

Covid Weekly Deaths Down Almost 40% In 16 Weeks

By Brian Woolf (October 23, 2020)

In the US, average weekly Covid-19 deaths have quietly, but steadily, been dropping. The most recent 4-week period (ended Oct 20) shows weekly deaths dramatically down 37.7% from the first 16 weeks of reporting (ended June 30). Great news!

Table 1					
US 50 STATES		AVG WEEKLY DEATH RATE IN 32 WEEKS THRU OCT 20, 2020			
A	B	C	D	E	F
#	Period	# Weeks	Avg Weekly Deaths in Period	% Change from Prior Period	% Change from Base
1	Mar 11 - Jun 30 (Base)	16	7,902		-
2	Jul 1 - Aug 25	8	6,329	(19.9)%	(19.9)%
3	Aug 26 - Sep 22	4	5,620	(11.2)%	(28.9)%
4	Sep 23 - Oct 20	4	4,920	(12.5)%	(37.7)%
How to Read: In Row 4, (12.5%) = (4,920-5,620) ÷ 5,620, and (37.7%) = (4,920-7,902) ÷ 7,902					
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This trend of declining deaths is made more dramatic by:

- **Surprise** - it's unexpected. The constant barrage of negative CV news headlines, without even a hint that overall death rates were declining, had led us to believe the virus is getting worse rather than better in the US.
- **Contrast** -while deaths per week have been declining in the US's 50 states, tests and cases per week have been growing significantly. In other words, Covid deaths have dropped while Covid tests have tripled and Covid cases have doubled. Very simply, since July 1 we've had a lot more tests and cases-yet fewer deaths. Why? A jump in asymptomatic cases? Fewer highly-susceptible people? Growing herd immunity? Better medical care of Covid cases? We're learning how to better manage Covid? We don't know for sure.

But we do know that *One fact can prick many balloons of opinion.*

Tests, Cases, and Deaths

To illustrate the interrelationship of tests, cases, and deaths, Table 2 shows their weekly averages in the initial ("Base") 16-week period to June 30 and the three following shorter periods (also totaling 16 weeks) from July 1 to October 20...

Table 2		US 50 STATES			
AVG WEEKLY TESTS, CASES, AND DEATHS IN 32 WEEKS THRU OCT 20, 2020					
A	B	C	D	E	F
#	Period	# Weeks	Avg Weekly Tests in Period	Avg Weekly Cases in Period	Avg Weekly Deaths in Period
1	Mar 11 - Jun 30	16	2,063,009	164,650	7,902
2	Jul 1 - Aug 25	8	5,303,390	389,338	6,329
3	Aug 26 - Sep 22	4	5,502,019	275,425	5,620
4	Sep 23 - Oct 20	4	6,899,486	338,884	4,920
5	Second 16 weeks Incr (Decr) as % Base				
6	Jul 1 - Aug 25	8	157%	136%	(19.9)%
7	Aug 26 - Sep 22	4	167%	67%	(28.9)%
8	Sep 23 - Oct 20	4	234%	106%	(37.7)%
9	Second 16 weeks as ratio of Base				
10	Jul 1 - Aug 25	8	2.6	2.4	0.8
11	Aug 26 - Sep 22	4	2.7	1.7	0.7
12	Sep 23 - Oct 20	4	3.3	2.1	0.6
Read: In Col D, row 8, 234% =(6,899,486 - 2,063,009) ÷ 2,063,009; & row 12, 3.3 =6,899,486 ÷ 2,063,009					
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We see, in rows 1-2 of Table 2, that during the 8 weeks immediately following the Base period, average weekly tests jumped from 2 million to over 5 million, and cases jumped from 165,000 to 389,000. Dramatic increases -but so, too, was the concurrent dramatic drop of 20% in average weekly deaths (from 7,902 to 6,329). Those changes set the pattern for the following two 4-week periods (see rows 3-4).

The table also tells us that, while weekly tests jumped, the **ratio of cases to tests fell** significantly from 8.0% in the Base period to 4.9% in the 4 w/e Oct 20. [164,650 / 2,063,009 = 8.0%; 338,884 / 6,899,486 = 4.9%]

Other data shows that the **chance of dying** after being infected has dropped by a huge **two-thirds**. In the Base period, 4.8% of cases ended in death [see row 1: 7,902 / 164,650 = 4.8%]; most recently, in the 4-weeks ending Oct 20, that had fallen by two-thirds to **1.5%** [see row 4: 4,920 / 338,884 = 1.5%!]

In an earlier article, *The Comeback Kids and Firebirds*, I discussed the two competing forces involved in the big changes between the Base and following period: the NY-centric states were recovering from weeks of high CV deaths, while some other states were hit with outbreaks of Covid hotspots. Result? The five Comeback Kids' average weekly deaths dropped 82-94%, while the five Firebirds' average weekly deaths increased 300-700%. (See [Table 3.](#))

Table 3 COMEBACK KIDS vs FIREBIRDS (32 w/e Oct 20, 2020)										
St	Pop (mill.)	Den. (ppsm)	Avg Deaths Per Week in each Period					Incr (Decr) over Base (%)		
			Mar 11 - Jun 30	Jul 1 - Aug 25	Aug 26 - Sep 22	Sep 23 - Oct 20	Mar 11 - Oct 20	Aug 25 vs Jun 30	Sep 22 vs Jun 30	Oct 20 vs Jun 30
# wks >			16 wks	8 wks	4 wks	4 wks	32 wks			
NY	19	357	1,969	184	53	79	1,047	(91)%	(97)%	(96)%
NJ	9	1,018	947	112	36	36	511	(88)%	(96)%	(96)%
MA	7	653	506	107	92	109	305	(79)%	(82)%	(78)%
CT	4	643	270	17	9	15	142	(94)%	(97)%	(95)%
RI	1	686	59	11	16	15	36	(82)%	(73)%	(75)%
FL	21	161	219	884	710	651	501	304%	224%	197%
TX	29	108	152	1,179	846	586	550	674%	455%	285%
SC	5	161	46	222	175	112	114	380%	279%	143%
ID	2	21	6	28	33	21	17	390%	485%	269%
MT	1	7	1.4	9	18	20	8	527%	1209%	1318%

Read: NY in 16 w/e Jun 30, lost 1,969 people per wk (pw). That dropped to 184 pw in 8 w/e Aug 25. For 32 w/e Oct 20, avg loss was 1,047 pw.

Read: FL in 16 w/e Jun 30, lost 219 people pw. That jumped to 884 pw in 8 w/e Aug 25. For whole 32 w/e Oct 20, avg loss was 501 pw.

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The five NY-centric states (Comeback Kids) are among the most densely populated in the nation and their airports are the main entry points for European visitors. Initially, unaware of the severity of the European strain of CV, their airports were not Covid-testing arrivals. For these

and other reasons these states were hit badly by Covid. In the Base period, Covid claimed from New York an average of almost 2,000 citizens every week while neighboring New Jersey lost close to 1,000 citizens every week (see **Table 3**, rows 1-2). With few proven guidelines on how to slow CV from spreading, draconic lockdowns became part of these states' response package. Their package (and the course of Nature) seemed to work because, in the 8-weeks beginning July 1, their average weekly deaths dropped 82-94%. For example:

- New York dived 91% from 1,969 to 184 weekly deaths in consecutive periods
- New Jersey dived 88% from 947 to 112 weekly deaths

The other three Comeback Kids did likewise. And all five states have subsequently held onto their new low, weekly death numbers, as seen in **Table 3**'s first 5 rows.

The Firebird states (see bottom 5 rows), by definition, had the highest increase in average weekly deaths in the period following the Base. For example:

- Texas's new deaths per week of 1,179 was 7.7x that of its 152-death Base
- South Carolina's new 222 deaths per week was 4.8x that of its 46-death Base
- Florida's new 884 deaths per week was 4.0x of its 219-death Base

Such overnight big jumps ring bells among a state's leadership team and so it did for these five. The cause was primarily hotspot outbreaks (eg, large crowds). Containment and correction plans were immediately activated.

And here's what happened between August and October:

- Texas and South Carolina cut their highs in half (1,179 to 586 and 222 to 112)
- Florida dropped its new high weekly rate 25% (884 to 651)

Now, be cautioned that hotspot turnarounds don't always happen on schedule as it did for these three. Some do, some doggedly keep increasing for a while, and some others go up and down like the teeth on a saw-blade. In **Table 4**, I have added for you examples of some that caught my eye.

Closing Comments

Several lessons I have learned from the first 32 weeks of Covid data.

- Expect to be severely hit at some stage. Plan for it; pray it doesn't happen.
 - There is no one single best response to beat CV at this time. The 10 states discussed here had different responses, eg, some had Lockdowns, others didn't.
 - Don't place all your hope in a cure-all vaccine (Dr Fauci has stated it may be as little as 50-60% effective.)
 - Develop a plan you and your team believe in.
 - The coming 12 months is likely to see a continuation of hotspot outbreaks.
- However, by applying the accumulating lessons learned, I expect the trend of declining average weekly deaths to continue.
- If you are interested in the underlying data in this paper and the results for each of the 50 states, it will be posted to my website (www.brianwoolf.com)

Table 4 STATE EXAMPLES WITH COMMENTS								
			Avg Deaths Per Week in each Period					
St	Pop (mill.)	Den. (ppsm)	Mar 11 - Jun 30	Jul 1 - Aug 25	Aug 26 - Sep 22	Sep 23 - Oct 20	Mar 11 - Oct 20	Comments
# wks >			16 wks	8 wks	4 wks	4 wks	32 wks	
MD	6	487	199	65	47	37	126	Part of the NY-centric group. Deaths drop 67% in Jul & keep falling: 65> 47> 37
AZ	7	64	102	<u>392</u>	182	83	182	AZ, like TX, hits <u>hotspot</u> in Jul which hikes deaths 4x. Then correction: 392> 182> 83
VT	1	65	3.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	1.8	VT ... Do stories get any better? 3.5 > 0.3 > 0 > 0
CA	40	241	374	<u>784</u>	703	483	531	CA hits <u>hotspot</u> in Jul (doubles 374 > 784). Then corrects 784 > 703> 483
MO	6	88	65	63	<u>108</u>	<u>179</u>	84	MO hits <u>hotspots</u> in Aug-Sep & Sep-Oct. Correction plan ahead.
AR	3	57	17	<u>53</u>	<u>125</u>	129	54	AR, who was doing superbly well, hits <u>hotspots</u> both in Jul & Aug. Painful path 17> 53> 125> 129
OH	12	261	180	140	161	110	159	OH is a classic up-down, saw-tooth state: 180> 140> 161> 110
HI	1	130	1.1	3.9	<u>18</u>	17	6	HI in total quarantine (no visitors) in Base Period. Next 3 periods quarantine lifts, deaths rise.

About the author...

Besides a full business life in retailing, and later, loyalty marketing, the other part of Brian Woolf's life has been filled with diverse interests: particularly speaking (including Toastmasters), travel (including all seven continents), and reading (including history). And he has written seven books sharing what he has learned along the journey. Ask him, two favorite trips? Antarctica and the Nile. Ask him, two favorite books? The Lessons of History (Will & Ariel Durant) and Over the Edge of the World (Laurence Bergreen). He loves learning and sharing.

And there's more where this came from...

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