

Press Clippings 08/28/21 to 8/30/21

---Daily Herald--08/28/2021

Lake, DuPage lead state in COVID-19 vaccination rates for kids 12-17

by Marni Pyke



A 17-year-old gets a COVID-19 shot in April at the Sports Hub in Glendale Heights. *Brian Hill | Staff Photographer*

With most suburban schools in full swing amid a spike in COVID-19 infections, state data Friday showed that less than half of young Illinoisans ages 12 to 17 are fully vaccinated.

That's 445,585 tweens and teenagers, or nearly 45%, who are fully inoculated out of 993,238 eligible for Pfizer/BioNTech's two-dose vaccine, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health.

In comparison, about 62% of all Illinoisans eligible for shots are fully vaccinated. Pfizer's vaccine was not authorized for use in children ages 12 to 15 until May 10.

The latest numbers come as COVID-19 caseloads, hospitalizations and deaths rose steadily in August. New cases reached 4,942 Friday, the highest for a day since January.

Hospitalizations have spiked by 36% in two weeks. This week's daily average of COVID-19 patients statewide was 2,169, compared to 1,592 a day from Aug. 8 to 14.

Lake County leads the state in inoculation rates for the 12-17 cohort with about 57.5% fully vaccinated.

The Lake County Health Department has gotten creative in its vaccination push. For example, it targeted teens with a School Spirit Day in May featuring shaved ice drinks, giveaways and music.

"We're encouraged by the vaccination numbers we are seeing in that age group," spokeswoman Emily Young said.

DuPage County was second in Illinois with 54.6% of the 12-17 contingent fully vaccinated. Vaccination events have helped, such as walk-up clinics in July co-sponsored by Glenbard High School District 87 that resulted in 74 people getting shots.

Suburban Cook County is at 49.7% fully vaccinated among 12- to 17-year-olds. Will County stands at 47.2%. Kane County is at 46%, and McHenry County is at 43.5%, below the state average.

On Thursday, Gov. J.B. Pritzker ordered statewide masking inside public places and also required vaccinations for all school and higher education employees.

A day later, IDPH data showed 26 school-related COVID-19 outbreaks over the last 30 days. Eight occurred in the suburbs.

In suburban Cook County, there were four hot spots, including **Glenbrook Elementary School** in Streamwood with 11 to 16 infections. Also listed with fewer than five cases each were Maine East High School in Park Ridge, Oak Park River Forest High School, and Reavis High School in Burbank. All involved students and were tied to classrooms except for Reavis, where the outbreak was sports-related, the IDPH reported Friday.

Glenbrook is in **Elgin Area School District U-46**, and a classroom will be closed through Sept. 7, Superintendent Tony Sanders said.

"We're generally pleased with the high level of compliance with our COVID mitigation strategies, but we expect that we will continue to see COVID cases in a district of our size," Sanders said in a message to parents.

In Kane County, outbreaks happened involving staff members at East Aurora School District 131, and students and staff members at Kaneland John Shields Elementary School in Sugar Grove. In Will County, outbreaks took place at Nelson Ridge School in New Lenox where students were infected, and at Reed-Custer Elementary School in Braidwood involving staff members and students.

All four hot spots were classroom-related and each comprised fewer than five cases.

A number of educators said Pritzker's edicts are part of the reality of living with a pandemic.

"When I look at the driving light of all we're trying to do this year, it's to keep kids physically in school," said veteran teacher Michael Williamson,

teachers union president at Algonquin-based Community Unit District 300. "Because we know when we keep them in school, we can do amazing things for them."

COVID-19 metrics showed a continued climb in August. This week's average daily caseload reached 3,572 compared to 3,550 from Aug. 15 to 21, up from 3,190 in the week of Aug. 8-14.

Also Friday, 14 more people died from the respiratory disease, the IDPH reported.

Illinois hospitals were treating 2,240 COVID-19 patients Thursday night.

On Thursday, 25,307 more COVID-19 shots were administered. The seven-day average is 24,056.

The federal government has delivered 16,146,505 doses of vaccine to Illinois since distribution began in mid-December, and 13,914,213 shots have been administered. The Pfizer vaccine, the only one approved for kids 17 and younger in the U.S., received full FDA approval Monday for ages 16 and up, with kids 12 to 15 eligible under FDA emergency authorization.

Statewide, 6,742,814 people have been fully vaccinated, 52.9% of Illinois' 12.7 million population.

The state's positivity rate for COVID-19 cases is 5.2% based on a seven-day average.

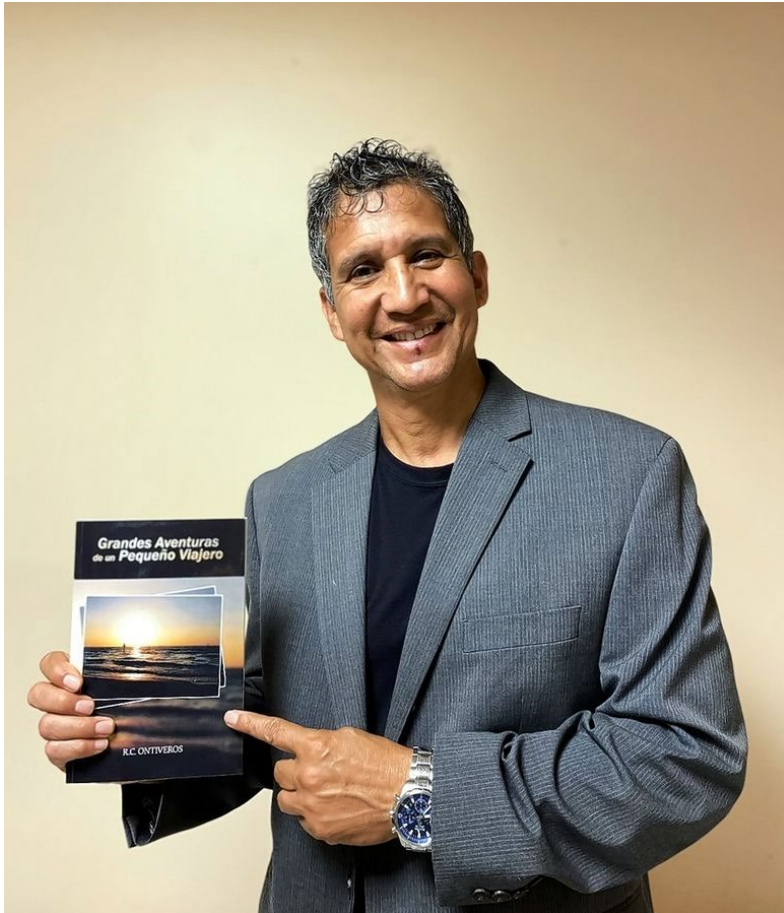
Total cases statewide stand at 1,508,005, and 23,889 Illinoisans have died since the pandemic began.

Labs processed 110,833 virus tests in the last 24 hours.

---Daily Herald--08/30/2021

Elgin authors among semifinalists in Illinois libraries' book contest

by Madhu Krishnamurthy



Elgin authors Raul Castillo Ontiveros, pictured here, and India Powers, both patrons of Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin, have been named semifinalists in the eighth annual Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project Indie Book Competition for their respective books "Grandes Aventuras de un Pequeño Viajero" and "Demon's Bane." *Courtesy of Raul Castillo*

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At 15, Raúl Castillo Ontiveros began traveling across his native Mexico in search of adventures.

"I used to travel from my hometown (Monterrey) to the most famous places in Mexico," said Ontiveros, 58, of Elgin, who teaches Advanced Placement Spanish at **Elgin High School**.

Ontiveros' bilingual memoir, "Grandes Aventuras de un Pequeño Viajero," and a fantasy historical romance novel, "Demon's Bane," by fellow Elgin author India Powers are semifinalists in the eighth annual Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project Indie Book Competition.

"The contest itself is good because it promotes writing," said Ontiveros, who has been teaching in **Elgin Area School District U-46** for 23 years.

Volunteer Illinois librarians read and evaluate the works of lesser-known local authors entered in the contest. Ontiveros and Powers are patrons of Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin. The library's staff members helped spread the word about the contest and received submissions and nominations of authors.

Author project

Eight years ago, a group of Illinois librarians created the Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project with the goal of demonstrating the power of libraries to promote the works of unknown local authors. Previous contest winners have seen higher book sales, increased visibility on library platforms, and at least one publishing contract.

This year, the group launched the Spanish language contest, De la Página a la Fama, the brainchild of Tina Viglucci, Gail Borden's director of Hispanic services.

"We're representing our communities, and our Elgin community is half Latino," Viglucci said. "If we are really representing our communities and giving them a voice ... everyone can benefit by hearing diverse voices."

The goal is magnifying diverse authors' voices and benefiting readers from their perspectives, she added.

Ten adult fiction novels, five young adult fiction works, and six Spanish language works were chosen as semifinalists in this year's competition. Winners in each category will receive a cash prize, opportunities to promote their books at libraries and author fairs throughout Illinois, and a chance to compete with winners from other state competitions to be named Indie Author of the Year.

Three finalists will be selected in September and a winner will be announced in October. For more information, visit soontobefamous.info.

---ABC-7 News—Aired at 10:44 p.m. on 08/27/2021
Fall football season is back for many schools after year on hold due to CPOVID pandemic
by John Garcia: Note – Hit Ctrl button and click on link below to see video

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