U.S. COVID-19 hospitalizations at lowest level since November

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(HealthDay)—The number of COVID-19 hospitalizations in the United

States late last week was the lowest since early November, data from The COVID Tracking Project show.

There were about 59,800 COVID-19 patients in hospitals nationwide on Friday, a 55 percent decrease from a peak of more than 132,470 on Jan. 6 and the first time since Nov. 9 that the number was below 60,000, *CNN* reported. Since hitting all-time highs around mid-January, daily new cases and deaths have also been decreasing.

Despite these positive trends, [public health experts](link) are urging faster vaccinations before more transmissible variants have a chance to spread and possibly reverse recent progress against the pandemic, *CNN* reported.

"This is why we're telling people to not stop masking, not stop avoiding indoor social gatherings quite yet, because we don't really know what's going to happen with this variant," Megan Ranney, M.D., an emergency medicine physician with Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, told *CNN* on Saturday. "And we saw what happened last winter when we didn't take COVID seriously enough."

The U.S. test positivity rate averaged about 4.8 percent during the last week as of early Saturday, according to The COVID Tracking Project. That is the first time the average has dropped below 5 percent since October, and it is far below a winter peak of about 13.6 percent near the start of January, *CNN* reported.

 More information: *[CNN Article](link)*
[The COVID Tracking Project](link)

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