

COVID-19 Daily Update

August 5, 2020

Summary

The United States has 4,727,879 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 155,942 reported related deaths. Six governors announced a bipartisan interstate compact with the Rockefeller Foundation to expand the use of rapid point-of-care COVID-19 antigen tests. The initial compact consists of Maryland, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, and Virginia, and may expand to include additional states in the coming weeks. The states are in discussions with Becton Dickinson and Quidel to purchase 500,000 tests per state, for a total of three million tests. Department of Health and Human Services entered into an over \$1 billion agreement with Johnson & Johnson for the large scale domestic manufacturing and delivery of 100 million doses of Janssen's SARS-CoV-2 investigational vaccine, Ad26.COV2.S. The Democratic National Convention announced that Joe Biden will accept the party's nomination virtually from his home state of Delaware. The cruise industry voluntarily extended its pause on operations in U.S. waters until "at least" October 31, a month after CDC's no-sail order is set to expire.

Chicago, the nation's third-largest school district, announced that it will begin the academic year remotely in September. Chicago Mayor Lightfoot commented that "this was not an easy decision to make" but "we have to be guided by the science." The district originally planned to open using a hybrid model, with students divided into pods of 15 children each and attending in-person classes two days a week. In Mississippi, Governor Reeves issued a two-week statewide mask mandate for indoor and outdoor public places. Reeves delayed the re-opening of public schools in several counties, noting that "we must pump the breaks in hardest-hit areas." Mississippi's COVID-19 positivity rate is 22%, the highest in the country. NFL training is set to begin on August 17 and the regular season is scheduled to start on September 10. NFL's chief medical doctor commented that "we expect to have positive [COVID-19] cases no matter how careful we try to be." The University of Connecticut became the first bowl-level school to cancel its 2020 football season noting that the season would put athletes "at an unacceptable level of risk."

Approximately 636, or 0.87%, of the 72,668 tests administered in New York on August 4 were positive for COVID-19. New York City announced a plan to implement traveler registration checkpoints at key entry points into the City. Officers will stop a random sampling of vehicles and provide travelers with the State contact-tracing forms. The stops will not be based solely on whether a car has out-of-state license plates. Checkpoints will be staffed at major bridges and tunnels entering the City, starting on Wednesday, August 5. Authorities will set up a checkpoint at Penn Station on Thursday, and are planning for another at Port Authority. Failure to submit the tracing form can result in a \$2,000 fine, while failure to comply with the overall State quarantine order can incur up to a \$10,000 civil penalty. Mayor de Blasio noted that "we don't want to penalize people... we want to educate them, make sure they're following the rules."

Presidential updates

- [*Remarks by President Trump in Press Briefing*](#), August 5
 - President Trump commented on COVID-19 in a press briefing at the White House.
 - Trump noted that “we are continuing to monitor... hotspots across the South, Southwest, and West” and stated that “11 out of 13 states with the positive rate above 10% have seen a decline in daily cases since mid-July.”
 - Trump noted that Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has opened surge testing sites in New Orleans, Phoenix, Miami, Jacksonville, McAllen, and Bakersfield over the last several weeks. This week, HHS will open new surge sites in Houston and Atlanta.
 - Trump highlighted efforts to monitor states with positivity rates between five and ten percent, to “ensure that these states do not become new flare-ups.” Trump noted that “there won’t be lockdowns, but we [will] watch specific areas.”
 - Trump noted “vast improvements in recovery rates across all age groups” and stated that “compared to April, mortality rates are 85% lower among individuals aged 18 to 69, and 70% lower among individuals over 70 years old.”
 - President Trump commented that “since the pandemic began, nearly half of all fatalities [in the United States] have been at nursing homes or assisted-living centers.”
 - Trump noted that the number of Medicare beneficiaries using telehealth has increased over the course of the pandemic from roughly 14,000 a week to nearly 1.7 million.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [*COVID-19 Situation Report – 197*](#), August 4
 - Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) issued a [warning](#) against the use of chlorine products as a treatment for COVID-19. Chlorine dioxide, a gas used as bleach in water treatment plants, and sodium hypochlorite, a disinfectant marketed as household bleach, could be toxic if ingested and can cause a variety of adverse effects.
 - WHO [analyzed](#) 6 million reported COVID-19 infections between February 24 and July 12. WHO found that the share of infected individuals aged 15-24 years rose from 4.5% to 15%. A Johns Hopkins nurse manager commented that “younger people tend to be less vigilant about masking and social distancing.”

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

- [*CDC Issues Press Release on Expected Outbreak of Life-Threatening Acute Flaccid Myelitis*](#), August 4
 - CDC issued a press release predicting another peak year for cases of acute flaccid myelitis (AFM), an uncommon but serious neurologic condition that affects mostly children.
 - The disease has peaked every two years between August and November in the United States since 2014. The third and largest peak of AFM occurred in 2018, with 238 cases in 42 states.
 - AFM can progress rapidly over the course of hours or days, leading to permanent paralysis or the respiratory failure in previously healthy patients. CDC released a [report](#) on the clinical characteristics of patients with confirmed AFM.
 - CDC stated that it is not known how the pandemic and the social distancing measures may affect the circulation of viruses that can cause AFM, or if COVID-19 will impact the health care system’s ability to promptly recognize and respond to AFM. If social

distancing measures decrease circulation of enteroviruses this year, AFM cases may be fewer than expected or the outbreak may be delayed.

- [Information for Employers on COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing in Non-Health Care Workplaces](#), August 4
 - CDC highlighted information on COVID-19 case investigation and contact tracing for employers in non-health care workplaces.
 - CDC recommends that employers work closely with health departments to investigate workplace exposures to COVID-19. CDC recommends establishing a COVID-19 coordinator or team; creating a preparedness, response, and control plan; and conducting workplace hazard evaluation and prevention activities.
 - CDC noted that when a COVID-19 case is identified that affects a workplace, the health department may ask the employer for help in understanding the risk for transmission in the workplace and identifying exposures and contacts in the workplace.

New York State

- [New York State COVID-19 Updates](#), August 5
 - New York reported four deaths, 564 hospitalizations, and 134 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Tuesday, August 4.
 - Approximately 636, or 0.87%, of the 72,668 tests administered in New York on August 4 were positive for COVID-19.
 - New York State Liquor Authority (NYSLA), conducted 945 compliance checks on August 3 to August 4, documenting social distancing violations at 27 establishments. NYSLA immediately suspended the liquor licenses of eleven bars and restaurants for egregious violations.
- [Department of Financial Services Takes Action to Protect Patients from Fees](#), August 5
 - New York State Department of Financial Services (NYSDFS) [issued](#) guidance to New York health insurers to ensure that patients are not charged personal protective equipment (PPE) fees by health care providers that participate in their insurer's network.
 - DFS reported receiving consumer complaints that participating healthcare providers, particularly dental providers, are improperly charging their patients fees for PPE or other charges related to increased costs due to COVID-19
 - Cuomo noted that the initiative would protect "against excessive fees associated with the necessary and, at times, life-saving care."

New York City

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), August 5
 - Mayor de Blasio commented that he does not see indoor dining, gyms, or malls re-opening in the City before Labor Day, at the soonest.
 - New York City [announced](#) a plan to implement traveler registration checkpoints at key entry points into the City to help enforce the State's quarantine order for travelers entering New York.
 - Mayor de Blasio noted that "we don't want to penalize people... we want to educate them, make sure they're following the rules."

- Checkpoints will be staffed at major bridges and tunnels entering the City, starting on Wednesday. Authorities will set up a checkpoint at Penn Station on Thursday, and are planning for another at Port Authority.
- Officers will stop a random sampling of vehicles. The stops will not be based solely on whether a car has out-of-state license plates. During the stop, officers provide travelers with the State contact-tracing forms to fill out.
- Failure to submit the form can result in mandatory quarantine and a \$2,000 fine, while failure to comply with the overall quarantine order can incur up to a \$10,000 civil penalty.
- According to Mayor de Blasio, the City hopes to implement “full-fledged checkpoints” where viable and hold them at other locations where they’re unlikely to create major traffic backups. The location of some of the checkpoints will vary daily.

Other Related Updates

- [*NIH Launches Initiative to Develop COVID-19 Treatments*](#), August 5
 - National Institutes of Health launched the Medical Imaging and Data Resource Center (MIDRC), to create COVID-19 detection and treatment options through artificial intelligence and medical imaging.
 - According to the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB) program lead, “this effort will gather a large repository of COVID-19 chest images, allowing researchers to evaluate both lung and cardiac tissue data, ask critical research questions, and develop predictive COVID-19 imaging signatures that can be delivered to healthcare providers.”
- [*FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup*](#), August 4
 - FDA issued Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) for a [medical device](#) to support COVID-19 patients at risk of heart failure and [four](#) COVID-19 diagnostic tests.
 - FDA issued a [warning letter](#) to a company for selling unapproved COVID-19 treatments.
 - FDA updated its [webpage](#) on COVID-19 drug shortages to provide information regarding “in-time use” for certain drugs during the pandemic. “In-time use” is the maximum amount of time that can be allowed to elapse between the penetration of a container-closure system containing a sterile drug product and before patient administration.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [Senate Proposes the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protection and Schools Act](#), August 4
- [Remote Control: Best Practices for Litigating and Investigating During COVID and Beyond](#), July 29

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