

# COVID-19 Daily Update

April 8, 2020

## Summary

President Trump stated that he sees “glimmers of very, very strong hope” but warned Americans of a “painful” two weeks. The United States now has 402,923 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 13,007 reported related deaths. The Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus pandemic started, lifted its lockdown on Wednesday, allowing 11 million residents to leave the city without special authorization for the first time in more than ten weeks. The Department of Health and Human Services announced the first contract issued under the Defense Production Act during the COVID-19 crisis. General Motors agreed to provide 30,000 ventilators to the federal stockpile for \$489 million by the end of August. The first batch, 6,132 of the machines, will be delivered by June 1.

Demand for food assistance in the United States is rising at an unprecedented rate. The surge in need is coming just as food banks face shortages of both donated food and volunteer workers. Feeding America, the nation’s largest network of food banks, with more than 200 affiliates, has projected a \$1.4 billion shortfall in the next six months alone. Cook County jail in Chicago, has emerged as the largest-known source of U.S. coronavirus infections, with 272 inmates and 115 staff members having tested positive. Because the vast majority of the jail’s 5,000 inmates have not been tested, corrections officers estimate the numbers are likely far higher. Federal immigration officials have begun releasing detained immigrants to lessen the risk of contagion in the nation’s immigration detention centers. ICE has identified 600 detainees for release, of whom 160 detainees have been released.

New York State, with a population of nearly 20 million, now has more confirmed cases than Italy, a nation of 60 million. Governor Cuomo announced that 779 more people died in the state, its highest single-day death toll. The total number of reported COVID-19 deaths in the state is 6,268. The Broadway League, a trade union that represents Broadway producers and theater owners, announced an extension of the current Broadway show shutdown. Theaters have been dark since March 12 and performances will be suspended through June 7.

## General/Employer Guidance

### **Presidential updates**

- [Remarks by President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force in Press Briefing](#), April 7
  - President Trump plans to ask Congress for \$250 billion to fund the Paycheck Protection Program, from which small businesses can acquire loans, in addition to the initial \$350 billion allocated in the broader stimulus bill passed in March.
  - The President said he is considering suspending funding to the World Health Organization, claiming that WHO is “China-centric” and provided misinformation during the pandemic. Government officials, health experts, and analysts have recently [raised concerns](#) about how WHO has responded to the outbreak.
  - Trump claimed he did not see memos written by his top trade adviser, Peter Navarro, in January, warning that the coronavirus could devastate American lives and decimate the economy. The President said he only learned about the memo a few days ago and has yet to see it. The President suggested he probably wouldn’t have done anything differently if he had seen the memo, since he “basically did what the memo said” and restricted many travelers from China.
  - White House officials noted that the African-American community is being disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Dr. Fauci attributes the higher death rate among African Americans to an increased prevalence of underlying medical conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, obesity and asthma, in the community.
  
- [President Donald J. Trump Approves Major Disaster Declarations](#), April 7
  - President Trump declared that a major disaster exists in Minnesota. He ordered Federal assistance to supplement state, and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by COVID-19. The action makes Federal funding available for crisis counseling for affected individuals in the State, and for other emergency protective measures.
  - President Trump recently issued similar declarations for over 46 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
  
- [Memorandum on Providing Federal Support for Governors’ Use of the National Guard to Respond to COVID-19](#), April 7
  - President Trump issued an order directing the Secretary of Defense to request that the governors of the following states order National Guard forces to engage in emergency COVID-19 assistance: Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, Wisconsin, and West Virginia.
  - The President also directed FEMA to fund 100 percent of the emergency assistance activities undertaken by the National Guard in these states. The federal cost share is effective for orders of duty of 31 days or fewer.

## World Health Organization (WHO)

- [\*Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Situation Report – 78\*](#), April 7
  - One new country, São Tomé and Príncipe, reported cases of COVID-19 in the past 24 hours.
  - WHO Director-General Tedros reiterated concerns regarding personal protective equipment shortages and urged that widespread mask use should only be used as part of a comprehensive package of interventions. WHO released [guidance](#) on the use of masks in communities, during home care, and in health care settings; further advice for the public can be found [here](#).
  - WHO announced “One World: Together at Home,” a globally televised [concert special](#) to celebrate health care workers and raise funds for the response. It is scheduled for Saturday, April 18.

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

- [\*Cloth Face Coverings: Questions and Answers\*](#), April 8
  - CDC highlighted answers to frequently asked questions about cloth face coverings. In light of new evidence on asymptomatic COVID-19 transmission, CDC recommends that people wear a cloth face covering to cover their nose and mouth in community settings.
  - CDC notes that face coverings should not be placed on young children younger than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance. CDC recommends staying at least six feet away from others even while wearing cloth face coverings. Cloth face coverings are not intended to protect the wearer, but may prevent the spread of virus from the wearer to others.
- [\*Interim Additional Guidance for Outpatient and Ambulatory Care Settings\*](#), April 7
  - CDC issued guidance on strategies for ambulatory care settings to minimize disease transmission, identify persons with presumptive COVID-19, reduce the negative impact on emergency department capacity, and maximize the efficiency of personal protective equipment utilization cross the health system.
  - CDC suggests assessing ill patients remotely using nurse advice lines, provider “visits” by telephone, text monitoring systems, or other telehealth methods. Managing patients who are ill with mild disease at home can reduce the strain on health care systems – so long as patients are carefully triaged and monitored.

## New York State

- [\*New York State records its highest single-day death toll\*](#), April 8
  - Governor Cuomo announced that 779 more people died in New York State, its highest single-day death toll. The total number of reported COVID-19 related deaths in the state is 6,268.
  - The rate of hospitalization continues to drop. While this could be a positive sign, it could be because the number of sick people seeking admission has lessened, or it may have to do with changing hospital admissions standards. Hospitals have changed admission standards, sending home people whom they might have admitted a few weeks earlier.

- [\*Governor Cuomo Announces State Will Invest in Private Companies to Scale Rapid Testing\*](#), April 7
  - Governor Cuomo announced that New York State will invest in private companies to rapidly scale COVID-19 testing capacity. Interested businesses should contact Empire State Development.
  - Governor Cuomo issued a [letter](#) to New York’s Congressional Delegation detailing deficiencies in the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and outlining the State’s remaining needs. Cuomo criticized FCCRA for failing to adequately address New York’s revenue losses and unduly restricting Medicaid reform.
  - The Governor announced an agreement with New York student loan providers including Navient, Nelnet, PHEAA, and MOHELA, to provide relief to borrowers experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19. Available relief includes 90 days of deferred monthly payments, waived late fees, no negative reporting to credit agencies, and enrolling eligible borrowers in available long-term assistance program. This measure provides relief to New York borrowers with privately owned loans, while the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) provides relief to borrowers with loans owned by the federal government.
  
- [\*AG James Issues Additional Legal Guidance for ICE Civil Detention Requests\*](#), April 8
  - New York Attorney General James issued guidance on the participation of local authorities in immigration enforcement. Under New York law, law enforcement officers may not arrest individuals for civil immigration violations without a judicial warrant. Attorney General James stressed that her office “vehemently opposes any attempt to use local law enforcement as an extension of ICE.” James noted that federal immigration enforcement efforts have persisted during the COVID-19 pandemic and stressed that her office will continue to maintain partnerships with immigrant communities.

## **New York City**

- [\*Mayor de Blasio Reports on Disparities in Access to Health Care\*](#), April 8
  - Mayor de Blasio highlighted disparities in how COVID-19 has affected New Yorkers. Black and Hispanic people in New York City are twice as likely to die of the virus as white people, according to preliminary [data](#) released by the City.
  - City officials asserted that some of the City’s Hispanic residents might have self-deferred from seeking medical care by “anti-immigrant rhetoric” of recent years, while Governor Cuomo attributed a portion of the difference to some groups having more untreated chronic health problems than others, making them more likely to die of the virus. Governor Cuomo noted that black and Hispanic people might also be disproportionately represented in the ranks of workers whose jobs on the front lines put them at risk.
  
- [\*Mayor de Blasio Visits School Meal Hub, Reminds New Yorkers About Food Resources\*](#), April 7
  - 435 Meal Hubs across the City offer three free meals per day for any New Yorker between 7:30 am and 1:30 pm. No registration or ID is required. In the last three weeks,

the City supplied more than 2.6 million meals through the program. Mayor de Blasio noted that the City “will not let any New Yorker go hungry.”

- Mayor de Blasio announced the launch of “NYC Healthcare Heroes,” a city-wide philanthropic program to support health care professionals combatting COVID-19. The program will provide between 300,000 and 500,000 packages of food, household cleaning, and personal care products, to staff at hospitals across the City.
- The Mayor thanked the Governor of Oregon for volunteering to send ventilators to New York, and acknowledged the Governor of California’s move to return 500 ventilators to the national stockpile, for redistribution to COVID-19 hot spots.

### **Other Related Updates**

- [HHS Announces Ventilator Contract with GM under Defense Production Act](#), April 8
  - The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the first contract for ventilator production rated under the Defense Production Act. General Motors agreed to supply 30,000 ventilators to the Strategic National Stockpile by August 2020, with a production schedule allowing for the delivery of 6,132 ventilators by June 1, 2020. The total contract price is \$489.4 million.
  
- [FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup](#), April 7
  - FDA issued [guidance](#) on remote ophthalmic assessment and monitoring devices, to facilitate remote optometry care during the pandemic. The devices include visual acuity charts, visual field devices, general use ophthalmic cameras, and tonometers.
  - FDA issued a [new policy](#) to expand the availability of devices used in extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) therapy. COVID-19 can trigger acute respiratory failure and/or acute cardiopulmonary failure. EMCO therapy assists with the extracorporeal circulation and physiologic gas exchange in a patient’s blood.
  - FDA approved an [Abbreviated New Drug Application](#) (ANDA) for Accord Healthcare to manufacture and market generic hydroxychloroquine sulfate tablets for the treatment of malaria, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis in adults. FDA reports a [shortage](#) of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine due to a significant surge in demand.
  - FDA recently issued an [Emergency Use Authorization](#) for a COVID-19 serological test for use in clinical laboratories. Serological tests measure the amount of antibodies present in the blood when the body is responding to a specific infection, and can help identify individuals who have developed an immune response to COVID-19. Over 70 test developers have notified FDA that they have serological tests available for use to test for COVID-19 antibodies.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [COVID-19 & Executive Compensation – Considerations for Public Companies](#), April 8
- [COVID-19 Disruptions of International Clinical Trials: Comparing Guidances Issued by Key European National Regulatory Authorities, the Australian Department of Health, Brazil’s ANVISA, Health Canada and Singapore’s HAS](#), April 8
- [CARES Act Oversight: False Claims Act Risk under the CARES Act for Health Care Providers](#), April 8

- [Elevated Bribery and Fraud Risks in Latin America in the Wake of COVID-19](#), April 8
- [COVID-19 Issues for AMCs](#), April 7
- [Dealing with Health Care Staffing Shortages in the Face of COVID-19](#), April 7

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