

US health officials alarmed by rise in air travel

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A top US health official on Monday warned Americans it was too soon to resume traveling despite progress in the battle against the coronavirus, after data showed the country recorded its highest number of airport check-ins since last year.

"Now is not the time to travel," Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), told reporters, urging people to keep up with measures to stem the spread of the virus even as the vaccination rate increases.

On Sunday, more than 1.5 million passengers were checked in at US airports, a level that had not been reached since March 15, 2020, according to data from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

"Much of the travel, we know, is related to people who are going on [spring break](#)," said Walensky.

Miami Beach, the Florida city that symbolizes the

annual university vacation period, declared an emergency this weekend and imposed a curfew to contain the chaos as thousands descended to party en masse.

"We're worried not just for what happens when you are on the airplane itself, but what happens when people [travel](#). That is, they go out; they mix—they mix with people who are not vaccinated," added Walensky.

The rate of US COVID infections has been plateauing at over 50,000 for the past several weeks.

Officials suspect new variants like B.1.117, together with states loosening restrictions, have kept the daily case figures in the tens of thousands.

At the same time, a quarter of the US population has now received at least one dose of vaccine—so the vaccine and the virus are essentially locked in a tie.

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