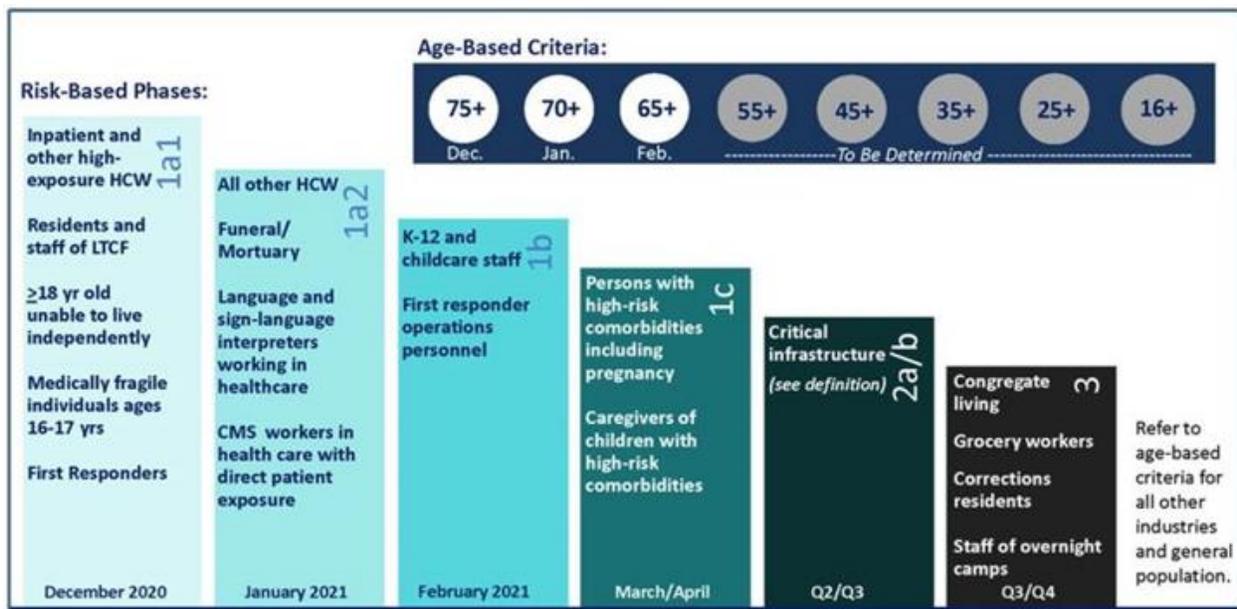




Tennessee to begin vaccinating 65+ and teachers

The Tennessee Department of Health has announced that [those age 65 and older, K-12, and child care employees will be eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine starting Monday, February 22](#). This includes everyone from full-time teachers, substitutes, bus drivers, administrative and janitorial staff. In Nashville, [Vanderbilt University Medical Center and HCA/Tristar Health are already beginning vaccinations for the city's roughly 25,000 school teachers and staff](#). Tennessee also modified its vaccine distribution plan due to expected increases in weekly vaccine supplies. Under the modified plan, Phase 1b will be expanded to include first responders, air traffic controllers, and air cargo workers, and Phase 1c will now include pregnant women.



+Jim [said](#), “On February 22, [@TNDeptofHealth](#) will begin registering age 65+ and Phase 1b (staff members of K-12th grade schools and child care facilities).” For more info visit <https://covid19.tn.gov>

Confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths, vaccinations in Tennessee

Yesterday, the [Tennessee Department of Health](#) reported 993 new cases, bringing the total to 761,301 confirmed cases. More than 11,057 people have died and there are approximately 1,108 people currently hospitalized with the virus statewide. There have been 6,644,952 tests statewide, more than 10,515 since Wednesday, with an 8.43% positivity rate. As of today in [Davidson County](#), there are 88,493 confirmed cases, and 619 total deaths.

Due to freezing weather conditions, Nashville COVID-19 community assessment centers and others are temporarily closed. To find a list of alternate testing centers, visit: <https://covid19.tn.gov/testing-sites/>.



As of yesterday, [1,068,979 vaccinations have been administered in Tennessee](#). Of the state's population, 10.36% (723,160 people) have received at least one dose and 4.9% of Tennesseans (343,740 people) have received a second dose and are fully vaccinated. [Nationwide, 79% of the vaccine supply has been used with 12% of Americans have received at least one dose and 4.9% have received two doses](#). Due to extreme weather events vaccine shipments have been delayed and the White House estimates a national backlog of 6 million doses. [Plans are underway to deliver the backlog of doses by next week](#).

To find out your phase and book your appointment for a vaccine visit covid19.tn.gov or covid19.nashville.gov or call 615-862-7777. There are now over 700 locations in Tennessee administering vaccines and you can [visit this website for a list of locations](#).

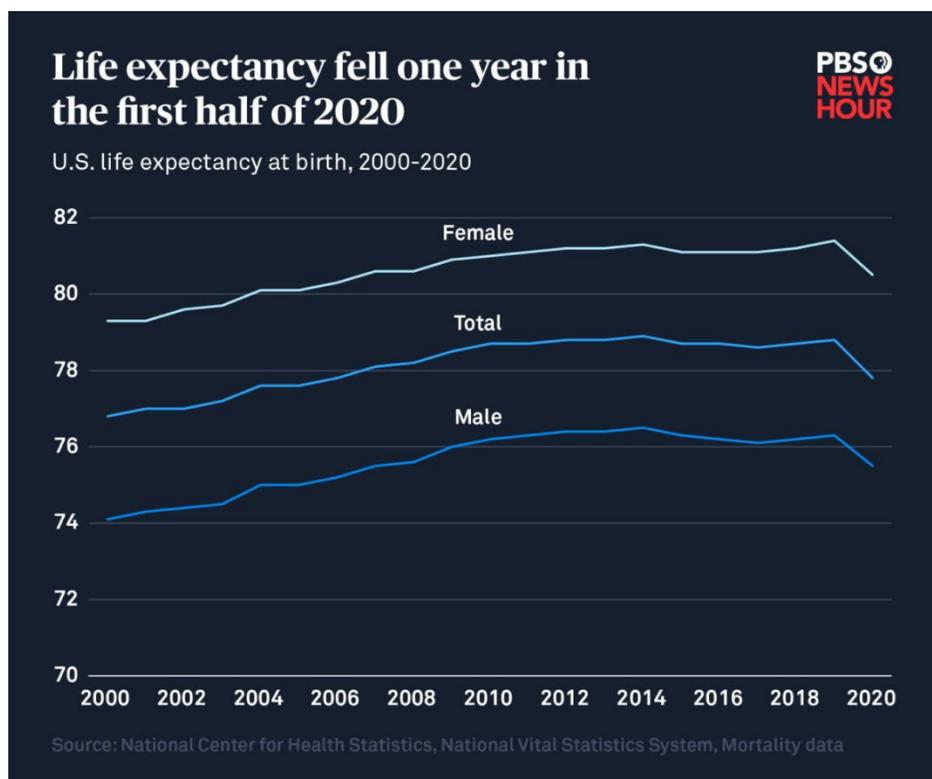
Administration wants most schools fully reopened by end of first 100 days in office

On Tuesday, President Biden said [he wants the majority of schools in the country to reopen for in-person instruction by April 30](#), the end of his first 100 days in office. His goal is to have K-8 students in school five days a week. He believes those are the easiest schools to open because of the low transmission rate between children in that age range. He also strongly supports giving teachers and school staff priority for COVID-19 vaccination. During the White House COVID-19 Response Team [briefing today](#), CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky clarified there are options for in-person learning available for all levels of community spread. As many communities are seeing decreases in cases and community spread, they are moving from the red-zone to the orange-zone, which allows for even more opportunities for in-person learning.

Life expectancy in the U.S. drops

[Life expectancy in the U.S. dropped by a year in the first half of 2020](#) amid a surge of COVID-19 deaths. The data is from January through June of last year and CDC unfortunately estimates the expectancy will decline further once data is analyzed for the entire year. The steepest decline was among Black men. While the life expectancy for white men dropped eight-tenths of a year during that six-month period, it dropped by three full years for Black men and two years for Hispanics. This is the steepest decline in life expectancy since the height of World War II. [Health experts say the drop highlights the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black Americans and people of color](#), but also shows the ongoing health disparities faced by

those communities, which are disproportionately affected by cancer, heart disease, and other conditions. The CDC Director said it will take a lot of work over the coming years to make up for the loss of life in this country.



Biden announces support for global COVID-19 vaccination effort

During a meeting of G-7 leaders earlier today, President Biden announced that [the U.S. will provide \\$4 billion to COVAX](#), an international effort to bolster the purchase and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine to poor nations. [He will also ask all G-7 members to fulfill their pledges to fund COVAX](#). COVAX is an initiative of the World Health Organization to improve access to the vaccination for developing countries. So far, [ten countries, including the U.S., have administered 75% of the vaccine available around the world](#).



Biden Administration immigration plan comes to the House

[The Biden Administration's plan for comprehensive immigration reform was released in Congress yesterday](#). The U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 would create an eight-year path to citizenship for many of the 11 million of immigrants already in the country, and allow undocumented immigrants brought to the US as children and certain immigrant farmworkers to immediately apply for a permanent residence. The bill includes funding for improving

immigration courts, enhancing border infrastructure at ports of entry, and addressing the root causes in countries in Central and South America driving immigration to the U.S. It will also reform and increase aspects of family-based immigration, clear visa backlogs, increase the number of diversity visas, and help STEM graduates from U.S. universities stay in the U.S. to work. The bill also includes the NO BAN Act, which will prevent future administrations from issuing immigration policies that discriminate based on religion, like Trump's Muslim ban. It is expected to pass the House, but will face strong opposition from Senate Republicans.

+Jim is a cosponsor of the U.S. Citizenship Act, and [said](#), "I am proud to join my colleagues in supporting [@POTUS](#)' U.S. Citizenship Act. It will provide a legal path to citizenship for millions of undocumented members of our community and reinforce that [#HomelsHere](#)."



House reintroduces Equality Act

Yesterday, [House Democrats reintroduced the Equality Act](#). The Act will expand and codify federal protections for LGBTQ+ Americans under the Civil Rights Act. The bill would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, education, public services, and financial lending. The Supreme Court read these protections into the employment context in a case last year. The Equality Act, which passed the House last Congress but died in the Senate, is once again expected to pass the House, but will face strong opposition from Senate Republicans, who say the bill is a violation of religious liberties.

+Jim is a long-time cosponsor of the Equality Act and [said](#), "Today the House re-introduced the [#EqualityAct](#). I'm proud to support it and have said before and will say it again: Every American should be guaranteed equal protection under the law."



U.S. officially rejoins Paris Agreement

[Today, the U.S. officially rejoined the Paris Agreement on climate change](#). Only hours after taking the oath of office, President Biden signed an executive order initiating a 30-day process to reenter the pact. The Paris Agreement is a landmark accord signed by nearly 200 nations, committing them to limiting greenhouse gas emissions and keeping global warming below more than 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial temperatures. President Trump announced the withdrawal in 2017, though it did not become official until the following year. The previous administration disengaged from international commitments and repeatedly denied science and the impacts of climate change, something that President Biden has vowed to change.

+ Jim previously [said](#), "It was reckless and irresponsible to leave the Agreement and we will be spending decades trying to reverse the impact on our climate."



NASA lands rover on Mars

The NASA rover, Perseverance, made its long-awaited landing on Mars yesterday afternoon. After a seven-month journey to the planet, the rover immediately began sending back images of the landing site in the Jezero Crater. The crater is a dried lake bed that likely existed on Mars nearly four billion years ago. During its mission, [the rover will search for any signs of ancient life on the planet](#) and will collect rock and soil samples to be sent back to Earth.



Biden Administration offers to talk with Iran about nuclear deal

[The Biden administration offered to sit down for talks with Iran and other members of the Iran nuclear accord.](#) The move is the first step for the U.S. to potentially return to the nuclear deal that limited Iran's nuclear program. During the previous Administration, the U.S. left the agreement, saying that Iran was not abiding by the terms of the deal. Until now, both sides had insisted that the other act first, with the U.S. demanding that Iran come into compliance with the

terms of the deal and Iran pushing for the U.S. lift crippling economic sanction. Still, it's unclear whether Iran would accept and a meeting has yet to be scheduled.



New staff hires and promotion

[Jim has announced two new staff hirings and a staff promotion.](#) Alayna Young, a Nashville native and recent Spelman College graduate, will join the staff in Washington as D.C. Scheduler. She previously had a temporary position with the VoteEarlyTN initiative in Jim's office last fall. MaKayla McCree will be the Scheduler in the Nashville office. She is a recent graduate of Tennessee State University. Jim has promoted Lindsey Smith to be a member of the community engagement and outreach team. She previously served as the Nashville Scheduler. Lindsey started her political work with Karl Dean's gubernatorial campaign in 2016, and ran the successful re-election campaign of At-Large Councilmember Bob Mendes. She is a graduate of the University of Kentucky.

+Jim [said](#), "Alayna, MaKayla, and Lindsey are trusted members of my team and have deep knowledge of the community. They are passionate about public service and I'm honored to continue serving with them."

