

COVID-19 Daily Update

August 13, 2020

Summary

The United States has 5,223,131 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 166,483 reported related deaths. The country recorded more than 1,500 COVID-19 deaths on Wednesday, August 12, marking the highest death toll since the end of May. More than half of the deaths reported were spread across five states: Texas, Florida, Arizona, California, and Georgia. CDC Director Redfield urged Americans to wear masks, socially distance, wash their hands, and avoid crowds during the next few months, or risk “the worst fall, from a public health perspective, that we have ever had.” Department of Labor reported that another 963,000 workers filed initial claims for unemployment benefits last week, marking the first time new claims fell below one million since March. UN Secretary General Guterres warned that the pandemic might “undermine faith in governments and public institutions,” disrupt the global economy and weaken civic life, and engender new conflicts. At least 23 countries have postponed national elections or referenda due to COVID-19, “and almost twice as many have postponed subnational votes.”

In California, Governor Newsom reported that hospitalization rates are down 21% with ICU admissions down 15% over the past two weeks. National Collegiate Athletic Association’s top medical officer warned that “it’s a very narrow path” to restart sports in the fall and warned that the Association is moving into “very troubled waters right now.” The Big 12 Conference announced that fall sports will continue, one day after the Big Ten and Pac-12 conferences postponed their fall football seasons due to safety concerns. Big 12 member institutions, including Oklahoma University and West Virginia University, are scaling up their COVID-19 testing and safety protocols. For high contact sports like football, volleyball, and soccer, players will be tested for COVID-19 three times a week. New Zealand’s first known community outbreak in more than three months grew to 17 cases on Thursday; Prime Minister Ardern warned that the cluster in Auckland is expected to “get worse before it gets better.”

New York reported ten deaths, 555 hospitalizations, and 124 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Wednesday, August 12. Approximately 737, or 0.84%, of the 87,900 tests administered in New York on August 12 were positive for COVID-19. State officials reported that New York has prevented nearly \$1 billion in unemployment fraud during the pandemic by identifying and stopping more than 42,200 fraudulent benefit claims since mid-March. A federal district court upheld New York’s order requiring travelers from COVID-19 hotspots to quarantine for two weeks upon arrival to the State. Hospital leaders testified at a joint hearing in the New York State legislature on the financial impact of COVID-19, warning of a “massive drop in revenue.” Healthcare Association of New York State reported that lost revenue and extra costs for hospitals across the state could total between \$20 billion and \$25 billion from the start of the pandemic to next April.

Presidential updates

- [*Remarks by President Trump in Press Conference on Re-Opening Schools*](#), August 13
 - President Trump held a press conference on re-opening schools during the pandemic, with Vice President Pence, Education Secretary DeVos, and Kellyanne Conway.
 - Vice President Pence noted that the administration is “calling on Congress to work with us to appropriate another \$105 billion” to support school re-opening.
 - Pence noted that “we don’t want our kids to miss out on the counseling they receive, special needs services, [and] nutrition programs” available in schools.
 - President Trump [asserted](#) that “we have to open up our schools and our businesses,” adding that school districts should plan to resume in-person education for students “as soon as possible.”
 - Trump announced plans to distribute “up to 125 million reusable masks to various school districts around the country.”
 - The White House issued general [recommendations](#) for schools to guide re-openings including: ensuring that all students, teachers, and staff understand the symptoms of the virus; encouraging frequent hand washing; using masks when social distancing is not possible; minimizing large indoor gatherings; and providing high-risk teachers the choice to stay home and engage in distance learning.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [*COVID-19 Situation Report – 205*](#), August 13
 - WHO has [shipped](#) substantial volumes of essential medical supplies to 159 countries to support the global COVID-19 response, including 131 million units of personal protective equipment (PPE), 22 million diagnostic kits, 10,059 oxygen concentrators, and 2,000 pulse oximeters.
 - American Dental Association (ADA) [challenged](#) WHO’s [recommendation](#) to delay “routine” dental care in certain situations due to COVID-19. ADA President Gehani pointed to the “millions of patients” who “have safely visited their dentists in the past few months for the full range of dental services.” Gehani asserted that “dentistry is essential health care because of its role in evaluating, diagnosing, preventing or treating oral diseases, which can affect systemic health.”

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

- [*CDC COVID-19 Updates*](#), August 13
 - CDC posted [guidance](#) on COVID-19 and in-home social service providers, such as caregivers or aides, teachers or tutors, social workers, and resettlement agency personnel. CDC recommends that providers screen all clients for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or exposure to a person with COVID-19 before each visit. CDC urges clients to consider web-based or telehealth alternatives to in-person services, when possible.
 - CDC highlighted its COVID-19 travel [recommendations](#) by country.
 - CDC updated [data](#) on COVID-19 cases and deaths by county.

New York State

- [New York State COVID-19 Updates](#), August 13
 - New York reported ten deaths, 555 hospitalizations, and 124 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Wednesday, August 12.
 - Approximately 737, or 0.84%, of the 87,900 tests administered in New York on August 12 were positive for COVID-19.
 - State officials reported that New York [prevented](#) nearly \$1 billion in unemployment fraud during the pandemic, by identifying and stopping more than 42,200 fraudulent benefit claims since mid-March.
 - A federal district court [upheld](#) New York’s order requiring travelers from COVID-19 hotspots to quarantine for two weeks upon arrival to the State, in part because the order applies equally to both New York residents and non-residents. American Freedom Law Center filed an immediate appeal of the ruling.
- [New York Hospitals Report Billions in Losses](#), August 12
 - Health care providers testified at a joint hearing in the New York State legislature on the financial impact of COVID-19.
 - Hospital leaders warned of a “massive drop in revenue” caused by a temporary ban on elective procedures and patients who remain wary of contracting COVID-19.
 - Healthcare Association of New York State reported that lost revenue and extra costs for hospitals across the state could total between \$20 billion and \$25 billion from the start of the pandemic to next April, though that figure doesn’t account for federal aid and certain cost-cutting measures.
 - Greater New York Hospital Association President Raske commented that “every hospital would lose money this year” but that the “question is how much.”
 - State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker noted that the administration is still verifying the veracity of the number of New York nursing home patients who died of COVID-19 in hospitals and is not yet prepared to release the data.

New York City

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), August 13
 - Mayor de Blasio [announced](#) a “community hiring economic justice plan,” which includes new agreements with the City’s trade unions for construction projects on public buildings. The plan is estimated to provide 1,300 construction jobs for every \$1 billion in construction for low-income communities during the first year.
 - New York City Department of Health (NYCDOH) published [guidance](#) on managing COVID-19 cases at New York City colleges, offering tips on how to effectively isolate students and staff with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. The State does not mandate initial or routine testing of students or staff, but NYCDOH will inform universities of any confirmed cases.
 - Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) announced that approximately [two-thirds](#) of New York City’s subway stations are now equipped with contactless fare payment systems. Customers can use the system to pay their fare using contactless bank cards, smart phones, and wearable technology.

Other Related Updates

- [*Department of Labor Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report*](#), August 13
 - Department of Labor (DOL) reported that another 963,000 workers filed initial claims for unemployment benefits last week.
 - The number of new claims had been steadily declining since March, when nearly seven million people filed for unemployment insurance in a single week. The numbers spiked for two weeks in July, briefly marking a reversal of that trend. This week's report marks the lowest weekly total since March.
 - DOL reported 488,622 new claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, the federal program intended to help freelancers, gig workers, the self-employed, and others not normally eligible for state jobless benefits.

- [*Comparison of Estimated Excess Deaths in New York City During the COVID-19 and 1918 Influenza Pandemics*](#), August 13
 - A recent analysis, published in Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open, compared excess deaths during the first two months of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City with the excess deaths during the deadliest two months of the 1918 H1N1 flu pandemic.
 - The increase in deaths during the 1918 flu pandemic was higher overall, but comparable to that observed in the first two months of the coronavirus outbreak in New York City.
 - The 1918 flu is estimated to have killed 50 million people worldwide, including 675,000 Americans. The analysis found that there were 31,589 deaths from all causes in New York during the peak period of the flu epidemic, about the same as the 33,465 tallied in the 61 days after the first recorded COVID-19 death in the City on March 11 of this year.
 - When taking into account improvements in hygiene, modern medicine and public health, however, the increase during the early COVID-19 outbreak was “substantially greater” than during the peak of the 1918 pandemic. Researchers found that the current outbreak has quadrupled the current death rate, while the flu pandemic nearly tripled it.
 - Dr. Jeremy Faust, an emergency physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and the lead author of the study, [noted](#) that “what we're experiencing is truly historic and unusual and shouldn't be shrugged off.” Faust stated that we are “used to a very low level of deaths, and for us to suddenly experience a quadrupling, it gives us a sense of the magnitude of the public health crisis we're dealing with.”
 - Faust commented the two pandemics are “comparable events in terms of magnitude” and noted that “what happened in New York was pretty similar [in its effect on mortality] to what happened in the greatest modern pandemic.”

- [*FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup*](#), August 13
 - FDA issued emergency use authorizations (EUAs) for COVID-19 diagnostic tests produced by [Lumira DX](#) and [Biomeme](#).
 - FDA issued a [warning letter](#) to Oxford Medical Instruments for selling a salt inhaler product with misleading claims that the product can mitigate, prevent, or treat COVID-19.
 - FDA published a [consumer update](#), encouraging people to continue washing their hands, wearing face masks, avoiding crowds, and practicing social distancing.

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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