



[Dr. Fauci and Dr. Redfield Testify at a House Oversight Hearing](#)

Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), and other health experts including Dr. Robert Redfield, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), testified at a House oversight hearing regarding the Trump administration's response to COVID-19. Dr. Fauci told the committee he remains cautiously optimistic that a vaccine will be ready at the end of the year. He also provided an assessment of where the country stands in its handling of the pandemic, warning that in some areas of the United States "we're now seeing a disturbing surge of infections." Dr. Redfield pointed out that the coronavirus has highlighted decades of underinvesting in the capabilities of public health data, and that now is the time to fix the system. Both Fauci and Redfield emphasized the importance of increased testing, particularly due to the oftentimes asymptomatic nature of coronavirus infection.

The group of health experts said that progress against COVID-19 is a "mixed bag" across the country. While the number of new cases has fallen in the New York City metropolitan area – the early epicenter of the outbreak – there has been a surge in other states such as Texas, Florida, and Arizona. In addition to these regional fluctuations, CDC chief Dr. Redfield stated that another challenge will be combatting the virus as we approach the flu season in the Fall. As such, his agency has developed a test that will check for the coronavirus and two types of the influenza virus simultaneously. Redfield said that "as we get to the Fall, we're going to have influenza and COVID-19 at the same time" so this new test will help doctors distinguish between these two illnesses which have similar symptoms.

Dr. Fauci warned that the country is still in the first wave of the health pandemic and therefore urged the American public to continue practicing social distancing. He also stated that the next few weeks are going to be critical to try and curb the ongoing surge in cases and acknowledged that widespread testing is critical to catch groupings of COVID-19 infections before they become full outbreaks in a given area. Fauci told lawmakers "we're going to be doing more testing, not less," in response to President Trump's recent claim that he asked his administration to slow down testing during the crisis. At last weekend's rally in Oklahoma, Trump said that "When you do testing to that extent, you're going to find more people, you're going to find more cases. So, I said to my people, slow the testing down please." After the president's comments, White House officials tried to play it down as a joke, however, Trump told reporters earlier this week that "he doesn't kid" when asked if he was joking with his remarks.

Since the last high-profile hearing on COVID-19 over a month ago, the United States has been emerging from weeks of stay-at-home orders and business shutdowns, with some states in particular being less cautious than others. States with governors who are adamant about extensive re-opening, such as Arizona, Florida, and Texas, are among those seeing a significant spike in cases.