

# COVID-19 Daily Update

July 17, 2020

## Summary

The United States has 3,533,317 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 137,846 reported related deaths. CDC will not release additional guidance on re-opening schools until the end of July. Assistant Health Secretary Giroir commented that most COVID-19 transmission is coming from people who are asymptomatic. Dr. Fauci noted that “when you measure the level of virus in the nasal pharynx of asymptomatic people, compared to people who are symptomatic, there doesn’t seem to be any difference.” Senate Republicans announced plans to propose liability protections for businesses, schools, hospitals, government agencies, and front-line medical workers in the next round of virus relief measures. The rules would bar employees and patients who became infected with the virus at work or injured during treatment from suing employers or health care providers except in cases of “gross negligence or intentional misconduct.”

Three states set single-day death records on Thursday, July 16, including Florida, South Carolina, and Texas. Seven others reached record deaths this week, including Alabama, Arizona, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Utah. FEMA sent 14 refrigerated trucks to Texas to serve as temporary mortuaries. Kentucky Governor Beshear warned that “when you put up record numbers of cases, while our hospitals are working really hard, we will see more death.” In California, Governor Newsom announced that schools in counties flagged for high COVID-19 transmission rates must hold classes online until certain public health thresholds are met. Currently, 32 of the state’s 58 counties, including many of the most-populated, are on that list. Chicago’s public school system tentatively announced plans for a mix of in-person and online classes, with a final decision set for August. Target, CVS, Kohl’s, and Kroger’s grocery stores instituted mandatory mask wearing policies for customers this week.

New York reported 10 deaths, 765 hospitalizations, and 179 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Thursday, July 17. Approximately 776, or 0.99%, of the 78,239 tests conducted in New York on July 16 were positive for COVID-19. Governor Cuomo warned that New York may soon face a “man-made” second wave of COVID-19 infections caused by travelers from states struggling to control the virus. New York announced a one-time rental subsidy for eligible residents who have lost income due to COVID-19. Up to four months of rent will be sent directly to the household’s landlord; applicants do not need to repay this assistance. New York extended its moratorium on the collection of student and medical debt owed to the State for an additional 30 days, until August 15. New York City will enter phase four of re-opening on Monday, July 20. Expanded indoor activities, such as museums and shopping malls, will not re-open, but film production, professional sports with no fans, and higher education will be eligible to re-open. Outdoor venues, such as zoos and botanical gardens, may open at 33% capacity.

## Presidential updates

- [\*White House Comments on School Re-Openings\*](#), July 18
  - Press Secretary McEnany reiterated President Trump's view that schools must open in the fall. McEnany stated that "when he says open, he means open and full, kids being able to attend each and every day at their school. The science should not stand in the way of this."
  - President Trump recently described CDC school re-opening guidelines as "very tough and expensive."
  - CDC announced that it will not release additional guidance on re-opening schools until the end of July. The guidance will include "science- and evidence-based resources and tools [to] provide additional information [on schools] for administrators, teachers and staff, parents, caregivers and guardians."

## World Health Organization (WHO)

- [\*COVID-19 Situation Report – 176\*](#), July 15
  - Seventy-five countries expressed interest in joining WHO's vaccination distribution network, COVAX. COVAX expects to deliver two billion doses of a potential COVID-19 vaccine, once available.
  - WHO [published](#) an overview of the agency's COVID-19 guidance, including information on how to prepare for an outbreak, manage an existing outbreak, and resume activities following an outbreak
  - WHO [released](#) a checklist tool for local authorities in cities and urban settings to use when preparing for potential COVID-19 outbreaks.

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

- [\*CDC Extends No Sail Order for Cruise Ships Through September\*](#), July 16
  - CDC extended its No Sail Order for cruise ships through September 30. The order applies to passenger operations on ships with the capacity to carry at least 250 passengers.
  - CDC expressed support for the decision of Cruise Line International Association (CLIA) to voluntarily suspend cruise operations until September 15.
  - CDC warned that spaces on cruise ships are more crowded than most urban settings. If unrestricted cruise operations were permitted to resume, those that work or travel on cruise ships "would place substantial unnecessary risk on healthcare workers, port personnel and federal partners, and the communities they return to."
  - CDC reported 2,973 COVID-19 cases and 34 related deaths of individuals who were on cruise ships from March through July 10; the cases resulted from 99 outbreaks across 123 different cruise ships.
- [\*CDC COVID-19 Guidance\*](#), July 16
  - CDC highlighted [guidance](#) on glove use during the pandemic. CDC recommends using gloves when disinfecting the home or caring for someone who is sick. CDC notes that wearing gloves outside of these instances will not necessarily protect against COVID-19. Instead, CDC recommends regularly washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

- CDC updated [guidance](#) on face coverings. CDC does not recommend using face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings. CDC noted that “it is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles.”

## **New York State**

- [New York State COVID-19 Updates](#), July 17
  - New York reported 10 deaths, 765 hospitalizations, and 179 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Friday, July 17. Hospitalizations have dropped to their lowest level since March 18.
  - Approximately 776, or 0.99%, of the 78,239 tests conducted in New York on July 16 were positive for COVID-19.
  - Governor Cuomo [warned](#) that a “man-made” second wave of COVID-19 infections may soon hit New York, caused by travelers from states struggling to control the virus.
  - New York created the COVID Rent Relief Program, [offering](#) a one-time rental subsidy for eligible State residents. Up to four months of rent will be sent directly to the household’s landlord; applicants will not need to re-pay this assistance. The State plans to prioritize eligible households with “greatest economic and social need” accounting for income, rent burden, percent of income lost during the pandemic, and risk of homelessness.
- [State Debt Collection Suspended Until August 15](#), July 16
  - New York State halted the collection of medical and student debt owed to the State of New York that was specifically referred to the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) for collection.
  - A new executive order extends the suspension for another 30-day period until August 15. OAG will then reassess whether another extension is necessary.
  - More than 165,000 matters fit the criteria for a suspension of state debt collection, including patients that owe medical debt to state hospitals, students that owe debt to State University of New York (SUNY) campuses, and other fees owed to State agencies. The temporary policy also suspends the accrual of interest and the collection of fees.

## **New York City**

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), July 17
  - Governor Cuomo announced that New York City will enter phase four of re-opening on Monday, July 20.
  - Phase four allows the following activities to resume: TV and film production, professional sports with no fans, and higher education.
  - City and State authorities will not allow expanded indoor activities to resume in phase four, including dining, museums, and shopping malls. Outdoor venues, such as zoos and botanical gardens, may open at 33% capacity.
  - Governor Cuomo cautioned that “we’ll continue to monitor that situation, and when the facts change, we’ll let you know.”

- New York City’s Open Restaurants program will [continue](#) at least until the end of October. Nine thousand restaurants are currently serving food in socially distant outdoor spaces across 47 city streets.

### **Other Related Updates**

- [Map of Mask Use in the United States](#), July 17
  - New York Times created a map detailing national mask use using data from 250,000 survey responses between July 2 and July 14.
  - The map shows broad regional patterns; mask use is high in the Northeast and the West, and lower in the Plains and parts of the South.
  - Local differences are evident as well. For example, masks are widely worn in the District of Columbia, but there are sections of the suburbs in both Maryland and Virginia where mask use is low.
  - Several national surveys in recent weeks have found that around 80% of Americans say they wear masks frequently or always when they expect to be within six feet of other people.
  - CDC Director Redfield recently [commented](#) that “if we could get everybody to wear a mask right now, I really do think over the next 4-6-8 weeks, I really think we can bring this under control.”
- [Dexamethasone in Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19](#), July 17
  - A recent study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, examined the impact of dexamethasone on patients with severe COVID-19.
  - The study assigned 2,104 to receive dexamethasone and 4,321 to the standard of care. Overall, 482 patients (22.9%) in the dexamethasone group and 1110 patients (25.7%) in the usual care group died within 28 days after randomization.
  - The study concluded that “the use of dexamethasone resulted in lower 28-day mortality among those who were receiving either invasive mechanical ventilation or oxygen alone at randomization but not among those receiving no respiratory support.”
- [FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup](#), July 16
  - FDA announced plans to close its COVID-19 Industry Hotline on Friday, July 17. Questions about COVID-19 and medical devices may be directed to a new [FDA directory](#).
  - FDA [updated](#) safety information on the recall of several hand sanitizers due to potential methanol contamination.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [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
- [European Regulatory Update for Asset Managers](#), July 13

Send questions to:

- [COVID-19-Implications@ropesgray.com](mailto:COVID-19-Implications@ropesgray.com)
- [COVID-19RecoveryPolicies@ropesgray.com](mailto:COVID-19RecoveryPolicies@ropesgray.com)