

NEWS RELEASE

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Georgia Surpasses Grim COVID-19 Milestone *More Than 20,000 Lives Lost to COVID-19*

ATLANTA – The number of Georgians who have died from COVID-19 now surpasses 20,000. As of 3 p.m. today, there have been 20,041 confirmed COVID deaths in Georgia since the pandemic began.

“It is tragic but not surprising that we have surpassed this grim milestone of 20,000 COVID deaths in our state,” said Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., Georgia Department of Public Health commissioner. “Ninety seven percent of COVID deaths since we’ve had vaccine are in unvaccinated individuals. These deaths are preventable.”

COVID vaccines are safe and effective at protecting against COVID-19 infections. COVID vaccines also help prevent severe illness and death if an individual does get sick. The vaccines also reduce the risk of people spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID cases are surging in Georgia, driven by the delta variant. The delta variant is more transmissible than the original SARS-CoV-2 and research shows that it results in a higher rate of severe illness and hospitalization than other variants. COVID-19 is spreading fastest in areas with low vaccination rates. Currently, only 44% of Georgians are fully vaccinated.

All Georgians aged 12 and older are urged to get vaccinated, wear a mask in public settings and wash their hands frequently.

COVID vaccine is available statewide and is our best tool for ending this pandemic and reducing the overwhelming strain on EMS, the healthcare system and healthcare providers. To find a COVID vaccination location, log on to <https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-vaccine>.

COVID testing is recommended immediately for anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Additionally, individuals who have had a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be tested, even if they are fully vaccinated. People who are fully vaccinated should get tested 3-5 days after exposure. Unvaccinated individuals should quarantine and be tested immediately after being identified, and, if negative, tested again in 5–7 days after last exposure. To find testing locations, log on to <https://dph.georgia.gov/covidtesting>. Please do not go to hospital emergency rooms for COVID testing.

For updates on COVID-19, follow @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Twitter and @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Facebook.