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John Robbins 281-965-6390
Jun Gai 281-498-4310

Publisher: Wea H. Lee
President: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins

Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072
E-mail: News@scdaily.com



Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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U.S. FDA staff says Moderna did not meet all criteria for COVID-19 boosters

Oct 12 (Reuters) - Scientists at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said on Tuesday that Moderna Inc (MRNA.O) had not met all of the agency's criteria to support use of booster doses of its COVID-19 vaccine, possibly because the efficacy of the shot's first two doses has remained strong.

FDA staff said in documents that data for Moderna's vaccine showed that a booster does increase protective antibodies, but the difference in antibody levels before and after the shot was not wide enough, particularly in those whose levels had remained high.

The documents were released ahead of a meeting later this week of the FDA's outside expert advisers to discuss booster doses of the vaccine.

The FDA typically follows the advice of its experts, but is not bound to do so. A panel of advisers to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will meet next week to discuss specific recommendations on who can receive the boosters, if the FDA authorizes them.

"There was boosting, sure. Was it enough boosting? Who knows? There's no standard amount of boosting that is known to be needed, and nor is it clear how much boosting happened in the study," John Moore, a professor of microbiology and immunology at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York, said in an email.

Moderna is seeking authorization for a 50-microgram booster dose, half the strength of the original vaccine given in two shots about four weeks apart.

The company has asked regulators to clear a third round of shots for adults aged 65 and over, as well as for high-risk individuals, similar to the authorization gained by rivals Pfizer Inc (PFE.N) and German partner BioNTech for their mRNA vaccine.

President Joe Biden's administration announced plans earlier this year to roll out booster doses for most adults, but some FDA scientists later said in an article in journal The Lancet that there was not enough evidence to support boosters for all.

Data on the need for boosters has largely



Syringes filled with a dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine sit on a table during an employee vaccination at the Sarasota Memorial Hospital in Sarasota, Florida, U.S., September 24, 2021. REUTERS/Shannon Stapleton

come from Israel, which rolled out the additional shots of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine to large swaths of its population, and has provided details on the effectiveness of that effort to U.S. advisers.

No similar real-world study populations exist for the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson (JNJ.N) vaccines.

The evidence for Moderna's booster appears to have "a lot of holes," said Dr. Eric Topol, a professor of molecular medicine and director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in La Jolla, California, noting that the data provided was limited and offers no insight into how the boosters actually perform in people.

"That is fairly short of what Pfizer had from Israel, where they had the full restoration of the vaccine effectiveness from the booster," Topol said.

The FDA's advisers will also consider booster doses for J&J's single-dose vaccine on Friday. The FDA has not yet released its briefing documents on those shots.

J&J has asked the FDA to authorize a booster at least two months after the initial shot. It said data suggests high-risk adults should receive boosters earlier, but that lower-risk individuals could benefit from waiting at least six months for their second shot.

Billionaire Alibaba founder Jack Ma reappears in Hong Kong

HONG KONG, Oct 12 (Reuters) - Alibaba Group (9988.HK) founder Jack Ma, largely out of public view since a regulatory clampdown started on his business empire late last year, is currently in Hong Kong and has met business associates in recent days, two sources told Reuters.

The Chinese billionaire has been keeping a low profile since delivering a speech in October last year in Shanghai criticising China's financial regulators. That triggered a chain of events that resulted in the shelving of his Ant Group's mega IPO.

While Ma made a limited number of public appearances in mainland China after that, as speculation swirled about his whereabouts, one of the sources said the visit marked his first trip to the Asian financial hub since last October.

Alibaba did not immediately respond to requests for comment outside of its regular business hours. Comments from Ma typically come via the company. The sources declined to be identified due to confidentiality constraints. Ma, once China's most famous and

outspoken entrepreneur, met at least "a few" business associates over meals last week, said the people.

Ma, who is mostly based in the eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou, where his business empire is headquartered, owns at least one luxury house in the former British colony that also houses some of his companies' offshore business operations.

Alibaba is also listed in HongKong, besides New York. The former English teacher disappeared from public view for three months before surfacing in January, speaking to a group of teachers by video. That eased concern about his unusual absence from the limelight and sent Alibaba shares surging. In May, Ma made a rare visit to Alibaba's Hangzhou campus during the firm's annual "Ali Day" staff and family event, company sources have said. read more

On Sept. 1, photographs of Ma visiting several agricultural greenhouses in the eastern Zhejiang province, home to both Alibaba and its fintech affiliate Ant, went viral on Chinese social media.

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY 10/12/2021

World Table Tennis Championship Is Coming To Houston



Wea H. Lee
Wealee@scdaily.com

Chairman of International District Houston Texas
Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Southern News Group Chairman / CEO
Chairman of International Trade & Culture Center
Republic of Guiana Honorary consul at Houston Texas



The upcoming World Table Tennis Championship is scheduled to be held in Houston, Texas, from November 23-29. It will be the 56th edition of the championship and the first time ever to be held in the United States.

The Houston Sports Authority CEO Janice Burke along with CFO Michael Brown of the International Table Tennis Federation hosted a news conference at the Southern TV studio to announce to the entire international community this historic news about this great event.

We will be here to welcome the thousands of players from more than 125 countries who will visit this great city of Houston, Texas. This will be the first time this event will be held in America and the first time ever held outside of Europe and Asia since 1939.

The last event that was held in Budapest in 2019 had a global reach of over 500 million fans across both TV and digital platforms.

In 1971 when the United States table tennis team was invited to China, the "pong-pong diplomacy" was successful and resulted in opening up the US-China relationship.

Today, the tensions between the two countries still persist. We really need to promote the people's diplomacy to promote a better relationship between the U.S. and China for the best future for all of us.



PRESS RELEASE WITH HOUSTON SPORT AUTHORITY OCTOBER 12TH, 10AM

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- CHRIS MASSEY: VICE PRESIDENT, HOUSTON SPORT AUTHORITY
- MICHAEL BROWN: INTERNATIONAL TABLE TENNIS FEDERATION CFO



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Editor's Choice



A member of the New York City Department of Sanitation blows cigar smoke before marching along Fifth Avenue during the Columbus Day Parade in New York City. REUTERS/Shannon Stapleton



Surfers prepare to the sea on the beach in South Shields, Britain. REUTERS/Lee Smith



Greek Presidential Guards, known as Evzones, present arms during a ceremony marking the 77th anniversary of the Liberation of Athens from the Nazi occupation, with the Parthenon temple seen in the background, atop the Acropolis hill in Athens, Greece. REUTERS/Alkis Konstantinidis



The words "Expect us" are seen spray-painted on the statue of U.S. President Andrew Jackson, as people demonstrate during a climate change protest on Indigenous People's Day, outside the White House, in Washington, D.C. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque



A person adjusts a clay mask while preparing to take part in a deity's procession during the Shikali festival at Khokana, in Lalitpur, Nepal. REUTERS/Navesh Chitrakar



A vandalised statue of Christopher Columbus is pictured in London, Britain. REUTERS/Hannah McKay

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

BUSINESS

The State Has Gained Four Million Residents And Two Congressional Seats Per Census

Texas Becomes The Second Largest State In America



By Guest Writer Acacia Coronado

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Since 2010, Texas has gained nearly 4 million residents — more than any other state in sheer numbers. For perspective, that’s roughly the entire population of neighboring Oklahoma. It is now home to more than 29 million people, second in population only to California, which has nearly 40 million. Texas has sustained double-digit percentage growth and increased congressional representation for 80 years, following in trend with its neighboring Southern states, the region with most growth at over 10 percent.

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The constitutionally mandated 10-year census determines, among other things, how the fixed number of U.S. House seats and presidential electors will be allocated. The 2020 data was released

after months of delays and a head count conducted during the coronavirus pandemic, a heavy hurricane and wildfire season and amid civil unrest.

Texas will now have 38 congressional representatives— gaining more seats than any state—and 40 votes in the Electoral College.

Political tensions are expected to continue to rise as the state grows less white and more urban, demographics Democrats typically find favorable. Despite that, Republicans have managed to keep a tight grip on the state’s political power.

“We are going to encourage our activists across the state to participate in that process at all levels of government,” said Rose Clouston, voter protection director for Texas Democrats. “From the state Legislature, that is going to be drawing our congressional and state legislative maps, to our local city council and county commissions that are going to be drawing maps for their own districts.”

They also will be in charge of the once-a-decade redistricting once the more detailed community-level census data comes out in late summer, and are expected to create gerrymandered legislative and congressional districts designed to keep them in power.

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Texas Statistics From The U.S. Dept. Of Commerce

Table with Texas statistics including population, GDP, and various economic indicators.

While the new census report does not include demographic data, Texas State Demographer Lloyd Potter said estimates show that rural counties continue to lose population while metro areas

such as Houston, Dallas and Austin continue to grow. Hispanics make up the largest percentage of growth, Potter said, pushing them closer to a plurality of the overall population.

Half of Texas’ population gain comes from births, helping the state maintain a young median age, Potter said. Another major factor has been an ongoing influx of people from other countries and states, particularly California. Census Bureau demographers said Texas’ population growth in 2020 was about 1 percent lower than expected, leading to one less congressional seat than predicted by state researchers, but said they were confident in the statistics.

That may sound good to Democrats, said Joshua Blank, research director for the Texas Politics Project at the University of Texas at Austin, but it’s no guarantee that the new arrivals will automatically align with their party. Democrats will have to figure out how to capitalize on the state’s demographic changes, he said.

Democrats’ last opportunity — the November election — was a bust.



Republicans continued their more-than-two-decades of control of statewide offices, retained power in both houses of the Legislature and kept Texas in the win column for former President Donald Trump, despite his eventual loss to Joe Biden.

What Texas Democrats hope will mobilize the party is the GOP-led campaign to tighten voting laws across the U.S. In Texas, that effort aims to outlaw drive-thru voting and 24-hour polling places, and to criminalize unsolicited absentee ballot applications. Those were all options that election officials in Houston — the biggest Democratic stronghold in Texas — used or planned last fall to expand voting access during the pandemic.

Texas GOP chairman Allen West said in a statement that his party will “await the affirmed census results and will continue to deliver our message of economic growth, prosperity, individual Liberty and rights, quality education, small business entrepreneurship, and safety/security.” (Courtesy https://apnews.com/)

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

COMMUNITY

U.S. Pandemics: Then And Now

(Editor’s Note: The Spanish flu, also known as the 1918 flu pandemic, was an unusually deadly influenza pandemic. Lasting from January 1918 to December 1920, it infected 500 million people — about a third of the world’s population at the time. The death toll is estimated to have been anywhere from 17 million to 50 million, and possibly as high as 100 million, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in human history. Today, we face a Coronavirus pandemic with many similarities in terms of how we are responding to this health crisis in terms of service and care to those impacted. The photos we share here are clear testament to even though it was 100 years ago, the hard work and dedication of America’s health care workers of yesterday is very similar to today’s health care workers who are carrying on the timeless tradition of saving lives and bringing hope.)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



DRASTIC ACTION TO HALT EPIDEMIC Schools and Theaters Closed and Public Gatherings Prohibited.

Due to the Corona Virus We will be closed on Saturday March 21st

To Prevent Influenza! Do not take any person's breath. Stay the mouth and hand clean. Avoid those that cough and sneeze. Don't visit poorly ventilated places. Keep rooms, get fresh air and eat often. Check for common drinking cups, towels, etc. Cover your mouth when you cough and sneeze. Avoid Mucus, Hair and Fatigue. Stay at home if you have a cold. Walk to your work or school. In sick season wear a proper mask like the illustration.

INFLUENZA SUSPENDS ALL GATHERINGS City Authorities Meet and Take Action Demanded by Imminent Spread of Infection

DO YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?