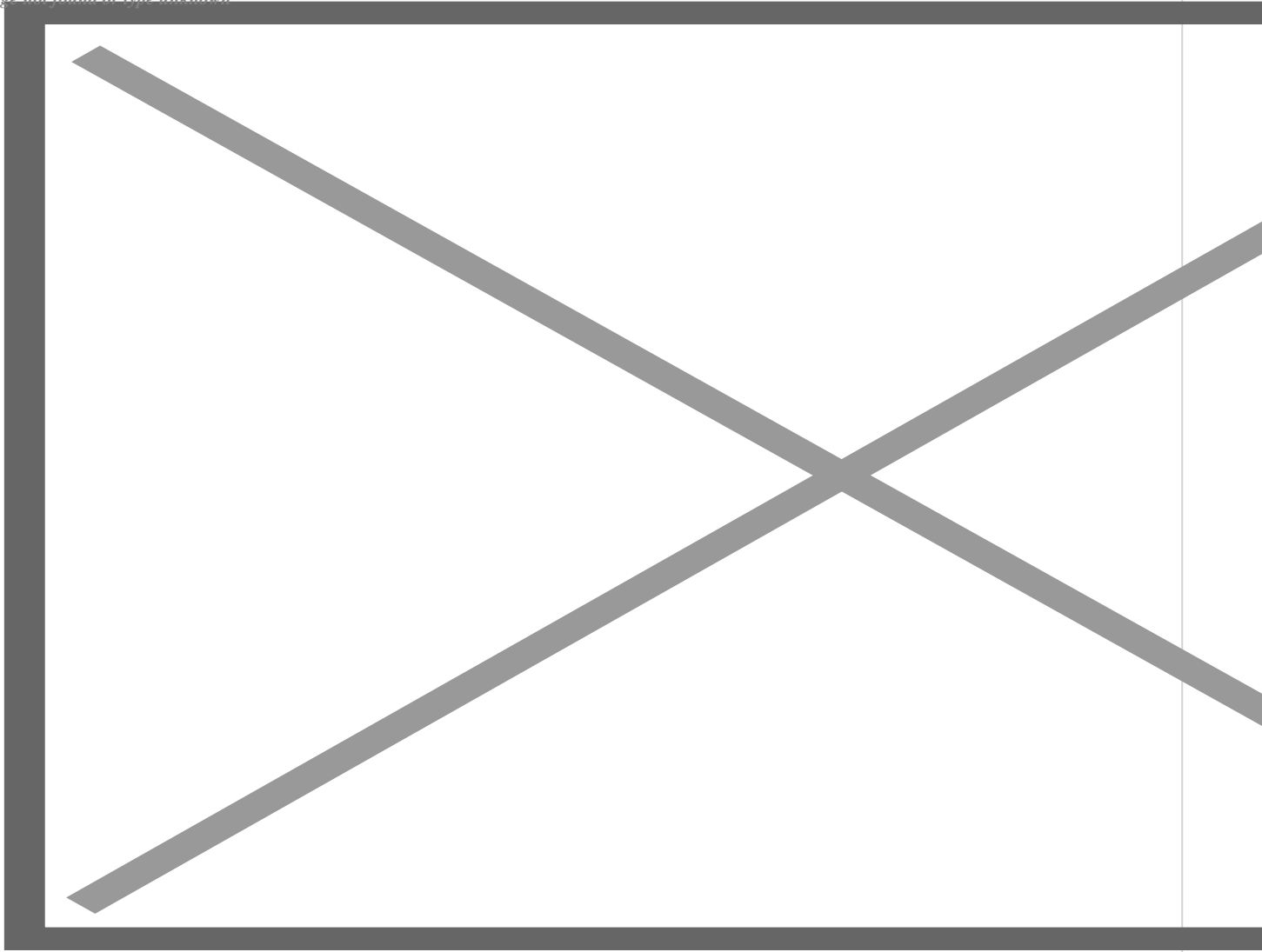


U.S. may be in early stages of fourth wave as COVID cases rise

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Washington, April 3 (RHC)-- A fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic could hit the United States with cases rising in 25 states, according to reports. The U.S. has recorded an average of 63,000 new cases daily over the past week, showing a rise of 17% from the week prior, news website Axios reported.

During the third wave of the pandemic, with its peak in January, about 250,000 people tested positive for Covid-19 daily, the Hill reported. In addition to Michigan and New York where this new increase is most pronounced, the disease is becoming widespread across large swaths of the country.

The possibility of a fourth wave comes as many states have eased coronavirus restrictions, failing to heed health officials' many warnings that doing so was premature. Although a fourth wave is liable to be less deadly than previous waves especially among the elderly as 73% of seniors have received at least one dose of coronavirus vaccine, a fresh spike of the virus can easily impede progress in battling the pandemic.

Meanwhile, millions of younger Americans will remain at risk of illness and death as they have still not received vaccination. Hospitalizations relating to Covid-19 have also risen amid the virus's apparent resurgence, albeit less than before.

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) director, has said a fourth wave is all but guaranteed, noting, "I'm going to lose the script, and I'm going to reflect on the recurring feeling I have of impending doom."

"We have so much to look forward to, so much promise and potential of where we are, and so much reason for hope. But right now I'm scared," Walensky said during a White House briefing.

President Joe Biden has urged regional officials to maintain or reinstate mask their mandates due to the alarming trend in case numbers in the country. "I'm reiterating my call for every governor, mayor, and local leader to maintain and reinstate the mask mandate," the president said hours after Walensky's comments. "Please, this is not politics. Reinstate the mandate if you let it down."

The current pandemic also sets the stage for the appearance of variant strains of the virus. The current variants are more contagious than COVID-19's initial strain and the present vaccines might also be less effective against these variants.

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