

# COVID-19 Daily Update

April 9, 2020

## Summary

The United States now has 451,491 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 15,938 reported related deaths. The Department of Labor reports that another 6.6 million Americans filed initial claims for unemployment benefits last week. Nearly 17 million workers, 11 percent of the US labor force, have filed for unemployment benefits in the last three weeks, as countless restaurants, hotels, factories and offices have been forced to shut down to combat the spread of the coronavirus. Several economists expect that by the end of the month more than 20 million people will have lost their jobs, pushing the unemployment rate toward 15 percent.

CDC compiled data on a sample of hospitalized COVID-19 patients across 14 states, approximately 90% of whom had one or more underlying medical conditions. Older people infected with the virus were more likely to be hospitalized; men were more likely to endure severe cases than women; and black people were hospitalized at a higher rate than whites. The numbers reflected trends that were reported from other countries at earlier stages of the outbreak.

In the past two weeks, the number of virus patients hospitalized in New York has grown more and more slowly, from over 20 percent a day at one point to a 1% increase on Thursday. Daily ICU admissions and number of intubations have also fallen significantly. Deaths in New York hit a third-straight daily record, with 799 new fatalities reported on Wednesday; New York reports 7,063 total COVID-19 deaths. Governor Cuomo warned that the number of coronavirus cases will “shoot through the roof” again if local officials start easing restrictions. New York City Mayor de Blasio stated that New Yorkers would likely remain under heavy restrictions through May. De Blasio noted that the widespread availability of testing is necessary before the City can ease any restrictions. A group of adjoining neighborhoods — Corona, Elmhurst, East Elmhurst and Jackson Heights — has emerged as the epicenter of New York’s outbreak. Those communities, with a combined population of around 600,000, have recorded more than 7,260 infections. Manhattan, with nearly three times as many people, has reported about 10,860 cases.

## **General/Employer Guidance**

### **Presidential updates**

- [Remarks by President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force in Press Briefing](#), April 8
  - President Trump stated that he would like to reopen the U.S. economy with a “big bang” but that the COVID-19 death toll needs to be on a downward trajectory before that can happen.
  - State Department Officials noted that the Department has repatriated over 50,000 American citizens from more than 90 countries since January 29<sup>th</sup>. The State Department urged countries to be transparent and thorough when reporting information on COVID-19 cases and related deaths.
  - President Trump criticized the World Health Organization and its response to the pandemic. The President stated that WHO “got it very wrong” and minimized the threat of COVID-19. The President plans to conduct an investigation into whether the United States will pause its funding to WHO.
- [President Donald J. Trump Approves Major Disaster Declarations](#), April 7
  - President Trump declared that a major disaster exists in Vermont. 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 all other states, except for Idaho and Alaska, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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

- [WHO Director-General’s opening remarks at media briefing on COVID-19](#), April 8
  - WHO Director-General Tedros [warned](#) world leaders against politicizing COVID-19. WHO urged “unity at the national level” and argued that political attacks would only lead to “more body bags.” President Trump has criticized WHO’s handling of the outbreak and threatened to cut off funding to the organization. Tedros noted that he expected the U.S. to continue contributing to WHO and thanked the U.S. for its “generous support so far.”

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

- [Interim Guidance for Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers](#), April 8
  - New CDC guidance allows critical infrastructure workers to continue working even after potential exposure to COVID-19, provided that they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them, their fellow workers, and the community.
  - These precautions include: implementing regular temperature checks before employees enter the workplace, wearing a mask in the workplace for 14 days after the employee’s

last exposure, social distancing as work duties permit, and routinely disinfecting all common areas.

- CDC defines a “potential exposure” as having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of time 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic.
- [\*Hospitalization Rates and Characteristics of Patients Hospitalized with Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19\*](#), April 8
  - A recent study, published as an early release by CDC, examined population-based rates of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19-associated hospitalizations across 14 U.S. states.
  - The study found that COVID-19 hospitalization rates increase with age and are highest among older adults; the majority of hospitalized patients have underlying conditions. The most commonly reported underlying medical conditions were hypertension (49.7%), obesity (48.3%), chronic lung disease (34.6%), diabetes mellitus (28.3%), and cardiovascular disease (27.8%). COVID-19-associated hospitalization rates were higher among males than among females (5.1 versus 4.1 per 100,000 population).
  - The most common signs and symptoms at admission included cough (86.1%), fever or chills (85.0%), and shortness of breath (80.0%). Gastrointestinal symptoms were also common; 26.7% had diarrhea, and 24.4% had nausea or vomiting.
- [\*Community Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 at Two Family Gatherings\*](#), April 8
  - A recent study, published as an early release by CDC, reported on person-to-person transmission in a cluster of COVID-19 patients in Chicago.
  - The cluster studied was comprised of 16 cases of COVID-19, with transmission mostly occurring between non-household contacts at family gatherings. The median interval from last contact with a patient with confirmed or probable COVID-19 to first symptom onset was 4 days. Within 3 weeks after mild respiratory symptoms were noted in the index patient, 15 other persons were likely infected with COVID-19, including three who died.
  - These data illustrate the importance of social distancing for preventing COVID-19 transmission, even within families. In this cluster, extended family gatherings (a birthday party, funeral, and church attendance), might have facilitated transmission of SARS-CoV-2 beyond household contacts into the broader community.

## **New York State**

- [\*New York Coronavirus Hospitalizations Drop To Lowest Level Since March 19\*](#), April 9
  - In the past two weeks, the number of virus patients hospitalized in New York State has grown more and more slowly, from over 20 percent a day at one point to a 1% increase on Thursday. Daily ICU admissions and number of intubations have also fallen significantly. If the current trend holds, the State will likely have enough hospital beds and ventilators to treat virus patients.
  - Deaths in New York hit a third-straight daily record, with 799 fatalities reported on Wednesday; New York reports 7,063 total COVID-19 casualties. Governor Cuomo cautioned that New York may be in only the first wave of the pandemic.

- The Governor emphasized that New York’s black and Hispanic communities were being hit the hardest by the virus, and announced that additional testing sites would be opened in predominantly black and Latino neighborhoods.
- The Governor urged the federal government to pass stimulus measures that provide more aid to state and local governments.
- [\*Governor Cuomo Directs Flags to Be Flown at Half-mast in Honor of Those We Have Lost to COVID-19\*](#), April 8
  - Governor Cuomo announced that all flags will be flown at half-mast in honor of those who have died from COVID-19. The flags will remain lowered for the remainder of the New York on PAUSE initiative.
  - Governor Cuomo directed the State Department of Labor to immediately make \$600 in additional weekly unemployment benefits available to all New Yorkers. The additional benefits were included in the Federal CARES Act. New York is also extending the period covered by unemployment benefits for another 13 weeks, for a total of 39 weeks.
  - Governor Cuomo plans to issue an Executive Order to ensure New Yorkers can vote by absentee ballot in the June 23<sup>rd</sup> presidential, congressional, and legislative primary elections.
  - Delta, JetBlue, and United are offering free travel to New York for COVID-19 medical workers. To date, more than 90,000 health professionals, including more than 25,000 out-of-state individuals, have signed up to serve as part of the State’s surge health care force.
  - The State has distributed over one million free bottles of NYSClean hand sanitizer to county emergency managers, first responders, health care workers, nursing homes, law enforcement, homeless organizations, and transportation systems, including MTA.

## **New York City**

- [\*Attorney General James Urges Action to Protect Communities of Color from COVID-19\*](#), April 8
  - New York Attorney General James issued a statement in response to new data which revealed the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color.
  - Attorney General James described the data as “disturbing” and noted that public health crises “both reveal and exacerbate the depths of inequality in our society.” She calls for expanded treatment, rapid testing, and tracking with a focus on marginalized communities.
  - NYSDOH preliminary [data](#) show the reported COVID-19 fatalities in New York City. Hispanics make up 29% of the City’s total population and account for 35% of reported COVID-19 fatalities. African-Americans make up 22% of the City’s total population and account for 29% of reported COVID-19 fatalities. By comparison, white people make up 32% of the City’s total population and account for 27% of reported COVID-19 fatalities.
- [\*Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Salas Prosecute Repeat Price Gougers\*](#), April 8
  - The Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) filed [three cases](#) against repeat offenders for knowingly increasing the price of certain goods in violation of the

City's consumer protection laws. DCWP issued a total of 203 violations to the three businesses for selling face masks, hand sanitizer, cough medicine, and other products at drastically increased prices.

- In one particularly egregious example, one business charged consumers \$20 for one N95 face mask. The cases will be heard at the City's Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) where DCWP is seeking up to \$101,500 in fines.

### **Other Related Updates**

- [\*Federal Reserve takes additional actions to provide up to \\$2.3 trillion in loans\*](#), April 9
  - The Federal Reserve announced a new effort to provide \$2.3 trillion in loans to support the economy, to assist employers and enhance the ability of state governments to deliver critical services during the pandemic.
  - The Federal Reserve announced that it would use Treasury Department funds recently authorized by Congress to buy municipal bonds and expand corporate bond-buying programs to include some lower-rated and riskier debt. The Fed also rolled out a highly-anticipated business lending program that targets midsize companies, including those not eligible under a Small Business Administration loan program.
- [\*NIH clinical trial of hydroxychloroquine, a potential therapy for COVID-19, begins\*](#), April 9
  - An NIH clinical trial to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of hydroxychloroquine for adults hospitalized with COVID-19 has begun. Hydroxychloroquine is currently used to treat malaria and rheumatoid conditions such as arthritis.
  - The first participants have enrolled in the trial at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, one of dozens of centers in the clinical trial network. The blinded, placebo-controlled randomized clinical trial aims to enroll more than 500 adults who are currently hospitalized with COVID-19 or in an emergency department with anticipated hospitalization.
- [\*Department of Labor Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report\*](#), April 9
  - DOL reports that 6.6 million people filed initial claims for unemployment benefits last week. More than 16 million workers, 11% of the US labor force, have filed in the last three weeks. Claims have skyrocketed in recent weeks, as countless restaurants, hotels, factories and offices have been forced to shut down to combat the spread of the coronavirus.
  - California had the largest number of new claims in the week ending Saturday, April 4, with 925,450 claims — down from 1.058 million new claims the prior week. Georgia's new claims totaled 388,175, nearly triple the previous week's total. Michigan's initial claims totaled 384,844, topping the prior week's total of 304,335.
  - Several [economists](#) expect that by the end of the month more than 20 million people will have lost their jobs, pushing the unemployment rate toward 15%. In February, it was 3.5%, following 113 straight months of job growth.
- [\*OASH Authorizing Licensed Pharmacists to Order and Administer COVID-19 Tests\*](#), April 8
  - The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) issued [guidance](#) under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP Act) authorizing licensed pharmacists to order and administer FDA-approved COVID-19 tests.

- The Secretary of HHS issued a [declaration](#) under the PREP Act on March 17, providing liability immunity related to the manufacture, testing, and administration of medical countermeasures to combat COVID-19.
- Pharmacists who administer COVID-19 tests per OASH guidance, qualify as “covered persons” under the PREP Act. As such, they may receive immunity under the PREP Act with respect to all claims for loss caused by, arising out of, relating to, or resulting from, the administration or use of FDA-authorized COVID-19 tests.
- [OSHA Issues Alert To Ensure Retail Worker Safety During COVID-19 Pandemic](#), April 8
  - OSHA issued an [alert](#) listing safety tips employers can follow to protect retail workers in pharmacies and supermarkets from exposure to COVID-19. These include: routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and equipment; using a drive-through window or offering curbside pick-up; recommending that workers wear masks over their nose and mouth to prevent spreading the virus; and practicing social distancing by opening only every other cash register, temporarily moving workstations, and installing plexiglass partitions between workstations.
- [FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup](#), April 8
  - FDA issued [guidance](#) on the administration and study of convalescent plasma to patients who are seriously ill with COVID-19. Convalescent plasma is plasma collected from individuals who have recovered from COVID-19, and is referred to as COVID-19 convalescent plasma. FDA recommends available pathways for use of investigational COVID-19 convalescent plasma, patient and donor eligibility guidelines, and labeling and recordkeeping rules.
  - FDA and FTC issued [warning letters](#) to three sellers of fraudulent COVID-19 products. FDA cautions consumers not to take or purchase any product to prevent or treat COVID-19 unless it is prescribed by a health care provider and acquired from a legitimate source.
  - FDA approved the first generic of Proventil HFA (albuterol sulfate) Metered Dose Inhaler, for the treatment or prevention of bronchospasm in patients who have reversible obstructive airway disease. Bronchospasms occur when the muscles surrounding the airways swell and tighten, causing them to squeeze the airways and make them smaller. FDA Commissioner Hahn noted the increased demand for albuterol products during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Summer Heat May Not Diminish Coronavirus Strength](#), April 8
  - The National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine issued a public [report](#) to the White House on the survival of the SARS-Cov-2 virus in relation to temperature and humidity and the potential for seasonal reduction and resurgence in COVID-19 cases.
  - The report reviews several well-controlled laboratory studies, and concludes that the studies do not offer a basis to believe that summer weather will interfere with the spread of the coronavirus. The report notes that because countries currently in ‘summer’ climates, such as Australia and Iran, are experiencing rapid virus spread, a decrease in cases with increases in humidity and temperature elsewhere should not be assumed.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [FEMA to Impose COVID-19-Related Export Restrictions on Medical Equipment](#), April 9
- [Partnerships Are Now Allowed to File Amended Income Tax Returns for 2018 and 2019, Immediately — to Benefit from CARES Act](#), Without Delay, April 8
- [COVID-19 & Executive Compensation – Considerations for Public Companies](#), April 8
- [COVID-19 Disruptions of International Clinical Trials: Comparing Guidance 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

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