

March 31, 2020

**Summary**

The United States has the highest number of reported infections in the world, with 165,874 confirmed cases. Nations across Europe continue to see a steady rise in new infections and deaths. France has surged past 3,000 fatalities. Combined death toll of Italy and Spain approaches 20,000, roughly half of the global total. There are mounting concerns that some countries, including China, North Korea and Indonesia, have understated – perhaps by a large margin – the scope of their outbreaks. China recently announced more than 1,500 coronavirus cases that had not previously been made public, giving in to pressure for greater transparency nearly two weeks after officials there first announced zero new local infections. Later today, the White House is expected to release its models showing the future course of the disease.

CDC is reconsidering its guidance that healthy people should not wear masks as new data show high rates of transmission by people who are carrying the virus but show no symptoms. CDC and WHO previously stated that the general public does not need to wear masks. In light of the new data, once there are enough masks for health care workers, the White House Coronavirus Task Force will consider recommending that all Americans wear masks. In New York City, Mount Sinai Health System's tented field hospital opened today in Central Park to treat coronavirus patients. An area of indoor courts at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, the site of the U.S. Open tennis tournament, will be used for 350 temporary hospital beds starting Tuesday. NYPD Police Commissioner reported that "crime has dropped off the face of the map" in New York City. NYPD reports that 15 percent of its uniformed officers, about 5,600 cops, are out sick. According to MTA, at least seven transit workers have died from the virus in the city. Nearly 100 people living in New York City's main homeless shelter system have tested positive.

**General/Employer Guidance****Presidential updates**

- [\*Remarks by President Trump and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force\*](#), March 30
  - White House officials announced that one million people have been tested in the United States. The country is now testing at a rate of 100,000 samples per day. President Trump highlighted a new point-of-care test for COVID-19, developed by Abbott, which delivers results within five minutes. He also noted the development of N95 respirator sterilization kits. Each machine, developed by Battelle, can disinfect 120,000 masks per day. Each mask can go through disinfection process 20 times.
  - Members of the Coronavirus Task Force acknowledged that COVID-19 could be a seasonal, cyclical virus. Should the disease recur in the fall, the U.S. would have an increased ability to

test, identify, isolate, and trace disease contacts. Many are hopeful that successful therapeutic interventions will emerge from current clinical trials.

- [President Donald J. Trump Approves Major Disaster Declarations](#), March 30
  - President Trump declared that a major disaster exists in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania. 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 New York, California, Washington State, Louisiana, Iowa, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, Illinois, Missouri, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Oregon, Connecticut, Colorado, South Carolina, Kentucky, Georgia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the District of Columbia, Kansas, and Alabama.

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

- [WHO releases guidelines to help countries maintain essential health services](#), March 30
  - WHO issued updated operational planning [guidelines](#) to help countries maintain essential health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The document includes a set of immediate actions that countries should consider at national, regional, and local level to reorganize and maintain access to high-quality essential health services for all.

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

- [CDC On Models For Months To Come: 'This Virus Is Going To Be With Us'](#), March 31
  - CDC Director Redfield stated that COVID-19 is about three times as infectious as flu. CDC estimates that as many as 25 percent of individuals that are infected remain asymptomatic and contribute to transmission. For those who do become symptomatic, there is significant shedding of the virus in the oropharyngeal compartment up to 48 hours before symptoms become apparent. In light of new data on significant asymptomatic transmission, CDC is re-reviewing its current mask recommendations and whether more widespread mask use could prevent transmission.
  - CDC notes that most respiratory viruses have a seasonality to them and that it is reasonable to hypothesize that COVID-19 will as well. CDC anticipates a second wave of infections in the late fall and early winter, when a substantial portion of Americans will be susceptible. CDC is hopeful that we will have sufficient time to prepare for the second wave.
- [CDC Updated Guidance](#), March 30
  - CDC Issued interim additional guidance for infection prevention and control for patients with suspected COVID-19 in [outpatient hemodialysis facilities](#).
  - CDC created [new guidance](#) for health care workers answering calls from children or adults seeking advice on possible COVID-19 infections. It includes a clinical decision algorithm and provides care recommendations on screening for life-threatening conditions, COVID-19 symptoms, and high risk conditions.
  - CDC maintains specific recommendations for people who need to take extra precautions against COVID-19. This includes older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions. CDC recently highlighted guidance for [other at-risk populations](#), or those who may have issues getting assistance if they become ill. These populations include pregnant people and people experiencing homelessness.

## New York State

- [Governor Cuomo Press Conference](#), March 31
  - Governor Cuomo announced that 332 people died of COVID-related causes in New York since Monday morning, bringing the total dead in the state to 1,550. The daily number of new deaths has been growing at an average of 33% per day for the past week, and the death toll has tripled in four days. The number of confirmed cases in New York increased by 9,298, bringing the total number of cases to 75,795 statewide. In New York City, 43,139 people have tested positive.
  - The number of patients hospitalized passed 10,900, up 15 percent from yesterday. Of those, 2,710 are currently in intensive care rooms with ventilators. More than 18,000 people were tested overnight, pushing the total number of people tested to about 205,000, more than one percent of the state's population.
- [Governor Cuomo Announces Statewide Public-Private Hospital Plan](#), March 30
  - Governor Cuomo announced a statewide public-private hospital plan in which hospitals that are beginning to reach or exceed capacity can transfer patients to other hospitals that are not as full. Hospital systems across the state have also agreed to share supplies, staff and other resources as needed.
  - The New York State Department of Health is creating a command center to share information between hospitals about the supplies that each hospital has in stock and the supplies each hospital is ordering. This central inventory system will help ensure purchasing and distribution of supplies is done strategically and efficiently.

## New York City

- [Partnership with FEMA to Bring 250 Additional Ambulances to New York City](#), March 31
  - Mayor de Blasio announced a partnership between FEMA and the City to bring 250 more ambulances and approximately 500 more EMTs and paramedics to New York City.
  - Officials hope the partnership will make an immediate impact on the City's overwhelmed 911 system. During this crisis, EMS has been responding to a record number of medical emergencies each day – a 50% increase over normal daily call volume. FDNY is urging New Yorkers to only call 911 if it is a true medical emergency. Those who are sick should call a doctor, and can call 311 for help getting connected with a doctor.
- [Mayor de Blasio Press Interview](#), March 31
  - In a recent press interview, Mayor de Blasio stated that New York City is considering tripling its hospital capacity to deal with the coming influx of COVID-19 patients. There are currently 20,000 hospital beds in the City, all of which may be turned into intensive care beds for COVID-19 patients. The Mayor noted that some states could still benefit from rapid testing on a universal level, before they are affected by an outbreak.
  - De Blasio recently authorized NYPD to give out fines of \$250 or \$500 to people who fail to engage in social distancing.
- [Fears of Virus Catastrophe at Rikers Jail](#), March 31
  - Fears are growing of a public health catastrophe inside New York City's jail system. As of yesterday, nearly 170 inmates and almost 140 staff members had tested positive at the city's jails, including the Rikers Island complex. Inside the jails, inmates, including some waiting to be released, have been struggling to protect themselves, some by diluting shampoo to disinfect cell bars and tabletops.

- Mayor de Blasio has been pushing prosecutors and judges to release as many inmates as possible, after dire warnings from public defenders and jail health officials about the toll the disease could take inside lockups. As of Sunday, about 650 people had been released, bringing the city's total jail population to under 5,000 for the first time since 1949.

### **Other Related Updates**

- [\*Newly Issued FEMA Guidance\*](#), March 31
  - FEMA offered guidance on the types of [non-congregate sheltering](#) it will support under COVID-19 emergency declarations. FEMA will consider non-congregate sheltering for health and medical-related needs, such as isolation and quarantine in hotels, motels, or dormitories, resulting from the public health emergency. Alternate care sites and temporary hospitals are not considered non-congregate sheltering. The non-congregate sheltering must be at the direction of an official order signed by public health official or be done in accordance with the direction of state or local health officials.
  - FEMA released a [fact sheet](#) on the eligibility of emergency medical care activities as an emergency protective measure under any emergency declaration and any major disaster declaration authorizing public assistance for COVID-19.
- [\*Attorneys General: Trump Administration Must Suspend Implementation of Joint Employer Rule Amid Coronavirus Pandemic\*](#), March 30
  - A coalition of 18 attorneys general urged the Trump administration to stop the implementation of a new joint employer rule during the COVID-19 outbreak.
  - In February, the Department of Labor (DOL) implemented a rule that narrows the joint employer standard under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). FLSA is the federal law establishing baseline critical workplace protections, such as minimum wage and overtime. The joint employment standard determines when more than one employer is responsible under FLSA because both exert sufficient influence over a worker's employment.
  - The coalition argues that DOL's new rule provides an incentive for businesses to subcontract with intermediary entities instead of hiring workers directly. This move would allow businesses to offload employment responsibilities to smaller companies, which, under the new rule, will shield businesses from federal liability for wage and hour obligations under the FLSA.
  - The coalition asserts that the current COVID-19 economic crisis combined with the new rule will erode protections for workers in low-wage jobs. DOL recently acknowledged that the new rule would make it more difficult for workers to collect back wages when employers become bankrupt.
- [\*FEMA Supply Chain Task Force\*](#), March 30
  - FEMA and HHS created the Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force, to close the gap between private sector resources and public need. Its primary effort is to source personal protective equipment, ventilators, and other resources requested by states. This will allow the government to surge support to COVID-19 hot spots as they arise.
  - The Task Force has a four-pronged approach: preservation of current supplies, acceleration of industrial manufacturing, expansion of production capacity, and proper allocation of resources to areas experiencing the greatest need. The Task Force also engages manufacturers, distributors, and health care networks to stabilize the supply chain.
- [\*FDA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Update: Daily Roundup\*](#), March 30
  - FDA [amended](#) the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the Battelle Decontamination System for use in decontaminating compatible N95 respirators for reuse by health care

- personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The EUA allows for reuse of N95 respirators by medical professionals after decontamination.
- FDA issued a [new enforcement policy](#) to help expand the availability and capability of sterilizers, disinfectant devices and air purifiers. The devices include those intended to make devices sterile, kill pathogens or other microorganisms and kill pathogens or microorganisms in the air.
  - FDA issued [new guidance](#) to help expand the availability of surgical apparel for health care professionals, including gowns, hoods, and surgeon's and patient examination gloves.
- [\*Firing of Amazon Worker Who Organized Walkout\*](#), March 30
    - A group of workers walked off the job at an Amazon warehouse on Staten Island on Monday, to protest what they see as inadequate safety measures and insufficient pay for the risks they confront. Amazon fired one of the workers who led the Staten Island walkout. New York Attorney General James condemned the termination and is asking the National Labor relations Board to investigate.
    - On Monday, a group of workers who fulfill orders for the grocery delivery service [Instacart](#) walked off the job, demanding greater pay and better access to paid leave and disinfectant. Instacart said the strike had “absolutely no impact on Instacart’s operations” and claims it sold more groceries over the past 72 hours “than ever before.” Workers at [Whole Foods](#) have called for a sickout, scheduled for Tuesday, to demand paid leave for all workers who must isolate themselves and a doubling of pay to compensate for the risk of working.

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