

COVID-19 Daily Update

May 7, 2020

Summary

The United States has 1,244,119 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 74,844 reported related deaths. The Department of Labor (DOL) reports that another 3,169,000 workers filed initial claims for unemployment benefits last week. More than 33 million workers have filed for unemployment benefits over the last seven weeks. The Pentagon issued interim guidance medically disqualifying anyone who has previously been hospitalized with COVID-19 from joining the military. CDC consolidated data from 14 models projecting the COVID-19 death rate; all models indicate an increase in national COVID-19 deaths in the coming weeks. A U.S. military aide who works at the White House tested positive for COVID-19. Both President Trump and Vice President Pence were re-tested for the virus and were reported to have tested negative. Federal officials project that recent meat shortages at grocery stores and fast food chains will end within the next 10 days as more meatpacking plants re-open.

Researchers tracked signature mutations of the virus that causes COVID-19 and concluded that New York City seeded outbreaks around the country in early March, weeks before the City enacted social distancing measures. An epidemiologist expressed confidence that “New York was the primary gateway for the rest of the country.” Shopping malls re-opened in Hawaii. Montana will permit schools to re-start “in-classroom teaching” at the discretion of local school boards. Texas Governor Abbott modified his stay-at-home order to prohibit local officials from jailing people who violate the order. The action came after a salon owner was sentenced to a week in jail and fined \$7,000 for re-opening her salon two weeks ago. Los Angeles will require anyone traveling through LAX International Airport to wear a mask or another type of face covering, effective May 11. Several air carriers, including Frontier, Jet Blue, and United, now require passengers to wear face coverings. TSA reports that 534 TSA employees have tested positive for COVID-19, including six that have died from virus-related complications.

New York reported 230 deaths on Thursday. New York conducted antibody tests on 27,000 health care workers at 25 hospitals. The study found that health care workers who were tested for COVID-19 antibodies were less likely to test positive than the general population. Governor Cuomo attributed this counterintuitive finding to the fact that health care workers follow protocols on mask, glove, and hand sanitizer use more closely than regular citizens. New York City plans to offer 140,000 free antibody tests to New Yorkers in hard-hit neighborhoods. The City may begin limiting entry to some parks to prevent overcrowding as the weather warms.

Presidential updates

- [*Remarks by President Trump and Vice President Pence at a Meeting with Governor Reynolds of Iowa*](#), May 6
 - President Trump attributed the high number of COVID-19 cases in the United States to the country's increased testing efforts. Trump stated that "we're going to have more cases because we do more testing" and that "by doing all of this testing, we make ourselves look bad."
 - The United States has [performed](#) more COVID-19 tests than any other country, but lags behind a number of countries, such as Germany and Italy, in terms of the share of its population being tested.
 - Officials addressed the growing number of COVID-19 outbreaks at meatpacking plants. Agriculture Secretary Perdue asserted that meat shortages at grocery stores and fast food chains would be short-lived. Secretary Perdue projected that shortages will end within the next 10 days as more meatpacking plants re-open.

World Health Organization (WHO)

- [*COVID-19 Situation Report – 107*](#), May 6
 - The number of COVID-19 cases is doubling every few days in many areas in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador.
 - Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) stressed that communities should analyze the rate of new cases, evaluate hospital bed capacity, and continue to engage in extensive testing and contact tracing, before reducing social distancing measures.

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

- [*White House Rejects Detailed CDC Guidelines for Re-Opening*](#), May 7
 - The New York Times obtained a copy of internal CDC [guidance](#) to help faith leaders, business owners, educators, and state officials determine how to bring back mass transit, day care centers, restaurants, and businesses.
 - According to those familiar with internal discussions, federal officials rejected the guidelines as "too uniform and regressive" for places with a minimal number of COVID-19 cases. Agency scientists were told the guidance "would never see the light of day," a CDC official [told](#) the Associated Press.
- [*COVID-19 in Correctional and Detention Facilities*](#), May 6
 - A recent report, published by CDC as an early release, highlighted the challenges correctional facilities face in controlling the spread of COVID-19.
 - The report examined surveillance data from 37 state health departments overseeing 420 correctional and detention facilities. 86% reported at least one confirmed COVID-19 case. 4,892 COVID-19 cases and 88 related deaths were reported among detainees. 2,778 COVID-19 cases and 15 related deaths were reported among staff members.
 - Correctional facilities often have crowded dormitories, shared lavatories, and limited medical resources. Facilities continually introduce newly detained persons, and staff members are permitted to enter and exit the facility on a daily basis.

- [COVID-19 Forecasting Models](#), May 6
 - CDC consolidated data from 14 models projecting the COVID-19 death rate. All 14 models indicate an increase in national COVID-19 deaths in the coming weeks. Predicted rates of increase differ among the forecasts, depending on assumptions about the prevalence and rigor of social distancing behaviors.

New York State

- [Governor Cuomo Holds Daily Press Conference on COVID-19](#), May 7
 - New York reported 230 deaths on Thursday. New York reported a total of 8,600 hospitalized COVID-19 patients on Thursday.
 - New York conducted antibody tests on 27,000 health care workers at 25 hospitals. The study found that health care workers who were tested for COVID-19 antibodies were less likely to test positive than the general population.
 - In New York City, 12% of health care workers tested positive, while 20% of the general population tested positive. In Westchester County, 7% of health care workers tested positive, while 14% of the general population tested positive. On Long Island, the percentages of health care workers who tested positive for antibodies was about equal to the percent that tested positive in the general population.
 - Governor Cuomo attributed the counterintuitive finding to the fact that health care workers follow protocols on mask, glove, and hand sanitizer use more closely than regular citizens.
- [New York State Department of Health Issues Advisory on Inflammatory Disease in Children Potentially Related to COVID-19](#), May 6
 - The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) issued an advisory to health care providers about a serious inflammatory disease affecting children throughout the State.
 - 64 potential cases of the condition, called “Pediatric Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome Associated with COVID-19,” have been reported in children in New York hospitals. Providers are required to immediately report all cases to NYSDOH.
 - Many of the children demonstrated symptoms associated with toxic shock or Kawasaki disease, a rare illness that involves blood vessel inflammation. Children may present with fever, abdominal issues, rash, or cardiovascular changes. NYSDOH reports that the inflammatory syndrome may occur days to weeks after acute COVID-19 illness.

New York City

- [Mayor de Blasio Holds Media Availability on COVID-19](#), May 7
 - New York City may begin limiting entry to some parks to prevent overcrowding as the weather warms. Mayor de Blasio did not clarify which parks could be covered by the new rules, but said more details would be announced on Friday.
 - New York City plans to offer 140,000 free antibody tests to New Yorkers at testing sites in Morrisania in the Bronx, East New York in Brooklyn, Upper Manhattan, Long Island City in Queens, and Concord in Staten Island. The City plans to release a hotline phone number for appointments on Friday. Those tested will be asked for demographic and employment information to better inform the City’s response.
 - Since Wednesday, May 6, the New York City subway has shut down twice to facilitate nightly disinfection. On Thursday morning, City workers approached 361 homeless

individuals in the subway. 60% agreed to go to shelters (196 people) or hospitals (22 people). Many had been camping on mostly-empty trains in recent weeks.

- [*New York City Opens Additional Streets for Social Distancing Among Pedestrians*](#), May 6
 - New York City plans to close 40 miles of city streets to vehicle traffic in May to enable greater social distancing among pedestrians.
 - Mayor de Blasio announced two miles of street closures across three boroughs, adding to the seven miles of car-free streets opened last week. The streets include stretches of 34th Avenue in Jackson Heights, Queens; Broadway in Midtown Manhattan; Downtown Brooklyn; and Third Avenue in the South Bronx.

- [*Mayor de Blasio Announces Appointees to Advisory Councils*](#), May 6
 - 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 labor and the workforce, large businesses, small businesses, and arts, culture, and entertainment.
 - Membership of the Sector Advisory Councils on faith, construction and real estate, non-profits and social services, public health and health care, education and vocational training, and surface transportation will be announced in the coming days.

Other Related Updates

- [*Pentagon Issues Guidance Banning Recruits Previously Hospitalized With COVID-19*](#), May 7
 - The Pentagon issued interim guidance medically disqualifying anyone who has previously been hospitalized with COVID-19 from joining the military.
 - Previously hospitalized individuals may still be eligible for service by obtaining a service waiver, similar to the process established for other conditions that could medically disqualify a recruit, such as asthma or a recent case of pneumonia.
 - The guidance suggests that officials are concerned about the possibility of lingering health complications for recovered patients.

- [*United Nations Projects Impending Humanitarian Disaster*](#), May 7
 - The United Nations expanded its \$6.7 billion humanitarian aid appeal to help the most vulnerable countries threatened by the pandemic. Approximately \$1 billion has been raised so far.
 - The UN noted that “there is already evidence of incomes plummeting and jobs disappearing, food supplies failing and prices soaring, and children missing vaccinations and meals.”
 - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Director Lowcock warned that urgent action is necessary to prevent “a significant rise in conflict, hunger and poverty.” Lowcock stressed that “no one is safe until everyone is safe” and noted that COVID-19 could “boomerang” from low-income countries back to other nations.

- [*Travel From New York City Seeded Wave of U.S. Outbreaks*](#), May 7
 - A recent study analyzed more than 2,000 samples of COVID-19 from infected individuals across the United States.

- Most samples taken in taken in Texas, Ohio, Louisiana, Idaho, Wisconsin and other states carried distinct mutations that can be traced back to New York. The study estimates that infections spreading from New York account for 60 to 65% of the sequenced viruses across the country. COVID-19 strains tied to New York have a distinct genetic signature linking them to outbreaks in Europe.
- While other scientists expressed a desire to see more samples before calculating precise figures, they agreed that New York's prominence in seeding the national spread appears to have begun in early March, two weeks before stay-at-home orders were put in place.
- [Department of Labor Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report](#), May 7
 - The Department of Labor (DOL) reports that another 3,169,000 workers filed initial claims for unemployment benefits last week. More than 33 million workers have filed for unemployment benefits over the last seven weeks.
 - The Congressional Budget Office [projected](#) that the unemployment rate, which hit 4.4% in March, will average nearly 14% during April, May, and June. The ADP Research Institute [reported](#) that the private sector lost more than 20.2 million jobs last month. The previous record was 835,000 jobs cut in February 2009, during the height of the Great Recession.
- [Contact-Tracing Apps in the United States](#), May 6
 - U.S. companies have spearheaded efforts to develop digital contact-tracing systems to help identify and isolate people exposed to COVID-19.
 - Apple and Google recently partnered to develop contact-tracing technology. The system uses Bluetooth beacons to log devices and anonymizes the data.
 - North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah have promoted voluntary contact-tracing apps which rely on WiFi location data, triangulation using cell tower data, and GPS location data.
 - Many companies, including PwC, Salesforce, and NSO Group, are preparing to launch apps that would allow employers preparing to re-open their offices to track the virus among employees. PwC plans to require all 275,000 employees to use the app.
- [Coalition of Attorneys General Write Letter on the Paycheck Protection Program](#), May 6
 - A coalition of 23 attorneys general wrote a [letter](#) to Congress highlighting concerns about the implementation of the Paycheck Protection Program, a federal program providing loans to small business that were affected by COVID-19.
 - The coalition asks the Small Business Administration (SBA) to provide explicit guidance to prohibit lenders from giving preference to certain categories of customers over others, such as existing or larger customers. The coalition calls for a portion of any future funding to be allocated exclusively for minority-owned businesses and to be fairly distributed across metropolitan areas.
- [FDA COVID-19 Update: Daily Roundup](#), May 6
 - FDA issued [guidance](#) requiring manufacturers of certain medical devices to notify FDA about changes in production. FDA will use this information to prevent or mitigate device shortages during the pandemic. FDA will host a [webinar](#) for medical device manufacturers on May 11.

- FDA issued an [update](#) on the agency’s efforts to combat fraudulent COVID-19 medical products. FDA has issued 42 warning letters to companies selling fraudulent products with claims to prevent, treat, diagnose, or cure COVID-19.
- [Reassessing COVID-19 Needs for Health Care Providers](#), May 6
 - An article published in the New England Journal of Medicine highlighted recommended best practices for health care providers to plan an effective COVID-19 response. Key areas include surge capacity, supply availability, workforce readiness, clinical operations processes, and COVID-19 governance structure and financial resiliency.
- [CPR in the COVID-19 Era — An Ethical Framework](#), May 6
 - An article published in the New England Journal of Medicine described the need for crisis and contingency standards for CPR during a major surge in COVID-19 patients.
 - CPR is resource-intensive and may pose risks to clinicians. Successful resuscitation typically requires transfer to an ICU and mechanical ventilation. Under crisis conditions, the hospital may have no available ICU beds or ventilators. Code-team members also face risks related to aerosolized transmission of COVID-19 particularly during intubation. Code-team members must wear personal protective equipment, which may be in limited supply.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [Accessing New Research Funding Opportunities During and After COVID-19](#), May 7
- [Life After Lockdown: The Challenges of Creating a Safe \(and Smart\) Working Environment in the UK](#), May 7
- [FDA Walks Back Enforcement Discretion for Commercially Manufactured Serology Tests](#), May 6
- [Regulators Issue Modern Slavery Reporting Guidance Relating to COVID-19](#), May 5

Send questions to:

- COVID-19-Implications@ropesgray.com
- COVID-19RecoveryPolicies@ropesgray.com