

# COVID-19 Daily Update

July 5, 2020

## Summary

The United States has 2,874,396 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 129,870 reported related deaths. Despite new daily cases nearly doubling over the past two weeks, the number of patients dying from the virus continues to decrease. There is a growing belief that increases in testing, better treatment, and a younger average patient are all contributing factors in the death rate staying low. In his Fourth of July speech, President Trump defended his administration's pandemic response, blaming Chinese "deception" for allowing the virus to spread. Senior administration officials stated that the White House is preparing a new message: "the virus is with us, but we need to live with it." The administration reportedly intends to promote a new study that they say shows promising results on therapeutics, describing the results as "market-moving." A group of 239 scientists will publish an open letter this week calling on WHO to consider airborne transmission as a significant factor in how COVID-19 spreads, contrary to prior positions taken by WHO. If the scientists are correct, more onerous steps may be required to contain the spread of COVID-19 in indoor settings.

Across the country, 21 states, including Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas, have paused their re-opening plans. Hospitals in at least two Texas counties have reached their maximum capacities and have had to airlift patients out of the area. Doctors in Houston have been reaching out to peers in New York for advice on handling the influx of new patients. Crowds flocked to beaches Saturday, despite cities including Virginia Beach and Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, canceling their holiday fireworks displays. In California, where many beaches in the southern part of the State closed for the holiday weekend, the beaches remained open in San Diego and crowds there were reminiscent of years past.

533, or .84%, of the 63,415 tests conducted in New York on July 4 were positive for COVID-19. New York City enters phase three of its re-opening Monday as health officials continue to track the rapidly increasing number of infections around the country. Despite the progress the State has made resisting the spread of COVID-19, New York is no longer on track to contain the virus's spread, according to one projection. The average New York COVID-19 patient is currently infecting 0.96 other people, a figure that has slowly increased since the State hit its lowest infection rate, 0.7, in early May.

## Presidential updates

- [President Trump Addresses COVID-19 Response](#), July 4
  - In his [Independence Day remarks](#), President Trump praised his administration's response to COVID-19. He highlighted the number of tests administered as well as increases in production of ventilators and protective equipment.
  - President Trump asserted that China's "secrecy, deceptions, and cover-up" allowed the virus "to spread all over the world," stating that "China must be held fully accountable."
  - President Trump predicted that "we'll likely have a therapeutic and/or vaccine solution long before the end of the year."
  - FDA Commissioner Dr. Stephen Hahn spoke to the possible timeframe for the development of a COVID-19 vaccine, [stating](#) he "can't predict when a vaccine will be available," but that FDA is "seeing unprecedented speed for the development of a vaccine." Dr. Hahn expressed hope that a vaccine would be ready by "year's end or early next year." He emphasized that FDA "will make a decision based upon the data and science on a vaccine, with respect to the safety and effectiveness of that vaccine."
- [Administration Confronts Presence of COVID-19 Through November](#), July 3
  - President Trump asked the White House Coronavirus Task Force to resume briefings, indicating that he would not participate.
  - Senior administration officials are [reportedly](#) planning to message a new stance on the pandemic next week: "The virus is with us, but we need to live with it." According to the officials, the White House intends to push acceptance that the virus will be around through the November election. President Trump's top advisers plan to argue that the country must figure out how to press forward despite it. The White House will increasingly emphasize the relatively low risk most Americans have of dying from the virus.
  - Therapeutic drugs will also be showcased as a key component of moving forward. Administration officials said they are planning to promote a new study they say shows promising results on therapeutics, describing such results as "market-moving."

## World Health Organization (WHO)

- [COVID-19 Situation Report – 166](#), July 4
  - UN Secretary-General, António Guterres in his [remarks](#) to the Security Council, warned that the COVID-19 pandemic has been affecting peace and security around the world. He stated that "Collective security and our shared well-being are under assault on many fronts led by a relentless disease and abetted by global fragilities."
  - Secretary-General Guterres spoke about the development of the UN's "[Verified](#)" initiative, which is designed to create a cadre of "digital first responders" to increase the volume and reach of trusted, accurate information surrounding the crisis. He emphasized the ongoing need to "counter the spread of untruthful and harmful information" about the virus.
  - WHO is [providing](#) support to bridge a shortfall in oxygen supplies in Iraq. WHO airlifted 300 oxygen concentrators from WHO's warehouses in the United Arab Emirates.

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

- [CDC Releases Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#), July 3
  - A recent [report](#), published by CDC, found that implementing infection prevention and control (IPC) measures might prevent COVID-19 transmission in the residential, congregated setting of a psychiatric facility.
  - After admitting two patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection, a psychiatric facility responded by implementing modified and expanded IPC procedures. Although both patients were asymptomatic at the time of transfer and one had a negative test result for SARS-CoV-2 at the originating facility, they were both isolated and received testing upon arrival. Later test results indicated that both patients had SARS-CoV-2 infections.
  - In response, the state hospital implemented expanded COVID-19 IPC procedures (e.g., enhanced screening, testing, and management of new patient admissions) and adapted some standard IPC measures to facilitate implementation within the psychiatric patient population (e.g., use of modified face coverings).
  - A point prevalence survey found no evidence of further SARS-CoV-2 transmission within the facility.

## New York State

- [New York State COVID-19 Updates](#), July 5
  - New York reported 11 deaths and 190 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Saturday, July 4, and [reported](#) 8 deaths and 178 patients in intensive care on Sunday, July 5. 844 patients remain hospitalized.
  - 726, or 1.16%, of the 62,403 tests conducted in New York on July 3 were positive for COVID-19. 533, or .84%, of the 63,415 tests conducted in New York on July 4 were positive for COVID-19.
  - Rockland County officials investigating a new cluster of COVID-19 cases tied to a large party earlier this month are [resorting to subpoenas](#) to compel people to comply with contact tracing.
- [Group Warns That New York No Longer on Track to Contain COVID-19](#), July 3
  - [Covid Act Now](#), which uses real-time modeling and metrics to assess the nation's standing in the fight against the novel coronavirus, has indicated that New York is no longer among the few states currently on track to contain COVID-19.
  - As of [July 3](#), each person in New York with COVID-19 is infecting 0.96 other people. Because this number is around 1.0, it means that COVID continues to spread, but in a slow and controlled fashion. In early May, New York's infection rate was 0.7. The infection rate peaked at 2.58 in mid-March.
  - Governor Cuomo has previously cited Covid Act Now in his briefings as a reliable measure of New York's progress. Governor Cuomo has recently focused more on seven-day rolling average test rates than daily numbers in New York, as hospitalizations and daily fatalities fall to three-month lows.

## New York City

- [New York City Will Enter Phase Three Monday](#), July 5
  - New York City will begin phase three of re-opening Monday, without indoor dining.

- Nail salons, tattoo, and massage parlors will be allowed to re-open at 50 percent capacity. Businesses must disinfect workstations for each new customer and require customers and employees to wear face coverings.
- Dog parks and basketball, handball, tennis, bocce and volleyball courts will also re-open.
- After two weeks of phase three, officials will determine if the City is eligible to enter phase four, the final phase of re-opening. It is unclear when indoor dining will resume.

### **Other Related Updates**

- [\*Scientists Write Letter To WHO Arguing COVID-19 Might Be Airborne\*](#), July 4
  - WHO emphasizes that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 infections, can be transmitted via direct contact and large droplets, while suggesting reduced concern regarding the potential influence of airborne spread. A group of 239 scientists will publish an open letter this week calling on WHO to take into account that airborne transmission is a significant factor in how COVID-19 spreads.
  - If airborne transmission is a significant factor in the pandemic, the consequences for containment may be significant. Masks may be needed indoors, even when persons are located far apart. Ventilation systems in schools, nursing homes, residences, and businesses may need to minimize recirculating air and add more powerful new filters.
  - A [letter](#) published by the American Association of Nurse Anesthetist Journal similarly observes that the authors did not find any definitive evidence supporting WHO’s assertion that COVID-19 airborne transmission is limited to specific circumstances, such as procedures or support treatments, and is not more generalized. The letter outlines evidence available to the authors, and urges “there is an immediate need to revisit WHO recommendations that include the potential for airborne transmission, so that healthcare providers and others working and/or sharing indoor space with SARS-CoV-2– infected individuals are protected by the appropriate protocols.”
  - Dr. Benedetta Allegranzi, WHO’s technical lead on infection control, said WHO considers “airborne transmission as possible but certainly not supported by solid or even clear evidence.” Dr. Allegranzi acknowledges “there is a strong debate on this.”
- [\*Despite Increases in Cases, COVID-19 Deaths Remain Down\*](#), July 3
  - In April and May, COVID-19 led to as many as 3,000 deaths per day and claimed the lives of roughly 7-8% of Americans known to have been infected. The number of daily deaths is now closer to 600, and the comparable death rate is less than 5%.
  - Experts cite three broad reasons for the downward trend in coronavirus deaths: testing, treatment, and a shift in whom the virus is infecting.
  - With more tests available, infections are often identified earlier, which allows for earlier intervention. Health care workers have become more knowledgeable about promising treatments to combat the coronavirus and its effects. Younger people now make up a growing proportion of cases, and they are less likely to die from the disease.

- The relative contribution of these factors [is not yet clear](#). And because death reports can lag diagnoses by weeks, the current rise in coronavirus cases could still portend increases in mortality in the days to come.
- [\*Scientists Find COVID-19 Has Mutated, Now More Infectious\*](#), July 3
  - An international team of researchers [published](#) evidence, in the journal Cell, that a new form of COVID-19 has spread from Europe to the US. The new mutation makes the virus more likely to infect people and is now the dominant form infecting people.
  - Scientists estimate that the mutation made the virus between three to nine times more infectious.
  - The mutation does not appear to have an impact on disease severity.

Send questions to:

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