

Unvaccinated are 6x More Likely to be Hospitalized for COVID in N.J.

COVID-19 hospitalizations are rising once again in New Jersey, and the data confirm that a vast majority of those severely ill individuals are not vaccinated against the virus.

After hitting an all-pandemic low of 267 hospitalized COVID patients on July 2, 2021, the state’s hospitals are again seeing a rise in hospitalizations. The number of COVID patients in hospital beds reached over 1,000 on Aug. 26. This new surge in hospitalizations is occurring in spite of New Jersey boasting one of the nation’s highest levels of vaccination.

As of Sept. 1, 2021, approximately 5.6 million, or 63 percent, of New Jersey residents were fully vaccinated. When accounting for those that are partially vaccinated, approximately 70 percent have some protection over the virus. Recent studies have quantified that the vaccines’ protection may wane over time, leading to breakthrough infections in vaccinated individuals. Nevertheless, it’s not those individuals filling the majority of hospital beds today – it’s the individuals who have decided to forego vaccination altogether as COVID vaccination remains highly effective in preventing hospitalization.

A Closer Look at the Data

The New Jersey Hospital Association’s COVID-19 Data Portal collects information daily from the state’s hospitals and nursing homes on COVID hospitalizations, capacity and other vital information to guide the response by providers and public health. On Aug. 16, 2021, hospitals began reporting additional daily data on the vaccination status of COVID patients at the time of their admission to the hospital. The data is stratified between adults (ages 18+) and pediatric patients (ages 17 and under). The New Jersey Hospital Association’s research hub, the Center for Health Analytics, Research & Transformation (CHART), has been analyzing the portal data to identify patterns and trends associated with the COVID pandemic.

Several weeks’ worth of this new data shows that 73 percent of all statewide hospitalized COVID patients were unvaccinated, while 24 percent were fully vaccinated and 3 percent of patients were partially vaccinated.

Vaccination Status	Total (all ages)	Adults (18+)	Pediatrics (0-17)
Not Vaccinated	73.3%	73.2%	76.9%
Partially Vaccinated	3.0%	3.1%	0.0%
Fully Vaccinated	23.7%	23.7%	23.1%

Hospitals have been successful in determining the vaccination status of approximately 93 percent of their inpatient COVID admissions. Utilizing that data combined with the vaccination status of the state’s entire population the following assessment can be made:

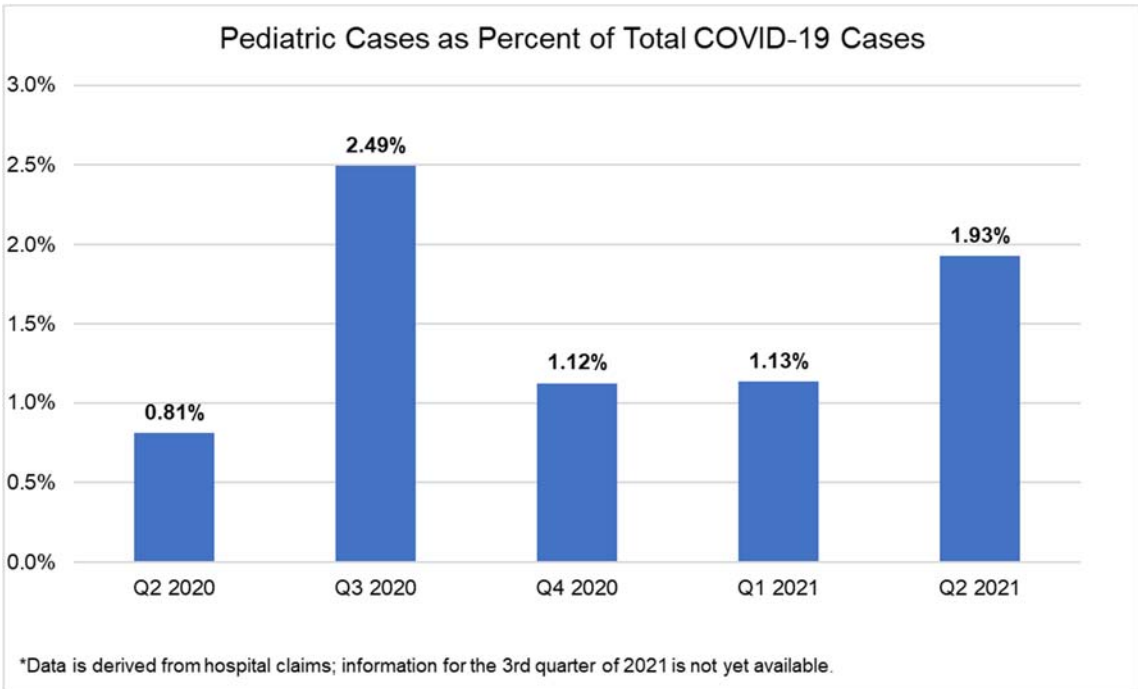
Vaccination Status	New Jersey Residents	Number of COVID-19 Hospitalizations*	Rate per 100,000
Not Vaccinated	2,761,442	727	26.33
Partially and Fully Vaccinated	6,120,748	265	4.33

*Excludes patients who did not provide vaccination status.

Therefore, unvaccinated individuals are six times more likely to require hospitalization than those who have been vaccinated against the virus.

Differences by Age Group

With the Delta variant driving up COVID hospitalizations nationwide, the number of children ages 0-17 hospitalized with the virus in August 2021 reached the highest levels in eight months, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. New Jersey has seen a similar trend of rising pediatric cases. The proportion of children hospitalized with COVID in New Jersey reached 2.49 percent in the 3rd quarter of 2020, before falling to 1.12 percent and 1.13 percent in the next two quarters. While the proportion of pediatric cases remains small compared with the total number of hospitalizations, a precipitous rise was seen once again in the 2nd quarter of 2021 – spanning April, May and June – as the proportion of children among all hospitalized COVID patients reached nearly 2 percent (1.93%).



The data on the vaccination status of hospitalized patients reveals the added vulnerability of children, with no vaccine available for those under the age of 12.

Statewide, the percent of hospitalized adult COVID patients by vaccination status is distributed as follows:

- Not vaccinated – 73%
- Partially vaccinated – 3%
- Fully vaccinated – 24%

Conversely, the same distribution for pediatric cases are as follows:

- Not vaccinated – 77%
- Partially vaccinated – 0%
- Fully vaccinated – 23%

COVID-19 has presented itself as a formidable foe. Hospitals, post-acute providers, state officials and NJHA have invested considerable resources in efforts to manage and mitigate its impact on New Jersey's residents – the most powerful of which is vaccination. While this new data shows that vaccination is not a sole solution in the fight against COVID-19, the fact that nearly three-quarters of all current hospitalizations in New Jersey are associated with unvaccinated patients reinforces the importance of vaccination in reducing preventable hospitalizations.

Visit www.njha.com/chart/ for additional resources