

April 7, 2020

**Summary**

The United States now has 383,965 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 12,021 reported related deaths. France's health minister announced that the country had not reached the peak of its epidemic and was "still in a worsening phase." France has recorded more than 78,167 cases and 10,328 deaths. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is receiving oxygen support in an intensive care unit as he battles a worsening coronavirus infection. Turkey has ordered all citizens to wear masks when shopping or visiting crowded public places and announced it will begin delivering masks to every family, free of charge. South Carolina issued a shelter-in-place order, effective Tuesday at 5 PM. It is the 42nd state to issue an order of this kind. Approximately 95 percent of the U.S. population is or will soon be under directives to stay home. New Jersey Governor Murphy signed an executive order closing all state parks, state forests, and county parks in the state, because too many people have failed to observe social distancing guidelines.

In New York, the death toll reached a new one-day high, as 731 more people died in the state. The grim tally followed two days in which new deaths dropped below 600. Governor Cuomo said that while the state's new death toll was upsetting, he was encouraged by data showing that the rate of hospitalizations had fallen for several days, suggesting that the spread of the virus could be plateauing. President Trump granted Governor Cuomo's request to allow the treatment of COVID-19 patients on the USNS Comfort. The ship, which has 1,000 beds, was previously reserved for non-COVID-19 patients. New York City Mayor de Blasio reported that, after receiving another 500 ventilators from the state, the City now has a sufficient number of ventilators to sustain clinical demand through the end of this week. The New York City Department of Health released guidance on how pets may be affected by COVID-19. Although there is currently no evidence that pets can transmit COVID-19, NYCDOH urges people who are sick to limit contact with their pets.

**General/Employer Guidance****Presidential updates**

- [\*Trump Walks A Tightrope Between Grim Warnings And Offering Hope\*](#), April 6
  - President Trump announced that "we certainly want to try" to lift restrictions on life in the U.S. by April 30 but made no definitive commitment to do so. Trump said he wasn't sure yet whether he and Congress might need to negotiate a fourth coronavirus relief bill.

- President Trump confirmed that Navy hospital ships USNS Comfort, in New York City, and USNS Mercy, will accept coronavirus patients. The two ships were initially implemented as surge capacity for non-pandemic cases.
- Task Force members projected that if enough Americans in enough places continue to stay home, avoid large groups, wash their hands, and take the other measures urged by public health authorities, the pandemic may result in fewer deaths than the 100,000 to 240,000 deaths projected by earlier models.
- [\*Vice President's Video Teleconference with Governors on the Partnership to Prepare and Respond to COVID-19\*](#), April 6
  - Vice President Pence led a discussion with state governors and emergency managers on the American response to COVID-19. The federal government has approved 45 major disaster declaration requests related to the pandemic. Pence praised Oregon and Washington for donating ventilators to help other states meet current needs. The Vice President urged state leaders to use all available testing resources from public and commercial labs to eliminate unnecessary delays.

#### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

- [\*Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Situation Report – 77\*](#), April 6
  - One new country, South Sudan, reported cases of COVID-19 in the past 24 hours.
  - WHO and IMF issued an [article](#) acknowledging that public health measures seem to require a trade-off: either save lives or save livelihoods. WHO and IMF maintain that this is a false dilemma, and that protecting public health and sending people back to work go hand-in-hand. The article urges countries to prioritize public health expenditures and states that getting the virus under control is a prerequisite to saving the economy.

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

- [\*Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages\*](#), April 6
  - CDC issued guidance to assist health care facilities mitigate personnel shortages due to COVID-19.
  - CDC recommends implementing contingency capacity strategies such as requesting that personnel postpone elective time off from work, prioritizing testing for workers with suspected COVID-19, and developing plans for asymptomatic workers who have had unprotected exposure to COVID-19—including being within 6 feet of a person infected with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time or having unprotected direct contact with infectious secretions—to continue work.
  - When there are no longer sufficient staff to provide patient care, CDC recommends implementing regional plans to transfer COVID-19 patients to other facilities and developing criteria to determine when workers with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 who are well enough to work to do so before meeting all return to work criteria. In the latter situation, the staff should be restricted to working in the following limited settings: performing duties where they do not interact with others; providing direct care only for patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19; or, as a last resort, providing care to patients without confirmed or suspected COVID-19.

- [Guidance on Running Essential Errands](#), April 6
  - CDC provided advice on how safely to engage in essential errands, like grocery shopping, accepting deliveries and takeout orders, banking, purchasing gas, and going to doctor visits.
  - CDC urges people to order food and other items online for home delivery or curbside pickup. People should only visit the grocery store in person when absolutely necessary. If persons must visit in person, they should go during hours when fewer people will be present.
  - CDC recommends accepting deliveries without in-person contact whenever possible by asking for deliveries to be left in a safe spot outside your home. When buying gasoline, individuals should use gloves or disinfecting wipes on handles and buttons. After fueling, one should use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

### **New York State**

- [Virus deaths in N.Y. hit a new one-day peak, but hospitalizations are slowing](#), April 7
  - Governor Cuomo announced that 731 people died of the virus since Monday, the highest one-day total yet. The state’s death toll now stands at 5,489. Officials believe the death count is a lagging indicator, as patients are often ill for a long time before they die.
  - There are other signs that the virus is spreading more slowly. The number of new COVID-19 hospitalizations increased four percent since Monday, the fourth straight day that it had grown seven percent or less, after growing at least 20 percent each day for weeks.
- [Governor Cuomo Holds Media Availability on COVID-19](#), April 6
  - Governor Cuomo announced the creation of the First Responders Fund, which will help health care workers pay for expenses, including child care. Blackstone made an anchor \$10 million contribution to the fund and NYSDOH is currently accepting donations.
  - 802 ventilators have been distributed through the State’s “surge and flex” supply-sharing system. Of the 802 ventilators, 38 were deployed to Rockland County, 36 were deployed to Westchester County, 505 were deployed to New York City, and 223 were deployed to Long Island.
- [Governor Cuomo Announces Federal Government Granted Request to Allow COVID-19 Patients to be Treated at USNS Comfort](#), April 6
  - President Trump granted Governor Cuomo’s request to allow the treatment of COVID-19 patients on the USNS Comfort. The ship, which has 1,000 beds, was previously reserved for non-virus patients. The 2,500-bed temporary hospital facility at the Javits Center was also recently repurposed to accept COVID-19 patients.
  - Governor Cuomo clarified that the Javits Center and USS Comfort are emergency facilities without robust intake assessment capabilities. Ambulances will continue to go directly to local hospitals. Local hospitals may then transfer patients to the Comfort.
  - [Recent reports](#) note that a Comfort crew member tested positive for COVID-19 and several others have gone into isolation. A Navy spokeswoman said the discovery of an infected crew member would not affect the Comfort’s mission in New York.

- [NYSDOH COVID-19 Tracker](#), April 6
  - New York State Department of Health released an interactive map of COVID-19 cases across the state and individual counties. New York State reports 8,174 new COVID-19 cases and a total of 138,862 confirmed cases.

## **New York City**

- [De Blasio urges focus on feeding New Yorkers in need](#), April 7
  - Research polls indicate that around half of New York City residents are worried about putting food on the table. Mayor de Blasio announced that City programs served 2.6 million meals to New Yorkers in the last three weeks — “and that is just the beginning.” De Blasio cited a projection that at least 500,000 New Yorkers had either lost their jobs or soon would.
- [Mayor de Blasio Announces New Production Line Making Surgical Gowns for NYC Healthcare Workers](#), April 6
  - Mayor de Blasio visited the Brooklyn Navy Yard where manufacturers are producing surgical gowns for health care workers. The City projects that over 300,000 gowns will be produced by the end of April by factories across the City. Over the next three months, local industrial firms will manufacture up to 1.5 million face shields.
  - The City had been closing down parts of four streets each day, to give pedestrians and cyclists more room to be outside while keeping a safe distance from one another. The City is suspending this “safe streets” pilot program, because not enough people were using the open space to justify the police presence needed to shut down the streets.
  - NYC Parks is closing dog runs as a part of ongoing efforts to maintain social distancing. NYC Parks will also remove any remaining basketball rims and tennis nets and lock up all courts with a gate, including handball courts. On Friday, the City closed all playgrounds.
  - De Blasio [reported](#) that, after receiving another 500 ventilators from the state, the City now has a sufficient number of ventilators to meet clinical demands through the end of this week.
- [COVID-19 and Animals FAQ](#), April 6
  - NYCDOH released an FAQ on how pets may be affected by COVID-19.
  - There is no evidence that pets are contributing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Limited studies suggest that while dogs may be infected, they do not get sick or spread COVID-19. Cats can be infected, and there are a few reports of cats becoming sick. However, at this time there are no reports of cats spreading COVID-19 to people.
  - NYCDOH urges people to limit contact with pets if sick and to maintain separation from pets. If possible, sick persons should have others care for their pets while their sickness lingers.
  - Hand-washing is essential for handling pets, especially if one is ill. Hands should be washed before and after interacting with pets, and one should refrain from hugging, kissing, and sharing food with pets; coughing or sneezing on pets; and allowing animals from different households to mingle.

## **Other Related Updates**

- [\*FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup\*](#), April 6
  - FDA issued [guidance](#) to expand the availability of clinical electronic thermometers. Thermometers are an important screening and diagnostic tool for COVID-19 because fever commonly appears 2 to 14 days after exposure.
  - FDA issued [guidance](#) on infusion pumps and accessories, to ensure remote device capabilities. This allows for a safer physical distance between health care providers and patients who require a continuous infusion of medications or nutrition.
  - FDA urged importers of COVID-19 supplies with delayed shipments at ports-of-entry to [contact](#) the Agency.
  
- [\*Department of Labor Publishes New OSHA Poster Aimed At Reducing Workplace Exposure to the Coronavirus\*](#), April 6
  - The Department of Labor published a new [poster](#) listing steps all workplaces can take to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure.
  - Safety measures include encouraging sick workers to stay home; establishing flexible worksites and staggered work shifts; discouraging workers from using other workers' phones, desks and other work equipment; and using Environmental Protection Agency-approved cleaning chemicals with label claims against the coronavirus.
  
- [\*State Department Briefing on Assistance for American Citizens Abroad\*](#), April 6
  - State Department Officials provided an update on efforts to bring Americans back from abroad during the pandemic. The Department has brought home 45,000 American citizens since January 29.
  - The Department "can't guarantee that this worldwide repatriation effort will continue indefinitely." Officials urged Americans remaining abroad to come home now or risk remaining outside of the country for an unknown period of time.
  - Officials report heavy demand from South Asia. The United States has organized 13 flights from South and Central Asia, including special flights home for about 2,900 U.S. citizens from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The Department is running multiple flights a day from Central and South America, and has repatriated over 5,600 Americans from Peru alone.
  
- [\*HHS Supports Public Health Labs with COVID-19 Rapid Point-of-Care Test\*](#), April 6
  - The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is purchasing the ID NOW COVID-19 rapid point-of-care test, developed by Abbott Diagnostics, for use in public health labs. The test provides COVID-19 results in under 13 minutes and expands the capacity for coronavirus testing. HHS stated that the test will conserve personal protective equipment for front line workers, because only gloves and a facemask are necessary to administer the test.
  - Abbott is producing 50,000 tests per day. HHS will provide the test to public health labs in every state and is procuring tests for the Strategic National Stockpile.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [\*Dealing with Health Care Staffing Shortages in the Face of COVID-19\*](#), April 7

- [Illinois's Expansion of Access to Health Care via Telehealth Executive Order 2020-09 & Medicaid Emergency Rulemaking](#), April 6
- [Private Equity Industry Insights | Employer Considerations under COVID Legislation and Sponsor Debt Purchases](#), April 6
- [Small Business Administration and Treasury Provide Additional Information on Paycheck Protection Program](#), April 5

Send questions to [COVID-19-Implications@ropesgray.com](mailto:COVID-19-Implications@ropesgray.com)