

**From:** [Schwartz, David](#)  
**Subject:** DOM Covid Communication  
**Date:** Sunday, January 24, 2021 1:06:41 PM  
**Attachments:** [Science Magazine.pdf](#)

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Dear Friends and Colleagues.

The numbers look pretty good. Compared to the previous 2 weeks, cases in the U.S. and Colorado are down 31% and 46%, deaths in the U.S. and Colorado are down 4% and 58%, and hospitalizations in the U.S. and Colorado are down 7% and 17% respectively. A similar trend is seen in our hospitals, and despite a clinically impactful baseline number of hospitalized Covid patients (47 at UCH as of this morning), our hospitals are returning to more normal operations. On January 8<sup>th</sup>, IHME (<http://www.healthdata.org/covid/updates>) estimated that our effective R in Colorado was 0.89; we want R to be < 1.0 to contain the pandemic.

A key question is when can we return to a more normal life? An article in the NYTs this morning addressed this topic with data that I thought helped put this question in perspective (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/01/24/us/covid-vaccine-rollout.html>).

Unfortunately, given the persistence of the virus in our population, too many people are at risk during the rollout of our vaccination program. In this article, a group of modelers from Columbia University project that in the U.S.:

- Relaxing current restrictions in February will result in 29M more infections
- Relaxing current restriction in mid-March will result in 6M more infections
- Strengthening current restrictions through July will result in 19M fewer infections

The bottom line is that current restrictions should not be lifted until late summer and a strong case could be made to strengthen current restrictions.

However, the emergence of new strains of SARS-CoV-2 in the UK, South Africa, and Brazil could complicate this situation. If these strains turn out to be more transmissible or immunologically and pathogenically distinct (see attached Science commentary), it's quite possible, we're experiencing the calm before the storm. There is a huge gap of knowledge between these mutant strains of SARS-CoV-2 and the potential impact on Covid-19. To address this unmet need, the WHO has called for a global effort to sequence more SARS-CoV-2 genomes to understand that relationship between viral mutations, transmissibility, immune responsiveness, and treatment. I think this represents a critically important area of research. Eric Poeschla has agreed to address this topic in an upcoming Medicine Grand Rounds.

Fortunately, new effective therapeutic approaches are rapidly emerging, such as full anticoagulation in hospitalized (non-ICU) patients (<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/full-dose-blood-thinners-decreased-need-life-support-improved-outcome-hospitalized-covid-19-patients>) and use of colchicine prior to hospitalization (<https://thecanadian.news/2021/01/23/major-breakthrough-large-study-shows-effectiveness-of-colchicine-to-treat-covid-19/>). Last week's Town Hall with focused on vaccine distribution,

nationally and regionally ([“COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution: Update on a Work in Progress”](#)). The next 2 Town Halls will focus on advancing in treatment – Jan 28th focused on antibody therapy (David Beckham) and Feb 4<sup>th</sup> on other therapeutics (Lakshmi Chauhan and Steve Johnson). DOM Town Halls are accessible at our website (<https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/medicine/faculty-affairs/covid-19>). Recent Town Hall include:

- **Dec 2, 2020** ["UCH COVID Command Center "What it is and How it Works"](#)
- **Dec 10, 2020** ["Vaccine Distribution"](#)
- **Dec 17, 2020** ["Your Charge is Low: How to Manage Pandemic Depletion"](#)
- **Jan 7, 2021** ["COVID-19: What Happened post-Thanksgiving and What's Next?"](#)
- **Jan 13, 2021** ["Implications of Genetic Variants of SARS-CoV-2: A New Pandemic Phase?"](#)
- **Jan 21, 2021** ["COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution: Update on a Work in Progress"](#)
- **Jan 28, 2021 (7-8 PM):** “Update on SARS-CoV-2 specific antibody therapies for Covid-19”

**Join Zoom Meeting:** <https://ucdenver.zoom.us/j/96282507513?pwd=V3FibGo0Y0VBcGhoRWlsL2xYSUZQZz09>

**Meeting ID:** 962 8250 7513; **Passcode:** 961584

Please hang in there, keep up the great work, and let's continue to support each other. While uncertainty is clearly evident, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Please let me know if there's anything I can do for you or any other topics you'd like me to address. My very best wishes to you and your families.

David

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