

COVID-19 Daily Update

May 10, 2020

Summary

The United States has 1,323,028 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 79,124 reported related deaths. Three members of the White House coronavirus task force – FDA Commissioner Hahn, CDC Director Redfield, and NIAID Director Fauci – are self-quarantining after coming into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. FDA authorized the first COVID-19 antigen test. The test detects protein fragments associated with the virus in nasal swab samples and can produce results within minutes. FDA notes that this test is less reliable at ruling out infection in patients and that negative results “may need to be confirmed with a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test prior to making treatment decisions.” South Korea reported 34 new COVID-19 infections, its highest tally in about a month, following an outbreak tied to several nightclubs and restaurants. Primary schools in France will re-open this week; classes will be limited to 15 students. More than 300 mayors in the Paris region issued a statement asking to delay the re-opening and warning that the timeline is “untenable and unrealistic.”

Many companies, with mostly white-collar employees, have extended work-from-home policies far beyond the shelter-in-place timelines mandated by state and local authorities. Google and Facebook extended work from home policies through the end of 2020. Amazon stated that employees are “welcome” to work from home until October. Nationwide Insurance plans to shutter five offices around the country by November; the 4,000 employees from these five offices will telecommute permanently. California health officials denied Tesla’s request to re-open its factory in Fremont because of concerns related to COVID-19. Tesla CEO Elon Musk filed a lawsuit against Alameda County on Saturday, May 9, to “ensure that Tesla and its employees can go back to work” and threatened to move its manufacturing activities out of California.

New York State reported 207 deaths on Sunday, May 10. New York State issued new measures to protect nursing home residents. All nursing home workers must be tested for COVID-19 twice per week. Hospitals are no longer permitted to discharge COVID-19 positive patients to nursing homes. Three children in New York have died from pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome, an inflammatory illness that has associated with COVID-19. State officials are now investigating 85 potential cases. 38 cases are in New York City. New York State partnered with Rockefeller University to conduct a genome and RNA sequencing study of the syndrome. New York City’s antibody survey found that 14.2% of City transit workers have COVID-19 antibodies, compared to 19.9% of the general City population. Governor Cuomo will discuss plans to re-open parts of the State with county executives on Monday, May 11. The Governor’s current executive order limiting non-essential business and activities will expire on May 15.

Presidential updates

- [*COVID-19 Cases Reported Among White House Staffers*](#), May 10
 - Two White House staff members tested positive for COVID-19, including Katie Miller, the spokeswoman for Vice President Pence, and one of President Trump’s personal valets.
 - The discovery prompted the White House to ramp up daily testing for select senior staff, increase mask usage, and engage in more rigorous screening for visitors.
 - Three members of the White House coronavirus task force reportedly came in contact with the infected individuals. CDC Director Redfield and FDA Commissioner Hahn both attended a meeting in the Situation Room, where Katie Miller was present. Both doctors started a two-week self-quarantine this weekend. NIAID Director Fauci also began a “modified quarantine” after what he called a “low risk” contact with an infected staffer.
- [*President Trump Approves Seminole Tribe of Florida Disaster Declaration*](#), May 8
 - President Trump declared that a major disaster exists for the Seminole Tribe of Florida. Trump ordered federal assistance to supplement the Tribe’s efforts in the areas affected by COVID-19. The action makes federal funding available for the Tribe and certain private non-profit organizations for emergency protective measures.
 - President Trump issued similar declarations for all states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [*COVID-19 Situation Report – 109 and Situation Report– 110*](#), May 9
 - WHO updated its [*Global Humanitarian Response Plan to COVID-19*](#) and highlighted that “[i]f we do not support poorer countries as they battle the pandemic, we are leaving the virus to spread unchecked and circle back around the world.”
 - WHO issued [*guidance*](#) on how to adapt COVID-19 response measures for low capacity and humanitarian settings.

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

- [*COVIDView Weekly Surveillance Summary of U.S. COVID-19 Activity*](#), May 9
 - CDC summarized key COVID-19 disease indicators for the week ending May 2.
 - The national percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for COVID-19 decreased from the previous week; it decreased from 17.7% to 13.2% in public health labs and decreased from 15.9% to 13.2% in commercial labs.
 - The overall cumulative hospitalization rate is 50.3 per 100,000, with the highest rates in people 65 years and older (162 per 100,000) and 50-64 years (79 per 100,000).
 - Based on death certificate data, the percentage of total deaths attributed to pneumonia, influenza, or COVID-19 decreased from 21% to 10.6% from the prior week, but remained above baseline.

- [CDC Guidance for the Public on Glove Use](#), May 9
 - CDC issued guidance for the general public on glove use and COVID-19. CDC recommends wearing gloves in two instances: (1) when routinely cleaning and disinfecting the home; or (2) caring for someone who is sick.
 - CDC warns that wearing gloves outside of these two circumstances will not necessarily protect against COVID-19 and may still lead to the spread of germs. CDC urges individuals to regularly wash their hands with soap and water after running errands, such as using a shopping cart or using an ATM.
- [Public Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19](#), May 9
 - CDC highlighted that public aquatic venues may re-open in some areas and issued guidance on COVID-19 for operators of public pools, hot tubs, and water playgrounds.

New York State

- [Governor Cuomo Holds Press Briefing on COVID-19](#), May 10
 - New York State reported 207 deaths on Sunday, May 10. The State also reported 7,262 hospitalized COVID-19 patients and 521 new hospitalizations.
 - Governor Cuomo announced a series of new measures to help protect the roughly 100,000 New Yorkers living in nursing homes. If a nursing home cannot provide appropriate care for a resident, they must transfer the person out of the facility; the facility can seek a transfer from the State Department of Health to one of the 40,000 excess-capacity hospital beds created during the pandemic.
 - All nursing home workers statewide must be tested for COVID-19 twice per week. Hospitals are no longer permitted to discharge COVID-19 positive patients to nursing homes. Patients must be held in the hospital or transferred to a COVID-19-only facility.
 - Governor Cuomo reiterated his call for federal funding, and noted that businesses which “use[] this pandemic to lay off workers” should not receive federal funding.
- [New York to Develop National Criteria for Identifying and Responding to COVID-Related Illness in Children](#), May 9
 - New York State plans to help develop national criteria for identifying and responding to a serious inflammatory disease affecting children.
 - New York hospitals report 85 cases of the condition, called “Pediatric Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome Associated with COVID-19.” Three children have died from the condition in New York State.
 - The State is partnering with the NY Genome Center and Rockefeller University to conduct a genome and RNA sequencing study to better understand the syndrome.
- [New York Initiative to Expand Access to Testing in Low-Income Communities](#), May 9
 - New York State launched a new initiative to expand COVID-19 testing in low-income communities and communities of color. The State is partnering with Northwell Health to establish 24 temporary testing sites at churches in predominately minority communities in downstate New York.
 - Governor Cuomo announced preliminary results of the State’s antibody testing survey of more than 1,300 transit workers in New York City. The survey found that 14.2% of City

transit workers have COVID-19 antibodies, compared to 19.9% of the general New York City population.

New York City

- [*Mayor de Blasio Holds Media Availability on COVID-19*](#), May 10
 - Mayor de Blasio described recent COVID-19 indicators in New York City as a “mixed bag.” New York City reported 69 new hospitalizations on May 8. The number of patients in ICU treatment decreased slightly from 559 to 540. The percentage of City residents testing positive for COVID-19 increased from 12% on May 7 to 17% on May 8.
 - The City plans to increase the number of City employees acting as “social distancing ambassadors” from 1,000 to 2,300. At least 260 City employees have died from COVID-19 complications.
 - Mayor de Blasio dismissed concerns that enforcing social distancing rules infringed on the freedom of speech of protesters. De Blasio called such gatherings “idiotic” and accused protesters of being “out of step with the times we’re living in to believe that the only way to get something done is to gather in the middle of the pandemic.”
- [*New York City Announces Test and Trace Corps*](#), May 8
 - Mayor de Blasio announced the “Test and Trace Corps.” The City will partner with NYC Health + Hospitals to hire 1,000 contact tracers by the end of May to investigate COVID-19 cases, trace and monitor contacts, and manage all case data.
 - The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) plans to transfer 40 experienced contact tracers to lead and supervise incoming contact tracers.
 - The City will test 20,000 people per day by May 25 and 50,000 people per day by August 1. The City will provide meals, clean clothes, medication refills, and remote medical checks for anyone who may require assistance while in quarantine.
- [*Mayor de Blasio Appoints Members to Sector Advisory Councils*](#), May 8
 - Mayor De Blasio appointed members to several Sector Advisory Councils designed to inform the City’s efforts to re-start the economy. These include councils on non-profit and social services, public health and health care, construction and real estate, faith-based institutions, education, and surface transportation.

Other Related Updates

- [*White House adviser says unemployment rate may pass 20%*](#), May 10
 - White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett recently predicted that the unemployment rate could rise above 20% and the worst job losses would come in “May or June.” The United States lost 20.5 million jobs in April, and the unemployment rate rose to 14.7%, both record-high numbers.
- [*White-Collar Companies Race to Be Last to Return to the Office*](#), May 9
 - Many companies, with mostly white-collar employees, have recently extended work-from-home policies far beyond the shelter-in-place timelines mandated by state and local authorities.

- Google and Facebook extended work from home policies through the end of 2020. Capital One informed 40,000 workers that offices will not re-open until Labor Day, at the earliest. Amazon stated that employees are “welcome” to work from home until October.
- Nationwide Insurance plans to shutter five offices around the country; the 4,000 employees from these five offices will telecommute permanently. Zillow, the online real estate firm based in Seattle, announced that its 5,000 employees are permitted to work from home until 2021.
- [*Tyson’s Largest Pork Plant Reopens as Tests Show Surge in COVID-19 Cases*](#), May 9
 - Tyson’s largest U.S. pork plant re-opened in on May 7 in Waterloo, Iowa after a two-week closure. 1,031 of the plant’s estimated 2,800 employees have tested positive for the virus; 90% of COVID-19 cases in the county are linked to the Tyson’s facility.
 - Tyson installed clear plastic mats to divide workstations and hand sanitizing stations. The plant instituted temperature checks and provides workers with surgical masks upon arrival.
- [*HHS announces shipments of remdesivir for hospitalized patients with COVID-19*](#), May 9
 - Gilead Sciences plans to donate approximately 607,000 vials of remdesivir to the federal government over the next six weeks to treat 78,000 hospitalized COVID-19 patients.
 - Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) sent an initial delivery of the drug to seven states, including a shipment of 565 cases to New York. Each case contains 40 vials of remdesivir.
 - HHS announced a second delivery of the drug to the following states: Connecticut (30 cases), Illinois (140 cases), Iowa (10 cases), Maryland (30 cases), Michigan (40 cases) and New Jersey (110 cases).
- [*NIH Clinical Trial Testing Antiviral Remdesivir and Baricitinib for COVID-19*](#), May 8
 - The National Institutes of Health (NIH) initiated a randomized, controlled clinical trial combining the anti-viral drug remdesivir and the anti-inflammatory drug baricitinib to treat COVID-19.
 - The trial is now enrolling more than 1,000 hospitalized COVID-19 patients in the United States. Participants will either receive remdesivir or remdesivir with baricitinib. Baricitinib is currently used to treat adults with moderately to severely active rheumatoid arthritis.
 - The trial is the next iteration of a National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) clinical trial which evaluated remdesivir. Researchers [found](#) that patients who received remdesivir had a statistically significant shorter recovery period compared to patients who received placebo.
- [*FDA COVID-19 Daily Roundup*](#), May 8
 - FDA issued [guidance](#) to assist retail food establishments in re-opening after being closed or partially closed during the pandemic.
 - FDA and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued [warning letters](#) to four companies for selling fraudulent COVID-19 products, including Sanit Technologies, AgroTerra, WashintonLastFrontier.com, and Chronic Lyme Treatments.

- FDA issued an [emergency use authorization](#) (EUA) for the Duke Decontamination System to decontaminate N-95 respirators for re-use by health care personnel. This is the sixth respirator decontamination system FDA has authorized during the pandemic.
- [FDA Authorizes First Antigen Test for COVID-19](#), May 10
 - FDA [authorized](#) the first COVID-19 antigen test. FDA issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) to the manufacturer, Quidel Corporation.
 - Antigen tests look for fragments of viral surface proteins as a marker for infection. An antigen is the part of a pathogen that elicits an immune response. One of the main advantages of an antigen test is the speed of the test, which can provide results in minutes.
 - The test is different from the two existing types of FDA-authorized tests. PCR tests are diagnostic tests that detect genetic material from the virus to determine whether someone has an active infection. Serological tests detect antibodies to attempt to determine if someone has had the virus and built up an immune response to it.
 - Antigen tests, however, are not as sensitive as the existing molecular polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests and have a higher chance of false negatives. FDA warns that negative results from an antigen test may need to be confirmed with a PCR test prior to making treatment decisions.
- [Department of Labor Provides Additional Guidance to States On the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation Program](#), May 19
 - The Department of Labor (DOL) published a series of responses to state inquiries on the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program. FPUC allows states to provide an additional \$600 weekly benefit to eligible individuals. FPUC is authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [Five-Phase “Restore Illinois” Plan Announced to Re-Open State](#), May 8
- [COVID-19, Data Analytics & the FCA: Big Response, Big Data, Big Risk](#), May 8

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