

U.S. surpasses two-thirds of 65+ fully vaccinated

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More than four out of five Americans aged 65 and older have received at least one shot against COVID-19 so far, and as of Friday, a full two-thirds of that older population is fully vaccinated against the highly infectious coronavirus, federal health officials announced.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky told reporters that 66 percent of the country's 65-and-older population is now fully vaccinated, representing more than 36 million people who are among those most vulnerable.

"It's so important that we're protecting those over age 65," Walensky said during a press briefing with the White House's COVID-19 Response Team. "They have borne the brunt of the pandemic and, without a vaccine, are at high risk for severe disease, hospitalization, and death. We are well on our way to have one of our most vulnerable populations fully protected against this deadly virus, and that is a reason to celebrate."

Massachusetts is running ahead of the national trend: through Thursday, the Baker administration reported that 846,900 out of about 1.17 million residents 65 and older had been fully vaccinated for a roughly 72 percent rate. Older adults have been among those hit hardest by the virus, with those 65 and older accounting for more than 80 percent of COVID-19 deaths in America. The vaccine rollout has led to an 80 percent reduction in deaths and a 70 percent reduction in hospitalizations among seniors, according to White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Jeff Zients.