

COVID-19 Daily Update

June 22, 2020

Summary

The United States has 2,291,353 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 120,106 reported related deaths. WHO Director-General Tedros warned that the pandemic entered a “new and dangerous phase.” WHO noted that countries are “eager to open up their societies and economies” even though “most people are still susceptible” to COVID-19. Former FDA Commissioner Gottlieb stated that the increase in COVID-19 cases across more than 20 states clearly indicates that “there is now community spread underway, and this isn’t just a function of [increased] testing.” The White House announced that it is “scaling back” temperature checks for visitors entering the complex, and changed its mask policy for employees. Masks for White House staff are recommended, but are no longer required. Gilead Sciences announced plans to test an inhaled version of remdesivir to allow for “easier administration” of the drug outside of a hospital setting. FDA has already authorized the intravenous administration of remdesivir for hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

More than 1,100 new infections were reported on both June 19 and June 20 across the Houston metropolitan area. Local officials warned of “significant, uncontrolled spread” of the virus and “very disturbing trends” in hospitalizations. Washington’s Yakima County, where the number of cases has more than doubled in the past month, is at a “breaking point” according to Governor Inslee. With a shortage of hospital beds and health care personnel, patients are being transported to Seattle, more than two hours away, for medical care. More than 3.6 million people watched a live-streamed summer solstice sunset and sunrise at Stonehenge, the prehistoric monument in southwestern England, after the site’s annual gathering was canceled because of the pandemic. Disneyland Paris announced plans to re-open on July 15.

New York reported 15 deaths on Sunday, June 21. Approximately 664, or .98%, of the 67,526 tests conducted in New York on June 20 were positive for COVID-19. The Mid-Hudson region is on track to enter phase three on Tuesday, June 23. New York City entered phase two of its re-opening on Monday, June 22. Mayor de Blasio described phase two as “a giant step for this city” because it “is where most of our economy is.” Between 150,000 to 300,000 people are expected to return to work across outdoor dining, in-store retail, hair salons, real estate services, vehicle sales, and office-based companies. The City encouraged office-based employees to continue to work from home as much as possible. In a survey by the Partnership for New York City, a business group, respondents from 60 companies with Manhattan offices predicted that only 10% of their employees would return by August 15. Many establishments are not included in phase two and remain closed, including malls, schools, indoor restaurant and bar service, movie theaters, fitness centers, and casino gaming facilities.

Presidential updates

- [*White House Scales Back COVID-19 Safety Measures*](#), June 22
 - The White House announced that it is “scaling back” temperature checks for visitors entering the complex. The decision was made in conjunction with Washington, D.C.’s move into phase two of its re-opening plan on Monday, June 22.
 - “Social distancing, hand sanitizer, regular deep cleaning of all work spaces, and voluntary facial coverings” remain in place for visitors.
 - Every staffer or visitor who comes into contact with the president will still be tested for COVID-19 and receive a temperature check. Masks for White House staff are now recommended, but are no longer required.
- [*President Trump Moves Forward with Fourth of July Event in D.C.*](#), June 22
 - President Trump announced plans to hold his “Salute to America” event in Washington D.C. on July 4 on the South Lawn of the White House and the Ellipse.
 - The event will include “music, military demonstrations, and flyovers” and will conclude with fireworks over the National Mall.
 - The annual parade co-hosted by the National Park Service has been cancelled this year. The parade’s website states that local leadership determined that “COVID-19 infection levels will not be abated to the degree that it would be safe or prudent to conduct the parade.”
 - A group of lawmakers from the Washington D.C. area wrote a [letter](#) on May 26 to the secretaries of defense and the interior, to cancel the “Salute to America” event. The letter stated that “such an event would needlessly risk the health and safety of thousands of Americans” and “would come at the cost of millions of taxpayer dollars while we are facing an unprecedented economic downturn due to the pandemic.”

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [*COVID-19 Situation Report – 153*](#), June 21
 - WHO [reported](#) more than 183,020 new cases, the largest one-day increase since the beginning of the pandemic.
 - A Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) survey [found](#) that services for the prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) were affected during the pandemic, due to the cancellation of elective care services, clinical staff being re-assigned to the COVID-19 response, and patients failing to present for treatment.

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

- [*CDC Contact Tracing Training Plan*](#), June 22
 - CDC updated available resources for contact tracers, including jurisdiction-specific contact tracing [tools](#) and [opportunities](#) for the continuous improvement of contact tracing encounters.

New York State

- [New York State COVID-19 Update](#), June 21
 - New York reported 15 deaths, 1,142 total COVID-19 hospitalizations, and 332 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on Sunday, June 21.
 - Approximately 664, or .98%, of the 67,526 tests conducted in New York on June 20 were positive for COVID-19.
 - The Mid-Hudson region is on track to enter phase three on Tuesday, June 23.

New York City

- [Health Department Issues Updated Phase Two Guidance For Businesses](#), June 22
 - New York City entered phase two of its re-opening on Monday, June 22. Between 150,000 to 300,000 people are expected to return to work.
 - Businesses can use the New York Forward Business Re-opening [Lookup Wizard](#) to determine their eligibility to re-open, including any restrictions that may apply.
 - New York City Department of Health (NYCDOH) issued updated guidance for businesses re-opening during phase two, including [in-store retail](#), [hair salons](#), [real estate services](#), and [vehicle sales](#).
 - NYCDOH expanded available [resources](#) for restaurants including a [checklist](#) for restaurants offering takeout, delivery, and outdoor dining, and an [application](#) for the City's Open Restaurant program.
 - NYCDOH published [frequently asked questions](#) for office-based businesses. The guidance covers: physical distancing measures; employee screening, testing, and contact tracing; City resources for employees that are unable to isolate at home; the use of face coverings in the workplace; employee training; visitor policies; and cleaning protocols.
 - NYCDOH published a [sample](#) COVID-19 symptom screening tool for employers. New York State office-based work guidance is available [here](#).
 - [Schools](#) are not allowed to resume operations until phase four of the State's re-opening plan. Schools across New York will remain closed for the remainder of the 2019/ 2020 academic year. The State has yet to determine whether students will return in the fall.
- [New York City Health Department Guidance for Residents](#), June 22
 - NYCDOH issued recommendations for residents during phase two of re-opening.
 - NYCDOH issued [guidance](#) on how to safely gather with others. New York State only allows gatherings of no more than 10 people, if physical distancing, face covering use, cleaning, and disinfection guidance are followed. NYCDOH recommends gathering outdoors and limiting in-person social gatherings to a core group of friends or family.
 - NYCDOH issued [guidance](#) on how to dine out safely during the pandemic. NYCDOH recommends limiting the time spent waiting in restaurants by making reservations in advance, looking at the menu online, or ordering while waiting for your table. Restaurant patrons should wear face coverings at all times when not eating or drinking.
- [MTA Commissioned Report on COVID-19 Measures](#), June 22
 - Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) commissioned a report from a consulting firm to better prepare for re-opening the City's subway system.

- The report describes best practices from transit systems around the world. Canada and Singapore use thermal-scanner temperature checks and deny entry to riders with a fever. Hong Kong deployed robots to deep clean and decontaminate subway cars. Authorities in Paris use artificial intelligence to scan CCTV footage from the Metro to gauge mask usage among riders.
- MTA Chariman Foye acknowledged the need for increased safety measures as hundreds of thousands of riders return to mass transit each week. MTA is considering whether to apply some of the options outlined in the report to its own transit system.
- The report evaluated MTA's responsiveness to the pandemic, but this portion has yet to be publicly released. It will be presented to MTA board members on Wednesday, June 24.

Other Related Updates

- [Study Compares Immune Response Among COVID-19 Cases](#), June 21
 - A recent study, published in Nature Medicine, compared the immune response of asymptomatic and symptomatic COVID-19 cases.
 - The study found that infected people who are asymptomatic develop a weaker and shorter immune response than people who have symptoms.
 - The study is based on 178 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Wanzhou District in China in early April. 37 of the 178 cases (20.8%) never developed any symptoms.
 - Researchers observed that COVID-19 antibody levels across all patients started to decrease within 2-3 months after infection. At 8 weeks, 40% of asymptomatic cases and 13% of symptomatic cases were negative for antibodies.
 - The study noted that the strength and duration of immunity after infection are key issues for informing decisions on how and when to ease physical distancing restrictions.
- [Department of Labor Summarizes Recent Actions on COVID-19](#), June 21
 - Department of Labor (DOL) summarized recent agency actions on COVID-19.
 - DOL issued [guidance](#) to help states improve the administration of unemployment insurance programs by detecting fraud and assessing the accuracy of payments.
 - Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) translated a [poster](#) on proper respirator use into 16 languages.
 - OSHA issued [guidance](#) for non-essential businesses on strategies for basic hygiene, social distancing, identification and isolation of sick employees, and employee training.
 - DOL [enforced](#) provisions of the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), and found that a Florida company wrongly denied an employee paid sick leave despite a health care provider's recommendation to self-quarantine.
- [FDA COVID-19 Updates](#), June 22
 - FDA, CDC, and Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), will host a [webinar](#) on June 23 on importing respirators for health care personnel use during the pandemic.
 - FDA will host a [virtual town hall](#) on June 24 for clinical laboratories and commercial manufacturers that are developing or have developed diagnostic tests for SARS-CoV-2 to answer technical questions about the development and validation of COVID-19 tests.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [European Regulatory Update for Asset Managers](#), June 22
- [Challenges of “Return to Work” in an Ongoing Pandemic](#), June 18
- [2021 Medicare Parts C and D Final Rule: Enhancing Coverage for ESRD and Easing Network and MLR Standards](#), June 17

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