

COVID-19 Daily Update

July 22, 2020

Summary

The United States has 3,903,684 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 142,312 reported related deaths. President Trump held a press conference on COVID-19 and warned that the outbreak will “likely, unfortunately, get worse before it gets better.” Trump asked Americans to “wear a mask” when “you are not able to socially distance.” Trump acknowledged that “whether you like the mask or not, they have an impact.” Department of Health and Human Services entered into a \$1.95 billion contract with Pfizer and BioNTech for up to 600 million doses of a potential COVID-19 vaccine. Once developed and approved, the vaccine would be provided to the American public “at no cost.” The European Union agreed to an \$858 billion pandemic stimulus package. Countries will raise large sums by selling bonds collectively, rather than individually and much of that money will be handed out to member nations hit hardest by the pandemic as grants, not loans. German Chancellor Angela Merkel praised the agreement by the 27-member group as “truly historic.”

The northeast has gone from the country’s worst coronavirus hot spot to its most controlled. Director of the Harvard Global Health Institute predicted that the United States will operate as “two countries” by the fall, “one which is neck-deep in coronavirus, its hospitals overwhelmed, and another part of the country that is struggling a little, but largely doing okay with their economy.” United Airlines expanded its mask policy to require that passengers wear face coverings not only on board the plane but also in its lounges, baggage claim areas, gates, customer service counters, and kiosks. If travelers don’t comply, they could be denied travel or banned from the airline. In Ohio, Governor DeWine issued a state-wide mask order that will take effect on Thursday evening.

Approximately 705, or 1.04%, of the 67,659 tests conducted in New York on July 22 were positive for COVID-19. Governor Cuomo issued a joint statement with Maryland Governor Hogan urging Congress to approve state stabilization funding in the next COVID-19 relief bill. The statement notes that “governors have already cut budgets and reduced our payrolls by 1.5 million people,” and “we cannot imperil our economic recovery efforts by slashing state programs that pay our teachers, firefighters, health care, and front-line workers.” New York announced that it may have to reduce or suspend its Excelsior Scholarship because the “pandemic has dramatically reduced state revenues.” The program allows students from households earning under \$125,000 to attend State and City colleges tuition-free.

Presidential updates

- [*Remarks by President Trump in Press Briefing on COVID-19*](#), July 21
 - President Trump held a press briefing on COVID-19 on Tuesday, July 21.
 - Trump appeared on the podium by himself, a departure from previous briefings in which members of the White House coronavirus task force were by his side.
 - Trump warned that the outbreak will “likely, unfortunately, get worse before it gets better.”
 - Trump previously described recent outbreaks around the country as just “embers” of the virus, but conceded that there were now “big fires,” particularly in Florida and elsewhere across the South and West.
 - Trump asked Americans to “wear a mask” when “you are not able to socially distance.” Trump acknowledged that “whether you like the mask or not, they have an impact.”

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [*COVID-19 Situation Report – 183*](#), July 21
 - WHO [developed](#) a research agenda aimed at understanding and counteracting the risk of infodemics and the promulgation of anti-scientific information.
 - WHO [warned](#) that COVID-19 cases are “beginning to accelerate in Africa.”

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

- [*CDC Updates COVID-19 Guidance*](#), July 21
 - CDC highlighted [answers](#) to frequently asked questions on COVID-19, on transmission, testing, investigational therapies, and comorbidities such as asthma, liver disease, and hypertension.
 - CDC posted [guidance](#) for veterinary clinics treating companion animals on COVID-19 infection and control.
 - CDC issued [information](#) on how to protect children during a COVID-19 outbreak, including limiting in-person play time with other children.

New York State

- [*New York State COVID-19 Updates*](#), July 22
 - New York reported 9 deaths, 714 hospitalizations, and 179 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Tuesday, July 21.
 - Approximately 705, or 1.04%, of the 67,659 tests conducted in New York on July 22 were positive for COVID-19.
 - New York launched a new diagnostic testing site in partnership with Good Samaritan Hospital in the Town of Ramapo, a community heavily impacted by COVID-19.
- [*New York May Suspend Excelsior Scholarship Due to COVID-19*](#), July 22
 - New York announced that it may have to reduce or suspend its Excelsior Scholarship because the “pandemic has dramatically reduced state revenues.”
 - The program allows students from households earning under \$125,000 to attend state and city colleges tuition-free. Recipients must work in New York for four years after graduation or treat the grant as a loan.
 - The State noted that the processing of new applications depends on federal assistance which has been delayed since April. A spokesman for the State Division of the Budget

expressed “hope [that] students and their families will join us in calling on the federal government to act.”

New York City

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), July 22
 - An [investigation](#) conducted by Eyewitness News found a higher concentration of COVID-19 testing sites per capita in wealthier areas of Manhattan, reducing the likelihood of long waits for tests, compared to certain predominantly minority communities in parts of Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.
 - A recent [study](#) by Partnership for New York City, outlined the City’s economic challenges during the pandemic. The study found that the City lost as many as 520,000 jobs in the small business sector and that up to 33% of the City’s 233,000 small businesses may never re-open. New York State and City are projected to lose a combined \$37 billion in tax revenue, setting the stage for cuts in government services and potential tax increases.

Other Related Updates

- [Health Department Publishes Information on HHS Protect](#), July 21
 - Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) posted an [FAQ](#) about HHS Protect, a new database for sharing, analyzing, and accessing COVID-19 data submitted by hospitals.
 - The data includes the inpatient bed utilization, ICU bed utilization, percentage of inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients, and number of COVID-19 cases.
 - HHS noted that all data is “immediately captured, recorded, and time-stamped before it is accessible” and that the system is “above politics and manipulation.”
- [Health Department Announces Vaccine Production Agreement With Pfizer](#), July 22
 - HHS and Department of Defense (DoD) [announced](#) a \$1.95 billion agreement with Pfizer and BioNTech for large-scale production and nationwide distribution of 100 million doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, pending the vaccine’s successful development and FDA approval.
 - The agreement allows HHS to acquire an additional 500 million vaccine doses from Pfizer, beyond the initial 100 million doses. The vaccine would be available to consumers at no cost, but health care professionals may charge insurers for the cost of administering the vaccine.
 - Unlike AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, and Moderna, which have also received funding from the U.S. government, the government did not fund Pfizer’s initial research and development efforts. The current contract extends only to the production and distribution of the vaccine.
 - Pfizer Chief Business Officer Young testified before Congress on July 21 along with executives from four other vaccine manufacturers. Young stated that Pfizer “didn’t accept the federal government funding solely for the reason that we wanted to be able to move as quickly as possible with our vaccine candidate into the clinic.”
 - Young noted that Pfizer would not sell the vaccine at cost and would instead “price our potential vaccine consistent with the urgent global health emergency that we’re facing.”

- [*FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup*](#), July 21
 - FDA [published](#) an article on its support of COVID-19 test manufacturers. FDA has worked with more than 500 developers since the beginning of the pandemic.
 - FDA [delivered](#) written testimony to the Senate Subcommittee on Manufacturing, Trade, and Consumer Protection on FDA's COVID-19 fraud task force.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [Non-Binding Guidance: FDA Regulation of COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests and Return to Work](#), July 21
- [COVID-19: Market Declines and Falling Out of Carry: Considerations for Fund Sponsors and Investors](#), July 17

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