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Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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## Turkish leader acknowledges problems with earthquake relief effort

KAHRAMANMARAS/ANTAKYA, Turkey, Feb 8 (Reuters) - President Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday admitted there were problems with his government's initial response to a devastating earthquake in southern Turkey, amid anger from those left destitute and frustrated over the slow arrival of rescue teams.

Erdogan, who contests an election in May, said on a visit to the disaster zone that operations were now working normally and promised no one would be left homeless, as the combined reported death toll across Turkey and neighbouring Syria rose past 12,000.

Across a swathe of southern Turkey, people sought temporary shelter and food in freezing winter weather, and waited in anguish by piles of rubble where family and friends might still lie buried.

Rescuers were still digging out some people alive, and finding others dead. But many Turks have complained of a lack of equipment, expertise and support to rescue those trapped - sometimes even as they could hear cries for help.

Netflix lays out plans to crack down on account sharing  
Egypt to sell state stakes in 32 firms over next year  
E.ON: supply region of Turkish JV Enerjisa affected by earthquake  
Uber focuses on 2023 profits as pandemic pain eases  
Alphabet shares dive after Google AI chatbot Bard flubs answer in ad  
"Where is the state? Where have they been for two days? We are begging them. Let us do it, we can get them out," Sabiha Alinak said near a snow-covered collapsed building where her young relatives were trapped in the city of Malatya.

There were similar scenes and complaints in neighbouring Syria, whose north was also hard hit by Monday's huge quake.

Syria's ambassador to the United Nations admitted the government had a "lack of capabilities and lack of equipment" but blamed this on more than a decade of civil war in his country and Western sanctions.

**DEATH TOLL SURE TO RISE**  
The death toll from both countries was expected to rise further as hundreds of collapsed buildings in many cities have become tombs for people who had been asleep in their homes when the quake hit in the early morning.

In the Turkish city of Antakya, dozens of bodies, some covered in blankets and sheets and others in body bags, were lined up on the ground outside a hospital.

Melek, 64, said she had seen no rescue teams. "We survived the earthquake, but we will die here due to hunger or cold."

Families in southern Turkey and in Syria spent a second night in the freezing cold.

Many in the disaster zone had slept in their cars or in the streets under blankets, fearful of going back into buildings shaken by the 7.8 magnitude tremor - Turkey's deadliest since 1999 - and by a second powerful quake hours later.

The confirmed death toll rose to 9,057 in Turkey on Wednesday. In Syria, the death toll climbed to at least 2,950 by late Wednesday, according to the government and a rescue service operat-



ing in the rebel-held northwest.

Aftermath of the deadly earthquake in Kahramanmaraş

Turkish authorities released video of rescued survivors, including a young girl in pyjamas, and an older man covered in dust, an unlit cigarette clamped between his fingers as he was pulled from the debris.

Turkish officials say some 13.5 million people were affected in an area spanning roughly 450 km (280 miles) from Adana in the west to Diyarbakir in the east. In Syria, people were killed as far south as Hama, 250 km from the epicentre.

Some of those who died in Turkey were refugees from Syria's war. Their body bags arrived at the border in taxis, vans and in piles atop flatbed trucks to be taken to final resting places in their homeland.

More than 298,000 people have been made homeless and 180 shelters for the displaced had been opened, Syrian state media reported, apparently referring to areas under government control, not those held by opposition factions.

In Syria, the relief effort is complicated by a conflict that has partitioned the nation and wrecked its infrastructure. Turkey was working on opening two more border gates with Syria to enable the flow of humanitarian aid, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said.

In Syria's Aleppo, staff at the Al-Razi hospital attended to a man with injured eyes who said more than a dozen relatives including his mother and father were killed when the building they were in collapsed.

**ELECTION IMPACT**  
Erdogan, who has declared a state of emergency in 10 provinces and sent in troops to help, arrived in Kahramanmaraş to view the damage and see the rescue and relief effort.

Speaking to reporters, with the wail of ambulance sirens in the background, he said there had been problems with roads and airports but "we are better today".

"We will be better tomorrow and later. We still have some issues with fuel ... but we will overcome those too," Erdogan said.

Later, he condemned criticism of the government's response. "This is a time for unity, solidarity. In a period like this, I cannot stomach people conducting negative campaigns for political interest," Erdogan told reporters on his arrival in the southern province of Hatay.

Nevertheless, the disaster will pose a challenge to Erdogan in the May election that was already set to be the toughest fight of his two decades in power. Istanbul's stock exchange operator suspended trading for five days in an unprecedented step.

Any perception that the government is failing to address the disaster properly could hurt his prospects. On the other hand, analysts say, he could rally national support around the crisis response and strengthen his position.

For his part, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad appears to be seeking political advantage from the quake, pressing for foreign aid to be delivered through his territory as he aims to chip away at his international isolation, analysts said.

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# WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

02/07/2023

## U.S. - China Relations Are In Trouble

After a U.S. fighter jet shot down a Chinese balloon, the reaction from Beijing was very angered, and further declared the action as, "strong discontent and protectionist," saying that the balloon was a civilian research airship blown way off course by fierce winds. But the U.S. government rejected China's response, stating that the balloon was on a spying mission.



Secretary of State Anthony Blinken had been preparing to visit Beijing last week to discuss many issues, but he pulled out of the trip citing that the reason for the cancellation was because of the balloon issue.

Chinese military sources said, "We solemnly protest the U.S. action and retain the right to use the

necessary means to deal with similar circumstances."

In the meantime, newly elected House Speaker Kevin McCarthy plans to visit Taiwan soon which will make the two countries' relationship much more stressful.

We are very worried and disappointed. The relations between the U.S. and China are at a very low point. In the near future, we need to reach a resolution of mutual benefit, not just for the two countries alone, but also for the entire world as well.



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**Southern DAILY** Make Today Different

## Editor's Choice



Smoke rises from burning containers at the port in the earthquake-stricken town of Iskenderun, Turkey. REUTERS/Benoit Tessier



President Joe Biden delivers the State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress at the Capitol as Vice President Kamala Harris applauds. Jacquelyn Martin/Pool



People walk past rubble of damaged buildings, in the aftermath of the earthquake, in Aleppo, Syria. REUTERS/Firas Makdesi



Muhammet Ruzgar, 5, is carried out by rescuers from the site of a damaged building, following an earthquake in Hatay, Turkey. REUTERS/Umit Bektas



An aerial view shows collapsed and damaged buildings after an earthquake in Hatay, Turkey. REUTERS/Umit Bektas



Ukrainian servicemen fire a BM-21 Grad multiple launch rocket system towards Russian positions on a frontline near the town of Marinka, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Donetsk region, Ukraine. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

# Biden Administration Plans Imminent Booster Expansion To All Adults



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

The Biden administration is expected to begin the process of expanding the booster authorization to all adults as early as this week, according to a source familiar with internal planning.

**Why it matters:** America's booster campaign got off to an underwhelming start, potentially leaving millions of vulnerable people at risk as the holidays approach.

**The big picture:** The pandemic still isn't over, and the data is clear that vaccine effectiveness has waned over time and with the rise of Delta — but also that a booster dose restores protection against the virus to remarkable levels.

Despite disagreement among experts about who needs a booster, there's broad consensus that older people and at least some with underlying health conditions should get an additional dose around six months after their first series.

• But only 36% of Americans 65 and older have received a booster shot, according to the CDC.

• “As every month goes by, the immunity wanes more and more. So as time goes by, you're going to see more vaccinated people” becoming more vulnerable to the virus, NIAID director Anthony Fauci told Axios.

• The vast majority of breakthrough cases — particularly among younger people — aren't severe. But “as is always the case, the elderly are more vulnerable, because they're more likely to have waning of protection over time,” Fauci said.

**State of play:** The Biden administration's original plan over the summer was to recommend that most adults get a booster shot eight months after their initial round. However, the FDA and CDC ultimately recommended that more limited groups of people receive another shot six months later.

• But some cities and states — including California, Colorado, and New York City — have gotten ahead of the FDA and have made boosters available to all adults, and some experts are arguing that it's time for the federal government to do the same.

• Other experts are still skeptical about further broadening eligibility.

**Where it all stands:** There isn't good national data on how many current hospitalizations and deaths are among vaccinated people, although some states are reporting rising numbers of breakthrough cases. (The number of breakthrough cases is expected to rise as more people get vaccinated.)

• In Colorado, for example, 80% of hospitalized COVID patients are unvaccinated, Denver's 9 News reports from state data.



• “Many of the ones who end up hospitalized after vaccination are older or have medical conditions or they're on some sort of immunosuppressant,” Jared Eddy, director of Infection Control and Prevention at National Jewish Health, told 9 News.

**What we're watching:** If eligibility is expanded — and thus simplified — booster uptake could increase.

• “I believe it's extremely important for people to get boosters, and I am hoping very soon we will see a situation where there won't be any confusion about who should and should not get boosters,” Fauci said.

• “In my opinion boosters are ultimately going to become a part of the standard regimen and not just a bonus,” he added.

**Coronavirus Dashboard**



**1. Vaccines:** NYC to allow all adults to get a booster shot — Biden administration plans imminent booster expansion to all adults — All adults in California, Colorado, New Mexico can get boosters.

**2. Health:** Pfizer agrees to share recipe for COVID pill — Kaiser Permanente averts strike in tentative deal with health care workers — The best way to use rapid tests — if you can find them.

**3. Politics:** World gets tough on the unvaccinated — Florida special legislative session will consider bills to curb vaccine mandates — Texas AG justifies supporting state vaccine ban, opposing federal mandate.

**4. Education:** Schools across the U.S. offer vaccine drives — Benefits of in-person school outweigh risks, study finds.

**Cases:**  
**1. Global:** Total confirmed cases as of 12:15 p.m. ET on Tuesday: 254,092,019 — Total deaths: 5,111,573 — Total vaccine doses administered: 7,538,664,047.  
**2. U.S.:** Total confirmed cases as of 12:15 p.m. ET on Tuesday: 47,233,212 — Total deaths: 764,608.

**World Coronavirus Updates**

Reported cases of COVID-19



Data: The Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins; Map: Axios Visuals

**By the numbers:** Globally, more than 1 million people have died from the novel coronavirus and over 35.7 million have tested positive, Johns Hopkins data shows.

• The U.S. has reported the highest death toll and case count from the novel coronavirus, with nearly 210,800 fatalities and almost 7.5 million infections — with President Trump among those being treated for the virus.

• Brazil has reported the second-highest number of deaths from COVID-19 — nearly 147,500. India has the second-highest number of cases (almost 6.7 million).

**What's happening:**  
 • The World Health Organization said in a statement Tuesday that Europe is experiencing “rising COVID-19 fatigue” as cases increase across the continent. “Despite the hardships, COVID-19 is urging us to move beyond biomedical science,” the WHO said.

• Ireland's government has rejected health experts' advice to return the country to a “full lockdown” despite rising

infection numbers, the Guardian reports.  
 • France's Prime Minister Jean Castex said bars in Paris will close for two weeks from Tuesday as part of new measures against the coronavirus, per the EU Observer.

**Pfizer agrees to licensing deal for COVID-19 pill**

Pfizer announced on Tuesday it will allow low and middle-income countries to make and distribute the company's COVID-19 pill inexpensively. The move is an attempt to increase the global supply in 95 poorer nations.

While the deal helps treat patients, the company has not made the same decision when it comes to its COVID-19 vaccine.

**Arkansas Allows Boosters For All Adults**



**Illustration: Annelise Capossela/Axios**  
 Anyone 18 and older can get booster shots in Arkansas, Gov. Asa Hutchinson announced yesterday during his news conference.

If it's been at least six months since your second Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or two months since your first Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you can get another dose.

**Background:** Booster doses were previously limited to people 65 or older and to people 18 to 64 who worked in high-risk environments, had underlying health conditions or lived in long-term care facilities.

“We want more people to get their booster shot and this is somewhat confusing and limiting as to eligibility goes,” Hutchinson said, referencing the old regulations.

State health secretary Jose Romero stressed that parents need to get their children vaccinated. About 4% of kids in Arkansas ages 5 to 11 have received one dose since becoming eligible earlier this month. (Courtesy Axios.com)

# COMMUNITY

## Majority Of COVID-19 Cases And Deaths In State Are Unvaccinated Texans, New State Data Reveals



A pharmacist prepares the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at Houston Independent School District's Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center. HISD partnered with Kroger to administer the COVID-19 vaccine to educators, police officers and school nurses as part of Phase 1A and 1B of the vaccine rollout. Jan. 9, 2021.

Credit: May-Ying Lam for The Texas Tribune

**Key Point**

The new state survey is the first time Texas health officials have been able to statistically measure the vaccine's true impact on the pandemic.

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

New data from the Texas health department released Monday proves what health officials have been trying to tell vaccine-hesitant Texans for months: The COVID-19 vaccine dramatically prevents death and is the best tool to prevent transmission of the deadly virus.

Out of nearly 29,000 Texans who have died from COVID-related illnesses since mid-January, only 8% of them were fully vaccinated against the virus, according to a report detailing the Texas Department of State Health Services' findings.

COVID-19 cases and deaths by vaccination status From mid-January to October, unvaccinated people made up the vast majority of reported COVID-19 cases and deaths.

Unvaccinated Partially vaccinated Fully vaccinated

inated people were among Texans older than 75, the age group that is most vulnerable to the virus, the study shows.

**COVID-19 was deadlier for unvaccinated Texans across age groups**  
 Reported deaths from mid-January to October showed that most COVID-19 deaths occurred among unvaccinated younger and older Texans.

Age group	Unvaccinated	Vaccinated
18-29 years	239	110
30-39	1,019	211
40-49	2,332	421
50-59	6,780	517
60-69	6,211	589
70+	7,830	1,243

Note: Most people became eligible for COVID-19 vaccines in late March. (Source: Texas Department of State Health Services Credit: Mandi Cai)

“We've known for a while that vaccines were going to have a protective effect on a large segment of our population,” said Dr. Jennifer A. Shuford, state epidemiologist. “By looking at our own population and seeing what the impact of the vaccines have been on that population, we're hoping just to be able to reach people here

in Texas and show them the difference that being fully vaccinated can make in their lives and for their communities.”

The state health department study covers most of the positive cases and COVID-19 deaths reported in Texas among residents from Jan. 15 to Oct. 1. It's the first time state officials have been able to statistically measure the true impact of the vaccine on the pandemic in Texas — which has one of the highest death tolls in the nation. The majority of Texans ages 16 and up didn't become eligible for the vaccine until late March. State health officials also found the vaccine greatly reduced the risk of virus transmission, including the highly contagious delta variant that ravaged the state over the summer.

Only 3% of 1.5 million positive COVID-19 tests examined since mid-January occurred in people who were already vaccinated. State researchers matched electronic lab reports and death certificates with state immunization records, and measured cases and deaths since mid-January, a month after the first shots were administered in Texas.

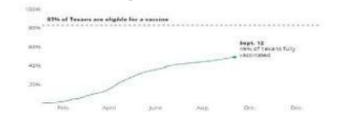
The study was done using data similar to those used by other states that conducted similar studies and methods recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Shuford said. And while the outcome was not particularly surprising, Shuford said, officials hope that the new data will increase trust in the benefits of the shot. “Texas is a unique place; it's got a lot of diversity, geographic and population-wise,” Shuford said. “We know that some people want to see actual numbers and that they want to see it for their own community. And so we are hoping that this reaches some of those people who have been hesitant and really just questioning the benefits of the vaccines.”

In Texas, it literally requires a disaster — like a pandemic — before the state records precise information about vaccinations. As a result, there is a record for every single COVID-19 vaccine dose of the name and age of the person who received it plus the date it was administered. Normally, vaccination records are shown to schools by parents, but details of all vaccinations are not regularly kept by a state registry in Texas, unlike nearly every other state, because it's a voluntary system. However, state officials still don't have official numbers on how many vaccinated people were hospitalized with COVID-19 because hospitals are not required to report that level of data under state law. But the state's largest hospital districts and counties have reported that at least 90% of the hospitalized Texans with the virus were unvaccinated.

The state's new health data comes as Republican state leaders grapple with local cities and school districts about masking, which has been proven to reduce transmission of the virus, and with federal officials over vaccine mandates. About 53% of the Texas population is fully vaccinated. More than 70,000 Texans have died from COVID-19

since the pandemic began.

**Percentage of Texans fully vaccinated**  
 As of Nov. 14, about 53.9% of Texas' 29.1 million people have been fully vaccinated. According to the Census Bureau's 2019 Vintage population estimates, 93% of Texans are age 5 and older and thus eligible for a vaccine.



**Sources: Vaccination data from the Texas Department of State Health Services, statewide population from 2020 U.S. census, population by age from Census Vintage 2019 estimates. (Photo Credit: The Texas Tribune)**

**Immunity heading into the holidays**  
 The new report is particularly well-timed, officials say, because gatherings throughout the holiday season could touch off another surge as families get together — many of them for the first time since last year — and around 9 million Texans remain unvaccinated. Texas saw its deadliest surge of the pandemic in January, when more than 400 deaths were reported daily at its peak, a trend health officials said was likely a direct result of the holidays.

The recent Texas Coronavirus Antibody Response Survey, commissioned by the state health department in partnership with the University of Texas System, estimated that about 75% of Texans — roughly 22 million people — likely have some level of protection against the virus, either by natural immunity from being infected or through vaccination. But that doesn't mean infected people are immune indefinitely or that they shouldn't get the vaccine, health experts say. In fact, doctors, scientists and health officials urge those who have been infected to get vaccinated anyway, saying the vaccine provides a strong boost in immunity even to those who have some level of natural protection.

The Texas CARES study found that fully vaccinated participants showed significantly higher antibody levels than those who were unvaccinated but had been infected.

A week ago, the CDC found that while both vaccination and natural infection provide about six months of protection from infection by the virus, the vaccine provides a “higher, more robust, and more consistent level of immunity” than natural infection does. And while the fact that a solid majority of Texans are estimated to have some protection from the virus bodes well for the state in its fight against the pandemic, Shuford said, it still means that millions of Texans are vulnerable to severe illness or death from the highly contagious virus, without any vaccine or natural immunity.

“Those susceptible populations can still get infected, and the holidays are the perfect time for that,” she said. “Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's. These are all times that people gather together, and COVID-19 can easily be transmitted at these gatherings.” (Courtesy https://www.texastribune.org)

ted at these gatherings.”

**Vaccine FAQs**

• **Who is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine?**  
 People ages 5-17 are eligible to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. People age 18 and older are eligible to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

• **Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe and effective??**  
 • **Should I still get the vaccine if I've had COVID-19?**

Yes. Research has not yet shown how long you are protected from getting COVID-19 again after recovering from COVID-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and vaccination will boost protection. If you were treated for COVID-19 with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you are unsure what treatments you received or if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

• **Where can I get the COVID-19 vaccine in Texas?**  
 Most chain pharmacies and many independent ones have a ready supply of the vaccine, and many private doctors' offices also have it. Texas has compiled other options for finding vaccine appointments here, and businesses or civic organizations can set up vaccine clinics to offer it to employees, visitors, customers or members. The vaccine is free, and you don't need health insurance to get it.

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