary is agreed, line by line, by every government on the planet, with the scientists vetoing any politically convenient but unscientific proposal. Read more at [the Guardian](#)

SEE ALSO:

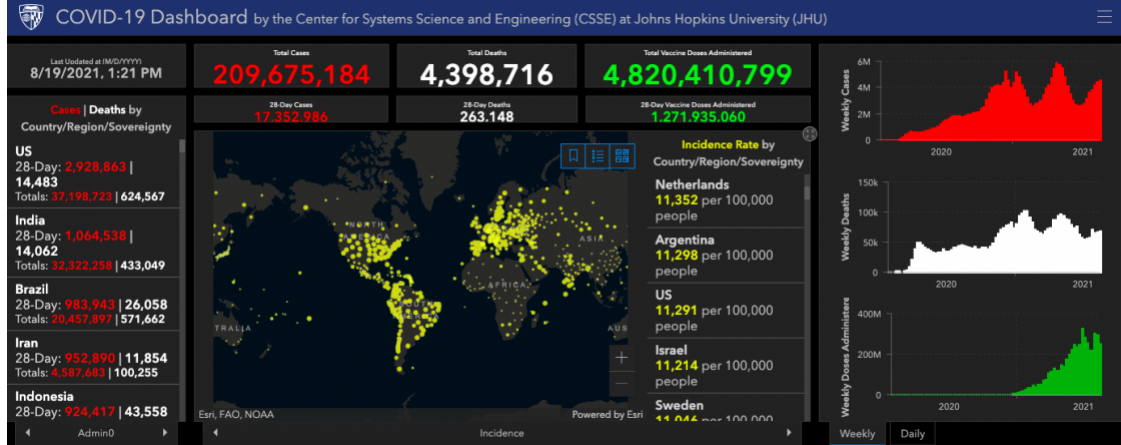
At Daily Kos: [Climate Models Now Showing Implausibly Fast Warming \(Good Summary Of Recent Evidence\)](#)

Now with the publication the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report (AR6) having unveiled its latest scientific assessment, widely considered the most authoritative review of climate research, here's a good summary of issues dealt with including how scientists have had to grapple with the fact that several [next-generation models](#) used in the assessment project that the [Earth will warm far faster than previous estimates](#).

At Wiley: [Observational Evidence of Increasing Global Radiative Forcing](#)

Changes in atmospheric composition, such as increasing greenhouse gases, cause an initial radiative imbalance to the climate system, quantified as instantaneous radiative forcing. This fundamental metric has not been directly observed globally and previous estimates have come from models. In part, this is because current space-based instruments cannot distinguish the instantaneous radiative forcing from the climate's radiative response. We find that all-sky instantaneous radiative forcing has increased $0.53 \pm 0.11 \text{ W/m}^2$ from 2003 to 2018, accounting for positive trends in the total planetary radiative imbalance (i.e., heating). This increase has been due to a combination of rising concentrations of well-mixed greenhouse gases and recent reductions in aerosol emissions. These results highlight distinct fingerprints of anthropogenic activity in Earth's changing energy budget, which we find observations can detect within 4 years.

SARS-CoV-2 & COVID-19 UPDATES



Source: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/ma...>

Globally, the situation is still dire, despite lots of vaccines in some countries. Lack of vaccines in many, lack of enough uptake in the West, and the Delta variant are wreaking havoc. Over the last week there were about 4.7 million new cases of Covid-19 (up again, this time about 8%) and 70,000 new deaths (also up about 5%); and about 260 million people received a vaccine, or an average of almost 37 million doses per day (down ~10%). At this rate the world will need another 6 months to achieve 75% coverage.

(See ENDSHOTS at the end of this newsletter for various COVID-19 charts and stats from Canada and around the world.)

"It is the plague in seemingly all sincerity." Bob Woodward

Canada's Federal Government To Require Vaccinations For All Federal Public Servants, Air And Train Passengers



Credit: Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press

Canadian Transport Minister Omar Alghabra announced on August 13 that the federal government will soon require that all public servants be vaccinated — a mandate that he said will also be implemented by Crown corporations and other federally regulated businesses in the coming weeks.

While Canada's vaccination rate is among the highest in the world — 81% of all eligible Canadians have had at least one dose — Alghabra said the country "must do better. We need to reach as many Canadians as we possibly can."

But there are still more than 5.7 million people over the age of 12 who have chosen to forgo a shot altogether, or to wait for a later date. The number of unvaccinated Canadians is roughly equivalent to everyone living in the Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton metropolitan areas combined. Starting as soon as next month, the vaccine will be made mandatory for federal employees and those working in some federally regulated industries (airlines and railways, among others) in an effort to boost stalled vaccination rates. Read more at [CBC](#)

READ MORE COVID-19 STORIES:

At the Economist: [Scientists' Pandemic Response Could Be Even Faster Next Time](#)

At NY Times: [Tokyo's Olympic Bubble? Wait Till You See Beijing's.](#)

For the Winter Games, just six months away, China plans far more elaborate Covid-19 precautions than were taken at the Summer Olympics.

Emerging Economies Must Leapfrog To Renewables – And They Already Are



Credit: [Antonio Garcia/Unsplash](#)

Renewables like solar and wind are quickly becoming more affordable and accessible. The [International Renewable Energy Agency](#) (IRENA) reports that the cost of electricity coming from utility-scale solar power fell 82% between 2010 and 2019, and clean power technologies such as solar and wind are undercutting even the cheapest coal-fired power plants. Further, a 2020 analysis from [BloombergNEF](#) found that wind and solar have overtaken fossil fuels as the most cost-effective form of new sources of electricity in most of the world.

This trend has made “[energy leapfrogging](#)” – i.e., the ability to reap a nation’s power needs from renewables such as solar, wind and geothermal at a rapid pace, bypassing heavy investments in fossil fuels and the infrastructure needed for them – ever more possible in emerging markets.

Economies, including several examples in Africa and Latin America, have been transitioning straight from what for many of their communities had been [traditional sources of energy](#) like wood, charcoal, agricultural waste and animal dung; these countries are also able to shift rapidly toward renewables as they have not invested in massive infrastructure that supports a national power grid, as was the case with what more industrialized nations in Europe and North America had done during the 20th century. The result is that more communities within these emerging markets are forgoing conventional energy sources like fossil fuels; the same goes for other forms of energy like nuclear, biofuels and even natural gas. Read more at [Triple Pundit](#)

SEE ALSO:

At Policy Options: [How Canada Intends To Achieve Its 2030 Emissions Targets](#)

As part of the [2015 Paris Agreement on combatting global warming, about 190 parties](#) to the agreement pledged nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that outlined the actions they would take to keep the increase in global average temperature below 2C compared with pre-industrial levels. Canada, [the world's 10th-largest emitter](#) of greenhouse gases in 2019, committed to a 30% reduction in its emissions from all sources from 2005 levels by 2030. The challenge will be how it will do that, given its poor reputation on climate change and despite its unambitious reduction targets.

In 2005, Canada emitted [730 megatonnes \(Mt\) of greenhouse gases](#), making its 2030 target 511 Mt. Between 2005 and 2018 (the most recent year for which statistics are available), Canada's emissions had fallen by just one megatonne to [729 Mt](#). How then, is it expecting to reduce emissions by a further 218 Mt by 2030 to meet its NDC commitments?

Satellite Images Reveal A Climate Crisis Nightmare In Siberia



Permafrost melts into the Kolyma River in Siberia. Record-breaking heat waves increase permafrost thaw, triggering the release of methane and contributing to global warming. Credit: Getty

TRAVERSE DEEP INTO NORTHERN SIBERIA, and you'll find the Yenisey-Khatanga Basin. As of late, this remote part of the world is predominantly known for two things: its untapped potential as [a massive source](#) of oil and gas, and its [proximity to the wildfires](#) that have raged in Siberia this summer.

Now, scientists suggest another factor that demands our attention: According to [a study](#) published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, considerable amounts of methane are being released from a previously unexplored source.

Arctic methane is typically connected to [two sources](#): organic matter in [permafrost](#) and methyl clathrate (molecules of methane frozen in ice crystals). This study spotlights a third — one released from fractures and pockets in the permafrost zone that's become unstable due to warming. As the climate crisis worsens, understanding this study's findings "may make the difference between catastrophe and apocalypse," lead author [Nikolaus Froitzheim](#), a professor at the University of Bonn's Institute of Geosciences in Germany, tells *Inverse*. Read more at [Inverse](#)

SEE ALSO:

At the Guardian: [Smoke From Siberia Wildfires Reaches North Pole In Historic First](#)

Smoke from raging [forest fires in Siberia](#) has reached the North Pole for the first time in recorded history, as a Russian monitoring institute warned the blazes were worsening. Devastating wildfires have ripped across Siberia with increasing regularity over the past few years, which Russia's weather officials and environmentalists have linked to climate change and an underfunded forest service.

UN climate experts just published a report that unequivocally shows global heating is [unfolding more quickly than feared](#) and humanity is almost entirely to blame.

At Climate.Gov: [Preliminary Analysis Concludes Pacific Northwest Heat Wave Was A 1,000-Year Event...Hopefully](#)

An international team of weather and climate experts known as the "World Weather Attribution" project has [analyzed the late June heatwave](#) in the U.S. Pacific Northwest and come to a preliminary conclusion - that the event was a roughly 1-in-1,000-year event in today's climate. If they are correct, it would have been at least 150 times rarer before global warming. Theoretically, a 1-in-150,000-year event—so rare, they concluded, that it's fair to say it would have been "virtually impossible" in pre-industrial times. Taken at face value, it would also mean that events like that aren't about to become common any time soon.

At Washington Post: [Heat Waves To Drastically Worsen In Northern Hemisphere, Studies Warn](#)

As global temperatures have increased, extreme heat events in the Northern Hemisphere have occurred with greater frequency and intensity. Deadly, record-crushing heat waves have scorched parts of the United States, Canada, Europe and the Arctic in just the past two decades. The World Health Organization [reports](#) that more than 160,000 heat-related deaths occurred from 1998 to 2017 globally.

Recent studies show the magnitude of extreme heat events, and their effect on people will escalate in coming decades if greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are not slashed. Climate models show record-breaking heat waves and heat stress will more than double in the northern midlatitudes before the end of the century.

Coastal Ecosystems Are Being 'Burned' By Double Whammy Of Rising

Temperatures And Ocean Acidification



Credit: Nicolas Floch

New research from an international team of scientists has shown that when ocean warming and acidification combine, complex coastal habitats can be stripped of their variety and reduced to slime-covered barren grounds. Across Japan, the team has found widespread evidence of 'isoyake' – or 'burnt seashore' – with the disappearance of kelp forests and abalone fisheries as temperate coastal marine ecosystems lose biodiversity and become more 'simple'.

In two studies published in [Global Change Biology](#), the team from the Plymouth University (UK), with counterparts in Japan, Italy, France and Spain, used the volcanic islands of Shikine-jima, approximately 160 kilometres south of Tōkyō, and Vulcano Island, off the coast of Italy, as living laboratories to analyze the impact of rising pH levels and temperatures. Read more at [Plymouth](#)

The Countries Of The Middle East And North Africa Are Parched



Credit: Getty Images

In the neighbourhood of Algiers where the presidential palace and foreign embassies are located, some think the water pressure has increased of late. But don't tell those living in the suburbs of Algeria's capital, where the taps have been dry for days, as temperatures and tempers rise. Protesters have blocked main roads and railways. "If the water stops flowing, so will everything else," says a local journalist, conveying the protesters' mindset.

Algeria is not alone. In the past few months protests over water shortages have erupted in Iran, Iraq, Sudan and Yemen. Two protesters were shot dead in Iran on July 16th. And a lack of water is contributing to unrest elsewhere in the Middle East and north Africa. Read more at [the Economist](#)

GOOD NEWS

A New, Green Air-Conditioning System Manages Without Nasty Gases



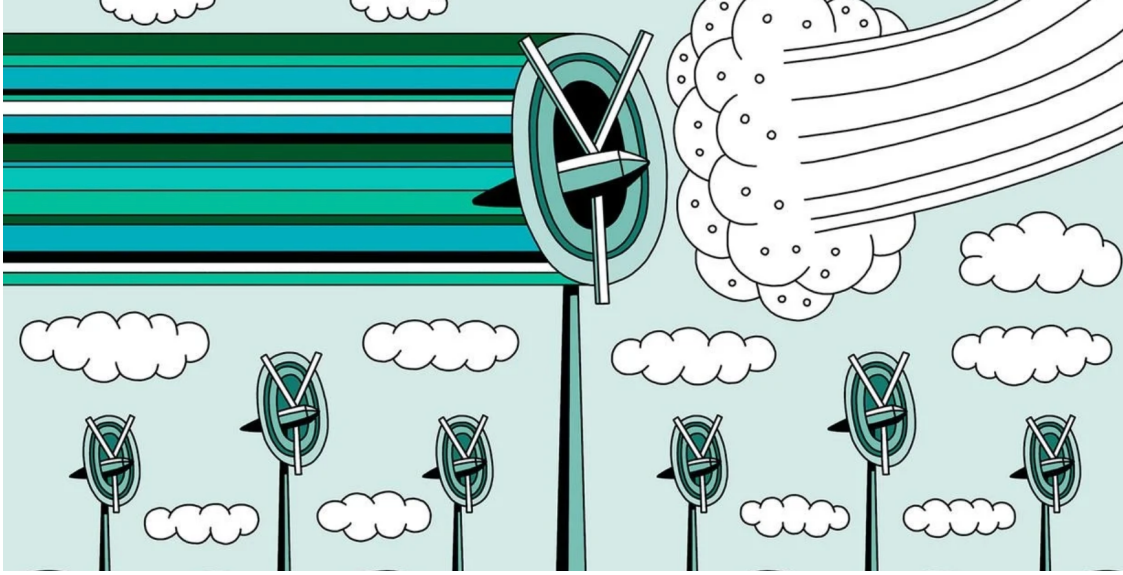
Credit: *Economist*

In a warming world it helps to stay cool. But doing so also [threatens the planet](#). Most air conditioners use refrigerant gases called hydrofluorocarbons (hfc's). Though these do not deplete Earth's ozone layer in the way the chlorofluorocarbons they replaced back in the mid-1990s did, they are hundreds of times more effective at trapping heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide is. Less-potent greenhouse gases are now being phased in as refrigerants, but these are not without problems of their own. They can be expensive, and some are inflammable.

Researchers have long sought ways to produce cooling systems that do without these troublesome gases, but none has come close to being a direct replacement. A small Irish company, however, now claims to have come up with an answer. Exergyn, based in Dublin, has developed a new type of air conditioning which not only avoids hfc's, but also has the benefit of having few moving parts at its core. Read more at [the Economist](#)

MORE GOOD NEWS

Floating Wind Turbines Could Rise To Great Heights



Credit: Cristina Spano

On July 16th Royal Dutch Shell, an oil and gas company, and Scottish Power, a subsidiary of Iberdrola, a Spanish electricity utility, made an announcement. They were, they said, jointly submitting proposals to the British authorities to build, off the coast of Scotland, the first large-scale set of floating wind farms in the world. At the moment, the largest floating farm is a six-turbine, 50MW array which is due for completion next month in the North Sea, 15km from Aberdeen. The consortium, by contrast, has said it is thinking in gigawatts (GW).

Offshore wind farms with foundations in the seabed are now part of the energy mix in several places. In the past four years their capacity has nearly doubled, from 19MW to 35MW, and amortized costs have dropped by a third, from \$120 per MW-hour to \$80. They are, however, of limited deployability, being restricted to waters shallower than about 60 metres. Read more at [Economist](#)

OPINION

Why Do We Honour Companies That Create Hunger?



Credit: TORSAR FILE PHOTO

For decades critics have identified Walmart Canada's employment practices — characterized by inadequate wages with few benefits — as contributing to household food insecurity (HFI). Walmart Canada also opposes unionization drives which would result in higher wages and benefits through the collective bargaining process. In a remarkable example of image management, Walmart Canada now brands itself as an important ally in reducing HFI by entering a partnership with the major food bank association in Canada, Food Banks Canada (FBC).

FBC describes itself as “a national charitable organization dedicated to helping Canadians living with food insecurity.” It provides support to a vast network of provincial associations, affiliate food banks and food agencies. While it expresses a concern with “reducing the need for food banks,” most of its activities involve fundraising to assist in the collection and distribution of food.

Food banks, however, are an ineffective means of reducing HFI as less than 25% of HFI Canadians receive food from food banks. Food bank drives and the attention they elicit from the media imply HFI is being managed, thereby reducing calls for public policy responses to deal with the inequitable distribution of resources, the ultimate source of HFI. Despite the public belief in the merit of such charitable institutions, many food bank clients experience stigma and shame. Food security advocates increasingly deny their value in reducing HFI and some call for them to be phased out. Read more at [the Hamilton Spectator](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY

Soil Nutrients Increase Long-Term Soil Carbon Gains Threefold On Retired Farmland



Credit: [iStock/Warren Price](#)

Abandoned agricultural lands often accumulate soil carbon (C) following depletion of soil C by cultivation. The potential for this recovery to provide significant C storage benefits depends on the rate of soil C accumulation, which, in turn, may depend on nutrient supply rates. We tracked soil C for almost four decades following intensive agricultural soil disturbance along an experimentally imposed gradient in nitrogen (N) added annually in combination with other macro- and micro-nutrients. Soil %C accumulated over the course of the study in unfertilized control plots leading to a gain of 6.1 Mg C ha^{-1} in the top 20 cm of soil. Nutrient addition increased soil %C accumulation leading to a gain of $17.8 \text{ Mg C ha}^{-1}$ in fertilized plots, nearly a threefold increase over the control plots. These results demonstrate that substantial increases in soil C in successional grasslands following agricultural abandonment occur over decadal timescales, and that C gain is increased by high supply rates of soil nutrients. In addition, soil %C continued to increase for decades under elevated nutrient supply, suggesting that short-term nutrient addition experiments underestimate the effects of soil nutrients on soil C accumulation. Read more at [Wiley](#).

SEE ALSO:

At the Counter: [The Biden Administration Will Pay Farmers More Money Not To Farm](#)

The Biden administration announced that it would expand a program that pays farmers to leave land fallow, part of a broader, government-wide effort to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030. The new initiative will incentivize farmers to take land out of production by raising rental rates and incentive payments.

Grassy Narrows Funding Pact For Mercury-Poisoning Care Home Spurs Joy And Bitter Memories



Credit: Logan Turner/CBC

As mid-afternoon approached in Grassy Narrows, Ontario on July 31, community members young and old watched Indigenous Services Canada Minister Marc Miller hop out of a car, flanked by aides. He was there to announce [nearly \\$69 million in funding](#) to provide long-term care and services at a treatment centre that, once built, will provide specialized treatment to people in the First Nation suffering from mercury poisoning. That's in addition to the \$19.5 million previously announced in April 2020 to build the facility, which is targeted to open in 2023. It's an announcement that's been decades in the making.

During the 1960s and early '70s, the Dryden chemical plant at the Reed Paper mill upstream of Grassy Narrows dumped 9,000 kilograms of mercury into the English-Wabigoon River. The fish were full of this poison, and the people from Grassy Narrows, who relied on the fish as a staple in their diet, were found to have the chemical element in their bodies.

Ingested mercury "bioaccumulates," meaning it can pass from one generation to the next — from mother to child — through the placenta. Mercury poisoning causes a range of physical and mental health impacts, including tremors, headaches, neuromuscular effects, memory loss and others.

So while the recent funding announcement for the home was reason for celebration in the First Nation, it also served as a reminder of the long, hard fight for access to necessary health care and the lives lost along the way. Read more at [CBC](#)

Quote Of The Week



Greenland is experiencing its most significant melting event of the year as temperatures in the Arctic surge. The amount of ice that melted on July 26 alone would be enough to cover the entire state of Florida in two inches of water. It's the third instance of extreme melting in the past decade.

Greenland lost more than 8.5 billion tons of surface mass on July 26, and 18.4 billion tons from July 23-30, according to the Denmark Meteorological Institute. While that week's total ice loss is not as extreme as a similar event in 2019 — a [record melt year](#) — the area of the ice sheet that's melting is larger.

As human-caused climate change warms the planet, ice loss has increased rapidly. According to a recent study published in the [journal Cryosphere](#), Earth has lost a staggering 28 trillion tonnes of ice since the mid-1990s.

"In the past decade, we've already seen that surface melting in Greenland has become both more severe and more erratic," said Thomas Slater, a glaciologist at the University of Leeds. "As the atmosphere continues to warm over Greenland, events such as yesterday's extreme melting will become more frequent."

In 2019, Greenland shed roughly [532 billion tons](#) of ice into the sea. During that year, an unexpectedly hot spring and a [July heat wave](#) caused almost the entire ice sheet's surface to begin melting. Global sea level rose permanently by 1.5 millimetres as a result. Melting from Greenland is expected to raise global sea level between 2 and 10 centimetres by the

end of the century. Massive ice sheets can melt rapidly when the air temperature is warm. But warmer ocean water is also eroding the ice sheet around the edges. As humans release heat-trapping greenhouse gas, the warming atmosphere thaws the fresh white ice — which reflects the sun's energy back into space — on the surface. That exposes the darker ice below which absorbs solar energy and causes more melting.

"While such events are concerning, the science is clear," Slater said. "Meaningful climate targets and action can still limit how much the global sea level will rise this century, reducing the damage done by severe flooding to people and infrastructure around the world."

Read more at CNN

Upcoming Events

- September 16-18, 2021: [North American Refugee Health Conference \(NARHC\)](#) (Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto). This year's conference will be offered completely online.
- September 20 – December 3, 2021: [Humanitarian Water Engineering Intensive Online Course \(Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research, York University, Toronto - Registration closes September 3\)](#)
- September 27 - October 1, 2021: [12th European Congress On Tropical Medicine And International Health: Global Challenges In Health, Migration And Equity](#)
- Sept. 29 – Oct. 1, 2021: [Net Zero Festival by Business Green \(London and Online\)](#)
- October 6-8, 2021: [Public Health 2021: Annual conference of the Canadian Public Health Association](#)
- November 1-12, 2021: [2020/2021 UN Climate Change Conference UNFCCC COP26](#) - Postponed in 2020 and now to be held November 1-12, 2021 (Glasgow, Scotland).
- November 11, 2021: [Evidenced Based Research Being Carried Out in Low and Middle Income Countries](#) ADAPT will host their second online conference for Physios in Global Health.
- April 1-3, 2022: CUGH 2022 Global Health Conference- Hybrid: [Healthy People, Healthy Planet, Social Justice](#) (Los Angeles, California). Virtual Satellite Sessions: March 21-25, 2022; In-person Satellite Sessions: March 31, 2022

FYI#1 SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA

Let's Keep The Vaccine Misinformation Problem In Perspective



Credit: SAM WHITNEY; GETTY IMAGES

With COVID cases surging in parts of the United States and [vaccinations](#) proceeding at a crawl, all eyes are on social media platforms. Many people, particularly some Democrats in Washington, appear to believe that online misinformation is at the heart of the flagging vaccination campaign. President Joe Biden summed up the mood when he suggested that Facebook was “killing people,” kicking off weeks of frenzied coverage. (He later clarified that he was referring to the purveyors of misinformation, not Facebook itself.) Then, late last week, Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota introduced a bill that would strip away [Section 230 immunity](#) for vaccine content promoted by social media algorithms.

The Klobuchar bill is an apt mascot for the confused state of discourse over misinformation. Because it would direct the government to decide what counts as misinformation and then treat content differently on that basis, it would probably violate the First Amendment. Of course, Klobuchar’s proposal will never become law; it is what’s known as a messaging bill. And the message seems to be that, in

order to close the vaccination gap and finally bring the pandemic to a close, social media platforms just need to *do something*.

SEE ALSO:

At the Daily Kos: [The New York Times Profiles The 'Most Influential' Purveyor Of Online COVID Vaccine Misinformation \(Joseph Mercola\)](#)

Read more at Wired

FYI #2

Everyone Will Lose Unless Humanity Makes 'Peace With The Planet', Declares Guterres



Credit: UN News

"We will all be losers if we don't achieve peace with the planet", [Secretary-General António Guterres told](#) a webinar ahead of the [International Day for Biological Diversity](#). "We should all be advocates for nature". Nature sustains life and provides opportunities, services and solutions, he explained, noting that "a healthy planet is critical for achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)".

Yet, biodiversity is declining at an "unprecedented and alarming rate", and the pressures are intensifying, he warned. "We have failed to meet any of our internationally agreed biodiversity targets", the UN chief said.

He said one million species are at risk of extinction; ecosystems are disappearing “before our eyes”; deserts are spreading, and wetlands are being lost. Every year, 10 million hectares of forests are lost, oceans are overfished and “choking with plastic waste” as the carbon dioxide they absorb is acidifying the seas, bleaching and killing coral reefs, he added.

And the total annual international public finance for nature is significantly less than the subsidies causing its degradation. “We are depleting resources faster than nature can replenish them”, the UN chief continued.

[Read more at UN News](#)

FYI #3

The Planetary Emergency: What Is It And How Healthcare Workers Can Take Action



Credit: Katie Bell Photography

Are you a healthcare professional concerned about the planetary health emergency? Do you want to find out what you can do to take climate action? Read on to learn about the planetary emergency, why health professionals should get involved, and how you can take action.

Over the last couple of years the work of Greta Thunberg and many other concerned individuals and organisations have highlighted that, despite the rhetoric and multiple international climate summits, since 1980 global emissions

have doubled. We have removed about half the wild birds, mammals, fish, invertebrates and insects on our planet.

The Centre for Sustainable Healthcare fully supports the calls for for change and declarations of [climate emergency](#). It supports moving the net zero target for emissions to 2030 (from 2050).

[Read More Sustainable Health Care](#)

FYI #4

How Canada's Biggest Bank Is Funding The Global Climate Crisis

In private, RBC continues to pour billions into oil, gas, and coal, making climate chaos worse.

RBC PUMPED MORE THAN

C\$208 BILLION INTO FOSSIL FUELS

since the Paris Climate Agreement was signed.

RBC STILL FUNDS COAL

C\$14 BILLION IN NEW COAL FUNDING

The world's 12th biggest funder of coal.

RBC IS THE

WORLD'S 5TH LARGEST FOSSIL FUEL FUNDER

and the biggest fossil bank in Canada.

Credit: RBC Revealed

RBC is a global banking giant, and Canada's second-largest company. It serves 17 million customers with a smile, commits to "creating a positive social impact," and

promises a bright future for local communities.

RBC says all the right things. **But its climate and human rights practices are dead wrong.**

[Read more at RBC Revealed](#)

FYI #5: AUGUST READING - NEW BOOK

Spike: The Virus v The People - The Inside Story



Credit: Book Cover

The Coronavirus pandemic has devastated lives and livelihoods around the world - and continues to do so. These personal tragedies will, and must, be told and heard. There is, however, also a truthful and objective scientific narrative to be written about how the virus played out and how the world set about dealing with

it. Spike is that story - from the inside. Its author, Jeremy Farrar, is one of the UK's leading scientists and a member of the SAGE emergency committee.

As head of the Wellcome Trust, and an expert in emerging infectious diseases, Jeremy Farrar was one of the first people in the world to hear about a mysterious new respiratory disease in China - and to learn that it could readily spread between people. Farrar describes how it feels as one of the key scientists at the sharp end of a fast-moving situation, when complex decisions must be made quickly amid great uncertainty. His book casts light on the UK government's claims to be 'following the science' in its response to the virus, and is informed not just by Farrar's views but by interviews with other top scientists and political figures.

Farrar, who has spent his career on the frontlines of epidemics including Nipah virus in Malaysia, bird flu in Vietnam and Ebola in West Africa, also reflects on the wider issues of Covid-19: the breath-taking scientific advances in creating tests, treatments and vaccines; the challenge to world leaders to respond for the global good and the need to address inequalities that hold back success against the virus. All these shape how the world ultimately fares not just against Covid-19, but against all the major health challenges we face globally.

[Read More at Good Reads](#)

FYI#6: SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION

China Makes Mental Health Courses Compulsory For Undergraduates



Credit: MSH International

China is making mental health courses compulsory for undergraduates, becoming one of the first countries in the world to do so, over growing concern particularly in the wake of [lengthy lockdowns](#) that have confined undergraduates to campuses.

A [notice from the Ministry of Education](#) puts mental health on a par with other compulsory courses such as English and Marxist theory and states that 32 to 36 hours should be dedicated to tuition. Student advisers should also pursue master's degrees in psychology, the notice says.

Read More at Times Higher Education

ENDSHOTS

**Sunset Cruise on the "Chippewa III" Around Parry Sound
Parry Sound, Ontario**

August 13, 2021

Amid Latest World and Canadian COVID-19 Stats & Charts



(Source: Parry Sound Cruise Lines)

Coronavirus Cases:

210,546,968

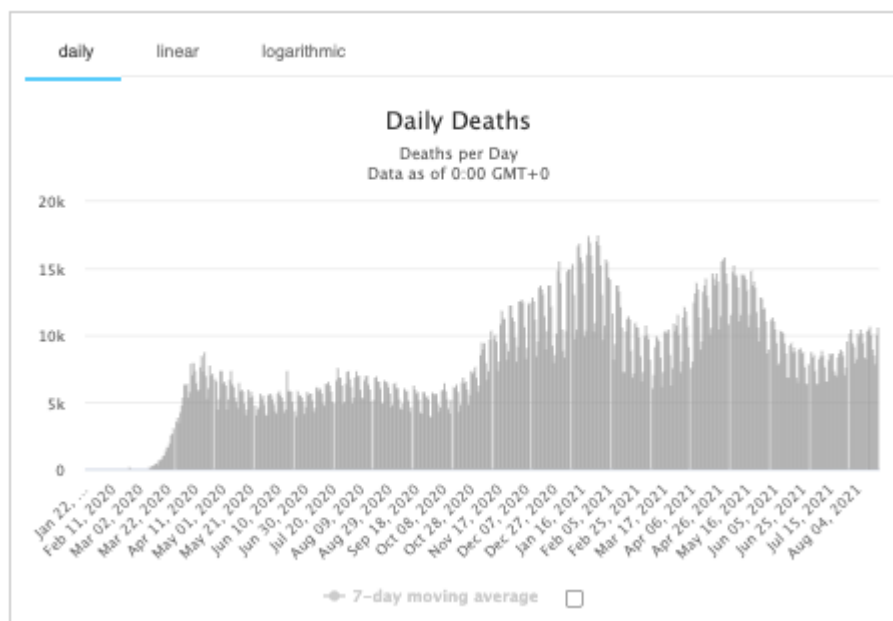
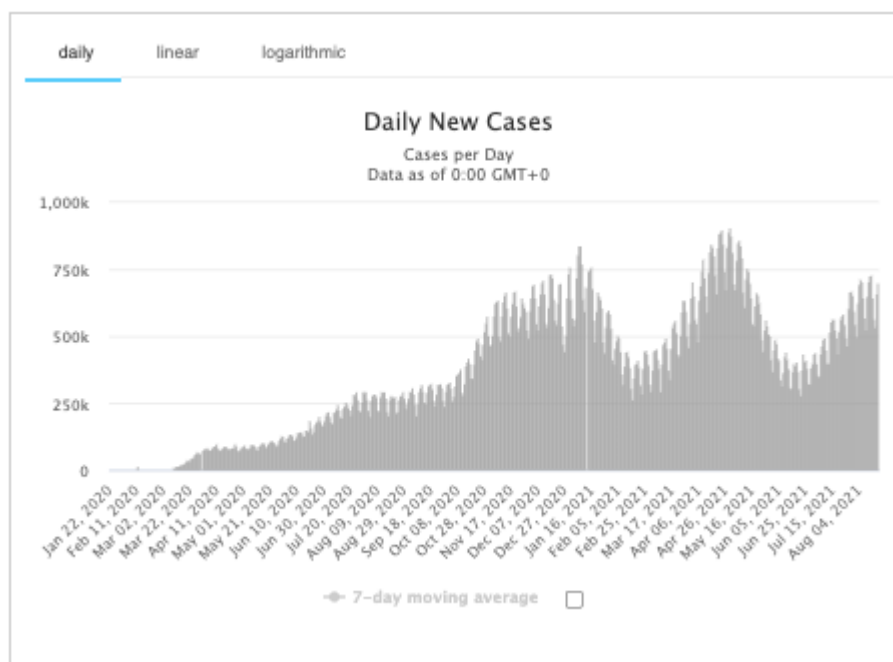
[view by country](#)

Deaths:

4,412,529

Recovered:

188,599,250



Source above: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>



COVID-19 CASES, DEATHS & VACCINATIONS (August 19, 2021) below:
Source:https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/mapping-spread-new-coronavirus/?itid=sf_coronavirus

More than
4,399,000
people have died from
the coronavirus worldwide

More than **210 million** cases have been reported.



Where the virus is surging

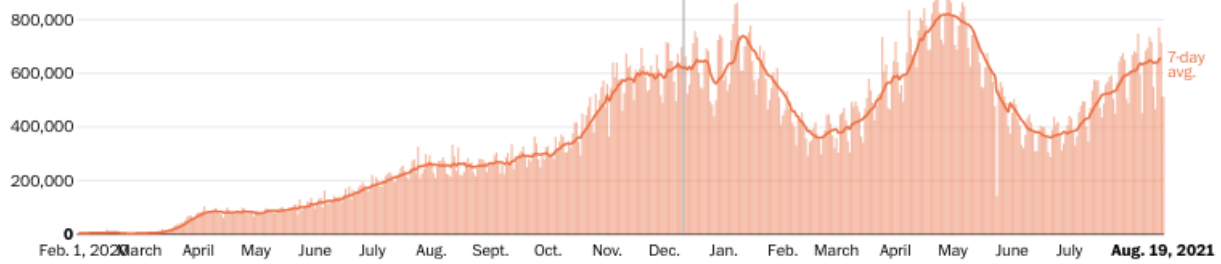


New daily reported cases across the world

Deaths

Cases

At least 209,781,262 have been reported since Feb. 29, 2020.



Date specification:

Where the virus is surging

Deaths

Cases

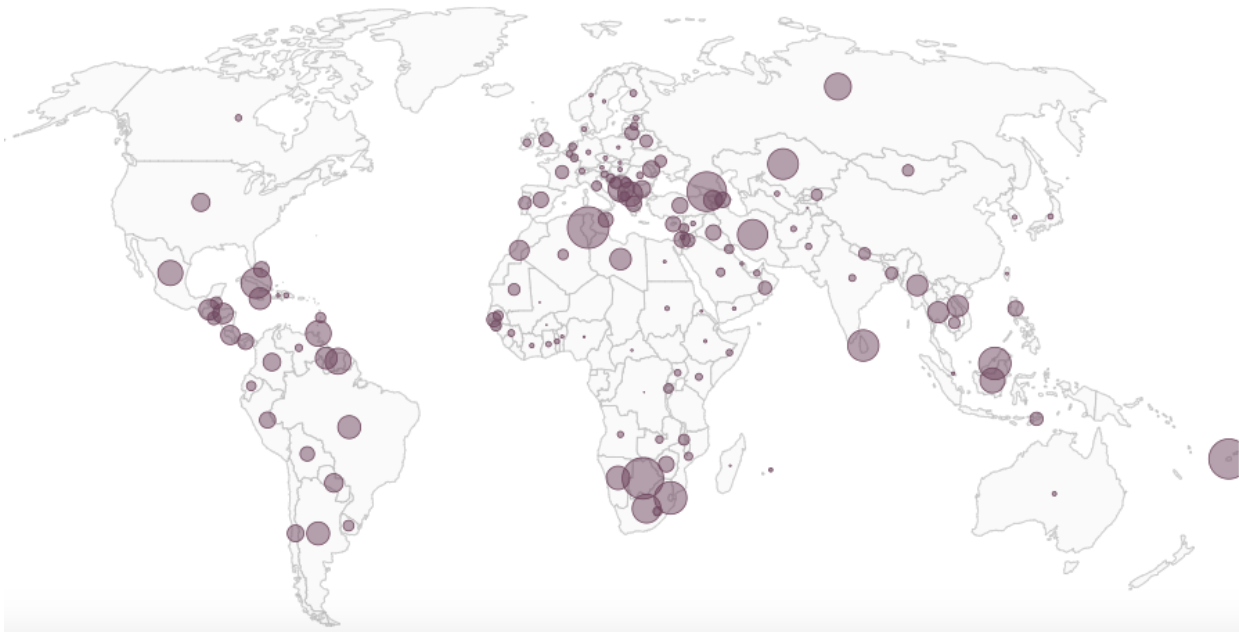
Adj. for population

Totals

Since last week

Cumulative

0.1 1 2
REPORTED DEATHS PER 100K

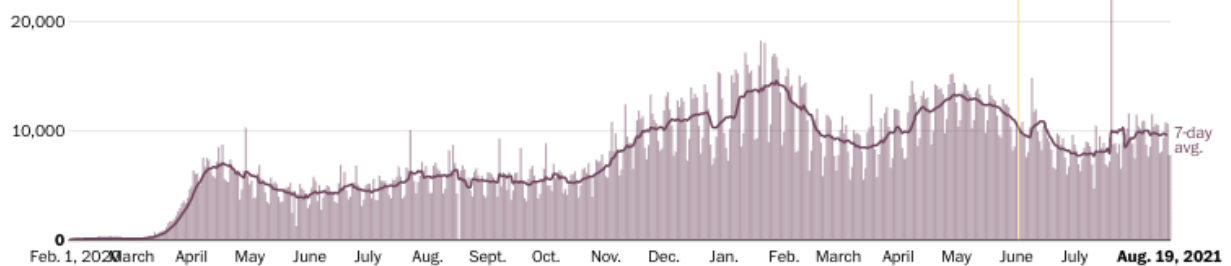


New daily deaths reported across the world

Deaths

Cases

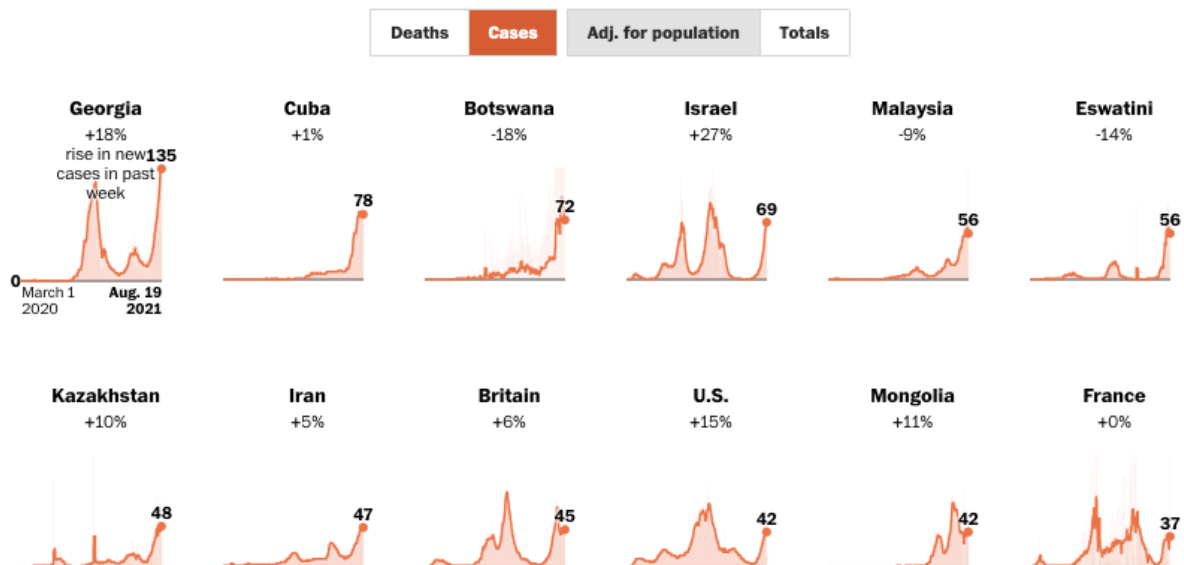
At least 4,399,166 have been reported since Feb. 29, 2020.





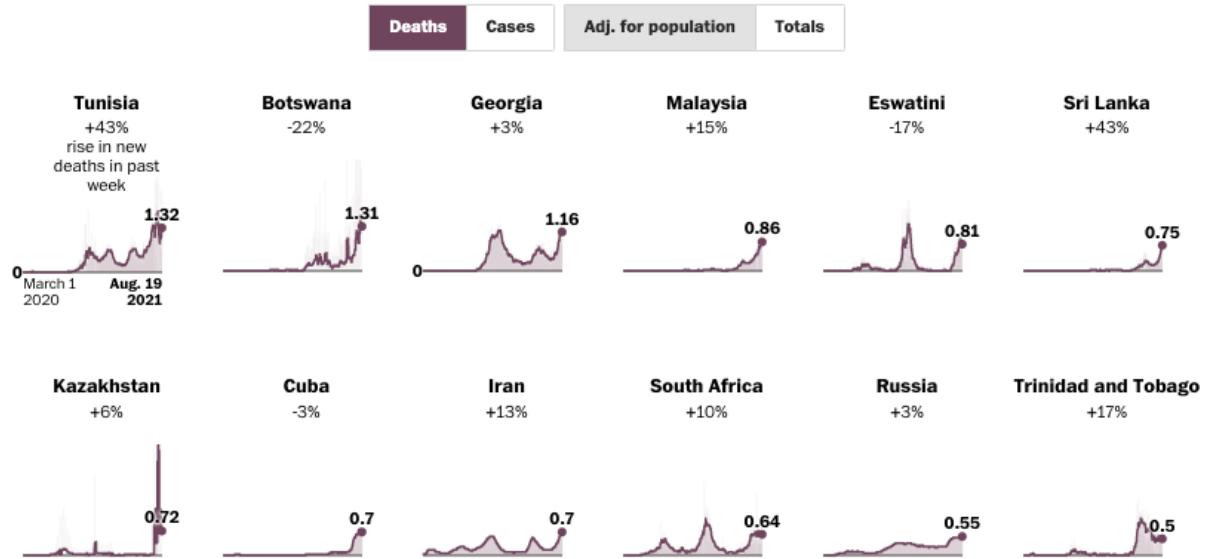
Global hot spots for reported cases per capita

— 7-day rolling average of daily new reported cases per 100,000 residents



Global hot spots for reported deaths per capita

— 7-day rolling average of daily new deaths per 100,000 residents



Global Vaccination Rates

Country	Total doses given per 100k	Pct. of pop. partially vaccinated	Pct. of pop. completed vaccination
UAE	179,178	84.1%	74.3%
Malta	178,284	92.7%	92.0%
Uruguay	149,682	76.2%	70.2%
Qatar	147,574	79.2%	68.3%
Singapore	146,096	77.1%	71.3%
Seychelles	145,912	75.0%	70.9%
Bahrain	143,182	66.4%	63.1%
Chile	141,331	75.2%	68.8%
Denmark	141,036	74.7%	67.1%
Canada	138,168	73.1%	65.0%
Israel	138,112	64.9%	60.0%
Belgium	136,615	72.4%	67.2%
China	135,945	—	—
Bhutan	135,699	73.5%	62.2%
Portugal	134,293	77.1%	66.4%
Britain	132,269	70.9%	61.3%
Spain	132,110	74.5%	64.3%
Iceland	132,075	76.2%	70.7%
Mongolia	131,923	68.9%	63.1%
Ireland	130,669	71.7%	63.6%
Netherlands	124,945	68.7%	60.8%
Italy	123,647	68.2%	57.8%
Greenland	122,307	68.9%	53.4%
France	122,073	69.5%	54.0%
Maldives	120,969	66.0%	54.9%

Luxembourg	120,791	64.6%	56.1%
Andorra	118,820	66.2%	52.7%
Germany	118,733	63.7%	58.2%
Austria	115,419	61.0%	57.0%
Finland	114,121	70.2%	43.9%
Norway	113,532	70.6%	42.9%
Monaco	113,079	62.8%	50.3%
Sweden	112,708	64.1%	48.6%
Liechtenstein	109,151	56.3%	53.5%
Switzerland	108,478	56.1%	50.4%
U.S.	108,013	60.0%	51.0%
Cuba	107,870	42.8%	26.9%
Lithuania	107,277	56.9%	50.4%
Czechia	103,940	54.8%	50.8%
Turkey	103,577	54.0%	40.9%
Greece	103,362	54.8%	51.9%
Mauritius	102,479	57.0%	45.5%
Cambodia	100,172	56.2%	46.0%
Dominican Republic	99,615	52.9%	41.7%
Saudi Arabia	96,125	61.6%	34.5%
Poland	93,569	49.8%	48.0%
Estonia	92,288	52.8%	39.5%
Malaysia	91,922	55.2%	36.8%
Japan	90,813	51.2%	39.6%
Ecuador	89,309	57.3%	32.0%
Cyprus	88,112	46.6%	41.5%
Slovenia	87,462	46.2%	41.3%

Panama	84,377	61.7%	22.7%
El Salvador	83,941	51.2%	32.7%
Fiji	83,735	60.0%	23.8%
Saint Kitts and Nevis	82,952	45.2%	37.8%
Argentina	82,856	59.6%	23.3%
Slovakia	81,417	42.8%	38.7%
Serbia	81,346	41.5%	39.8%
Morocco	80,345	46.5%	33.8%
Brazil	79,677	57.7%	24.2%
Croatia	78,244	41.4%	38.3%
Sri Lanka	77,604	54.9%	22.7%
Costa Rica	76,238	58.4%	17.8%
Latvia	75,362	43.0%	38.1%
Antigua and Barbuda	72,945	40.0%	32.9%
South Korea	65,731	47.0%	20.9%
Barbados	65,533	35.2%	30.3%
Colombia	63,952	41.7%	27.6%
Australia	62,656	40.5%	22.2%
Mexico	61,740	43.4%	23.4%
Kazakhstan	59,431	33.4%	26.0%
Oman	59,330	43.3%	16.0%
Azerbaijan	59,189	35.2%	24.0%
Jordan	58,933	32.7%	26.2%
Montenegro	58,630	31.8%	26.9%
Dominica	57,556	29.9%	27.6%
Trinidad and Tobago	57,406	33.1%	24.3%
Guyana	55,568	36.8%	18.8%

Canada is in 10th place globally for rate of vaccines given; U.S. is 37th

Doses of covid-19 vaccines administered per 100,000 residents

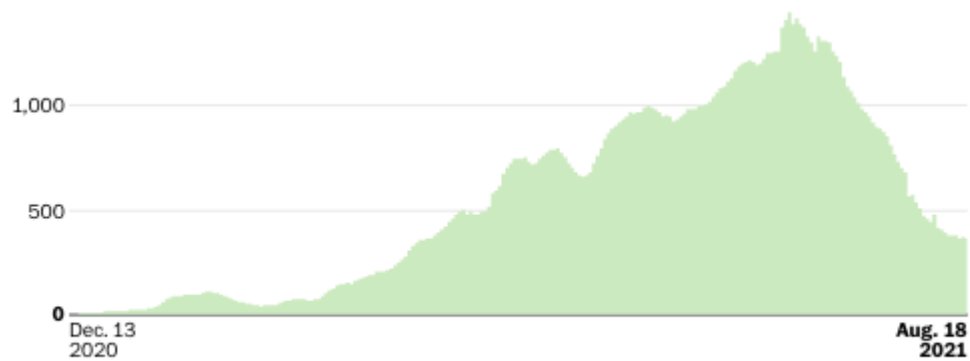
Adj. for population

Totals

Reported doses administered per day

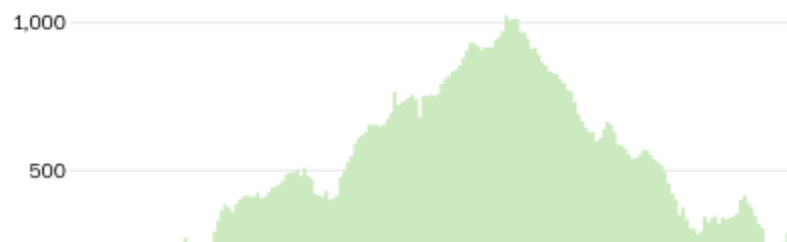
Show by

Canada



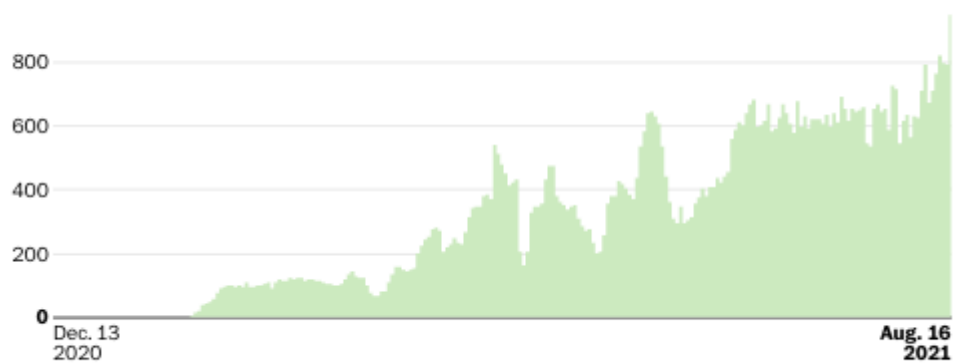
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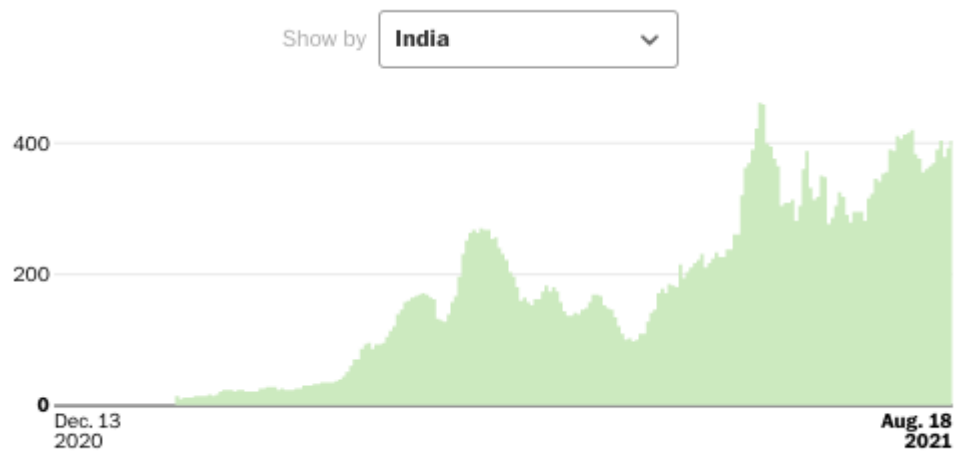
U.S.



Show by

Brazil



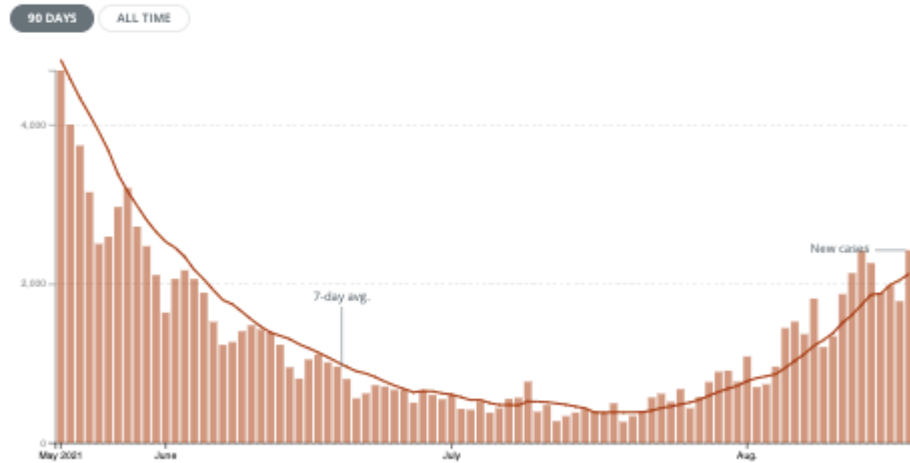


Source of Canadian Data Below (August 18, 2021):
<https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/coronavirustracker/>

Canada

Cases Deaths Hospitalizations ICU

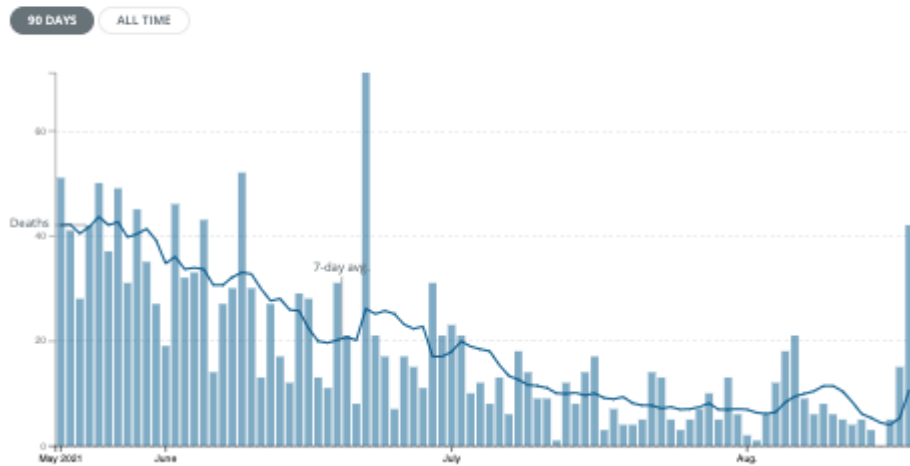
In Canada 1,460,175 cases have been reported.



Source: Public Health Agency of Canada.

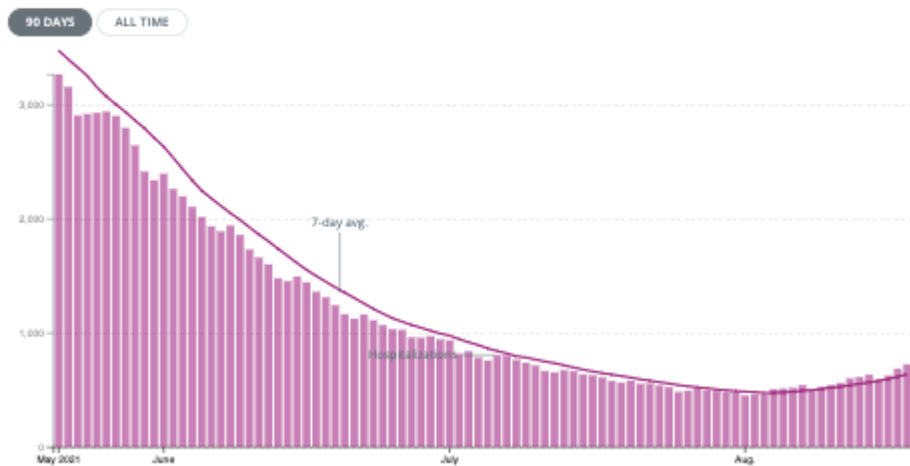
Cases Deaths Hospitalizations ICU

In Canada 26,761 deaths have been reported.

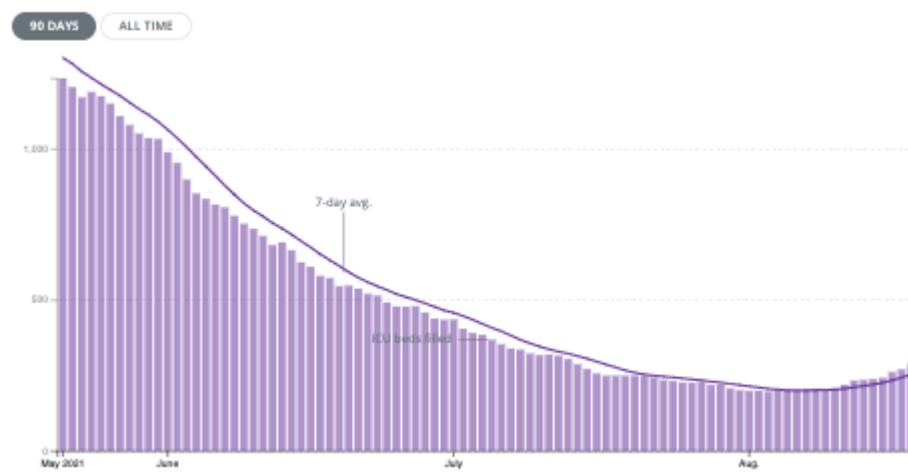


Cases Deaths Hospitalizations ICU

In Canada there are currently 723 people hospitalized.



In Canada there are currently 288 ICU beds filled.



In the past week in Canada...

New cases



There were 14,876 new cases, an increase of 41 per cent. That's 39.1 cases per 100,000 people.

Active cases



The number of active cases rose 53 per cent.

Deaths



There were 74 deaths, or 0.2 per 100,000 people, an increase of 1 per cent.

Hospitalizations



Hospitalizations rose 20 per cent and ICU beds filled rose 24 per cent.



Vaccines

The Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca-Oxford and Johnson & Johnson vaccines have been approved for use in Canada. Johnson & Johnson's is the first single-dose vaccine Health Canada has approved. The others require two doses for someone to be fully vaccinated.

Vaccinations Doses distributed

Region	Total doses given	Percentage of people given at least one dose	Percentage of people fully vaccinated
Canada	51,987,862	72.24%	64.39% <div></div>
Alberta	5,459,338	65.28%	57.78% <div></div>
British Columbia	7,265,222	74.59%	66.40% <div></div>
Manitoba	1,868,726	70.54%	64.63% <div></div>
New Brunswick	1,079,755	74.19%	63.87% <div></div>
Newfoundland and Labrador	752,000	79.23%	65.27% <div></div>
Nova Scotia	1,418,472	76.56%	68.27% <div></div>
Ontario	20,341,063	72.31%	65.54% <div></div>
Prince Edward Island	232,741	79.50%	66.12% <div></div>
Quebec	11,943,853	74.30%	64.98% <div></div>
Saskatchewan	1,453,199	65.56%	57.72% <div></div>
Northwest Territories	65,467	74.69%	70.36% <div></div>
Nunavut	43,628	59.02%	51.69% <div></div>
Yukon	64,398	78.32%	74.31% <div></div>

Source: CBC News.



Source of World Covid-19 Vaccination Data Below (August 19, 2021):
<https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/covid-vaccine-tracker-global-distribution/>

More Than 4.82 Billion Shots Given: Covid-19 Tracker

In the U.S., 359 million doses have been administered

Updated: August 18, 2021, 5:24 PM EDT



Vaccine Tracker

[Global](#) [U.S.](#) [U.S. Vaccine Demographics](#) [FAQ](#) [Covid-19 Tracker](#)

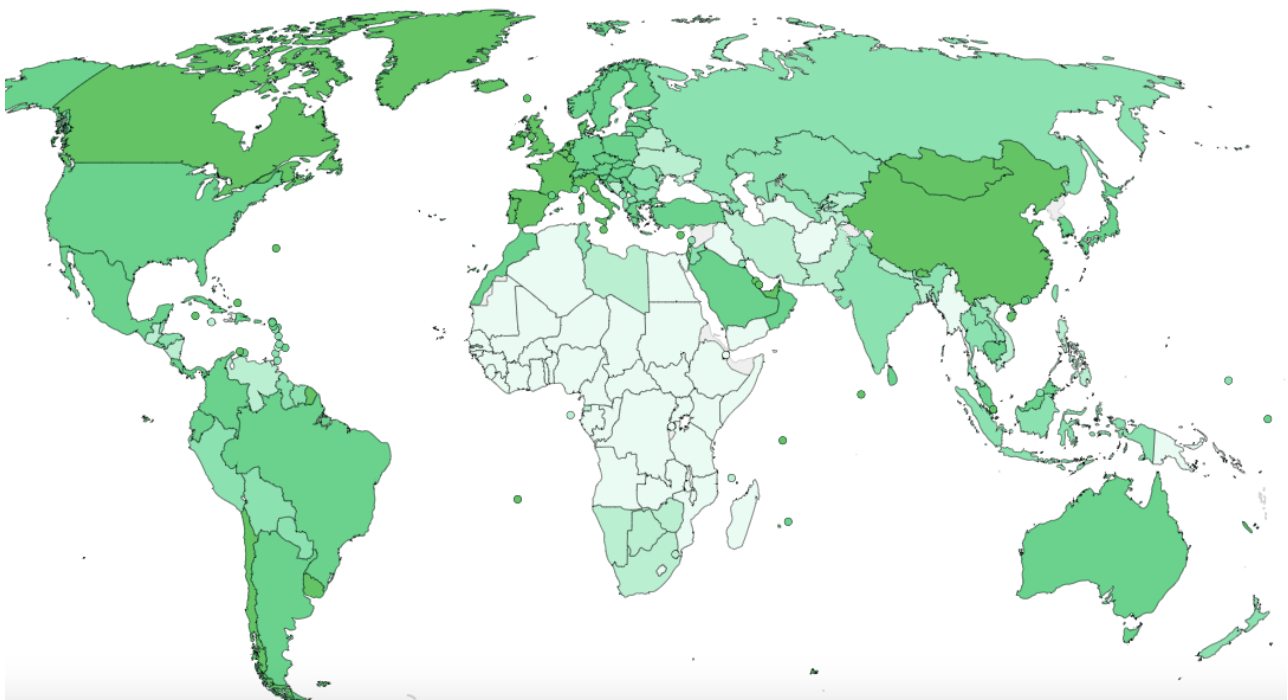
The biggest vaccination campaign in history is underway. More than **4.82 billion doses** have been administered across 183 countries, according to data collected by Bloomberg. The latest rate was roughly **37.5 million doses a day**.

In the U.S., **359 million doses** have been given so far. In the last week, an average of **774,118 doses per day** were administered.

World Map of Vaccinations

More than 4.82 billion doses have been administered—enough to fully vaccinate 31.4% of the global population

no data 5 15 30 60% of population covered



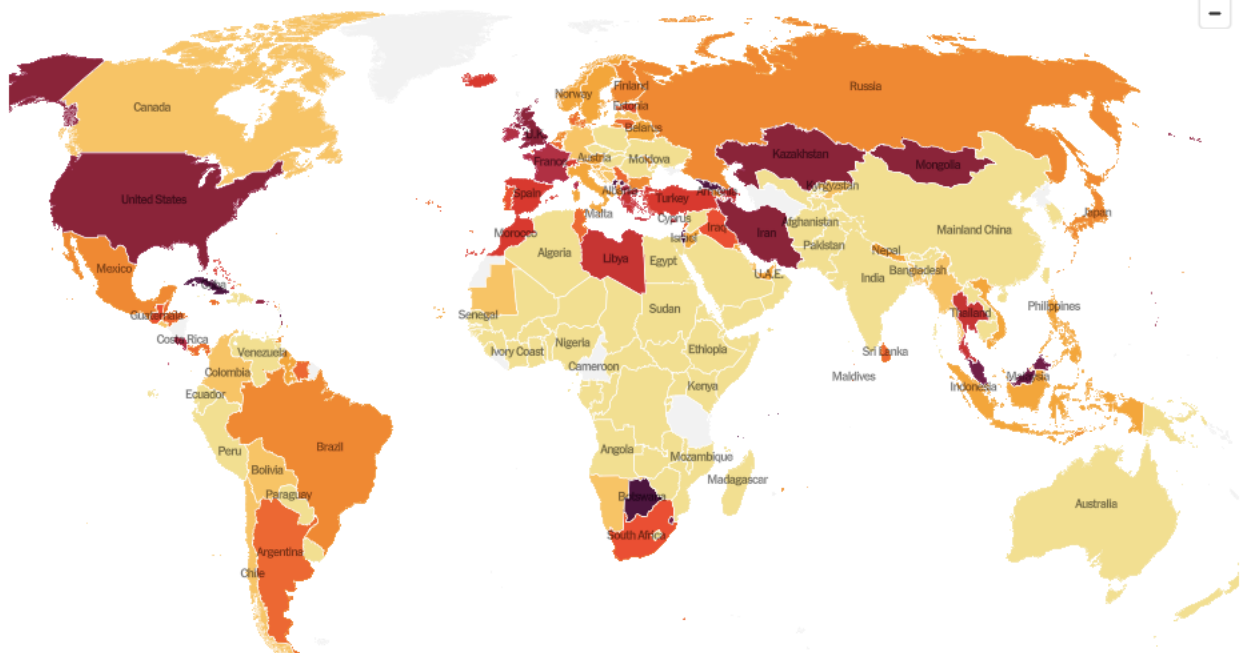
Enough doses have now been administered to fully vaccinate 31.4% of the global population—but the distribution has been lopsided. Countries and regions with the highest incomes are getting vaccinated more than 20 times faster than those with the lowest.



Source of World Covid-19 Data Below (August 19, 2021):
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/world/covid-cases.html>

Hot spots

AVERAGE DAILY CASES PER 100,000 PEOPLE IN PAST WEEK



Cases per capita

SHARE OF POPULATION WITH A REPORTED CASE

1 IN 80

1 IN 15

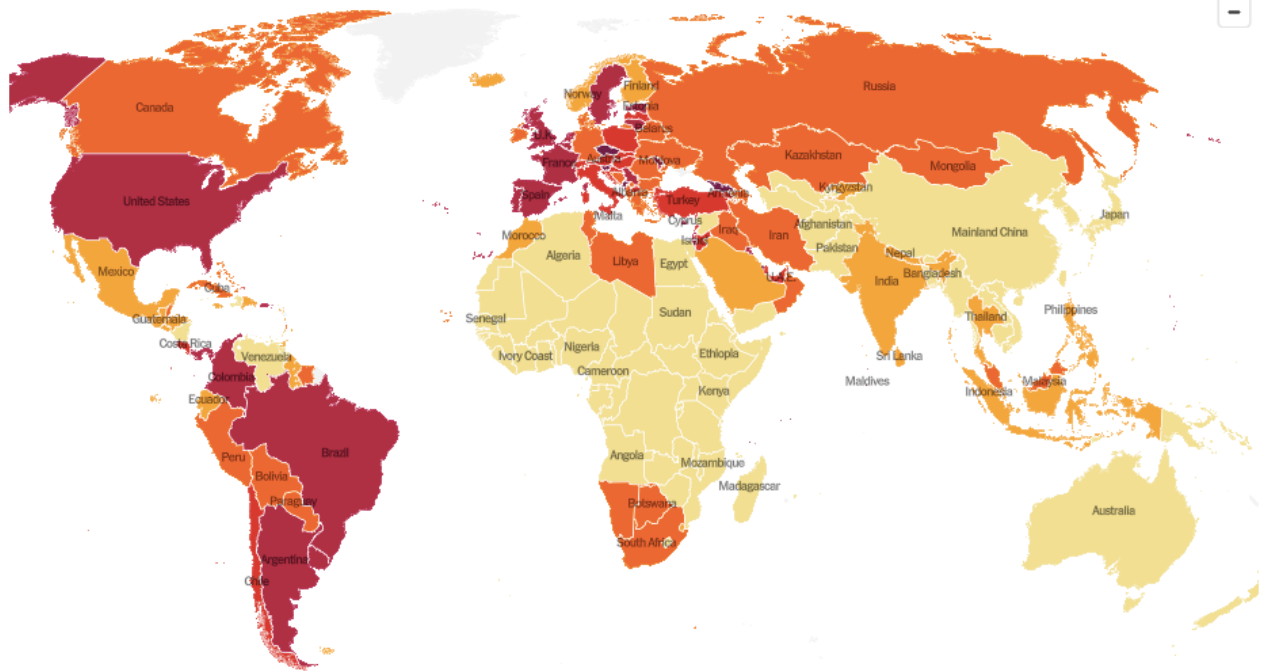
1 IN 8

FEW OR NO CASES



+

-

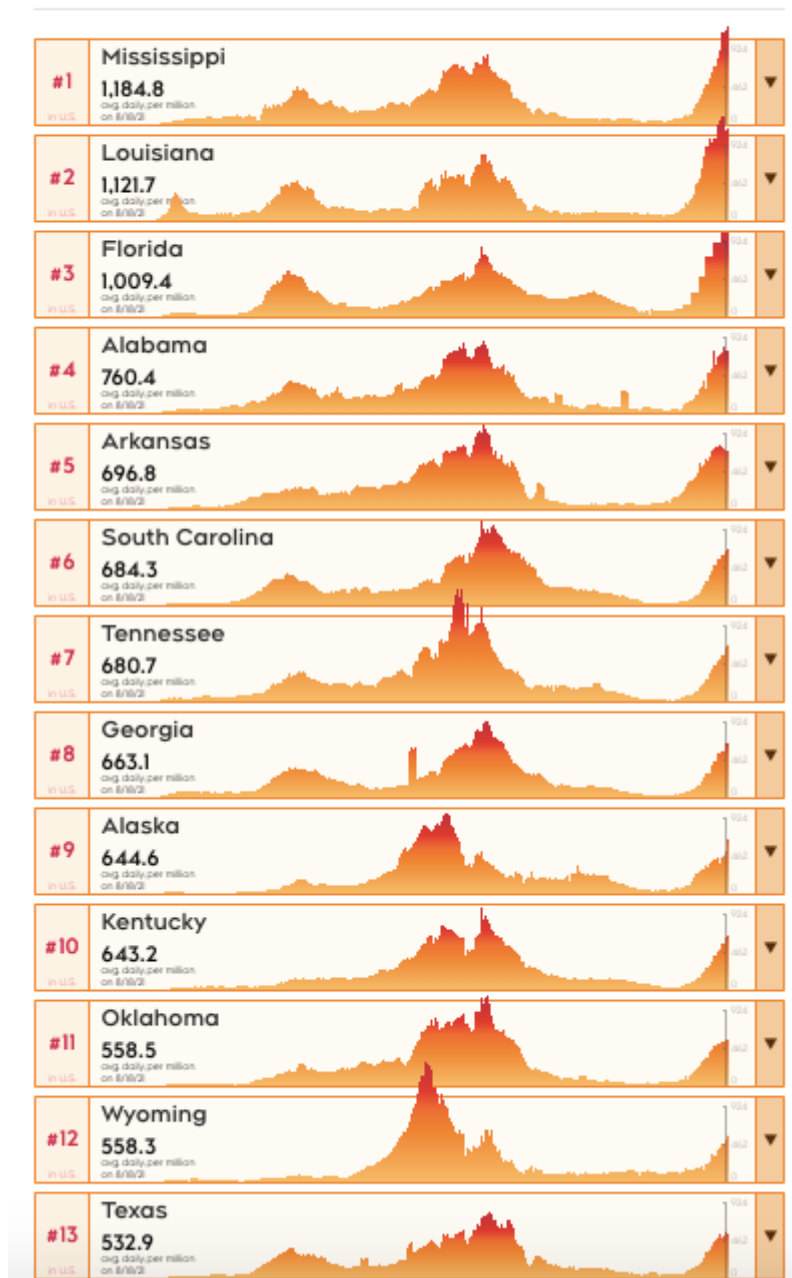


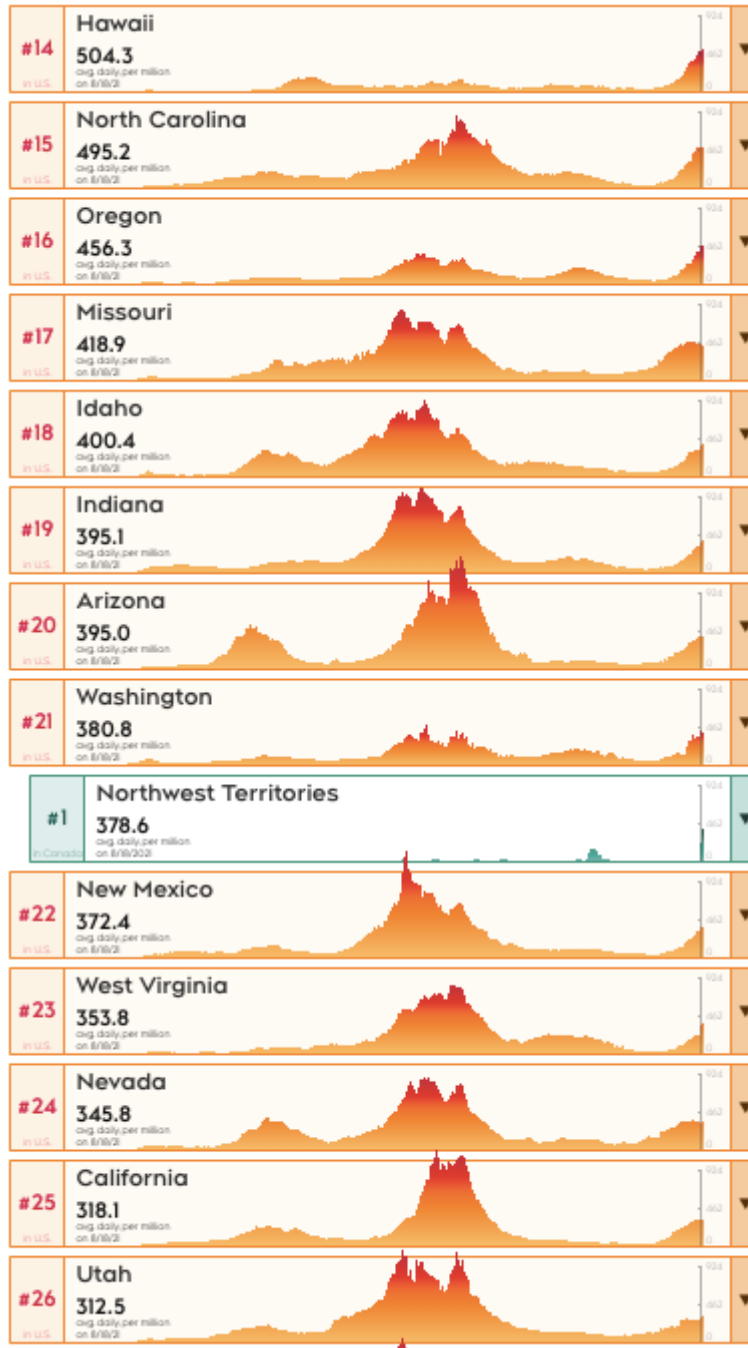
Source of Canadian and U.S. Comparative Data Below (Aug. 19, 2021):
<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/covid-19-in-the-u-s-how-do-canada-s-provinces-rank-against-american-states-1.5051033>

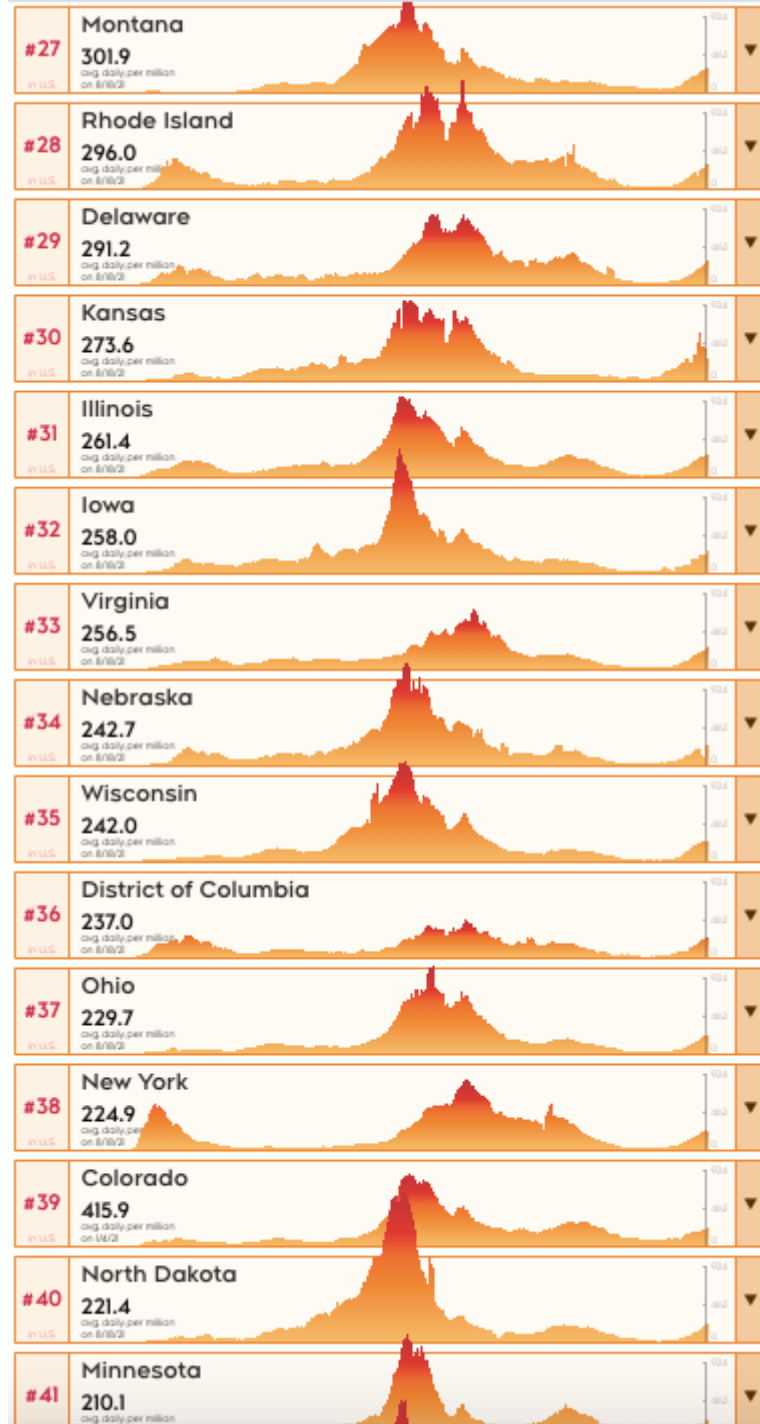
Comparing COVID-19 in states and provinces

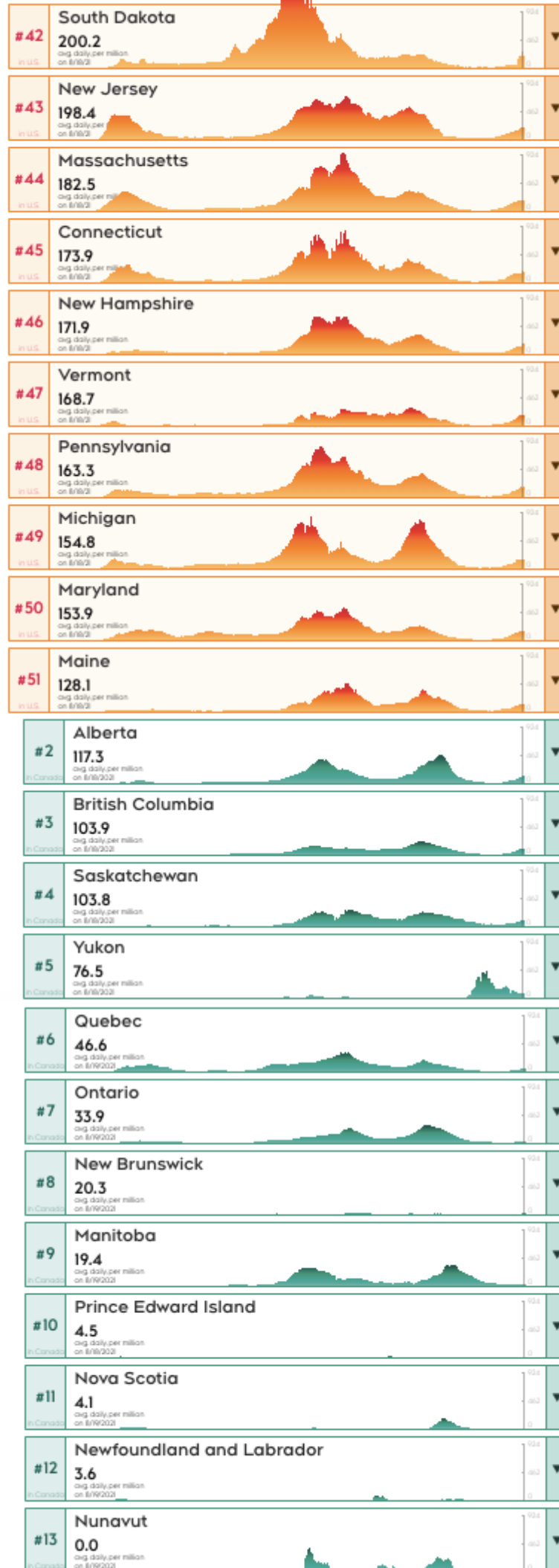
Showing 7-day avg. cases, per million

Ranked by highest current cases Scale: all same









U.S. data is collected daily from the [COVID-19 Data Repository](#) by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University. Canadian data is collected by CTV News based on daily provincial reports.



Photo Credits: David Zakus



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