



SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2021

PROMOTE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

We can all help prevent suicide. Every year, the Lifeline and other mental health organizations and individuals across the U.S. and around the world raise awareness of suicide prevention during September, National Suicide Prevention Month.

All month, mental health advocates, prevention organizations, survivors, allies, and community members unite to promote suicide prevention awareness.

KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES (Updated Aug. 19, 2021)

What You Need to Know

- **COVID-19 vaccines are effective at helping protect against severe disease and death from [variants of the virus](#) that causes COVID-19 currently circulating, including the Delta variant.**
- **[If you are fully vaccinated](#) you can resume many activities that you did before the pandemic, but you should wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an [area of substantial or high transmission](#) to maximize protection from the Delta variant and possibly spreading it to others.**
- **You may have [side effects](#) after vaccination. These are normal and should go away in a few days.**

- [Learn how to find a COVID-19 vaccine](#) so you can get it as soon as you can.

VARIANTS AND VACCINES

- FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines help protect against [Delta and other known variants](#).
- These vaccines are effective at keeping people from getting COVID-19, getting very sick, and dying.
- To maximize protection from the [Delta variant](#) and prevent possibly spreading it to others, you should wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an [area of substantial or high transmission](#) even if you are fully vaccinated.
- We don't know how effective the vaccines will be against new variants that may arise.

What we know

COVID-19 vaccines are effective against severe disease and death from variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 currently circulating in the United States, including the Delta variant.

- Infections happen in only a small proportion of people who are fully vaccinated, even with the Delta variant. When these infections occur among vaccinated people, they tend to be mild.
- If you are fully vaccinated and become infected with the Delta variant, you might be able to spread the virus to others.
- People with weakened immune systems, including people who take immunosuppressive medications, may not be protected even if fully vaccinated.

THE F.D.A. AUTHORIZED A THIRD DOSE OF COVID VACCINES FOR IMMUNOCOMPROMISED PEOPLE



The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday [authorized third doses](#) of Pfizer-BioNTech's and [Moderna's coronavirus vaccines](#) for some people with weakened immune systems, giving physicians more leeway to protect those who did not respond enough to an initial series of shots.

The authorization, in the form of updates to the existing emergency use authorizations for the two vaccines, applies to people who received solid organ transplants and others with similarly compromised immune systems, the F.D.A. said.

The agency's decision came a day before the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's independent advisory committee was set to consider and vote on whether to recommend the move. The committee is likely to give its approval, and the C.D.C. would follow with its own endorsement of the additional doses.

"The F.D.A. is especially cognizant that immune-compromised people are particularly at risk for severe disease," Dr. Janet Woodcock, the acting F.D.A. commissioner, said in a statement. "After a thorough review of the available data, the F.D.A. determined that this small, vulnerable group may benefit from a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna Vaccines."

The authorization of the third doses kicks off what promises to be a busy next stretch for federal vaccine regulators — and a new phase of the nation's inoculation drive. By the start of next month, the agency is expected to grant [full approval to Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine](#). That will most likely prompt a wave of vaccination mandates from companies and organizations that waited to require vaccination until the F.D.A. fully cleared a vaccine.

MASK ORDER UPDATE: Per Dr. Sam Page, Democrat for St. Louis County Executive, St. Louis County court considered the impact of a Council vote on the public health order calling for masks to be worn indoors; the court has yet to issue its final ruling, but promised to do so as quickly as possible. To recap: after County Department of Public Health issued a public health order requiring masking indoors, Missouri's Attorney General sued to invalidate that order, and its enforcement was suspended while a St. Louis County court considered the full case. Late last month, the County Council voted 4-0 to support the Department of Public Health's mask order. (Watch a replay of the meeting here: <https://youtu.be/nQaKUkv4A4Q>).

Prior to the vote, the Council held a special meeting devoted to masking. (You can watch a replay of that hearing here: <https://youtu.be/lauakbAyXWM>.) One of the witnesses was Dr. Hilary Babcock, the Medical Director of

Infection Prevention and Occupational Infection Prevention for BJC Healthcare. She is a past president of the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America and co-chair of the CDC's Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC). Dr Babcock specializes in prevention of infection transmission in healthcare settings, both operationally and through her research, with a particular focus on respiratory viral infections. Her research has focused on healthcare worker and patient risks for infections, including studies of aerosol generation and risks for pathogen transmission in collaboration with engineering partners. Dr. Babcock explained that the underlying science and data showing the efficacy of mask wearing is undisputed, and the issue is not controversial within the medical community. The Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization, American Medical Association, American Hospital Association, American Nurses Association, Infectious Diseases Society of America, American Academy of Pediatrics, Missouri State Medical Association, Missouri Hospital Association, and Missouri Nurses Association (to name just a few) have all publicly supported the efficacy of masks in combating the spread of COVID-19, and encouraged their use in community settings where transmission is high.

Regardless of your vaccination status, the CDC recommends wearing masks in public places, in areas of high COVID-19 transmission (St. Louis County is such an area).

NEW DPH (DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH) BREIF ON COVID-19 IN SCHOOLS RELEASED: Data compiled in the new DPH Brief on COVID-19 in Schools shows that the average rate of new cases in kids ages 10-14 increased by 44% in the County. Additionally, the percent positivity rate in that age group is about six points higher than the community average. As Dr. Page has expressed, "These numbers reveal that the level of transmission among our children is much too high... It's crucial that parents and educators take steps now to stop the transmission of COVID in schools."

Those steps are clear: vaccinate if eligible, wear a mask, get tested if exposed, stay home if experiencing cold symptoms, and follow quarantine rules. As Dr. Page reiterated: "We all have the same goal to keep our kids in school... Let's all work together."

DPH will release reports on youth COVID transmission every two weeks. Read the first Brief on COVID-19 in Schools at <https://stlouiscountymo.gov/st->

[louis-county-departments/public-health/covid-19/covid-19-data-reports/brief-on-covid-19-in-schools/](https://www.stlouiscountymissouri.gov/louis-county-departments/public-health/covid-19/covid-19-data-reports/brief-on-covid-19-in-schools/)

DR. PAGE SIGNS EVICTION MORATORIUM: The Supreme Court recently rejected the federal eviction moratorium that, due in large measure to Congresswoman Cori Bush's advocacy, had been extended until October 3rd. (Read more here: [Eviction moratorium extended, advocates hope to speed aid process](#)). Last week, Dr. Page asked the County Council to **immediately** implement an eviction moratorium to keep people in their homes while the County continues to continue to process applications and relief for landlords and renters.

In a letter to the County Council, Dr. Page explained that an eviction moratorium will buy the County time to get more federal rental assistance funds out the door, which will help both landlords and tenants. County employees are working through the weekends to get federal emergency rental assistance funds out the door and so far, \$9.58 million has been issued, assisting 1,353 families.

As Dr. Page said in his letter to the Council, "While we are doing better than most parts of the country in helping those facing homelessness, the application process based on Treasury Department guidelines has made it difficult to get the funds out the door at the rapid-fire pace we would like." However, the Treasury Department has changed its guidelines to make it easier to connect the funds to landlords. The County "anticipate[s] this will expedite the process and keep our struggling residents in a stable living situation." (See the letter at <https://stlouisco.civicweb.net/document/36584>, page 94).

During a Council meeting, the Council passed the eviction moratorium, which will go into effect in less than two weeks. It will sunset on October 3. The work continues apace to get relief to renters and landlords.

The County is partnering with St. Louis County Library, St. Patrick Center, and The Salvation Army St. Louis to help people apply for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The following locations will provide help with the application process: Bridgeton Trails Branch (3455 McKelvey Rd. ^{SEP} Bridgeton, MO. 63044 Fridays: 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.); Florissant Valley Branch (195 New Florissant Road, S. Florissant, MO 63031 Fridays: 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.); Lewis & Clark Branch–(9909 Lewis-Clark Blvd. ^{SEP} St. Louis, MO 63135 ^{SEP} Tuesdays: 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.); Natural Bridge Branch (7606 Natural Bridge Rd. ^{SEP} St. Louis, MO. 63121 Tuesdays: 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.); Weber Road Branch (4444

Weber Road ^{SEP} St. Louis, MO 63123 Mondays: 1:00– 4:00 p.m.). Applications can also be completed online here: <https://stlouisco.onlinepha.com/>

TAX ROUNDTABLE – HOW LONG IS IT TAKING TO PROCESS A TAX RETURN:
17 – 20 weeks based on the information below.

2020 tax returns could possibly take up to 20 weeks to be processed if there are issues with the submitted forms (W-2s, direct deposit, IRS corrected the EIP amounts that were listed on the original return, etc).