

# *U.S. braces for surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations*

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Washington, December 1 (RHC)-- As newly reported cases of the coronavirus continued to spike across much of the United States, breaking records for hospitalisations, some local leaders are moving to enact more stringent restrictions.

U.S. officials had pleaded with Americans to avoid travel and limit social gatherings as the nation entered its winter holiday season. But many appear to have disregarded those pleas over the long Thanksgiving weekend as the Transportation Security Administration screened nearly 1.2 million airline passengers on Sunday, the highest since mid-March.

That number is still about 60 percent lower than the comparable day last year when 2.88 million passengers were screened, the highest ever recorded by the agency. Health officials say they are now preparing for a wave of cases over the next two or three weeks that could be linked to holiday gatherings.

The virus has had such an effect on American lives that the word “pandemic” was declared on Monday as the Word of the Year by both Merriam-Webster and Dictionary.com. The two dictionaries said the word was a top search on their internet pages. Dictionary.com called it “a consequential word for a consequential year” and said the pandemic itself has reshaped the way people use daily language.

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