

COVID-19 Daily Update

May 12, 2020

Summary

The United States has 1,358,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 81,650 reported related deaths. The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee held a hearing on Tuesday, May 12, to discuss the federal government's response to COVID-19. FDA Commissioner Hahn, CDC Director Redfield, NIAID Director Fauci, and Health Secretary Giroir testified via videoconference. Senators emphasized the importance of ramping up COVID-19 testing. Officials estimated that the United States will have the ability to conduct 40 to 50 million tests per month by September. Dr. Fauci stated that he is "cautiously optimistic" that "we will have a [vaccine] candidate with some degree of efficacy" by late fall or early winter. CDC plans to release a new set of guidelines for states to re-open businesses and schools "soon." Dr. Fauci cautioned that the United States risks "the danger of multiple outbreaks" if states move to re-open too quickly.

Wuhan, China announced plans to test its 11 million residents for COVID-19 over a 10-day period. Wuhan recently discovered a new cluster of COVID-19 cases, more than a month after easing lockdown restrictions. Elon Musk confirmed that Tesla restarted its California factory, defying a local government stay-at-home order. The Broadway League announced that all 41 Broadway theaters will remain closed through at least September 6. Major League Baseball owners plan to submit a proposal to the player's union to start its season, without spectators, in July. The Democratic National Committee is taking steps to prepare for a possible remote convention this summer. New Jersey Attorney General Grewal opened an investigation into possible misconduct at nursing homes in the State. More than 53% of reported COVID-19 fatalities in New Jersey are long-term care patients or staff. Twitter will now label misleading, disputed, or unverified tweets about COVID-19 and will also remove messages that "directly pose a risk to someone's health or well-being."

New York State reported 195 COVID-19 deaths on Tuesday, up from 161 deaths on Monday. New York reports a total of 21,835 deaths related to COVID-19. New York plans to re-open certain low-risk business and recreational activities statewide on May 15, including landscaping and gardening; outdoor, low-risk recreational activities; and drive-in movie theaters. State health officials are investigating 100 cases of pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome, an illness in children that has been associated with COVID-19. New York City now reports 52 cases of the illness and Mayor de Blasio described the trend as "very troubling."

Presidential updates

- [Remarks by President Trump in a Press Briefing on COVID-19 Testing](#), May 11
 - President Trump announced that states will receive \$11 billion dollars to fund COVID-19 testing efforts. The President estimated that the United States conducts around 300,000 COVID-19 tests per day and suggested that testing efforts would increase “substantially.”
 - Two White House staff members recently tested positive for COVID-19, prompting several members of the coronavirus task force to self-quarantine. President Trump, speaking of his own health, stated that he “felt no vulnerability whatsoever.”
 - The White House released a [factsheet](#) on COVID-19 testing, highlighting that the United States has conducted more than 9 million COVID-19 tests to date.
- [President Trump Backs Elon Musk’s Call to Resume Tesla Production](#), May 12
 - Elon Musk confirmed that Tesla restarted its factory in Alameda County, defying a local government stay-at-home order.
 - California State law allows a fine of up to \$1,000 per day or up to 90 days in jail for operating in violation of public health orders. Musk [tweeted](#) that “if anyone is arrested, I ask that it only be me.”
 - President Trump defended Elon Musk’s calls to resume production and [tweeted](#) that “California should let Tesla... open the plant, NOW. It can be done Fast & Safely!”

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [COVID-19 Situation Report – 112](#), May 11
 - WHO published [guidance](#) on how to bolster COVID-19 contact tracing capacity.
 - A WHO and UNAID joint group [found](#) that COVID-19-related service disruptions in anti-retroviral therapy could cause an additional 500,000 deaths from AIDS-related illnesses in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020.
 - WHO [warned](#) that “the frequency, intensity, and duration of heatwaves” is increasing in Europe. WHO notes that COVID-19 compounds issues caused by extended periods of hot weather. High temperatures can trigger exhaustion and heat stroke, and can aggravate existing conditions – such as cardiovascular, respiratory, kidney, or mental diseases. City officials in the United States recently [highlighted](#) the risks associated with “cooling centers” (such as public libraries and indoor recreation facilities) during the pandemic.
- [WHO Statement: Tobacco Use and COVID-19](#), May 11
 - WHO released a [statement](#) on tobacco use and COVID-19. WHO found that smokers are more likely to develop severe complications from COVID-19, as compared to non-smokers. Smoking impairs lung function making it harder for the body to fight off COVID-19 and other respiratory infections.

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

- [Identification and Monitoring of International Travelers During the Initial Phase of COVID-19 Outbreak](#), May 11
 - A recent report, published by CDC as an early release, examined California’s ability to monitor international travelers during the initial phase of its COVID-19 outbreak.

- In February, federal officials screened travelers from China and Iran to collect demographic and contact information for COVID-19 follow-up with state public health departments.
 - The California Public Health Department received information on 11,574 international travelers. Local health jurisdictions contacted and interviewed travelers, and oversaw 14 days of quarantine or self-monitoring.
 - Researchers concluded that the traveler screening system did not effectively prevent the introduction of COVID-19 in California. The system was labor-intensive and limited by incomplete information, the volume of travelers, and the potential for asymptomatic transmission.
- [*Preliminary Estimate of Excess Mortality During the COVID-19 Outbreak in New York City*](#), May 11
 - A recent study, conducted by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and published by CDC as an early release, reported a preliminary excess of mortality during the COVID-19 outbreak in New York City from March 11 to May 2.
 - New York City reported 24,172 more deaths than would be expected based on data from prior years. These included 13,831 (57%) laboratory-confirmed COVID-19–associated deaths and 5,048 (21%) probable COVID-19–associated deaths.
 - Researchers speculate that the remaining 5,000 excess deaths “might have been directly or indirectly attributable to the pandemic.” Researchers noted that social distancing practices, the demand on hospitals, and public fear related to COVID-19 might have led to delays in seeking or obtaining lifesaving care.
 - [*Guidance on Purchasing Respirators from Another Country*](#), May 11
 - CDC issued guidance on purchasing respirators from other countries during the pandemic. CDC warns that an unprecedented number of products on the market do not perform as advertised; certification marks, logos, and model numbers may be counterfeit.
 - CDC offers several factors to consider when evaluating devices, manufacturers and sellers, and contract terms.

New York State

- [*Governor Cuomo Holds Press Conference on COVID-19*](#), May 12
 - New York State reported 195 COVID-19 deaths on Tuesday, up from 161 deaths on Monday. New York reports a total of 21,835 related deaths.
 - State health officials are investigating 100 cases of pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome, an illness in children that has been associated with COVID-19. 57% of cases in the State occurred in children ages 5 to 14. The State confirmed three related deaths, including a 5-year-old boy, a 7-year-old boy, and an 18-year-old girl.
- [*New York State Announces Preliminary Plans to Re-Open*](#), May 11
 - New York State released “[*New York Forward*](#),” a formal guide to re-opening the State. The document summarizes the results of New York’s antibody survey, expands on the

metrics used to guide re-opening, and outlines goals to improve the State's transportation, education, and health care systems.

- New York launched the [Regional Monitoring Dashboard](#), an interactive map displaying regional progress towards meeting all seven metrics required for re-opening. The metrics include sufficient testing and contact tracing capabilities, adequate hospital capacity, and a sustained decline in the number of new COVID-19 cases and related deaths.
- New York plans to re-open certain low-risk business and recreational activities statewide on May 15, including landscaping and gardening; outdoor, low-risk recreational activities, such as tennis; and drive-in movie theaters.

New York City

- [New York City identifies 52 cases of a rare inflammatory syndrome associated with COVID-19](#), May 12
 - New York City identified 14 additional cases of pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome, an illness in children that has been associated with COVID-19.
 - The City reports 52 cases of the illness; 10 other cases are under investigation. 25 children have tested positive for COVID-19 and 22 others had antibodies against the disease, suggesting they previously had and recovered from COVID-19.
 - Mayor de Blasio described the trend as “very troubling.”
- [New York City Expands Food For Heroes Program for Essential Workers](#), May 11
 - New York City announced an expansion of the Food For Heroes program.
 - Since April 15, the program has provided two grab-and-go meals per day to 1,250 staff members at Elmhurst Hospital. The program plans to bring daily meals to an additional 2,000 medical staff and volunteers staying in New York City hotels.
- [Mayor de Blasio Announces Senior Appointments to Guide COVID-19 Small Business Recovery](#), May 11
 - Mayor de Blasio announced two new senior appointments to expand the City's effort to support small business recovery during the pandemic. Gregg Bishop will serve as Senior Advisor for Small Business COVID-19 Recovery, and Jonnel Doris will serve as the City's Commissioner for Small Business Services.

Other Related Updates

- [Health Experts Testify Remotely before Senate Committee on COVID-19](#), May 12
 - The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee held a hearing on Tuesday, May 12, to discuss the federal government's response to COVID-19.
 - Three members of the White House coronavirus task force – FDA Commissioner Hahn, CDC Director Redfield, and NIAID Director Fauci – testified via videoconference. All three doctors are self-quarantining after coming into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Admiral Brett Giroir, the Secretary of Health at the Department of Health and Human Services also testified.
 - **Testing:** Senators emphasized the importance of ramping up COVID-19 testing. Tennessee Senator Alexander, the Republican chair of the committee, described a future vaccine or treatment as the “ultimate solution” but noted that, until then, “all

roads back to work and school go through testing.” The federal government plans to send 12.9 million testing swabs to states over the next four weeks. Officials estimated that the United States will have the ability to conduct 40 to 50 million tests per month by September.

- **Treatments:** A recent study indicated that patients treated with Remdesivir recovered 31% faster than those in a control group. Dr. Fauci emphasized that the result was “statistically significant, but really modest.”
 - **Vaccines:** Researchers are working on eight possible vaccines that could lead to a viable COVID-19 vaccine by late fall or early winter. Dr. Fauci stated that he is “cautiously optimistic” that “we will have a [vaccine] candidate with some degree of efficacy,” but noted that there is no guarantee. Fauci cautioned against releasing a vaccine too quickly and expressed concern that doing so could result in “disease enhancement,” the possibility that a vaccine could induce an immune response that would make the illness worse.
 - **Re-Opening:** CDC Director Redfield warned that “we are not out of the woods yet.” Redfield noted that an expansive new set of CDC guidelines for states to re-open businesses, schools, and religious institutions would be released “soon.” Senators referred to previous White House guidelines as “criminally vague” and pressed Redfield for a more concrete release date. NIAID Director Fauci warned that in making decisions about school openings, officials should not be “cavalier in thinking that children are completely immune to the deleterious effects” of COVID-19.
- [*Twitter Now Labels Certain Coronavirus Tweets as ‘Potentially Harmful’*](#), May 12
 - Twitter announced that it will now label tweets about the coronavirus that are misleading, disputed, or unverified. Twitter will also remove messages that “directly pose a risk to someone’s health or well-being.” Tweets that, for example, falsely claim that wearing masks can lead to sickness or encourage people to ignore social distancing guidelines would likely be removed.
 - A group of “trusted partners” will help determine whether a tweet is not credible or is in dispute. Twitter’s head of site integrity stated that the mission is not to “fact-check the entire Internet,” but rather to limit the spread of potentially harmful tweets.
 - [*California’s Community College System Sues the Education Department over COVID-19 Relief for Undocumented Students*](#), May 12
 - California’s system of community colleges sued the Education Department in Federal District Court in San Francisco seeking to overturn guidelines issued by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos that would deny COVID-19 relief to undocumented students.
 - The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act granted \$6 billion in emergency relief to thousands of universities to help students who have experienced disruptions due to campus closures during the pandemic.
 - The Education Department ordered higher education institutes to distribute funds only to students who are eligible for federal financial aid. The directive effectively excludes the hundreds of thousands of students who attend college under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program who make up more than half of the 1.5 million students enrolled in California’s 115 community colleges.

- [Group Demands at Least \\$7.6 Billion for Contact Tracing Workforce Surge](#), May 11
 - National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) sent a [request](#) to Congress asking for at least \$7.6 billion in additional federal funding to support contact tracing efforts.
 - The letter, sent on behalf of the nation’s 3,000 local health departments, calls for at least 100,000 additional contact tracers, 10,000 supervisors, and 1,600 epidemiologists to rapidly build contact tracing capacity.

- [FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup](#), May 11
 - FDA issued an [emergency use authorization](#) (EUA) for Fresenius Propoven 2% Emulsion to maintain sedation in patients who require mechanical ventilation in an ICU during the pandemic. FDA notes a shortage of FDA-approved drugs used to sedate mechanically ventilated patients.
 - FDA updated [guidance](#) on clinical trials during the pandemic with considerations for managing protocol deviations, using alternate labs, and holding trial participant visits via videoconference.
 - FDA issued [new drug applications](#) for the production of generic cisatracurium and azithromycin.
 - FDA updated its [policy](#) for COVID-19 testing to include EUA submission templates for molecular, antigen, and serology tests.
 - FDA issued an [update](#) on surveillance inspections during COVID-19. FDA will continue to postpone domestic and foreign routine inspections. FDA noted that inspections are only one part of a multi-pronged safety approach. FDA “is confident” in its ability to ensure “the availability of safe and quality products.”

- [Department of Labor COVID-19 Updates](#), May 11
 - Department of Labor (DOL) [announced](#) the availability of \$100 million in state grants for short-time compensation (STC) programs under the CARES Act. An STC program is a layoff aversion program in which an employer reduces the hours for a group of workers and the workers, in turn, receive a reduced unemployment benefit payment.
 - DOL issued [guidance](#) to ensure the integrity of state unemployment insurance programs. States must maintain weekly certification processes to verify the continuing eligibility of program claimants. States should expect “significant oversight, review, and scrutiny” of their unemployment compensation programs.
 - Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued an [alert](#) listing safety tips for dental industry workers during the pandemic.

- [CBP Seizes Counterfeit and Unapproved COVID-19 Products](#), May 11
 - Since March 23, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers across Philadelphia, Baltimore, and the District of Columbia have seized more than 1,350 counterfeit COVID-19 tests, 400 counterfeit N95 respirators, and 2,500 unapproved medications including hydroxychloroquine sulfate, chloroquine, lianhua qingwen and liushen jiaonang.
 - The products were shipped from manufacturers and distributors in China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Senegal, Germany, and the United

Kingdom and were destined to addresses in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, Connecticut, and Florida.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [Portfolio Company Director Role & Duties in the COVID-19 Era](#), May 11
- [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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