

# *U.S. COVID cases surpass 23 million with over 384,000 deaths*

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Washington, January 14 (RHC)-- The total number of COVID-19 cases in the United States has surpassed 23 million as of Wednesday evening, according to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University. The case count had risen to 23,047,409 with 384,277 deaths, as of 19:22 Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Tuesday, according to the CSSE tally.

The United States remains the worst-hit nation with the world's highest caseload and death toll, and the situation keeps worsening. Data from the Johns Hopkins University shows that for the first 13 days of 2021, the country has seen surging caseload topping 23 million with pace of 1 million new cases in every four days. Meanwhile, the daily new deaths have remained high at over 3,300 for the past week, more than three times higher than that of mid-November last year, and the death peak of 4,327 occurred on Tuesday.

California has been the hardest hit by the pandemic, with more than 2.81 million confirmed cases, while Texas has more than 2 million. Moreover, caseload surpassed 1.51 million in Florida and 1 million in New York and Illinois.

In the heavily affected Los Angeles County in California, the most populous county in the United States, deaths from COVID-19 increased 1,000 percent since last November, according to the local health department.

The medical system in Los Angeles is on the verge of collapse due to extreme pressure brought by surging infections. Now the whole country has less than 700 available hospital beds while 10 people test positive for the virus every minute. Barbara Ferrer, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, said that the country is facing the "worst disaster" in decades.

The surge in the death toll has overwhelmed the local hospitals and the funeral homes, with some families even unable to give their departed saints decent funerals in time.

In the epicenter of the county, the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital, a disproportionate number of ethnic minorities deaths shows how they are left vulnerable when facing with the deadly virus.

While the African Americans, who make up 13.4 percent of the U.S. population, account for 16.4 percent of all deaths in the pandemic, the white people account for 76.3 percent of the U.S. population and only 60.9 percent of the deaths.

According to the latest report released by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York on Thursday, poor protogenetic health condition, low insurance coverage and high population density have led to more harms for the ethnic minorities and low-income groups in the United States. However, large scale protests and riots remain active amid surging cases as the country is expecting a transfer of governments recently.

Health experts warn that last week's riots on the Capitol Hill could mean a super-spread event, as the members of congress were forced to hide in an enclosed environment when many of them didn't wear masks.

Congressman Brad Schneider on Tuesday announced that he tested positive for COVID-19 as "many of his Republican counterparts who were in the same room with him refused to wear masks and exposed the others in danger." Schneider is the third congressmen contracted the disease during the incident.

According to the model prediction of COVID-19 made by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington earlier this month, the United States has entered the most severe phase of the pandemic, and is expected to see 150,000 deaths in February, much higher than that in last December when the country had seen record deaths of 76,000.

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