

COVID-19 Daily Update

April 30, 2020

Summary

The United States has 1,053,063 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 61,547 reported related deaths. Federal social distancing guidelines are set to expire on Thursday, April 30. President Trump indicated that he does not intend to renew these guidelines. The Department of Labor reported that another 3.8 million workers filed initial claims for unemployment benefits last week. More than 30 million workers have filed for unemployment benefits over the last six weeks. The Commerce Department announced that consumer spending has fallen by 7.5% since February, the biggest drop in nearly 60 years. Both South Korea and Hong Kong reported that they have no new domestic COVID-19 cases. An International Energy Agency report projects global energy demand will fall by 6% this year and that greenhouse gas emissions will fall nearly 8%.

Scientists and conservation leaders from 25 countries signed a letter calling on governments to shutdown wildlife markets to prevent the possible outbreak of another pandemic. California will close all beaches between 11 AM and 5 PM after tens of thousands of people gathered on beaches despite the statewide stay-at-home order. Los Angeles announced the first COVID-19 testing policy in the United States to include testing for asymptomatic individuals. Priority will still be given to health care employees, other workers who interact with the public, and people with symptoms. Costco plans to return to normal operating hours next week, but customers and employees will be required to wear face-coverings in the stores. Macy's plans to re-open 68 stores nationwide on Monday, May 4. Macy's expects that all 775 of its locations will be re-opened in six weeks based on state and local guidelines.

New York reported 306 deaths on Thursday, the lowest COVID-19 death toll since March 30. The number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients in New York dropped for the 17th day in a row and is now below 12,000. Governor Cuomo described plans to develop "an army" of 6,400 to 17,000 contact tracers across the State. New York City will shut down its subway system from 1 AM to 5 AM each night in order to disinfect all trains. The shutdown will begin on May 6. Transit officials will provide riders alternative ways to get to and from work during those hours, including fully subsidized for-hire vehicles, dollar vans, and buses. New York City will provide appointment-only antibody testing for health care workers across 11 NYC Health + Hospitals locations, starting next week. New York City workers will continue to monitor public spaces and plan to hand out up to 275,000 face coverings this week.

General/Employer Guidance

Presidential updates

- [*Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with Governor Edwards of Louisiana*](#), April 29
 - Federal guidelines encouraging people to work from home, limit travel, and avoid large gatherings are set to expire on Thursday, April 30. President Trump indicated that he does not intend to extend these guidelines and stated, “they’ll be fading out, because now the governors are doing it.”
 - On May 1, more than a [dozen states](#) will start partially re-opening their economies and restarting public life, raising concerns among health experts about another spike in cases that may not be detected in official numbers for two weeks. Dr. Fauci recently warned that premature action by states could lead to “a rebound to get us right back in the same boat that we were in a few weeks ago.”

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [*COVID-19 Situation Report – 100*](#), April 29
 - WHO Regional Office for Europe [highlighted](#) the importance of respiratory physiotherapy and functional rehabilitation for recovered critical COVID-19 patients.
 - WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region [described](#) the added challenge of combatting COVID-19 in the Syrian Arab Republic, Libya and Yemen where decades of conflict have left weakened health systems and health care worker shortages.
 - April 30 marks three months since WHO declared a public health emergency of international concern over the outbreak of COVID-19. Director-General Tedros [reviewed](#) a comprehensive timeline of events since WHO first discovered a cluster of “pneumonia of unknown cause” in Wuhan China on December 31, 2019.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [*Clinical Outcomes of Adult Patients Hospitalized with COVID-19*](#), April 29
 - A recent study, published as a preprint by CDC, reviewed a group of 305 hospitalized COVID-19 patients across seven hospitals in Georgia.
 - At four affiliated hospitals, which accounted for 67% of patients in the cohort, 80% of COVID-19 patients were black. During the same month, 47% of all hospitalized patients at these facilities were black. Researchers called on public health officials to ensure that prevention activities prioritize communities and racial groups most affected by COVID-19.
 - A considerable proportion of patients aged 18–64 years without high-risk conditions received ICU-level care and died, 23% and 5%, respectively. The data suggest that COVID-19 can cause significant morbidity in relatively young people without severe underlying medical conditions.
- [*Coronavirus and Travel in the United States*](#), April 29
 - CDC issued travel recommendations for different types of travel in the United States.
 - CDC recommends staying home as much as possible and avoiding non-essential travel. CDC acknowledges, however, that some travel is essential, whether for work or to provide medical care to others. CDC provides considerations for air, bus, car, or RV

travel. CDC also provides recommendations for finding lodging and reviewing state and local travel restrictions.

New York State

- [*Governor Cuomo COVID-19 Briefing*](#), April 30
 - New York reported 306 deaths on Thursday, the lowest COVID-19 death toll since March 30. The number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients dropped for the 17th day in a row and is now below 12,000 — down nearly 40% from mid-April when there were nearly 19,000 hospitalized patients.
 - New York State plans to train 30 contract tracers for every 100,000 people in an affected area. Governor Cuomo described the plan as developing “a tracing army.” New York could need anywhere from 6,400 to 17,000 tracers statewide based on projected cases.

- [*Report Outlining Maternity Task Force’s Initial Recommendations*](#), April 29
 - New York State’s COVID-19 Maternity Task Force issued a [report](#) outlining its initial recommendations.
 - The recommendations include diversifying birthing site options; mandating COVID-19 testing for all pregnant New Yorkers; ensuring equity in birthing options; creating an educational campaign; and reviewing the impact of COVID-19 on pregnancy and newborns with special emphasis on reducing racial disparities in maternal mortality.
 - Governor Cuomo has accepted these recommendations in full.

- [*Attorney General James Calls on Cable and Satellite Providers to Provide Financial Relief to Consumers During Pandemic*](#), April 29
 - New York Attorney General James called on seven major cable and satellite television providers in New York to reduce or eliminate fees for live sports programming during the pandemic.
 - Despite the fact that live sporting events in the United States have been cancelled, cable and satellite television providers continue to charge high fees for live sports programming.

New York City

- [*City workers will begin handing out masks and more testing sites will open*](#), April 30
 - Mayor de Blasio announced that New York City workers will begin handing out up to 275,000 face coverings this week in public spaces.
 - Two new virus testing sites, one in Coney Island and one in Inwood in Manhattan, will open over the weekend. By next week, there will be 11 community testing sites available across the city.
 - New York’s Citi Bike program will open more than 100 new stations in the Bronx and Upper Manhattan to aid essential workers; some essential workers will be given free one-year bike memberships.
 - Mayor de Blasio criticized President Trump for urging the country to re-open and described the White House press briefings as “incoherent.”

- [*NYC's Subway, a 24/7 Mainstay, Will Close for Overnight Disinfection*](#), April 30
 - For the duration of the pandemic, New York City's subway will shut down from 1 AM to 5 AM every day to disinfect equipment. The shutdown will begin on May 6.
 - Transit officials will provide riders alternative ways to get to and from work during those hours, including fully subsidized for-hire vehicles, dollar vans, and buses.
 - Governor Cuomo described the plan as “one of the most aggressive, creative, challenging undertakings that the MTA has done.” The system has only shut down twice in the past decade; the previous shutdowns were tied to hurricanes, including hurricane Sandy in 2012.
 - MTA was previously cleaning its network of trains and buses every 72 hours during the pandemic.

- [*Mayor de Blasio Announces New COVID-19 Initiatives*](#), April 29
 - New York City will provide [antibody testing](#) for health care workers across 11 NYC Health + Hospitals locations. Tests will be available by mid-week next week and will be offered on an appointment-only basis. The initiative will prioritize those working in high-exposure environments such as ICUs and emergency departments.
 - Mayor de Blasio announced “[Project Cupid](#),” an effort to transition to a fully online process for marriage licenses. The new system will allow couples to virtually schedule and attend an appointment with the City Clerk’s office, upload the required licensing documentation, and upload a signed license once the ceremony is complete.
 - NYC Health + Hospitals announced a collaboration with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) to [train](#) health care workers on how to cope with stress. The program will tailor elements of DoD’s combat stress management and resilience program for military personnel into a webinar series for civilian health care workers.

Other Related Updates

- [*Department of Labor Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report*](#), April 30
 - The Department of Labor (DOL) reports that another 3.8 million workers filed initial claims for unemployment benefits last week. More than 30 million workers have filed for unemployment benefits over the last six weeks. Secretary of Labor Scalia issued a [statement](#) attributing the elevated unemployment claims to the pandemic.
 - The Economic Policy Institute [found](#) that roughly 50% more people may have qualified for unemployment benefits over the last four weeks, but were not able to successfully apply for benefits. The New York Times [reports](#) that many states have stringent unemployment benefit requirements that are difficult to meet during the pandemic.

- [*Trump Officials Are Said to Press Spies to Link Virus and Wuhan Labs*](#), April 30
 - The Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a statement confirming that the U.S. intelligence community is investigating whether the COVID-19 outbreak “began through contact with infected animals or if it was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan.”
 - The statement noted that the intelligence community “concur with the wide scientific consensus that the COVID-19 virus was not man-made or genetically modified.”

- [*Department of Labor COVID-19 Updates*](#), April 29
 - DOL [awarded](#) over \$30 million in Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs) to expand dislocated worker training and employment programs in Arizona, Connecticut, Louisiana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin. The funds were awarded under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.
 - DOL [announced](#) that federal pandemic unemployment compensation (FPUC) benefits are now being paid in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. FPUC is authorized under the CARES Act and provides an additional \$600 in weekly unemployment insurance payments to eligible individuals.
 - DOL [investigated](#) a southern California tire company for refusing to provide sick leave to an employee who self-quarantined while awaiting a family member's test for COVID-19. Investigators found that the employer wrongfully denied the employee's request for leave under newly passed Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPLSA).

- [*Best Practices for a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Health Systems*](#), April 30
 - A national group of health care leaders developed a guide for COVID-19 preparedness in the New England Journal of Medicine.
 - An effective COVID-19 health system preparedness must address the following critical elements: (1) mitigating local transmission; (2) conserving, supporting, and protecting staff; (3) eliminating non-urgent strains on the system; and (4) coordinating communication.
 - Health systems should not wait until they face a surge in COVID-19 cases to implement a comprehensive response. By acting early, health systems may avoid being crippled by crisis and continue to be operational and provide critically important care.

- [*NIH clinical trial shows Remdesivir accelerates recovery from COVID-19*](#), April 29
 - National Institutes of Health (NIH) conducted a randomized, controlled clinical trial of remdesivir as a potential treatment for COVID-19. Remdesivir is an investigational broad-spectrum antiviral drug developed by Gilead Sciences.
 - Preliminary data indicate that hospitalized patients with advanced COVID-19 who received remdesivir via daily infusion recovered 31% faster than those who received a placebo. Patients treated with remdesivir, on average, recovered in 11 days while those who received a placebo recovered in 15 days. The results also suggested a survival benefit, as the group receiving remdesivir had mortality rate of 8%, compared with 11.6% for the placebo group.
 - While not a "knock out," NIAID Director Fauci stated that the results were "a very important proof of concept."

- [*FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup*](#), April 29
 - FDA issued a [consumer update](#) on how to use nutrition facts labels to learn more about food. FDA notes that many may be purchasing different items because of temporary disruptions in the supply chain.
 - DOJ and FDA [announced](#) that a federal court in Utah entered an injunction halting the sale of various silver products, promoted as treatments for COVID-19.

- FDA [granted accelerated approval](#) to a new dosing regimen for a cancer therapy, to allow patients with certain cancers to continue treatment with fewer in-person visits.
- FDA issued an [emergency use authorization](#) (EUA) for COVID-19 antibody tests that were evaluated in an independent validation study performed at the NIH, or by another government agency designated by FDA, and are confirmed by FDA to meet the criteria set forth in the Scope of Authorization.
- FDA recently posted an [FAQ](#) on ventilator policy enforcement and the open sourcing of ventilator software.
- FDA posted an [FAQ](#) on EUAs for medical devices during the pandemic, including how to submit a request for a new EUA and what happens to authorized devices after the public health emergency is over.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [Mortgage-Backed Securities Litigation in the Wake of COVID-19](#), April 30
- [Virtual Discussion: COVID-19 - European Regulatory Considerations for Private Fund Managers](#), April 30
- [Phasing-In: Use of COVID-19 Testing as a “Return to Work” Strategy](#), April 29
- [COVID-19 Business Liability Considerations in Reopening the Economy](#), April 29

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