

# COVID-19 Daily Update

July 23, 2020

## Summary

The United States has 3,998,259 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 143,701 reported related deaths. According to the Covid Tracking Project, there were 59,628 total COVID-19 hospitalizations across the country on Wednesday, July 22, close to the peak of 59,940 hospitalizations reported on April 15. Dr. Birx privately warned a group of state and local health officials of “new [test positivity] increases in Miami, New Orleans, Las Vegas, San Jose, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Nashville, Pittsburgh, Columbus and Baltimore.” Birx urged officials in these cities to make “sure they’re being aggressive about mitigation efforts.” Department of Labor reported 1.4 million new initial claims for unemployment benefits last week; applications rose for the first time since early in the pandemic. A recent United Nations report found that providing a temporary basic income for individuals below the poverty line in 132 developing countries could mitigate the impact of COVID-19 internationally, as it would allow people to stay at home and pay for their food and health expenses.

According to a survey conducted by the American Alliance of Museums, 33% of 760 museum directors expressed that there was a “significant risk” of their institutes closing permanently by next fall. A Chronicle of Higher Education tracker found that roughly half of more than 1,200 universities plan to re-open for in-person classes this fall, while a third propose a mix of online and in-person classes, and 11% committed to fully online learning. Three Midwestern states, Minnesota, Ohio, and Indiana, announced statewide face covering mandates on Wednesday, July 22. Minnesota Governor Walz noted that masks are the “cheapest and most effective” way to protect both lives and businesses. In Washington, D.C., Mayor Bower announced expanded mask requirements on Tuesday, requiring anyone leaving their home to wear a mask “if they are likely to come into contact with another person for more than a fleeting moment.”

Approximately 811, or 1.16%, of the 69,698 tests conducted in New York on July 22 were positive for COVID-19. New York State Liquor Authority clarified guidance on when bars and restaurants may serve alcohol under pandemic-related regulations; patrons must order “a substantial item,” and not just a snack, before they can be served alcohol. New York City announced plans to begin pooled testing for COVID-19, a testing approach that allows samples from multiple people to be combined to allow for quicker testing. Governor Cuomo warned that “our infection rate is going to go back up because of people coming into New York” and urged states struggling with COVID-19 to shut down. Mayor de Blasio announced that eight public swimming pools in the city will re-open on Friday, June 23; seven more pools are scheduled to re-open next week.

## Presidential Updates

- [\*Remarks by President Trump in Press Briefing\*](#), July 22
  - President Trump held a press briefing on COVID-19 on Wednesday, July 22.
  - The President was unaccompanied by any health experts but stated that White House coronavirus task force members gave him “everything they know, and I am giving the information to you.”
  - After warning on Tuesday that the virus would get “worse before it gets better,” the President stated that “it’s all going to work out, and it is working out.”
  - President Trump reiterated his desire for schools to re-open in the fall, and noted that he would be “comfortable” with sending his own young son and grandchildren to school in the fall.
  - The President stated that remdesivir has “proven to be terrific” and suggested that it has helped bring down the fatality rate of the virus. Trump noted that the administration is “working with every state to ensure the supply of remdesivir for early case intervention.”

## World Health Organization (WHO)

- [\*COVID-19 Situation Report – 184\*](#), July 22
  - Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) [warned](#) that one-third of people in the Americas are at increased risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms due to underlying health conditions.

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

- [\*CDC Director Issues Statement on SARS-CoV-2 infections\*](#), July 22
  - CDC Director Redfield addressed “misleading media reports” that have suggested that there are 24 times more SARS-CoV-2 infections than reported cases.
  - CDC’s retrospective estimate is that there were 10 times more cases than reported from the period between March through May.
  - Of the 10 states in which data was collected for this study, one state was estimated to have 23.8 times more infections than reported cases. CDC clarified that this may be due to underreporting or less testing done at the time the data was collected. The underreporting was in part due to asymptomatic individuals that were not seeking testing at the time.
  - Director Redfield noted that “today, we are testing more individuals and identifying more asymptomatic individuals than was able to be done previously.”
- [\*Interpretation of COVID-19 Death Forecasts\*](#), July 23
  - CDC consolidated data from 29 models projecting the COVID-19 death rate. Predicted rates of increase differ among the forecasts, depending on assumptions about the prevalence and rigor of social distancing behaviors.
  - National forecasts suggest that the number of cumulative COVID-19 deaths will be between 160,000 and 175,000 by August 15.
  - State-level forecasts indicate that the number of new deaths will likely exceed the number of new deaths reported over the last four weeks. The jurisdictions with the greatest likelihood of a larger number of deaths include Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Nevada, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah.

## **New York State**

- [\*New York State COVID-19 Updates\*](#), July 23
  - New York reported 13 deaths, 706 hospitalizations, and 160 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Wednesday, July 22.
  - Approximately 811, or 1.16%, of the 69,698 tests conducted in New York on July 22 were positive for COVID-19.
  - Governor Cuomo [discussed](#) the need for the federal support for the national COVID-19 testing materials supply chain. Cuomo called on President Trump to institute a federal executive order mandating nationwide mask use.
  - Cuomo warned that “our infection rate is going to go back up because of people coming into New York” and urged states struggling with COVID-19 to shut down.
- [\*New York Tightens Bar and Restaurant COVID-19 Regulations\*](#),
  - State Liquor Authority (SLA) [updated](#) guidance on when bars and restaurants may serve alcoholic beverages during the pandemic.
  - To enforce social distancing, New York businesses are required to sell a customer “sandwiches, soups, or other foods, whether fresh, processed, precooked or frozen” before they can serve the patron an alcoholic beverage.
  - In response to the requirement, some businesses were selling low-priced snacks, such as a bag of chips, for \$1, as a way of circumventing the requirement.
  - SLA, [clarified](#) that “other foods” are “foods which are similar in quality and substance to sandwiches and soups.” For example, “salads, wings, or hotdogs would be of that quality and substance; however, a bag of chips bowl of nuts, or candy alone are not.”

## **New York City**

- [\*New York City COVID-19 Updates\*](#), July 23
  - Mayor de Blasio announced that eight public swimming pools will re-open on Friday, June 23; seven more pools are scheduled to re-open next week.
  - The City’s Test and Trace Corps noted two key goals for the program. First, the City must reach 90% of all new COVID-19 cases. Second, the City must achieve a higher rate of compliance with contact tracing intake and monitoring. Currently, only 64% of all new cases complete the required intake.
  - The City plans to begin pooling COVID-19 samples to speed up the testing process. The median turnaround time for labs right now across New York City is two days.

## **Other Related Updates**

- [\*National Polls Describe Public Thoughts on Re-Opening Schools in the Fall\*](#), July 23
  - Two new national polls of parents by the Kaiser Family Foundation and [ParentsTogether](#) found that a majority of parents are not eager for schools to re-open this fall, given the health risk, despite facing lost income and increased child care responsibilities.
  - The Kaiser [poll](#) focused on school re-openings. Sixty-three percent of parents expressed that it is better to open schools later to minimize coronavirus infection risk.
  - Parents of color were more hesitant than white parents to re-open schools, but were simultaneously more worried about the impact of school closure on children, including falling behind academically and losing access to needed services.

- The ParentsTogether [poll](#) focused on child care needs and found similar results. Fifty-nine percent of respondents agreed that “schools should remain closed until they are certain there is no health risk, even if means students fall farther behind.”
- Sixty-three percent of parents reported that they lost income during the crisis and more than 40% attributed lost income to new child care responsibilities when schools and day cares closed.
- [Department of Labor Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report](#), July 23
  - Department of Labor (DOL) reports that another 1,416,000 workers filed initial claims for unemployment benefits last week.
  - The number of new claims had been steadily declining since March, when nearly 7 million people filed for unemployment insurance in a single week. Last week’s numbers marked the first reversal of that trend.
  - One economic commentator in the New York Times attributed the increase to businesses “shutting down again as cases surge in some places,” “funds from emergency small business loans through the Paycheck Protection Program... running out,” or businesses “running through their first line of credit.”
  - 974,999 new claims were filed for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, the federal program intended to help freelancers, gig workers, the self-employed, and others not normally eligible for state jobless benefits.
- [NIH RADx Initiative Rapidly Scales COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing in the United States](#), July 22
  - A special [report](#) in the New England Journal of Medicine detailed National Institutes of Health’s Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) initiative, which aims to “support the development, production scale-up, and deployment of accurate, rapid [SARS-CoV-2] tests across the country.”
  - One goal of RADx is to enable approximately six million daily tests in the United States by December 2020, many times the current daily testing rate, by (1) scaling point-of-care technologies; (2) focusing on non-traditional approaches for testing, such as evaluating home-based testing and re-purposing existing technologies to detect SARS-CoV-2; and (3) establishing community-engaged implementation projects to improve access to testing in underserved and vulnerable populations.
- [FDA COVID-19 Updates: Daily Roundup](#), July 22
  - FDA [updated](#) its FAQ on COVID-19 testing, including a list of COVID-19 tests that should no longer be used due to significant problems that have not or have yet to be addressed by the manufacturer.
  - FDA [granted](#) an emergency use authorization (EUA) to Access Bio for its COVID-19 test, which is designed to detect the virus in 83 minutes. Access Bio noted that it has confirmed 100% consistency in its clinical sample evaluations.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [COVID-19: Rethinking the “S” in ESG in Light of the Pandemic](#), July 23
- [Encouraging Internal Reporting to Mitigate COVID-19-Related Risk](#), July 22

- [COVID and Race: A Conversation with Leaders in Health Care](#), July 21
- [Non-Binding Guidance: FDA Regulation of COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests and Return to Work](#), July 21

Send questions to:

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