



Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>

Repustar fact brief on child covid hospitalizations misses the mark: correction needed

1 message

Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>
To: repustar@repustar.com

Tue, Sep 14, 2021 at 11:10 AM

Dear Repustar/FactSparrow,

Your Sept. 11, 2021 fact brief purporting to answer a question about covid-related hospitalizations for children 18 and under overlooked the CDC's distinction between hospital admissions and hospitalizations.

The fact brief answers a question about hospitalizations in terms of hospital admissions. So the brief's information on hospital admissions, taken more-or-less directly from the CDC website, was accurate. But it wasn't responsive to the question.

Here's how the fact brief presented the question:

Have about 2,500 children been hospitalized with COVID-19 in each recent week in the US?

The fact brief asserts that the answer to the question is "yes." Here's the opening paragraph, exemplifying the brief's focus on hospital admissions as a measure of hospitalizations:

According to Centers for Disease Control data, in the week ending Sept. 9, 2021, new hospital admissions of COVID-19 patients under 18 years of age averaged 350 a day, close to a pace of 2,500 weekly or 10,000 a month.

But the CDC website keeps statistics for hospitalizations separate from statistics for hospital admissions, apparently distinguishing between the two in a way that remains unacknowledged in the Repustar fact brief.

Your fact brief relied on information from this URL:

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#new-hospital-admissions>

Here's the URL that contradicts FactSparrow's answer to the question:

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#covidnet-hospitalization-network>

It's the same [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) website. The [second URL](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#covidnet-hospitalization-network) puts a number on the cumulative hospitalizations of children aged 0-17. It's 3,899. That's the total number since the pandemic began, 2020 through 2021. That number cannot support the Repustar claim of 2,500 hospitalizations of children in each recent week. Two weeks at that rate would eclipse the cumulative total since the start of the pandemic.

The peak number of hospitalizations for one week? One hundred twenty-one. That's well short of 2,500.

Everyone makes mistakes. It is the hallmark of conscientious journalism (and fact-checking) to correct promptly, completely and transparently. Transparency is supposed to encompass the attempt to make sure that those who read the incorrect information see the correction ([that can look like this](#)).

Cheers.

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Sincerely,

Bryan W. White
editor

9/14/2021

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