

COVID-19 Daily Update

July 20, 2020

Summary

The United States has 3,794,355 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 140,716 reported related deaths. President Trump announced plans to resume regular White House coronavirus task force briefings, beginning on Tuesday, July 21. President Trump cited the briefings “as a great way to get information out to the public” and noted a “big flare up in [COVID-19 cases in] Florida, Texas, and a couple of other places.” Trump plans to invite companies working on vaccines and therapeutics for the virus to provide updates on their progress via the daily briefings. According to two studies published on Monday in *The Lancet*, two potential vaccines against the virus from Oxford University and the Chinese company CanSino have triggered immune responses in hundreds of humans without dangerous side effects. At least 107,000 Americans have volunteered to take part in four phase three vaccine clinical trials through National Institutes of Health’s COVID-19 Prevention Trials Network.

The seven-day averages for daily new virus fatalities rose by more than 40% in the past week in eight states, including Idaho, Nebraska, and Iowa. In Chicago, Mayor Lightfoot rolled back the city’s re-opening to “help limit further community spread.” Beginning Friday, July 24, Chicago will ban indoor bar service, limit fitness classes to ten people, and limit residential guests to five people per unit. Delta announced that it will require passengers unable to wear face masks because of health conditions to undergo a medical clearance process at the airport before boarding. In Florida, teachers unions sued to block Governor DeSantis’s emergency order pushing schools to fully re-open in the fall. Broward County’s school superintendent commented that re-opening schools in the County would be “literally like sending people into battle, and without appropriate tools.”

New York reported 8 deaths, 716 hospitalizations, and 158 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Sunday, July 19. Approximately 519, or 1.05%, of the 49,342 tests conducted in New York on July 19 were positive for COVID-19. Governor Cuomo highlighted reports of groups of young people congregating at bars and restaurants, especially in the New York City area across Astoria, Queens, and the Lower East Side in Manhattan. Cuomo encouraged local governments and police to stop these gatherings, describing crowds as “a threat” to the State’s re-opening. Mayor de Blasio acknowledged the social distancing violations and cautioned that re-opening does not mean “business as usual.” The City shut down a restaurant considered a “focal point” of the crowds over the weekend. New York City entered phase four of the State’s re-opening plan on Monday, July 20. Phase four permits groups of up to 50 people and indoor religious gatherings to operate at one-third of maximum capacity.

Presidential updates

- [*President Trump Holds Meeting on Coronavirus Relief Package*](#), July 20
 - President Trump met with Senator Mitch McConnell, California Representative McCarthy, and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin on July 20 to discuss the next round of federal coronavirus relief.
 - Treasury Secretary Mnuchin stated that the plan will focus on “kids and jobs and vaccines.” The package will include “tax credits that incentivize businesses to bring people back to work.”
 - Supplemental pandemic unemployment benefits of \$600 per week are set to expire in most states at the end of this week.
 - Mnuchin expressed that “companies are trying to get people back to work and they won’t come because of the enhanced unemployment.” Mnuchin suggested that if federal jobless benefits are extended, it will be in a different form of assistance.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [*WHO Briefs Media on COVID-19*](#), July 20
 - Director-General Tedros highlighted the difficulty of treating COVID-19 in indigenous communities. Tedros noted the necessity of using contact tracing to combat COVID-19, both in indigenous communities and more broadly. Tedros stressed that “we do not have to wait for a vaccine” and that we must use “the tools we have at hand.”

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

- [*CDC COVID-19 Updates*](#), July 19
 - CDC updated data on reported COVID-19 cases and deaths in the United States.
 - As of July 19, 9% of diagnostic [tests](#) performed in the United States were positive for COVID-19. 26 states report more than 40,000 total COVID-19 [cases](#).
 - Several states report more than 5,000 total COVID-19 deaths, including California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Michigan.
- [*Symptom Profiles of a Sample of Patients with COVID-19*](#), July 17
 - CDC published results from a COVID-19 case investigation which collected demographic, epidemiologic, and clinical information from 164 symptomatic virus patients.
 - Nearly all patients experienced fever, cough, or shortness of breath. A wide variety of other symptoms were each reported by more than 50% of patients, including chills, myalgia, headache, fatigue, and the presence of at least one GI symptom (most commonly diarrhea). Changes in smell or taste were more commonly reported by women than by men.

New York State

- [*New York State COVID-19 Updates*](#), July 20
 - New York reported 8 deaths, 716 hospitalizations, and 158 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Sunday, July 19.
 - Approximately 519, or 1.05%, of the 49,342 tests conducted in New York on July 19 were positive for COVID-19.

- Governor Cuomo [noted](#) reports of groups of young people congregating at bars and restaurants, especially in the New York City area across Astoria, Queens, and the Lower East Side in Manhattan.
- In some instances, there were as many as 700 people drinking in an open space and violating the state’s open container law. Cuomo described these crowds as “a threat” to the State’s re-opening.
- Cuomo encouraged local governments and police to stop these gatherings from taking place. If the gatherings continue, Cuomo threatened to “roll back the bar and restaurant opening.”
- Governor Cuomo plans to travel to Georgia on Monday, July 20, to assist local leaders with their COVID-19 outbreak. Cuomo warned that the country is “still totally unprepared” to combat the pandemic as many states “still don’t have testing” and “still don’t have tracing programs.”
- Mayor de Blasio cautioned that re-opening does not mean “business as usual.” De Blasio noted that a restaurant considered a “focal point” of the crowds had been shut down for outdoor dining. The City will issue summonses to establishments that continue to flout social distancing regulations.

New York City

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), July 20
 - New York City entered phase four of its re-opening on Monday, July 20.
 - Phase four permits groups of up to 50 people and indoor religious gatherings to operate at one-third of maximum capacity.
 - The following activities are also allowed to resume: low-risk outdoor arts and entertainment, professional sports with no fans, higher education, and TV and film productions.
 - Gyms, malls, movie theaters, museums, and indoor dining remain prohibited.
- [Department of Health COVID-19 Updates](#), July 20
 - New York City Department of Health (NYCDOH) published an [update](#) encouraging health care providers to restore routine health care services in an equitable manner, prioritizing those most in need of services.
 - NYCDOH updated its [FAQ](#) for health care providers on COVID-19 testing and reporting, contact tracing, health care worker mental health, personal protective equipment, and preventing COVID-19 exposures at medical facilities.

Other Related Updates

- [Clinical Trials Publish Data on Safety and Immunogenicity of Potential COVID-19 Vaccines](#), July 20
 - Two clinical trials published results on two potential COVID-19 vaccine candidates in The Lancet.
 - Both trials used adenovirus vectors to deliver the COVID-19 vaccine. [Adenovirus-vectored vaccines](#) are designed to shuttle a gene from SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, into the body where cells will read it and generate coronavirus spike proteins. Those self-made spike proteins eventually train the body to detect and terminate any real SARS-CoV-2 infections.

- The first [study](#) examined ChAdOx1 nCoV-19, the vaccine produced by Oxford University, in partnership with AstraZeneca.
 - The immune system has two ways of finding and attacking pathogens, antibody responses and T cell responses. One Oxford researcher commented that ChAdOx1 “is intended to induce both, so it can attack the virus when it’s circulating in the body, as well as attacking infected cells.”
 - The study found that ChAdOx1 generated neutralizing antibodies in more than 90% of participants. T-cell responses were induced in all participants. Local and systemic adverse events such as fatigue, headache, and local tenderness occurred commonly in participants, but were well tolerated. No serious adverse events occurred.
 - The second [study](#) examined the COVID-19 vaccine developed by CanSino Biologics in Wuhan, China. Neutralizing antibodies were generated in about 85% of participants and more than 90% of participants had T-cell responses.
 - The Lancet [commented](#) that “the results of both trials are broadly similar and promising.” The Lancet noted that “the results of both studies augur well for phase three trials, where the vaccines must be tested on much larger populations of participants to assess their efficacy and safety.”
 - The Oxford vaccine is already in large phase three tests in Britain, Brazil, and South Africa; another phase three test involving 30,000 participants in the United States is set to begin next week.
- [Study on COVID-19 and Safety of the Donated Blood Supply](#), July 17
 - A recent study, published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, reported that a volunteer blood donor, healthy on the day of donation, had detectable SARS-CoV-2 RNA levels in their blood at least 40 days after the resolution of COVID-19 symptoms.
 - After SARS-CoV-2 RNA was detected in the donor’s blood, the donor tested negative for COVID-19 via nasopharyngeal swab.
 - Researchers described these findings as “concerning in light of current guidelines, which do not recommend SARS-CoV-2 screening in the general allogeneic donor population.”
 - The study notes, however, that “the infectivity of SARS-CoV-2 from blood remains unknown and, to date, we are not aware of cases of transfusion-transmitted COVID-19.”
 - The study concluded that “out of an abundance of caution ... our institution plans to continue donor screening for SARS-CoV-2 RNA and has extended the [blood donation] deferral period from 28 to 56 days after resolution of symptoms.”
- [Department of Labor Summarizes Recent Actions on COVID-19](#), July 20
 - Department of Labor (DOL) summarized recent actions on COVID-19.
 - DOL launched a public awareness campaign with educational videos, digital guides, and social media outreach to provide employers and employees information about available paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave benefits under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).
 - DOL, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and Small Business Administration (SBA) are presenting a series of [webinars](#) on paid sick leave, and expanded family and medical leave requirements of the (FFCRA) for employers and business owners.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [COVID-19: Market Declines and Falling Out of Carry: Considerations for Fund Sponsors and Investors](#), July 17
- [Disputing Tax: CARES Act Payroll Tax Provisions and Factors Employers Should Consider in Their Coronavirus Response](#), July 15
- [US Universities and Hospitals Facing Increased Cyber Attacks in Time of COVID-19](#), July 14

Send questions to:

- COVID-19-Implications@ropesgray.com
- COVID-19RecoveryPolicies@ropesgray.com