

COVID-19 Daily Update

August 12, 2020

Summary

The United States has 5,180,226 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 165,510 reported related deaths. Department of Health announced a \$1.5 billion agreement with Moderna to manufacture and deliver 100 million doses of the company's COVID-19 vaccine candidate through Operation Warp Speed. U.S. Immigration Services announced plans to furlough about two-thirds of its workers at the end of August due to budget shortfalls. Two Postal Service leaders published an op-ed, stating that the agency is "prepared and has ample capacity" to deliver "the anticipated increase in election mail due to the COVID-19 pandemic, without impact to on-time performance." Two major college conferences, the Big Ten and the Pac-12, cancelled college football and other fall sports due to the pandemic. President Trump previously urged the conferences to allow competitive sports in the fall, tweeting that "student-athletes have been working too hard for their season to be cancelled."

In Georgia, a school district north of Atlanta ordered 925 students, teachers and staff to self-quarantine after dozens tested positive for COVID-19 since the school's August 3 re-opening. In Texas, the State's Health Department reported a seven-day average positivity rate of 24%. In New Jersey, Governor Murphy announced that school districts will have the option to offer all-virtual classes when school resumes next month, relaxing his original requirement that teachers provide some form of in-person classroom instruction. In Texas, Governor Abbott acknowledged that many schools in the state will not re-open until at least October. In Florida, Miami officials have issued more than \$14,000 in fines since last month to people for refusing to wear masks in violation of local orders. Churchill Downs Racetrack officials unveiled a plan to limit attendance for the Kentucky Derby on September 5 to around 23,000 guests. Temperature checks, medical questionnaires, physical distancing, and mandatory face coverings will be required upon entrance.

New York reported seven deaths, 558 hospitalizations, and 123 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Tuesday, August 11. Approximately 700, or 0.79%, of the 87,776 tests administered in New York on August 11 were positive for COVID-19. According to a report by the Associated Press, the number of COVID-19 deaths in New York nursing homes may be significantly undercounted. New York State Nurses Association issued a statement urging the City to postpone in-person schooling this fall. The Association warned that "COVID-19 remains a clear and present danger to New Yorkers" and noted that "opening in-person schooling could easily... spark a resurgence of COVID-19." City health officials expressed concern about 228 new COVID-19 cases in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, reported over the last two weeks. The results represent a 6.7% positivity rate, compared to the citywide average of around 1%.

Presidential updates

- [Remarks by President Trump in Press Briefing](#), August 11
 - President Trump commented on COVID-19 in a press briefing.
 - The President urged those who have recovered from COVID-19 to donate convalescent plasma.
 - Trump noted that, since last week, 87% of the counties in the United States report declining COVID-19 cases. Mortality has similarly declined by 7%. Trump encouraged people to “remain vigilant, practice good hygiene, socially distance, and wear a mask whenever possible.”
 - Trump commented that he wants “to see college football start” and noted that “most [players] will never get [COVID-19], statistically.” Trump insisted that college football players are less likely to be severely affected by COVID-19 because they’re “young, strong people.” Recent [research](#) shows, however, that 1 in 3 young adults (ages 18 to 25) are medically vulnerable to severe COVID-19; when removing individuals who smoke cigarettes or e-cigarettes, the medically vulnerable percentage is 16%.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [COVID-19 Situation Report – 204](#), August 11
 - WHO [warned](#) that “young people around the world are being confronted by new challenges and uncertainty” and called for them to continue avoiding certain scenarios, “referred to as the ‘three Cs’ – crowded places, close-contact settings, and confined and enclosed spaces.”
 - Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Director Etienne, [announced](#) that efforts to eradicate a number of communicable diseases are “now under threat, due to the burden of COVID-19 on health systems, and the disruption of essential services, including priority disease control programs, elimination initiatives, and routine immunization.”
 - WHO’s Regional Office for Europe is [announced](#) plans to convene a Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development to rethink policy health care priorities in light of the pandemic.

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

- [CDC COVID-19 Updates](#), August 11
 - CDC highlighted [guidance](#) for K-12 school administrators on the use of cloth face coverings in schools. CDC acknowledged that the use of cloth face coverings in educational settings may present challenges, particularly for younger students and students with special health care or educational needs, and provided a set of practical recommendations on mask use for teachers and parents.
 - CDC updated [data](#) on COVID-19 cases and deaths by county.

New York State

- [New York State COVID-19 Updates](#), August 12
 - New York reported seven deaths, 558 hospitalizations, and 123 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Tuesday, August 11.
 - Approximately 700, or .79%, of the 87,776 tests administered in New York on August 11 were positive for COVID-19.
 - State Liquor Authority officials conducted 6,887 compliance checks at bars and restaurants in New York over the last week and observed 162 social distancing

violations. Officials immediately suspended the liquor licenses at 38 establishments for egregious violations.

- [Some Question New York's Count of Nursing Home Deaths](#), August 11
 - According to a [report](#) by the Associated Press, the number of COVID-19 deaths in New York nursing homes might be significantly undercounted.
 - The State's official nursing home death toll is just over 6,600. New York only counts residents who died on nursing home property and not those transported to hospitals, unlike every other State with major outbreaks.
 - The AP projected that adding in individuals transported to hospital "would translate into thousands more nursing home resident deaths than the state acknowledged."
 - For all 43 states that break out nursing home data, resident deaths make up 44% of total COVID deaths in their states, according to data from the Kaiser Family Foundation. Assuming the same proportion held in New York, that would translate to more than 11,000 nursing home deaths.
 - The State has refused to divulge this metric, and continues to insist that the State's percentage of nursing home deaths out of its overall COVID-19 death toll is about 20%, far less than Pennsylvania's 68%, Massachusetts' 64% and New Jersey's 44%.
 - Thomas Perls, a geriatrics expert at Boston University, questioned that figure noting that "there is no way New York could be truly at 20%."

New York City

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), August 12
 - Mayor de Blasio [warned](#) that the City may have to lay off as many as 22,000 public employees if federal economic stimulus funds do not materialize.
 - City health officials expressed [concerned](#) about 228 new COVID-19 cases in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, reported over the last two weeks. The results represent a 6.7% positivity rate, compared to the citywide average of around 1%. In response, the City will offer expanded testing capacity and contact tracing.
 - New York State Nurses Association issued a [statement](#) urging the City to postpone in-person schooling this fall. The Association warned that "COVID-19 remains a clear and present danger to New Yorkers" and noted that "opening in-person schooling could easily... spark a resurgence of COVID-19."
 - Event organizers [anceled](#) New York Comic Con, originally scheduled to take place at the Javitz Center in October, due to the pandemic.

Other Related Updates

- [Health Department COVID-19 Updates](#), August 11
 - Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [announced](#) a \$1.5 billion agreement with Moderna to manufacture and deliver 100 million doses of the company's COVID-19 vaccine candidate through Operation Warp Speed. HHS has the option to acquire up to 400 million additional doses of the vaccine, mRNA-1273. HHS previously provided \$1 billion to Moderna for the vaccine's testing and development.
 - HHS [announced](#) a new program to accelerate innovative uses of electronic health information via health information exchanges (HIEs) to support state and local public health agencies. The program aims to strengthen HIE infrastructure so that public health agencies are able to better access, share, and use health information to support

communities that have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. HHS will award up to five cooperative agreements to support this effort using \$2.5 million in funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

- [*Association of Nursing Home Ratings on Health Inspections, Quality of Care, and Nurse Staffing With COVID-19 Cases*](#), August 12
 - A research letter, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, examined why some nursing home facilities have been more successful at limiting the spread of COVID-19 than others.
 - Researchers examined COVID-19 cases at roughly 4,300 nursing homes in eight states, and evaluated whether nursing homes rated highly by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) across 3 unique domains—health inspections, quality measures, and nurse staffing—had lower COVID-19 cases than facilities with lower ratings.
 - Nursing homes that ranked highest on nurse staffing (i.e., mean staffing hours per resident by qualified nursing personnel) were less likely to have had more than 30 cases of COVID-19, compared with lower-scoring facilities. Other measures of quality, such as health inspection ratings, were not significantly associated with more cases.
 - Researchers concluded that “these findings suggest that poorly resourced [nursing homes] with nurse staffing shortages may be more susceptible to the spread of COVID-19.” The study notes that “although guidance on best practices on infection control are important ... policies that provide immediate staffing support may be more effective at mitigating the spread of COVID-19.”

- [*FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup*](#), August 11
 - FDA issued emergency use authorizations (EUAs) to [Solaris Diagnostics](#) and [Alpha Genomix Laboratories](#) for their COVID-19 diagnostic tests.
 - A U.S. District Court in Florida [granted](#) motions for default judgment and entered permanent injunctions against a number of defendants for distributing an unapproved COVID-19 treatment that contained industrial bleach.
 - FDA posted [answers](#) to frequently asked questions on importing medical devices during the pandemic.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [*Credit Funds: Valuation Risks and Other Compliance Considerations in a Pandemic Market Environment*](#), August 10

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