

COVID-19 Daily Update

May 5, 2020

Summary

The United States has 1,193,119 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 70,115 reported related deaths. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) revised its fatality projections. IHME forecasts more than 134,000 American deaths by early August. The revised projections reflect “rising mobility in most U.S. states as well as the easing of social distancing measures.” Doctors in France re-tested samples taken from a French patient on December 27 and reported that the patient tested positive for COVID-19, indicating that person-to-person transmission occurred in Europe far earlier than previously known; the patient was initially diagnosed with atypical pneumonia. WHO described the discovery as “not surprising” and noted that “there may be more early cases to be found.” New York City doctors raised the alarm on Monday after 15 children, many of whom had COVID-19, were recently hospitalized with symptoms associated with toxic shock or Kawasaki disease, a rare illness in children that involves inflammation of the blood. Pediatricians in several European countries, including Italy, Britain, France and Spain, reported dozens of cases of children showing similar symptoms. WHO noted that this discovery may reflect “the fact that the SARS-Cov-2 virus... is causing inflammation and attacks tissue other than lung tissue.”

California announced that clothing stores, bookstores, florists, and sporting goods retailers may reopen for pick up on Friday, May 8. Individual counties may also open restaurants and other hospitality sector businesses. Norwegian Cruise Line, one of the world’s largest cruise companies, announced it has “substantial doubt” about its ability to survive the pandemic. Kroger, the nation’s largest supermarket chain, announced plans to offer free COVID-19 testing through self-administered kits and public drive-thru sites to all store associates “based on symptoms and medical need.” Beef suppliers continue to face production challenges as Wendy’s announced that 18% of its restaurants do not have beef in stock. Starbucks plans to re-open over 85% of its United States locations with modified operations and hours by the end of the week. Treasury Secretary Mnuchin recently commented that it is “too hard to tell” whether international travel will be opened up this this year.

New York State reported 230 deaths on Tuesday. The New York State Department of Health released new fatality statistics, indicating that 4,813 people have died from COVID-19 in nursing homes. On Wednesday, May 6, the New York City subway will begin shutting down from 1 AM to 5 AM, so that trains can be disinfected on a daily basis. The MTA will increase overnight bus service, running an extra 300 buses along 61 different routes.

Presidential updates

- [*President Trump to Travel to Arizona to Tour Manufacturing Plant*](#), May 5
 - President Trump will travel to Phoenix, Arizona on Tuesday to tour a Honeywell International Inc. plant that is manufacturing medical masks. The President plans to give remarks and hold a roundtable on Native American issues.
 - Before departing on Marine One from the South Lawn, the President responded to questions about an internal federal [report](#) that projects a steep rise in COVID-19 cases over the next month. Trump asserted that the report does not take mitigation measure into account and stated that “we’re doing a lot of mitigation.” Trump asserted that Americans leaving their homes will be “social distancing and... washing their hands and doing the things they’re supposed to do.”
 - President Trump confirmed that Dr. Fauci will testify before a Senate panel on COVID-19 but not before the House, because “the House is a set-up” and “a bunch of Trump-haters.” Trump’s explanation contradicts an official White House explanation [offered](#) on Friday, which stated that it would be “counter-productive” for the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) to testify while he works on the government’s pandemic response.
- [*President Trump Comments on Federal Aid to States in Press Interview*](#), May 4
 - In a recent [interview](#) with the New York Post, President Trump commented that it would be unfair for Republicans to give federal aid to the states affected by COVID-19 because “they’re run by Democrats in every case.” Trump insinuated that the states run by democratic governors “have been mismanaged over a long period of time.”
 - President Trump cited Illinois, New York, and California as examples of democratic states with “tremendous debt” and praised Florida and Texas as “phenomenal” republican states with “very little debt.”
 - New York City Mayor de Blasio pushed back against the President’s suggestion that states run by Democrats were less deserving of aid, and [accused](#) the President of “stabbing his hometown in the back.”
 - New York Governor Cuomo [commented](#) that “this is not a blue state issue, every state has coronavirus cases.” Cuomo highlighted that New York did not seek federal aid prior to the pandemic and [asserted](#) that New York has consistently paid more to the federal government than it has received in federal funding.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [*COVID-19 Situation Report – 105*](#), May 4
 - WHO [delivered](#) a shipment of medications to Iran for its participation in the Solidarity Trial, an international study of potential COVID-19 treatments. The study is evaluating four re-purposed medications, Remdesivir, Lopinavir/Ritonavir, Interferon, and hydroxychloroquine.
 - WHO [cautioned](#) that all potential COVID-19 treatments must be rigorously vetted. Promoting unproven treatments is dangerous because it bolsters a false sense of security and may distract from hand washing and physical distancing measures.

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

- [COVID-19 Contact Tracing Training Guidance and Resources](#), May 4
 - CDC created a sample plan for states to use when training COVID-19 contact tracers. The plan includes suggested training modalities and a sample curriculum for volunteers with little or no experience conducting contact tracing.
- [Guidance on Pets that Test Positive for COVID-19](#), May 4
 - CDC issued guidance for owners of pets that have tested positive for COVID-19.
 - A small number of cats and dogs have tested positive for COVID-19. All symptomatic pets had a “mild disease” that could be taken care of at home. None of the pets have died.
 - CDC warns against wiping or bathing pets with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or any other products not approved for animal use. Pets with confirmed COVID-19 should be restricted to home isolation until a vet has determined that it is safe for them to be around other pets and people.

New York State

- [Governor Cuomo COVID-19 Daily Press Conference](#), May 5
 - New York State reported 230 deaths on Tuesday, a slight uptick from the 226 deaths reported on Monday. Governor Cuomo called for a gradual re-opening of the state, noting that “there is a cost of staying closed” but that “there’s also a cost of re-opening too quickly.”
- [New York State Department of Health Releases New Fatality Statistics](#), May 4
 - The New York State Department of Health released new fatality statistics on nursing home deaths from COVID-19.
 - The new report included over 1,600 people who did not receive a confirmed diagnosis but were presumed to have died from COVID-19. New York State now reports a total of 4,813 COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes across the state. The data does not include nursing home residents who died in hospitals.
 - Nursing home deaths account for approximately 25% of the state’s fatalities. The hardest-hit homes are in the New York City Metropolitan area. Homes in the Bronx had 215 confirmed deaths and 446 deaths likely to have been caused by the virus. In Queens, the new numbers show 358 confirmed COVID-related deaths and 476 presumed COVID-related deaths.

New York City

- [New York City Creates Stockpile of Personal Protective Equipment](#), May 4
 - New York City plans to maintain a 90-day stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure hospitals are equipped to handle a potential resurgence of COVID-19. Mayor de Blasio commented that, “now is not the time to let our guard down” and added that “we are planning for every possible scenario.”
 - This week, the City plans to send local nursing homes 1.93 million surgical masks, 170,000 face shields, and 767,000 gloves.

- [*Pediatric Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome Potentially Associated with COVID-19*](#), May 4
 - The New York City Department of Health reported 15 hospitalized patients aged 2-15 with a “pediatric multi-system inflammatory syndrome.” The patients were hospitalized from April 17 to May 1.
 - Many of the children demonstrated symptoms associated with toxic shock or Kawasaki disease, a rare illness that involves blood vessel inflammation. New York State Health officials are also investigating the unexplained syndrome.
 - Most children either tested positive for COVID-19 or were found, through antibody testing, to likely have been previously infected. Five children required mechanical ventilation and most “required blood pressure support.” No fatalities have been reported among these cases.
 - Pediatricians in several [European countries](#), including Italy, Britain, France, and Spain have reported dozens of similar cases. In four Parisian hospitals, 20 children were hospitalized with inflammatory heart conditions. In Italy’s northern town of Bergamo, a hot spot for the outbreak, one hospital had 20 cases in April alone.
 - WHO [described](#) the syndrome as “very rare” and asked its global network of clinicians to be on alert for other potential cases. WHO officials noted that this discovery may reflect “the fact that the SARS-Cov-2 virus... is causing inflammation and attacks tissue other than lung tissue.”

Other Related Updates

- [*New IHME Forecast Projects Nearly 135,000 COVID-19 Deaths in U.S.*](#), May 5
 - The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) recently revised its COVID-19 fatality projections for the United States. IMHE now forecasts more than 134,000 American deaths by early August.
 - The revised projections reflect “rising mobility in most U.S. states as well as the easing of social distancing measures expected in 31 states by May 11.” IMHE warned that “increases in testing and contact tracing, along with warming seasonal temperatures – factors that could help slow transmission – do not offset rising mobility.”
- [*France Reports a COVID-19 Case from December*](#), May 5
 - Doctors in France reported that a patient tested positive for COVID-19 in late December, raising questions about how long the virus had been circulating in Wuhan before it was acknowledged by Chinese authorities. Doctors re-tested samples taken from a French patient on December 27. The patient was initially diagnosed with atypical pneumonia.
 - WHO said it is “not surprising” that COVID-19 may have been circulating in France as early as December. WHO noted that “it is also possible there are more early cases to be found.” WHO encouraged other countries to investigate whether the virus was circulating earlier than previously known in order to identify a “new and clearer picture” of the outbreak.

- [COVID-19: An Unrelenting Crush of Cases and Deaths, May 5](#)
 - As states continue to ease social distancing restrictions, public health experts predict new COVID-19 flare-ups and super-spreader events. The United States identifies at least 25,000 new COVID-19 cases per day, expanding its total case count by two to four percent daily.
 - While cases in the New York metropolitan area have recently declined, the number of cases in the rest of the country is steadily increasing. Cook County, home to Chicago, sometimes adds more than 2,000 new COVID-19 cases in a day, while Los Angeles County often adds at least 1,000. Dallas County in Texas has been adding about 100 more cases than it was a month ago.
 - Many project that we may not realize the effect of re-opening states until six weeks after the fact, because of the time it takes for infections to spread, incubate, and cause people to die.

- [Pfizer begins human trials for a potential COVID-19 vaccine, May 5](#)
 - Pfizer and the German pharmaceutical company BioNTech developed a COVID-19 vaccine based on messenger RNA. Messenger RNA is genetic material which carries the instructions for cells to make proteins. Developers hope that the vaccine, BNT162, could train a healthy immune system to produce infection-fighting antibodies.
 - Pfizer and BioNTech injected the first 12 human volunteers in Germany last month. The clinical trial began on human participants in the United States on Monday, May 5. The companies plan to test 360 healthy volunteers in the first stage, adding up to 8,000 volunteers by the end of the second stage.

- [Department of Labor Provides Additional Guidance on State Unemployment Insurance Programs, May 4](#)
 - The Department of Labor (DOL) issued additional guidance for states administering unemployment insurance programs under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act and in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).

- [A Primer for Clinician Deployment to the Medicine Floors from an Epicenter of COVID-19, May 4](#)
 - In an article published in the New England Journal of Medicine, practitioners at Mount Sinai Hospital shared a physician deployment framework for other facilities to use to quickly scale patient care during the pandemic.
 - The framework is based on six overarching principles: (1) create an organizational structure; (2) define the facility's needs; (3) identify and optimize the pool of health care providers; (4) create surge teams; (5) prepare and deliver orientation materials; and (6) optimize working conditions for staff.

- [FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup, May 4](#)
 - FDA issued an [emergency use authorization](#) (EUA) for a new antibody test. This is the first test verified through a new federal validation effort organized through FDA, NIH, CDC, and Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA).

- FDA issued warning letters to a website operator for marketing unapproved COVID-19 products. FDA urged consumers to use [BeSafeRx](#) to learn about how to safely buy medicine online.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [Regulators Issue Modern Slavery Reporting Guidance Relating to COVID-19](#), May 5
- [Pandemic Privacy: Republican Senators Announce Plan to Introduce COVID-19 Consumer Data Protection Act of 2020](#), May 4
- [Illinois Extends and Modifies Its Stay-at-Home Order Through May 30, 2020 and Permits Elective Surgeries and Procedures as of May 11, 2020](#), May 4
- [Employee monitoring during the COVID 19 lockdown: GDPR considerations revisited](#), May 4

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