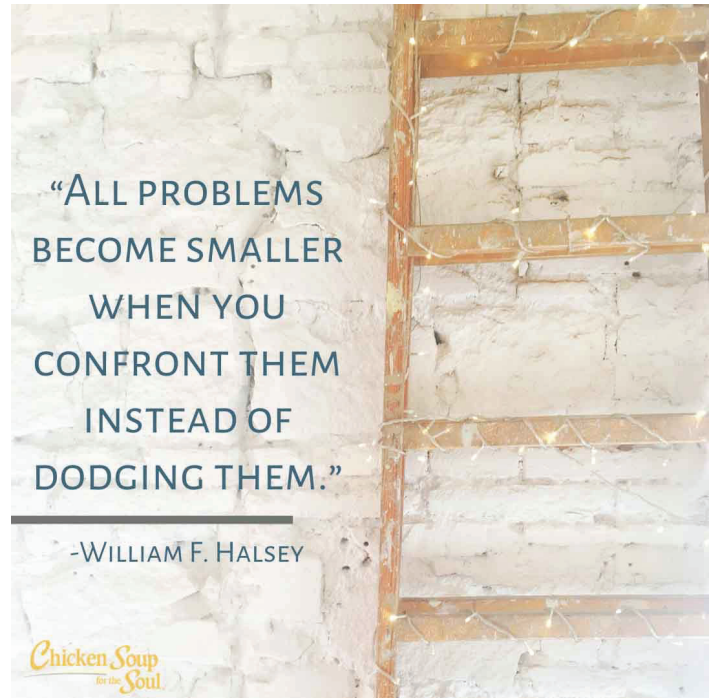


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President Trump declares National Day of Prayer

It is my great honor to declare Sunday, March 15th as a National Day of Prayer. We are a Country that, throughout our history, has looked to God for protection and strength in times like these....

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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The toilet paper shelves at many stores, including Ken's of Groton, are empty. Panic has set in among the people of Earth with this Covid-19 virus that is plaguing the planet.

Meanwhile, with school being dismissed all of next week, families rely on the free and reduced meals at the school for their children. TJ Harder came up with the idea of people donating items at Ken's of Groton and the food will be disbursed as needed. Two carts were full of groceries as of last night.



H1N1 United States Fast Facts

In 2009, the H1N1 influenza virus swept across the globe causing a global pandemic and infecting more than 18,000 people.

(CNN)Here's a look at the H1N1 influenza virus, also known as swine flu. There was a pandemic outbreak across the globe which lasted from 2009 to 2010.

Human cases of H1N1 from April 2009-April 2010:

Fatalities in the United States - Estimated total is 12,469.

Fatalities Worldwide - A 2012 study estimated a range between 151,700 and 575,400 deaths.

Swine Flu:

Swine flu is a respiratory disease caused by type A influenza virus in pigs. Swine flu outbreaks are common in pig herds, but generally the disease causes few deaths in pigs.

Swine flu is transmitted between pigs through close contact and contact with contaminated objects. Flu spreads when someone touches an object coughed or sneezed on by an infected person and then touches his/her mouth or nose. However, swine flu cannot be passed from properly handled pork products to humans.

Swine flu outbreaks in pigs can occur at any time, but mostly occur during the late fall and winter months.

It is a constantly mutating virus. Pigs are susceptible to viruses from birds, humans and other swine. When different influenza viruses strike pigs, the genes can mutate and new viruses can develop.

In pigs, there are currently three common influenza A virus subtypes in the United States: H1N1, H1N2 and H3N2.

Swine Flu in Humans:

Swine flu occurs in people that are in contact with infected pigs. When this occurs, it is called a "variant influenza virus."

Symptoms are similar to that of regular human influenza and can include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite, coughing, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Antiviral drugs that treat variant flu infections in humans are oseltamivir (Tamiflu), zanamivir (Relenza) and peramivir (Rapivab).

Timeline:

1930 - The swine flu virus (an influenza type A H1N1 virus) is first isolated from a pig.

1976 - Swine flu (Hsw1N1) breaks out among soldiers at Fort Dix in New Jersey. At least four soldiers are infected and one dies.

1976 - The United States begins a nationwide vaccination program against a type of swine flu known as Influenza A/New Jersey/76. However, the program is suspended after people who received shots develop a rare illness called Guillain-Barré syndrome.

September 1988 - A woman dies of the H1N1 flu virus days after visiting a county fair pig exhibition where there was widespread influenza-like illness among the swine.

December 2005-February 2009 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 12 cases of swine flu among humans.

April 2009 - Swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is detected in a 10-year-old boy. CDC lab testing confirms the same virus in a second California child residing about 130 miles away from the first patient.

April 24, 2009 - The CDC issues an outbreak notice warning travelers of an increased health risk of swine flu in Central Mexico and Mexico City.

April 26, 2009 - The United States declares a public health emergency as cases of swine flu increase.

April 27, 2009 - World Health Organization (WHO) raises the influenza pandemic alert to a level 4, which means that there has been human-to-human transmission of the virus.

April 29, 2009 - WHO raises the influenza pandemic alert to a level 5, indicating sustained community-level outbreaks in two or more countries within the same region.

June 11, 2009 - WHO raises the influenza pandemic alert to a level 6. The outbreak is now being considered a global pandemic.

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October 24, 2009 - US President Barack Obama declares the H1N1 outbreak a national emergency.
August 10, 2010 - WHO Director General Dr. Margaret Chan announces that the H1N1 outbreak has moved into the post-pandemic period.
June 26, 2012 - A study published in the Lancet Infectious Diseases journal estimates that the global death toll from the pandemic ranges between 151,700 and 575,400.

Avian Flu Fast Facts

(CNN)Here's a look at avian flu.

Avian influenza, also called avian flu or bird flu, is an illness that usually affects only birds.

There are many different strains of avian flu: 16 H subtypes and 9 N subtypes. Only those labeled H5, H7 and H10 have caused deaths in humans.

The most commonly seen and most deadly form of the virus is called "Influenza A (H5N1)," or the "H5N1 virus."

Diagnosis/Treatment:

Most cases of human bird flu infections are due to contact with infected poultry or surfaces that are contaminated with infected bird excretions: saliva, nasal secretions or feces.

Symptoms of avian flu include fever, cough, sore throat and sometimes severe respiratory diseases and pneumonia.

The CDC recommends oral oseltamivir (brand name: Tamiflu), inhaled zanamivir (brand name: Relenza) and intravenous permavir (brand name: Rapivab) for the treatment of human illness associated with avian flu.

The mortality rate is close to 60% for infected humans.

Timeline:

Early 1900s -The avian flu is first identified in Italy.

1961 - The H5N1 strain is isolated in birds in South Africa.

December 1983 - Chickens in Pennsylvania and Virginia are exposed to the avian flu and more than five million birds are killed to stop the disease from spreading.

1997 - Eighteen people are infected by the H5N1 strain in Hong Kong, six die. These are the first documented cases of human infection. Hong Kong destroys its entire poultry population, 1.5 million birds.

1999 - Two children in Hong Kong are infected by the H9N2 strain.

February 2003 - Eighty-four people in the Netherlands are affected by the H7N7 strain of the virus, one dies.

February 7, 2004 - Twelve thousand chickens are killed in Kent County, Delaware, after they are found to be infected with the H7 virus.

October 7, 2005 - The avian flu reaches Europe. Romanian officials quarantine a village of about 30 people after three dead ducks there test positive for bird flu.

November 12, 2005 - A one-year-old boy in Thailand tests positive for the H5N1 strain of avian influenza.

November 16, 2005 - The World Health Organization confirms two human cases of bird flu in China, including a female poultry worker who died from the H5N1 strain.

November 17, 2005 - Two deaths are confirmed in Indonesia from the H5N1 strain of avian influenza.

January 1, 2006 - A Turkish teenager dies of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza in Istanbul, and later that week, two of his sisters die.

January 17, 2006 - A 15-year-old girl from northern Iraq dies after contracting bird flu.

February 20, 2006 - Vietnam becomes the first country to successfully contain the disease. A country is considered disease-free when no new cases are reported in 21 days.

March 12, 2006 - Officials in Cameroon confirm cases of the H5N1 strain. The avian flu has now reached four African countries.

March 13, 2006 - The avian flu is confirmed by officials in Myanmar.

May 11, 2006 - Djibouti announces its first cases of H5N1 - several birds and one human.

December 20, 2011 - The US Department of Health and Human Services releases a statement saying

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that the government is urging scientific journals to omit details from research they intend to publish on the transfer of H5N1 among mammals. There is concern that the information could be misused by terrorists.

July 31, 2012 - Scientists announce that H3N8, a new strain of avian flu, caused the death of more than 160 baby seals in New England in 2011.

March 31, 2013 - Chinese authorities report the first human cases of infection of avian flu H7N9 to the World Health Organization. H7N9 has not previously been detected in humans.

December 6, 2013 - A 73-year-old woman infected with H10N8 dies in China, the first human fatality from this strain.

January 8, 2014 - Canadian health officials confirm that a resident from Alberta has died from H5N1 avian flu, the first case of the virus in North America. It is also the first case of H5N1 infection ever imported by a traveler into a country where the virus is not present in poultry.

April 20, 2015 - Officials say more than five million hens will be euthanized after bird flu was detected at a commercial laying facility in northwest Iowa. According to the US Department of Agriculture, close to eight million cases of bird flu have been detected in 13 states since December. Health officials say there is little to no risk for transmission to humans with respect to H5N2. No human infections with the virus have ever been detected.

January 15, 2016 - The US Department of Agriculture confirms that a commercial turkey farm in Dubois County, Indiana, has tested positive for the H7N8 strain of avian influenza.

January 24, 2017 - Britain's Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs releases a statement confirming that a case of H5N8 avian flu has been detected in a flock of farmed breeding pheasants in Preston, UK. The flock is estimated to contain around 10,000 birds. The statement adds that a number of those birds have died, and the remaining live birds at the premises are being "humanely" killed because of disease.

February 12, 2017 - A number of provinces in China have shut down their live poultry markets to prevent the spread of avian flu after a surge in the number of infections from the H7N9 strain. At least six provinces have reported human cases of H7N9 influenza this year, according to Chinese state media, Xinhua.

March 5-7, 2017 - The USDA confirms that a commercial chicken farm in Tennessee has tested positive for the H7N9 strain of avian flu, but says it is genetically different from the H7N9 lineage out of China. The 73,500-bird flock in Lincoln County will be euthanized, according to Tyson Foods.

February 14, 2018 - Hong Kong's Centre for Health Protection announces that a 68-year-old woman has been treated for the H7N4 strain. This is the first case of this strain in a human.

June 5, 2019 - Since 2013 there have been 1,568 confirmed human cases and 616 deaths worldwide from the H7N9 strain of avian flu, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

West Nile Virus Fast Facts

(CNN)West Nile virus (WNV) is primarily transmitted to humans by infected mosquitoes.

About 2,000 people have died of West Nile virus in the United States since it was first detected in New York City in 1999.

Facts:

West Nile virus is usually spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes.

It is not spread person-to-person through casual contact.

In rare cases, WNV can be spread through blood transfusions, organ transplants, exposure in a lab setting or from mother to infant.

Symptoms of West Nile infection include: fatigue, fever, headache, body aches, rash and swollen lymph nodes.

80% of infected people do not display any symptoms.

According to the CDC, less than 1% of infected people develop a serious neuroinvasive illness, such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the protective membranes covering

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the brain and spinal cord).

There is no vaccine or specific treatment for WNV.

The most effective method of prevention is to avoid mosquito bites, by using insect repellent and by wearing protective clothing when outdoors.

1937 - The first case of West Nile virus is reported in Uganda. It is common throughout Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East.

August 1999 - The first cases of West Nile encephalitis in the Western Hemisphere are reported in the Bronx and Queens boroughs of New York. It is not known how the virus arrived in the United States.

US Statistics: (source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

2018 (preliminary) - 2,544 cases reported with 137 deaths.

2017 - 2,097 cases reported with 146 deaths.

2016 - 2,149 cases reported with 106 deaths.

2015 - 2,175 cases reported with 146 deaths.

2014 - 2,205 cases reported with 97 deaths.

2013 - 2,469 cases reported with 119 deaths.

2012 - 5,674 cases reported with 286 deaths.

2011 - 712 cases reported with 43 deaths.

2010 - 1,021 cases reported with 57 deaths.

2009 - 720 cases reported with 32 deaths.

2008 - 1,356 cases reported with 44 deaths.

2007 - 3,630 cases reported with 124 deaths.

2006 - 4,269 cases reported with 177 deaths.

2005 - 3,000 cases reported with 119 deaths.

2004 - 2,539 cases reported with 100 deaths.

2003 - 9,862 cases reported with 264 deaths.

2002 - 4,156 cases reported with 284 deaths.

2001 - 66 cases reported with 10 deaths.

2000 - 21 cases reported with two deaths.

1999 - 62 cases reported with seven deaths.

OUTBREAK: 10 OF THE WORST PANDEMICS IN HISTORY

by MPH Online

HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC (AT ITS PEAK, 2005-2012)

Death Toll: 36 million

Cause: HIV/AIDS

First identified in Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1976, HIV/AIDS has truly proven itself as a global pandemic, killing more than 36 million people since 1981. Currently there are between 31 and 35 million people living with HIV, the vast majority of those are in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 5% of the population is infected, roughly 21 million people. As awareness has grown, new treatments have been developed that make HIV far more manageable, and many of those infected go on to lead productive lives. Between 2005 and 2012 the annual global deaths from HIV/AIDS dropped from 2.2 million to 1.6 million.

FLU PANDEMIC (1968)

Death Toll: 1 million

Cause: Influenza

A category 2 Flu pandemic sometimes referred to as "the Hong Kong Flu," the 1968 flu pandemic was caused by the H3N2 strain of the Influenza A virus, a genetic offshoot of the H2N2 subtype. From the first reported case on July 13, 1968 in Hong Kong, it took only 17 days before outbreaks of the virus were re-

ported in Singapore and Vietnam, and within three months had spread to The Philippines, India, Australia, Europe, and the United States. While the 1968 pandemic had a comparatively low mortality rate (.5%) it still resulted in the deaths of more than a million people, including 500,000 residents of Hong Kong, approximately 15% of its population at the time.

ASIAN FLU (1956-1958)

Death Toll: 2 million

Cause: Influenza

Asian Flu was a pandemic outbreak of Influenza A of the H2N2 subtype, that originated in China in 1956 and lasted until 1958. In its two-year spree, Asian Flu traveled from the Chinese province of Guizhou to Singapore, Hong Kong, and the United States. Estimates for the death toll of the Asian Flu vary depending on the source, but the World Health Organization places the final tally at approximately 2 million deaths, 69,800 of those in the US alone.

FLU PANDEMIC (1918)

Death Toll: 20 -50 million

Cause: Influenza

Between 1918 and 1920 a disturbingly deadly outbreak of influenza tore across the globe, infecting over a third of the world's population and ending the lives of 20 – 50 million people. Of the 500 million people infected in the 1918 pandemic, the mortality rate was estimated at 10% to 20%, with up to 25 million deaths in the first 25 weeks alone. What separated the 1918 flu pandemic from other influenza outbreaks was the victims; where influenza had always previously only killed juveniles and the elderly or already weakened patients, it had begun striking down hardy and completely healthy young adults, while leaving children and those with weaker immune systems still alive.

SIXTH CHOLERA PANDEMIC (1910-1911)

Death Toll: 800,000+

Cause: Cholera

Like its five previous incarnations, the Sixth Cholera Pandemic originated in India where it killed over 800,000, before spreading to the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Russia. The Sixth Cholera Pandemic was also the source of the last American outbreak of Cholera (1910–1911). American health authorities, having learned from the past, quickly sought to isolate the infected, and in the end only 11 deaths occurred in the U.S. By 1923 Cholera cases had been cut down dramatically, although it was still a constant in India.

FLU PANDEMIC (1889-1890)

Death Toll: 1 million

Cause: Influenza

Originally the "Asiatic Flu" or "Russian Flu" as it was called, this strain was thought to be an outbreak of the Influenza A virus subtype H2N2, though recent discoveries have instead found the cause to be the Influenza A virus subtype H3N8. The first cases were observed in May 1889 in three separate and distant locations, Bukhara in Central Asia (Turkestan), Athabasca in northwestern Canada, and Greenland. Rapid population growth of the 19th century, specifically in urban areas, only helped the flu spread, and before long the outbreak had spread across the globe. Though it was the first true epidemic in the era of bacteriology and much was learned from it. In the end, the 1889-1890 Flu Pandemic claimed the lives of over a million individuals.

THIRD CHOLERA PANDEMIC (1852–1860)

Death Toll: 1 million

Cause: Cholera

Generally considered the most deadly of the seven cholera pandemics, the third major outbreak of Cholera in the 19th century lasted from 1852 to 1860. Like the first and second pandemics, the Third Cholera Pandemic originated in India, spreading from the Ganges River Delta before tearing through Asia, Europe, North America and Africa and ending the lives of over a million people. British physician John Snow, while working in a poor area of London, tracked cases of cholera and eventually succeeded in identifying contaminated water as the means of transmission for the disease. Unfortunately the same year as his discovery (1854) went down as the worst year of the pandemic, in which 23,000 people died in Great Britain.

THE BLACK DEATH (1346-1353)

Death Toll: 75 – 200 million

Cause: Bubonic Plague

From 1346 to 1353 an outbreak of the Plague ravaged Europe, Africa, and Asia, with an estimated death toll between 75 and 200 million people. Thought to have originated in Asia, the Plague most likely jumped continents via the fleas living on the rats that so frequently lived aboard merchant ships. Ports being major urban centers at the time, were the perfect breeding ground for the rats and fleas, and thus the insidious bacterium flourished, devastating three continents in its wake.

PLAGUE OF JUSTINIAN (541-542)

Death Toll: 25 million

Cause: Bubonic Plague

Thought to have killed perhaps half the population of Europe, the Plague of Justinian was an outbreak of the bubonic plague that afflicted the Byzantine Empire and Mediterranean port cities, killing up to 25 million people in its year long reign of terror. Generally regarded as the first recorded incident of the Bubonic Plague, the Plague of Justinian left its mark on the world, killing up to a quarter of the population of the Eastern Mediterranean and devastating the city of Constantinople, where at its height it was killing an estimated 5,000 people per day and eventually resulting in the deaths of 40% of the city's population.

ANTONINE PLAGUE (165 AD)

Death Toll: 5 million

Cause: Unknown

Also known as the Plague of Galen, the Antonine Plague was an ancient pandemic that affected Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, and Italy and is thought to have been either Smallpox or Measles, though the true cause is still unknown. This unknown disease was brought back to Rome by soldiers returning from Mesopotamia around 165AD; unknowingly, they had spread a disease which would end up killing over 5 million people and decimating the Roman army.

And Now . . .

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Facts from CDC

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

Fact #1: Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others even though they are not at risk for spreading the virus.

Fact #2: For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low.

Older adults and people of any age with underlying health conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease, or heart disease, are at greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Fact #3: Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

Fact #4: There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Stay home when you are sick.

Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

Fact #5: You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

Fever

Cough

Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you Develop symptoms

AND

Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation and CDC will provide updated information as it becomes available, in addition to updated guidance.

Updated March 12, 2020

Background

CDC is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in China and which has now been detected in more than 100 locations internationally, including in the United States. The virus has been named "SARS-CoV-2" and the disease it causes has been named "coronavirus disease 2019" (abbreviated "COVID-19").

On January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern" (PHEIC). On January 31, 2020, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency (PHE) for the United States to aid the nation's healthcare community in responding to COVID-19. On March 11, 2020 WHO publicly characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic.

Source and Spread of the Virus

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV, and now with this new virus (named SARS-CoV-2).

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The SARS-CoV-2 virus is a betacoronavirus, like MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV. All three of these viruses have their origins in bats. The sequences from U.S. patients are similar to the one that China initially posted, suggesting a likely single, recent emergence of this virus from an animal reservoir.

Early on, many of the patients at the epicenter of the outbreak in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China had some link to a large seafood and live animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. Later, a growing number of patients reportedly did not have exposure to animal markets, indicating person-to-person spread. Person-to-person spread was subsequently reported outside Hubei and in countries outside China, including in the United States. Some international destinations now have apparent community spread with the virus that causes COVID-19, as do some parts of the United States. Community spread means some people have been infected and it is not known how or where they became exposed. [Learn what is known about the spread of this newly emerged coronaviruses.](#)

Severity

The complete clinical picture with regard to COVID-19 is not fully known. Reported illnesses have ranged from very mild (including some with no reported symptoms) to severe, including illness resulting in death. While information so far suggests that most COVID-19 illness is mild, a report external icon out of China suggests serious illness occurs in 16% of cases. Older people and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions — like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes, for example — seem to be at higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness.

COVID-19 Now a Pandemic

A pandemic is a global outbreak of disease. Pandemics happen when a new virus emerges to infect people and can spread between people sustainably. Because there is little to no pre-existing immunity against the new virus, it spreads worldwide.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is infecting people and spreading easily from person-to-person. Cases have been detected in most countries worldwide and community spread is being detected in a growing number of countries. On March 11, the COVID-19 outbreak was characterized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) external icon.

This is the first pandemic known to be caused by the emergence of a new coronavirus. In the past century, there have been four pandemics caused by the emergence of novel influenza viruses. As a result, most research and guidance around pandemics is specific to influenza, but the same premises can be applied to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Pandemics of respiratory disease follow a certain progression outlined in a "Pandemic Intervals Framework." Pandemics begin with an investigation phase, followed by recognition, initiation, and acceleration phases. The peak of illnesses occurs at the end of the acceleration phase, which is followed by a deceleration phase, during which there is a decrease in illnesses. Different countries can be in different phases of the pandemic at any point in time and different parts of the same country can also be in different phases of a pandemic.

There are ongoing investigations to learn more. This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available.

Risk Assessment

Risk depends on characteristics of the virus, including how well it spreads between people; the severity of resulting illness; and the medical or other measures available to control the impact of the virus (for example, vaccines or medications that can treat the illness) and the relative success of these. In the absence of vaccine or treatment medications, nonpharmaceutical interventions become the most important response strategy. These are community interventions that can reduce the impact of disease.

The risk from COVID-19 to Americans can be broken down into risk of exposure versus risk of serious illness and death.

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Risk of exposure:

The immediate risk of being exposed to this virus is still low for most Americans, but as the outbreak expands, that risk will increase. Cases of COVID-19 and instances of community spread are being reported in a growing number of states.

People in places where ongoing community spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 has been reported are at elevated risk of exposure, with the level of risk dependent on the location.

Healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.

Close contacts of persons with COVID-19 also are at elevated risk of exposure.

Travelers returning from affected international locations where community spread is occurring also are at elevated risk of exposure, with level of risk dependent on where they traveled.

Risk of Severe Illness:

Early information out of China, where COVID-19 first started, shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes:

Older adults, with risk increasing by age.

People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:

Heart disease

Diabetes

Lung disease

CDC has developed guidance to help in the risk assessment and management of people with potential exposures to COVID-19.

What May Happen

More cases of COVID-19 are likely to be identified in the United States in the coming days, including more instances of community spread. CDC expects that widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States will occur. In the coming months, most of the U.S. population will be exposed to this virus.

Widespread transmission of COVID-19 could translate into large numbers of people needing medical care at the same time. Schools, childcare centers, and workplaces, may experience more absenteeism. Mass gatherings may be sparsely attended or postponed. Public health and healthcare systems may become overloaded, with elevated rates of hospitalizations and deaths. Other critical infrastructure, such as law enforcement, emergency medical services, and sectors of the transportation industry may also be affected. Healthcare providers and hospitals may be overwhelmed. At this time, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and no medications approved to treat it. Nonpharmaceutical interventions will be the most important response strategy to try to delay the spread of the virus and reduce the impact of disease.

CDC Response

Global efforts at this time are focused concurrently on lessening the spread and impact of this virus. The federal government is working closely with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners, as well as public health partners, to respond to this public health threat.

CDC is implementing its pandemic preparedness and response plans, working on multiple fronts, including providing specific guidance on measures to prepare communities to respond to local spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. There is an abundance of pandemic guidance developed in anticipation of an influenza pandemic that is being adapted for a potential COVID-19 pandemic.

Updated March 13, 2020

COVID-19: U.S. at a Glance*

Total cases: 1,629

Total deaths: 41

Jurisdictions reporting cases: 47 (46 states and District of Columbia)

* Data include both confirmed and presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 reported to CDC or tested at CDC since January 21, 2020, with the exception of testing results for persons repatriated to the United

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States from Wuhan, China and Japan. State and local public health departments are now testing and publicly reporting their cases. In the event of a discrepancy between CDC cases and cases reported by state and local public health officials, data reported by states should be considered the most up to date.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS total and new cases in last 24 hours

Globally

125,048 confirmed (6729 new) 4613 deaths (321 new)

China

80,981 confirmed (26 new) 3173 deaths (11 new)

Outside of China

44,067 confirmed (6703 new) 1440 deaths (310 new)

117 countries/territories/ areas (4 new)

WHO RISK ASSESSMENT

China	Regional Level	Global Level
Very High	Very High	Very High

South Dakota

As of March 13, 2020

Positive: 9

1 each in Beadle, Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Davison, McCook (newest) and Pennington, and 3 in Minnehaha County.

Negative: 73

Pending: 11

Death: 1

2 in the age 30-39 bracket

3 in the age 40-49 bracket

2 in the age 50-59 bracket

2 in the age 60-69 bracket

8 males and 1 female

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The Day Athletics Stood Still

Becky Carlson

D-I NCAA Coach, Founder of The Fearless Coach

As a coach, I can tell you that every year brings its own set of unique memories. I have yet to meet a colleague in coaching that has gone one full year without experiencing or participating in a life-lesson moment, a team/athlete hardship, or a monumental turning point that ultimately defines that season. Sometimes those moments are great, while others are downright awful, but both have the capacity to leave a mark in a way that changes you as a leader.

The COVID-19 shutdown in college athletics shows that we are all at that moment at the exact same time. We may be different in sport, division and gender, and yet we're experiencing the same thing.

Each year I watch March Madness, the Frozen Four, and the Women's College World Series with a laptop, two TVs, and an iPad on hand. My heartstrings are always pulled by the dogpile at the end when the winning team moves to the next round or captures the trophy, but, even more than the winners, I am struck by the losing team.

We see the faces of the seniors. We see players on their knees, or players with foreheads on the court, or grass, or ice - and they know they are walking off for the last time when the handshake line has ended. This moment of realization and the finality of it all has the ability to make me ugly cry into my iPad. However, on this day of cancellations, our massive student-athlete population is feeling that finality with almost no warning.

There's a high chance that your team and staff have supported unexpected news before, such as: pregnancy, the death of a student-athlete or family member in an automobile accident, a life-threatening health diagnosis, a suicide, an addiction, and so many other gut-wrenching events. This particular situation is truly uncharted waters for all of us.

You've listened to critics label athletes as being spoiled and/or flighty on the image and likeness issue and ongoing transfer battle. You have likely read your share of articles from naysayers covering how grossly inadequate or abusive they believe our coaching population is, from youth to college.

To those responding with, "Hey, it's just sports" or "There are more important things to worry about", you've likely never been an 18-to-21-year-old student-athlete, nor have you walked a sideline with the same passion as the countless coaches in my social feeds posting photos of their teams with heartfelt messages, as if there has been a death.

Those not seeing this as a tragedy, or willing to understand the loss through the eyes of coaches or our student-athletes, this is your choice and I invite you to stop reading.

If you are one of those subscribing to any of the above and still believe athletes are spoiled and entitled and that coaches are awful people, I ask you to take a moment and recognize that this piece is about pure loss, disappointment, and a moment in time that can build and strengthen our resilience. It can feel earth shattering, or a little bit of both.

With the most recent mass shutdowns in NCAA conferences, and individual schools, there is a shock setting in that we must handle with care, compassion, and love regardless of how we choose to see our coaches and athletes. Athletics is often regarded as having special treatment, but in this domino effect of

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closings and cancellations, there is no special treatment to be found.

Nobody is winning when it comes to such an abrupt end to tournaments, competitions, trainings, and careers for our student-athletes. If you are reading this and thinking, "what about all the students who aren't athletes?" then I urge you to save your what-aboutisms because this piece is strictly about our broken-hearted athletes, coaches and admins.

At this very moment all around the country, our athletes are packing their bags to return to home to online classes, or being told to remain home during spring break. Others are actively learning about their cancellations, while huddled closely in team rooms, buses, hotel pool patios, and airports around the world. These athletes will return to empty campuses, which will only multiply their feeling of isolation as they make moves to return home.

While it was only hours ago that the NCAA issued a full cancellation to all winter and spring championships, this meant that, as of the time of publishing, hundreds of athletes and coaches still remained hopeful their seasons may be permitted to continue while others clung to the idea that theirs could end definitively with a true winner. No matter where you are and what your situation is, I want you to know that it doesn't matter if you're a coach or a player. Please hear me. You are not alone. There is a reality and sadness in this moment.

For our coaches:

The idea of closing the door on a senior class without any other option feels like a nightmare. We are solutions-based people, and our athletes rely on us for a contingency plan when things go wrong. We must remember that in this moment there is no plan B and approximately zero universities in this country included emotional training on coronavirus shutdown reactions to our athletes, coaches, and admin. As we sift through all this madness and try to make sense of this unrelenting wave of resentment and disappointment, please remember that it is not how you deliver this message to your athletes in the moment, it's how you support them after.

An athletic generation that we often criticize for lacking the coping skills to deal with adversity has all been dealt the same hand at once with zero discrimination by sport, division, gender or color.

As your crews take down your crests and banners in empty arenas and locker rooms, and turn the lights off once more before this season's untimely end, remember that there are few times in the history of athletics that all of us at every level have suffered in such parity, together.

You can be the basketball coach who is having to flush the idea of her first-ever bid to the NCAA tournament, the softball coach competing over spring break who didn't know her 8th game of the season would be her last, the ice hockey coach who believed they had at least one more opportunity to watch the team skate in their school colors, or the coach for your track athlete who should have had one more chance to beat their personal best before walking across the graduation stage.

We are all feeling what it truly means to cherish, to regret, and to bitterly watch the opportunity to see our teams compete just one more time, slip through our hands. This is a loss for all of us. Own this feeling and this outcome. You are human.

To our admins, our presidents, our provosts, and our conference commissioners:

We recognize that none of this is easy. This is probably one of the most chaotic weeks many of us will

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see for a long time during our tenure in athletics. We know you want us to be safe. If there was something you could have done to see us through to the last competition, you would have.

To our student-athletes:

Mourn the loss of your seasons because it is your right to do so.

Share the feelings you have with your teammates, your coach, and your families. Be open to your resentment of this loss. Know that you are not alone. One day you will look back on this and you will be able to say that you got through it. Nothing anyone can say can make this feel better in the moment, but I promise you this will heal with time.

For seniors in winter sport championships, you are now having to face and internalize that the work you did on the track, ice, pool, gym, or court will quickly be ushered into the what-if category. This might keep you wondering for years to come if that championship might have belonged to you. For spring sports just beginning, this feels like a devastating tale of a season that never was.

Ending your college career as a traditional senior is hard enough, but this was never the way anyone saw this ending.

Hard decisions have been made with outcomes that feel wildly unfair. This will hit us so much harder in 2020 because we now live in a world that offers appeals, outs, petitions and other forms of protest that at least feel as though we can fight it.

With this pandemic, fighting was simply not an option, and the leaders who made these choices did what was best. We can only hope that the chaos of this past week - and the endless conversations and calculations that led our leaders in athletics to this conclusion - is the most serious of our challenges.

Bates Township Equalization

Bates Township Equalization Meeting Notice:
The Bates Township Board of Equalization will meet at the Clerk's home on Tuesday, March 17th, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

All persons disputing their assessments are requested to notify the clerk prior to the meeting.

Betty Geist
Bates Township Clerk
14523 409th Ave
Conde, SD 57434
(0304.0311)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$11.75. 18695

Bates Township ROW Notice

Bates Township Board of Supervisors reminds all landowners and tenants that the road right-of-way extends 33 feet from the center of the township road. This ditch is to be maintained and mowed. Any crops planted in the road right-of-way will be mowed and expenses charged to the landowner.

Landowner is responsible for spraying all noxious weeds.

Bates Township Board of Supervisors
Betty Geist
Township Clerk
(0304.0311)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$12.93. 18694

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Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller

I'm finishing up today's summary a bit earlier than usual. I've been thinking about this far too much today, and I want an evening off. This one will be fairly brief.

We've climbed to 2110 cases in 48 states; Alabama and Idaho finally detected their first cases. We're still seeing the same three states leading, but MA is catching up to them. Here are their numbers: WA - 509, NY - 421, CA - 276, and MA - 123. CO is gaining on them with 77. Highest among other states is Texas with 51. In double-digits are 25 states and DC; in single-digits are 19 states. Two states still are reporting no cases, MT and WV.

There have been 48 deaths in 8 states, WA, CA, CO, FL, GA, NJ, SD, and KS. That stands at 2.2% of reported cases. I would guess we're keeping that number down largely because our health care systems have not yet been overwhelmed by critically ill patients. This is a good thing.

(And please don't for a moment think I am dismissing any of those 48 lost loved ones; I know they each had children or siblings or friends or someone who cared for them and who are suffering. I also know that in a pandemic, there will be lost lives, and our focus must be on numbers and how to keep them as small as possible if we're going to help ourselves. But don't ever let my dry recitation of numbers lead you to believe those folks don't matter to me. The reason I'm doing all this work at all is to contribute toward the effort to see as few as possible join these bereaved families going forward.)

Numbers of cases have been moving upward by around 25-35% per day. This is still a lot, especially as case numbers increase. I expect increases to continue at a brisk pace while we get more testing capacity online; after that, we might get a better idea how many actual new cases we're seeing as opposed to how many "old" cases have turned up which were previously undetected because we couldn't test.

The really important news continues to be in the area of response. It appears we've finally awakened to the danger, at least on the state level, across the country and are taking steps in almost every state to mitigate the risks and delay the development of new cases. And do understand these steps are being taken almost exclusively by governors, by mayors, by county commissions, and by organizations. I expect they're going to be a huge help. There is more testing capability online today than yesterday. We're still far behind where we need to be, but things are improving on this front.

So governors and mayors and organizers are closing things and stopping things and cancelling things right and left. A couple of days ago, I tried to list every one of these things I'd seen. Yesterday, all I could do was give you a sampling of the myriad actions taken. Today, I won't even try because there are too many to report. This is excellent news.

A couple of examples: The governor of ME declared a state of emergency and took emergency action before there ever was a case reported in the state. Today, the governor of SD took the fairly drastic action of closing the state's schools for a week after announcing only 9 cases in the state. These are the kinds of proactive steps that give us a shot at getting our arms around this situation before it is too late.

As I indicated in a post earlier today, I understand how disruptive these kinds of actions are and how difficult they're going to make life for many; but I also understand how much more disruptive the deaths of a million or two Americans or a total country-wide quarantine would be a couple of months down the road if things get really ugly. I am sorry for all of the ways these steps are going to mess up people's lives, yet I am pleased we're taking them anyway. The key to managing a pandemic is bold action. Let's hope it works, and let's help it work. What you do every day going forward can make a difference, so obey the spirit, as well as the letter, of these orders. Take all of the precautions I've been harping on. Stay out of crowds. Give this a chance to work.

I'm dropping in the comments below a fascinating modeling tool that enables you to visualize the outcome if we take action today or on a future date; you can adjust this to reflect whether the action taken is quite aggressive or fairly mild--sort of a high/medium/low setting. This kind of sophisticated modeling is well above my pay grade, but there are folks who get how to do this and give us something like this to help us understand what's operating here. Give your attention to the numbers of cases showing up at one time, as well as the death toll. The differences between doing a lot now and not enough later are

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stark. That will help you to understand why it's not crazy to go all-out before it even looks like your state or region has much of a problem.

Be well, and help others to be well too. You have the power to change the way this works out. Make good choices, and don't harass the public officials who are making the hard decisions. No one's having fun right now.

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT CLOSURE

by **JOE SCHWAN**

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020

At the recommendation of Governor Noem, the Groton Area School District will be closed for the week of March 13-22. There will be no school on Monday, March 16, Tuesday, March 17 or Wednesday, March 18 in addition to our pre-planned spring break. Each attendance center will undergo additional cleaning measures during the extended break.

The facilities will be closed for any and all activities for the duration of the break beginning at 4:00 PM on Friday, March 13. OST will run as usual through the end of the day on Friday, March 13.

Students enrolled in NSU E-learning courses and dual credit courses should continue to monitor their online classrooms and watch for correspondence from their instructors. Board of Regents institutions are currently planning to resume classes on Monday, March 23 and the NSU E-learning center has a previously announced plan for continuity of learning for those students.

One of the stated goals of Governor Noem's recommendation is to slow the spread of the coronavirus. In order for that goal to be realized, it is important that our students and families continue to practice social distancing and refrain from being around groups of people as well as maintaining and practicing good hygiene. We must be collectively judicious about our behaviors to prevent the spread of this virus upon returning to school.

Many questions still exist about what these decisions mean moving forward. We will provide updates as we are able.

From the SDHSAA

At the request of Governor Noem, the remainder of the SDHSAA Class B Girls Basketball tournament is postponed. In addition, all SDHSAA state basketball tournaments for next weekend, along with the Visual Arts competition, are also postponed. The Student Council Convention, all Region music contests, and All-State Band scheduled for later this month are cancelled.

This is a difficult decision and comes amid constant conversation and information sharing between the SDHSAA, the Governor's Office, and the Department of Health. We will evaluate the future of the postponed events in concert with those same entities. The safety of everyone involved is our foremost concern, followed by exploring all options to provide the student-athlete with the opportunity to finish their season.

We thank everyone for their patience and understanding in a very difficult time, and we apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause.

Dan Swartos, SDHSAA Executive Director

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South Dakota governor closes schools, declares emergency

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem ordered a state of emergency on Friday and instructed public schools to close in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Officials said another person had tested positive for the coronavirus, bringing the state's total to nine. Noem said the drop-off in positive test results and the absence of signs of community spread was "encouraging" but took the step of ordering the state of emergency as a "proactive" measure.

The move marks an intensification of Noem's response to the virus outbreak. She ordered all public schools to close for a week to clean facilities and prepare for the potential of reopening the following week.. She also said the state's high school athletics association would postpone the state basketball tournament scheduled for this week and next.

All nonessential state employees will be working from home as part of the measure, the governor said.

The new case was a man in his 30s from McCook County who had traveled outside the state.

All nine people who have tested positive for the coronavirus in South Dakota have traveled outside the state, and their contact with people in South Dakota was limited, officials said. One of the men who tested positive for the virus died on Tuesday. He had underlying health problems and was in his 60s.

Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon said the state is expecting a new shipment of tests for the coronavirus in the next few days. She also said that after receiving instructions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the state health lab will only administer a single test to people, rather than the double test it was performing.

Commercial testing is now available, and at least one healthcare provider in the state was administering tests through that option.

The state so far has produced 73 negative tests for the coronavirus. One of those was a state lawmaker who took the precaution of avoiding contact with people and getting tested.

Rep. Spencer Gosch stayed away from the Capitol after experiencing a cough and chest congestion. Lawmakers wrapped up one of their final days of the legislative session on Thursday, and many returned to their homes on Friday.

The South Dakota Supreme Court issued an order declaring a judicial emergency because of the new coronavirus. The order gives the presiding judges of the state's seven judicial circuits authority to modify or suspend court rules as warranted for dealing with the pandemic. That may be closing the courtrooms, relocating proceedings or otherwise modifying regular operations.

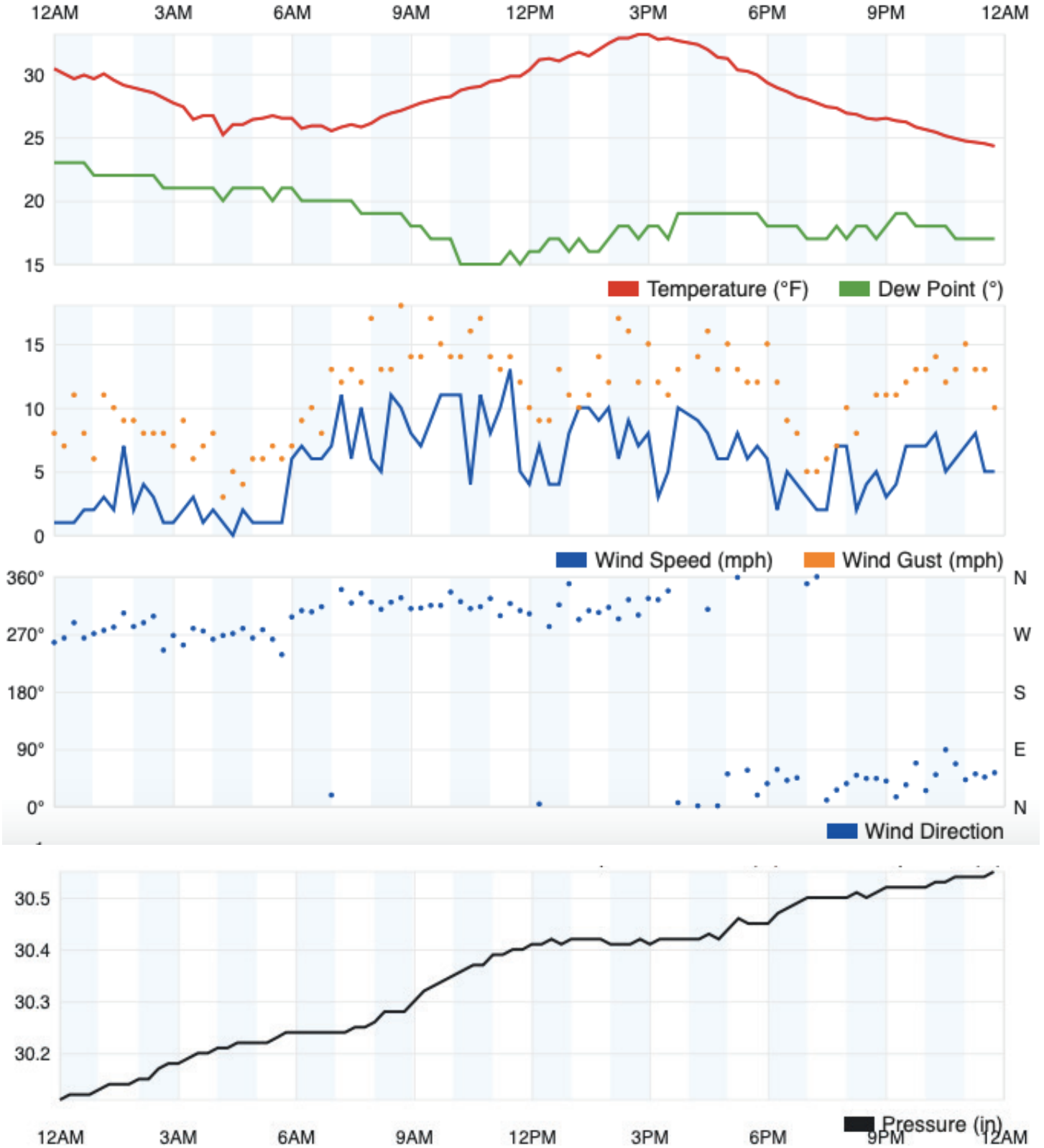
For most people, the coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Mostly Cloudy

High: 31 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 22 °F

Sunday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 39 °F

Sunday
Night



Slight Chance
Rain

Low: 32 °F

Monday



Slight Chance
Rain/Snow

High: 38 °F

Light Snow Exiting This Afternoon

Highs in the Upper 20s to Mid 30s.



Sunday → Warmer
And Drier



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/abr

Graphic Created
3/14/2020 4:19 AM

Portions of the area, mainly west of the James Valley, will see light snow this morning before it exits this afternoon. Drier and warmer conditions are expected across most of the forecast area on Sunday.

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Today in Weather History

March 14, 1989: A fast-moving winter storm produced freezing rain and heavy snow across most of South Dakota. The visibility was reduced to 100 ft within areas of blowing snow. Driving conditions were treacherous, resulting in abandoned vehicles, several accidents, and the temporary closing of I-29 from Sioux Falls to the North Dakota border.

March 14, 1990: Heavy Snow fell across parts of the southwest, central, and north-central South Dakota from the late afternoon on the 13th into the morning hours of the 14th. The highest accumulations were recorded in the north-central part of the state, including 9 inches at Gettysburg, 8 inches at Pollock, and 5 inches at Pine Ridge.

March 14, 2002: Heavy snow of 6 to 16 inches fell across parts of central and northeast South Dakota from the early morning to the evening hours. Some freezing rain fell across parts of the area before changing over to snow. Also, the winds increased from the north resulting in blowing snow and reduced visibilities. The combination of ice, heavy snow, and blowing snow resulted in challenging travel conditions. There were several accidents across the area, along with many vehicles sliding off the road. Schools either started late or were closed. Some snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Blunt, 7 inches at Murdo, 8 inches at Stephan and Clark, 9 inches at Gann Valley and Miller, and 11 inches at Highmore and Watertown. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included, 12 inches at Hayti and Milbank, 14 inches at Castlewood and Presho, 15 inches at Clear Lake, and 16 inches at Kennebec.

1933: A deadly tornado outbreak affected the Middle Tennessee region, including Nashville, on this day. The outbreak, which produced five or more tornadoes, killed 44 people and injured at least 461 others. The strongest tornado, F3, cut a path through the center of Nashville. About 1,400 homes were damaged or destroyed. Windows were blown out of the State Capitol Building.

1935: Suffocating dust storms frequently occurred in southeast Colorado between the 12th and the 25th of the month. Six people died, and many livestock starved or suffocated. Up to six feet of dust covered the ground. Schools were closed, and tenants deserted many rural homes.

2008: An EF2 tornado moved through downtown Atlanta, Georgia, shortly before 10 pm, damaging the Georgia Dome where the SEC men's basketball tournament was underway.

1870 - The term blizzard was first applied to a storm which produced heavy snow and high winds in Minnesota and Iowa. (David Ludlum)

1944 - A single storm brought a record 21.6 inches of snow to Salt Lake City UT. (The Weather Channel)

1960 - Northern Georgia was between snowstorms. Gainesville GA received 17 inches of snow during the month, and reported at least a trace of snow on the ground 22 days in March. Snow was on roofs in Hartwell GA from the 2nd to the 29th. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A powerful storm in the western U.S. produced 15 inches of snow in the Lake Tahoe Basin of Nevada, and wind gusts to 50 mph at Las Vegas NV. Thunderstorms in the Sacramento Valley of California spawned a tornado which hit a turkey farm near Corning. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Squalls in the Great Lakes Region continued to produce heavy snow in northwest Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, and produced up to 14 inches of snow in northeast Ohio. Poplar WI reported 27 inches of snow in two days. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - High winds in Colorado and Wyoming gusted above 120 mph at Horsetooth Heights CO. High winds in the Central Plains sharply reduced visibilities in blowing dust as far east as Kansas City MO. Winds gusting to 72 mph at Hill City KS reduced the visibility to a city block in blowing dust. Soil erosion in north-west Kansas damaged nearly five million acres of wheat. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Fifty-three cities reported record high temperatures for the date as readings warmed into the 70s and 80s from the Gulf coast to the Great Lakes Region. Charleston WV was the hot spot in the nation with a record high of 89 degrees. It was the fourth of five consecutive days with record warm temperatures for many cities in the eastern U.S. There were 283 daily record highs reported in the central and eastern U.S. during between the 11th and the 15th of March. (The National Weather Summary)

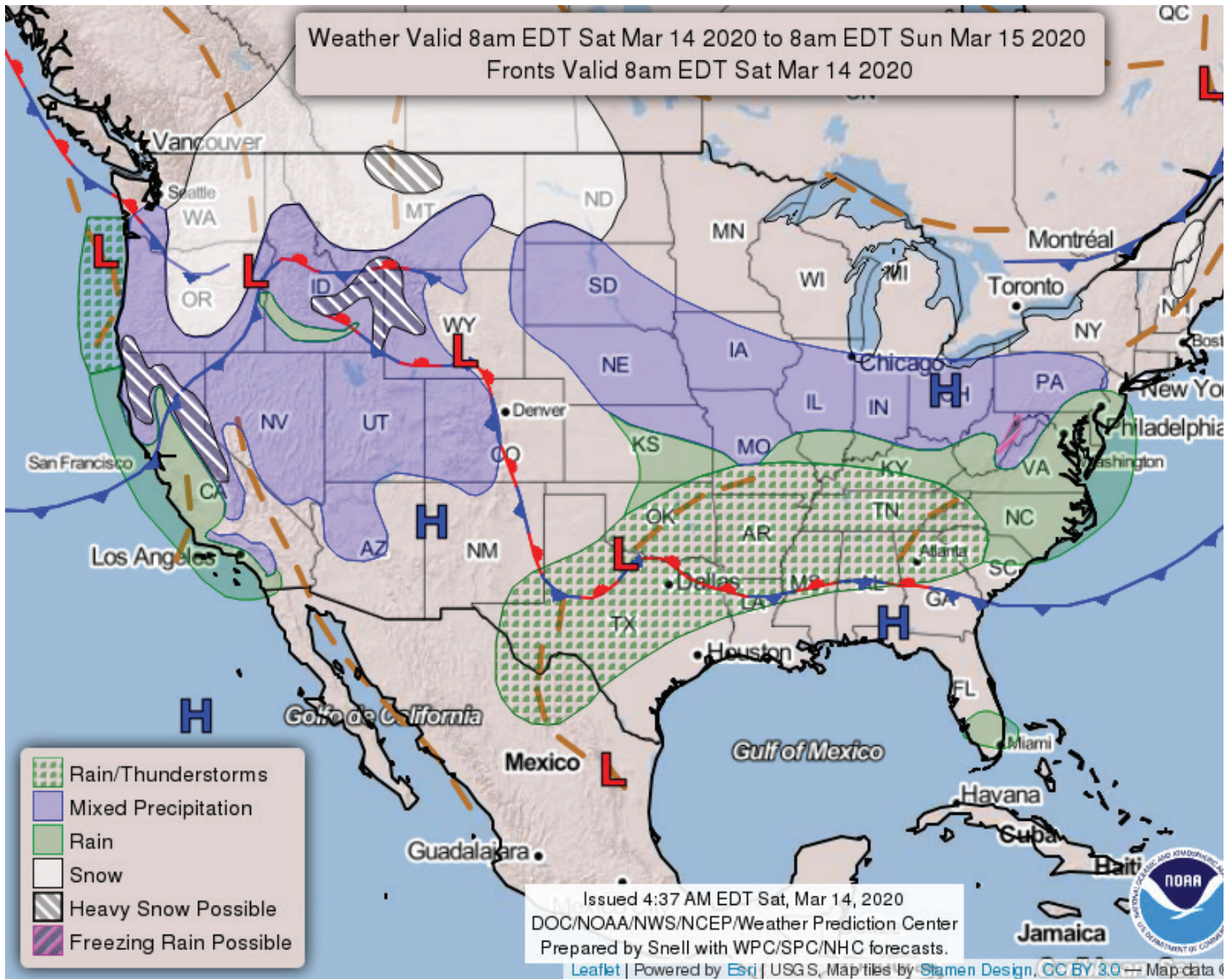
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 33 °F at 2:18 PM
Low Temp: 24 °F at 11:48 PM
Wind: 18 mph at 8:38 AM
Snow

Record High: 71° in 1981
Record Low: -31° in 1897
Average High: 39°F
Average Low: 19°F
Average Precip in March.: 0.40
Precip to date in March.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 1.42
Precip Year to Date: 0.35
Sunset Tonight: 7:39 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:45 a.m.



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LOVE ENOUGH TO CARE

Day after day Amy Jo came home from school crying. Her classmates were unkind and hurtful. They made fun of her uncontrolled movements, her limping, twisting and drooling. She could hardly sit or stand still without jerking because of her illness.

One day she wrote a letter to an editor. In it, she said: "I have a problem in school. Kids laugh at me because of the way I walk and talk. I have cerebral palsy. I just want one day at school when no one laughs at me and makes fun of me."

One paper finally carried her story, and then another. Eventually, it was carried by many newspapers, and she received an astounding number of letters that brought her hope, comfort and encouragement.

Many people have broken hearts, not as a result of mental or physical disabilities. Their hearts ache, they have troubled thoughts, and their shoulders droop because they are left out, feel unwelcome, unwanted, or unacceptable - even in our churches.

Jesus said that loving one's neighbor was the second most important commandment and because it is a commandment, we are obligated to love those who may seem unloveable or unacceptable – on our terms! But, we must remember that they are loved and accepted on God's terms! So, as His ambassadors, we must show His love. And, Paul said that showing God's love was more important than any spiritual gift. Love is not a word nor a choice: it is to be a way of life - the Christ-filled life.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to seek out the least, the last, the lost, and the lonely and give them Your love. Help us to recognize those who need love – Your love – and love them in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 03/14/2020 **CANCELLED** Youth Girls/Boys Basketball Tourney Grades 4th-6th (Baseball/Softball Foundation Fundraiser)
 - 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
 - 04/04/2020 Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
 - 04/25/2020 Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
 - 04/25-26/2020 Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
 - 04/26/2020 Father/Daughter dance.
 - 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
 - 05/11/2020 Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
 - 06/05/2020 Athletic Fundraiser at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
 - 06/19/2020 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/20/2020 Shriner's Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/22/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ladies Invitational
 - 06/26/2020 Groton Businesses Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
 - 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
 - 07/31-08/04/2020 State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
 - 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
 - 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
 - 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
 - 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
 - 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
 - 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
 - 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
 - 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
 - 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
 - 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
 - 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates
-
- Bingo every Wednesday 6:30pm at the American Legion Post #39
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Meat, American Legion Post #39 7pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Pizza, Jungle Lanes 8pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
-
- All dates are subject to change, check for updates here

News from the Associated Press

Rapid City High School gets rid of bells, empowers students

By MORGAN MATZEN Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City High School has made some significant changes in the last three years to give students more independence with their schedules and the pace at which they learn course material.

It started three years ago when the school added advising and mentoring for each of their 325 students. Then in the fall, the school switched to a personalized learning system. Now, the school has decommissioned its bells.

Principal Shane Heilman said all these different methods prevent students from “falling through the cracks.” Data from the school suggests that RCHS is on pace for a 45 percent reduction in the dropout rate this school year.

“Every student has an adult mentor in the school. That’s the huge point that has helped kids connect to the school,” he told the Rapid City Journal. “It makes it harder for them to fail, because they’ve got someone watching them, meeting them every day.”

No bells

RCHS has done away with school bells and class periods. The school implemented the “no bell” system in November on Fridays to test out the idea and see how students adjust. Now, the bells are gone for good, and a new individualized “flex schedule” takes their place.

Heilman said the change allows students to have more ownership of their day, as they can make their own schedule to fit their needs.

It allows students to “take the reins a little more,” Heilman said. “It increases motivation and ownership.”

Students who might struggle with time management can make their own schedule as well as sign up to see guest speakers and go to mental health counseling and social worker appointments among other daily needs, Heilman said. The school also provides a food pantry, laundry service and tutoring zones for students.

Jeff Nelsen, a geometry in construction teacher, said the “no bell” flex schedule gives students the freedom to choose the courses they need on a daily basis.

“It frees the students up to work on other courses where they may be struggling,” Nelsen said.

Nelsen said the change not only helps the students, but helps him to more effectively teach his hands-on building course. Nelsen is able to teach his course in two- or three-hour blocks, instead of hour-long classes spread throughout the school week.

He’s also been able to take students to work on the historic McGillicuddy House for a few afternoons every week for two to three hours.

“Under a traditional bell schedule, it’s difficult to schedule a three-hour class because I’m interfering with two other classes,” Nelsen said. “It helps the students get engaged in the work. They can work continuously for two to three hours.”

Mazie Croyle, a student representative on the school board, said at a board meeting Monday night that the school is seeing lower dropout numbers because of the flex schedule.

“It’s certainly changing the environment and reducing many of our issues in dropouts,” Croyle said. She said the school is collecting data this semester to see how it will continue to help students.

Personalized learning

This fall, the school introduced a personalized learning system, which means students are held accountable for mastering course material regardless of the time it takes to do so.

“In traditional schooling, time is a constant and learning is the variable,” Heilman said. “In traditional schools, we know how long a student will be in a course. But how much each student learns is going to vary greatly.”

Students and their advisors can customize the amount of time they need to spend on each subject. A student who may excel in math might be behind in reading, for example, and could customize their schedule and education path to accommodate their needs.

Traditional schooling is "why a lot of kids develop academic gaps," Heilman said. "That's why at our school, we get kids who are reading and doing math at an elementary level. We know exactly what each kid is going to learn, we just don't know how long it will take."

Sean Binder, who teaches a youth internship course at RCHS, said students who have a choice about their pace in school have more success after high school entering the workforce or getting into college.

"It's exciting to see (our students) become autonomous learners," Binder said. "It flips the script. Before, learners had to be ready for the teachers. Now, teachers have to be ready for the learners. It's an exciting challenge."

Blended learning

The school has also implemented blended learning, which is a combination of online and face-to-face teaching.

Sabrina Henriksen, a chemistry teacher, said she uses a website called Canvas to upload videos that students can follow if they miss a day of class, or simply need to review a topic.

"It makes everything accessible," she said. "They don't have to feel like they're behind, and they don't come back (to class) behind."

Advising and mentoring

Heilman said that every teacher is a mentor or a career and college planning advisor, and they help the students with self-regulation, organization and self-efficacy.

"(We) teach kids how to take ownership of their lives and improve their habits, thinking patterns and strategies for how to successfully navigate their lives and their challenges" Heilman said. "A lot of places assume kids should have these skills. Most schools don't teach these skills."

Henriksen said she's had a successful relationship with one of the students she advises each week.

"He calls me his school mom," she said of the student. "He can come to me if he has a rough day, and his parents know he has someone at school (to support him). If kids know there's one caring adult in their corner, they have a better chance of success."

First responders flock to Dahme Lake for ice rescue training

By **KELDA J.L. PHARRIS** Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — In Brad Thavenet's time as a rescue trainer with Dive Rescue International it's the equipment that has changed the most. Communications systems are better and high-tech suits keep responders safe in even the most treacherous conditions.

"17 years ago you were on the end of a rope" under water and ice with no ability to communicate to those on the surface, Thavenet told the Aberdeen American News by phone. "Safety equipment has been the biggest advancement."

That includes communications systems in the suit of the diver so they can remain in constant contact with their crew on the surface and advancements in exposure suits that not only keep a diver warm, but also safe from any potential contaminants in the water.

Thavenet is also Battalion Chief of Special Response Operations at Lincoln Fire and Rescue in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Recently Thavenet helped train on surface ice rescue with the goal of certifying new instructors who can then train any new recruits hired by their respective units. The training included both classroom work and in-the-field work. In this case, the field was a still iced-over Dahme Lake.

Those who trained on surface rescue and trainer certification included six members of Aberdeen Fire & Rescue, a member of the Brown County Dive Team and firefighters from Mitchell, Claremont, Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, Lincoln and Yutan, Nebraska, as well as a member from the Johnson County Metro Dive Team out of Coralville, Iowa, according to Stacy Vrchota, battalion chief with Aberdeen Fire & Rescue.

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That group of trainees learned about ice rescue techniques, ice conditions and precautions, and hypothermia treatment and care, said Vrchota.

"The local dive teams, county dive teams do on-going trainings. Most agencies don't have an in-house instructor," Thavenet said. "They were developing a cadre of their own in-house training."

A second session of training was on ice dive rescue. That training also included classroom work, work at the Aberdeen Family Y pool and nearly two days of training on Dahme Lake ending Sunday. This was a student-level course covering potential body recovery, drowning, evidence recovery, and retrieval of vehicles like a snowmobile or other such things that could contaminate a waterway, Thavenet said.

Nine members of the Brown County Dive Team, three members from the Burleigh County Sheriffs Department in North Dakota and eight members from the New York Police Department's SCUBA team took part in that training.

Dive Rescue International conducts numerous trainings across the country on all types of rescues and missions involving water, whether in liquid or solid form.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

07-22-37-43-44, Mega Ball: 22, Megaplier: 4

(seven, twenty-two, thirty-seven, forty-three, forty-four; Mega Ball: twenty-two; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$80 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$120 million

What died, what survived in the South Dakota Legislature

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota lawmakers headed home on Friday after pushing the budget and a few proposals over the finish line this week.

Legislators are scheduled to meet one more time at the end of the month to respond to any vetoes from Gov. Kristi Noem, but they have finished the bulk of their work for the year. As the session finishes, here's a look at what died and what survived:

DIED:

— TRANSGENDER TREATMENT BAN:

In the first week of the session, Rep. Fred Deutsch, a Florence Republican, dropped a bill to ban doctors from giving puberty-blockers, hormone therapy and surgeries to children under 16 who wanted to change their gender. The proposal drew national attention and protests as it passed in the House, but was stopped in the Senate Health and Human Services committee where moderate Republicans killed the bill.

— COMMERCIAL SURROGACY BAN:

Conservative House Republicans again failed to get a proposal past the Senate Health and Human Services Committee when it defeated a bill that aimed to stop commercial surrogacy in the state. Republicans on the committee were split on the issue, but in the end enough decided that criminalizing agents who facilitate commercial surrogacy contracts was a step too far.

— ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION:

Secretary of State Steve Barnett proposed making it possible to register to vote online. The House passed the bill, but it was killed by influential Republicans in the Senate State Affairs committee.

SURVIVED:

— HEMP

It took until one of the last votes of the session, but lawmakers ironed out a hemp proposal with Noem's

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approval. Lawmakers' decision to meet the governor's demand to allot \$3.5 million to startup and run the program ensured their year-long dispute over hemp drew to a close. Noem said she intends to sign the bill and it will take effect immediately. But it may take up to 60 days for the Department of Agriculture to approve the state's hemp plans.

— RIOT BOOSTING

The governor told lawmakers months before the session began that she would revive the state's criminal and civil penalties for rioting and inciting a riot this year. A federal judge found parts of the state's riot laws unconstitutional last year, in part because they were targeted at opponents to the Keystone XL pipeline. The proposal drew demonstrations from Native American and environmental groups, but did not face any major opposition from Republican legislators. Noem has yet to sign the bill.

— BAN ON FACULTY UNIONS

The governor has already signed a law that will ban faculty unions at state universities starting in July. The law will stop university faculty from collective bargaining in their contracts with the Board of Regents. There are about 1,400 faculty spread across six universities in the state.

— COUNTY PERMIT STREAMLINING

Noem spent a considerable amount of time pushing a proposal to streamline the permitting process for feedlots and other projects. She cast the overhaul as a part of her focus on economic development, arguing it would allow people to start profitable projects in rural communities. The proposal makes wide-ranging changes to how counties decide on permits.

— RESTRUCTURING PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Lawmakers have been looking for more control over the state's public universities and passed a bill to examine the universities' operations. The bill would require the Board of Regents to assemble a task force with at least eleven members, including four legislators. It paves the way for a potential shake up in public universities. They will present their findings in November.

State budget: Pay raises, hemp, bridges and USD building

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A boost for "the big three" — the nickname in the South Dakota Capitol for teachers, state employees and support providers — was the big-ticket item on the budget lawmakers approved Thursday, but they also had money left over to fund a hemp program, build several university buildings and send a bit of money to counties to repair aging bridges.

The Legislature met into the night as they completed the main part of the session for the year. They concluded with a vote on the \$4.9 billion budget that will take effect starting in July.

Not everyone was happy. Several especially conservative legislators voiced frustration with the budget-making process.

"This year has been especially acrimonious," said Sen. Lance Russell, a Hot Springs Republican.

Rep. Taffy Howard, a Rapid City Republican, said that Gov. Kristi Noem undercut the process by announcing earlier in the week that the state could afford to fund 2% pay increases if they factored declines in Medicaid enrollment. Howard said the proposal didn't give lawmakers enough time to dig into the proposal or account for the potential of the COVID-19 virus outbreak to cause an economic downturn.

The Republican governor told reporters before the budget vote that it was based on conservative financial projections and she was confident the budget could withstand an economic slump.

She watched from the galleries of both the House and Senate as they voted.

Sen. Reynold Nesiba, a Sioux Falls Democrat, said the process was more open and transparent than it was last year.

The budget had a bit more wiggle room than lawmakers anticipated when they convened in January. Better-than-expected revenues and declines in Medicaid eligibility allowed lawmakers to send nearly \$55 million to funds for state employees, teachers and people who work at community programs that are mostly funded by Medicaid. They also approved a nearly \$13 million boost this year to the health insurance pool

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for state employees.

Here's a look at some other items they funded:

HEMP

As part of lawmakers' proposal to legalize industrial hemp, they approved a crucial demand from the governor — allotting \$3.5 million that she says is necessary to “responsibly” startup and run a hemp program.

The governor wanted nearly \$1.9 million in one-time funds to start-up the program, and a commitment of another \$1.6 million to run it every year. Noem plans to spread the money across three state agencies, paying for up to 15 full-time staff positions, drug-testing equipment, drug-sniffing dogs and new drug storage space. The governor's office has argued the money is necessary for law enforcement to distinguish between hemp and marijuana.

UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS

The University of South Dakota will get a special \$5 million allotment to build a School of Health Sciences. The building will allow the university to expand its medical programs.

Representatives from the Board of Regents told lawmakers the \$5 million will allow them to get another \$4.5 million in matching funds from a donor.

The School of Mines and Black Hill State University will also be renovating and expanding their libraries. The money will mostly come from a fund held by the universities for repairing and expanding facilities.

COUNTY ROADS AND BRIDGES

The Legislature used an unexpected excess of about \$4 million to repair county and township roads.

After flooding hit many parts of the state last spring, many rural roads are still in disrepair. The Legislature sent the money as a way to help rural communities recover.

GOVERNOR'S PRIORITIES

Noem got most of what she asked the Legislature for this year for one-time spending items, including \$3.7 million for addiction treatment and law enforcement targeted at meth, \$4 million for corrections facilities, and \$5 million for grants to expand broadband access to rural areas of the state.

WHAT ELSE

The statewide expansion of a crisis hotline will get funding at about \$400,000 a year; lawmakers will put about \$1 million towards a college scholarship fund for people studying to be teachers in South Dakota; and people who provide care at senior centers and special needs programs funded by government dollars will get over \$2 million on one-time bonuses.

AP sources: Travel ban to extend to United Kingdom, Ireland

By ANDREW TAYLOR, LISA MASCARO, JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House is expected to announce that the U.S. will broaden its European travel ban, adding the United Kingdom and Ireland to its list.

Under the restrictions, American citizens, green card holders and others are still allowed to return home to the U.S., but will be funneled to 13 airports and be subjected to health screenings and quarantine orders, according to two people familiar with the plan who spoke on condition of anonymity before the official announcement expected Saturday.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. AP's earlier story follows below:

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says that she and the Trump administration are close to agreement on a coronavirus aid package to reassure anxious Americans by providing sick pay, free testing and other resources, hoping to calm teetering financial markets amid the mounting crisis.

Final details were being worked out, but the top House Democrat, who held daylong talks with Treasury

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Secretary Steven Mnuchin, expected an announcement Friday. The House could then swiftly vote.

"We have — are near — to an agreement," Pelosi said, emerging from her office at the Capitol shortly before 9 p.m. Thursday.

The potential deal between Congress and the White House would cap a tumultuous week in which Washington strained for a comprehensive response to the outbreak that is testing the nation's political, financial and health care systems.

It builds on an emergency \$8.3 billion package approved last week and is aimed at providing additional health and financial resources to arrest the sudden spread of the pandemic and the kind of economic fallout unseen in a generation. Pelosi promised in a letter to colleagues that a third package was yet to come.

The new sick leave benefit would require businesses to provide up to 14 days of paid leave to workers who are home quarantined with the virus, with the federal government reimbursing them through tax credits. The bill enhances unemployment benefits for the jobless and boosts food and nutrition programs for working families, students and seniors.

The late announcement was intended to boost confidence, Democrats said.

"We felt that putting together something that the American people can see cooperation on between the two parties in this difficult moment would be a confidence builder," said Rep. Richard Neal, D-N.J., the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, joining Pelosi at the Capitol, "and I think that we approached it that way."

Meanwhile, the Capitol, White House and Supreme Court all declared themselves off limits to the public for now, symbols of a nation hunkering down.

Democrat Joe Biden, President Donald Trump's chief rival, criticized him for playing down the threat for weeks and promised if he becomes president to "always tell you the truth."

Amid a wave of closures and cancellations, the coronavirus question got personal for Trump and some members of Congress.

Just days after meeting Trump and Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., the communications chief for Brazil's president, Fábio Wajngarten, tested positive for the coronavirus. A photo of the president, the senator and Wajngarten shows the trio shoulder-to-shoulder at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort last weekend.

It was the first time someone infected with the virus was known to have been in close proximity to the president.

Scott said he was isolating himself. Trump, 73, said he was unworried.

"We had dinner in Florida at Mar-a-Lago with the entire delegation," Trump told reporters at the White House. "But we did nothing very unusual. We sat next to each other for a period of time." Asked whether he should be tested, Trump replied, "I am not concerned."

White House spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham said "the White House is aware of public reports that a member of the Brazilian delegation's visit to Mar-a-Lago last weekend tested positive for COVID-19" though; confirmatory testing is pending.

She said: "Both the President and Vice President had almost no interactions with the individual who tested positive and do not require being tested at this time." GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham, who was also at Trump's club on the weekend, joined a growing list of lawmakers who have chosen to isolate themselves as a precaution.

On Wednesday, Trump announced a month-long restriction on travel from most of Europe, set to begin at midnight Friday night. He said Thursday that he was considering other major restrictions, such as limiting travel to domestic hot spots like California and Washington state, without spelling out how he would manage such an extraordinary effort. The State Department issued a global advisory cautioning U.S. citizens to "reconsider travel abroad."

So far, the administration's haphazard response and the stalemate in Congress have resulted in more uncertainty as the crisis roils the financial markets and rewrites daily life for Americans.

Biden and Bernie Sanders, the other main contender for the Democratic presidential nomination, delivered their own speeches the day after Trump's prime-time address to the nation.

Biden called for free virus testing, temporary pop-up hospitals and paid leave for all Americans to help

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cover paychecks as workers self-quarantine, care for the ill or lose jobs over the virus.

"No president can promise to prevent future outbreaks, but I can promise you this, when I'm president we will be better prepared, respond better and recover better," Biden declared.

Sanders also proposed swift federal intervention and money to help people suffering in their health or finances.

As talks between Pelosi and Mnuchin continued, lawmakers from both parties expressed alarm after what they called heated and testy briefings with Dr. Anthony Fauci, infectious disease chief at the National Institutes of Health, and other public health officials. Lawmakers were particularly frustrated that U.S. officials have tested relatively few patients.

"We're basically, in my opinion, flying blind," said Rep. Susie Lee, D-Nev.

As classes, sports events, concerts and conferences were canceled across the nation, Trump said he will halt his signature campaign rallies, telling reporters he needs a "little separation until such time as this goes away." Biden and Sanders said they would no longer hold large political gatherings and their staffs would work from home as the race for the presidency moved online.

The storied Smithsonian said it was canceling all public events and will temporarily close its network of museums and the National Zoo, starting Saturday. And Trump proposed postponing this summer's Olympics in Japan for a year, too.

The financial markets endured another day of alarming slides and the Federal Reserve moved to try to ease the disruptions by announcing that it will sharply increase its purchases of short-term Treasury bonds.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to be over it.

While Trump said all European travel except from Britain would be cut off, there were clarifications and criticisms of the cornerstone of his attempt to curtail the crisis.

Homeland Security officials said the new travel restrictions would apply only to most foreign nationals who have been in the Schengen Area at any point in the 14 days prior to their scheduled arrival to the United States. The area encompasses most European countries, among them France, Italy, Germany, Greece, Austria and Belgium.

The restrictions don't apply to legal permanent residents, immediate family of U.S. citizens or others identified in the proclamation signed by Trump. Vice President Mike Pence said the administration is also asking travelers returning to the U.S. from Europe to voluntarily quarantine for 14 days.

But some health officials, and even a former high-ranking Trump administration official, suggested Trump's European travel restriction was futile because the virus is already widespread on U.S. soil.

"In two weeks, we will regret wasting time and energy on travel restrictions and wish we focused more on hospital preparation and large scale community mitigation," Trump's former homeland security adviser, Thomas Bossert, tweeted Thursday.

Trump claimed falsely Thursday that the U.S. is currently screening all Americans and foreigners who are entering the country, saying, "people coming in have to be tested." And he claimed that those who return are being forced to isolate themselves, adding: "It's going to be a pretty strong enforcement of quarantine." No widespread quarantine orders have been announced.

Associated Press writers Amer Madhani, Luran Neergaard, Martin Crutsinger, Laurie Kellman and Kevin Freking in Washington and Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Virus-related shutdowns bringing US economy to grinding halt

By PAUL WISEMAN and JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — It took 15 minutes for the coronavirus to wreck Shelley Hutchings' carefully calculated financial plans.

Hutchings, a bartender and performer, had lined up gigs in advance of the South by Southwest film, music and technology festival, which draws hundreds of thousands of visitors to Austin each year. She'd expected to earn about \$3,000 — enough to pay her taxes and buy a new sewing machine for a tailoring business she runs.

Relaxed, she sat down to watch a movie. Then her phone started vibrating. Cancellations rolled in. One by one, the jobs she's been counting on were gone. In the face of the spreading coronavirus outbreak, Austin officials had called off the festival just as the first attendees had begun to arrive.

"In 15 minutes, things fell apart," Hutchings said. "To watch it vanish, all at once, was shocking."

As Hutchings and hundreds of millions of Americans can attest, damage from the coronavirus has pummeled the U.S. economy with breathtaking speed and force. Hour by hour, day by day, the activities that households take part in and spend money on — plane trips, sporting events, movies, concerts, restaurant meals, shopping trips for clothes, furniture, appliances — are grinding to a halt.

And so, it seems, is the U.S. economy.

Just a month ago, experts had expected any severe economic pain from the outbreak to be confined mainly to Asia and Europe. The U.S. economy, enjoying a record-breaking 11-year-long expansion, would likely keep cruising, it was thought — a bit bruised but not seriously damaged.

Now, forecasters can't downgrade their outlook for the American economy fast enough.

"The expansion is under threat," said Philipp Carlsson-Szlezak, chief economist at the Boston Consulting Group. "There's a very plausible risk this will amount to a recession."

On Wednesday, Wells Fargo Securities had predicted a slight drop in the nation's gross domestic product — the broadest measure of economic output — in the April-June quarter. The next day, as the American stock market endured its deepest plunge since 1987, Wells Fargo economist Jay Bryson wrote that it was "painfully obvious that we need to rethink this forecast" and further downgrade the outlook.

How did the picture darken so sharply, so quickly?

The speed of the virus' spread appeared to surprise economists as it hopped to 117 countries, including the United States, infecting a documented total of roughly 150,000 people worldwide and killing more than 5,500. And what health experts agree was the U.S. government's fumbling early response to the crisis has undermined the confidence of consumers, investors and businesses. Anxieties have escalated.

U.S. officials are bracing for a dramatic acceleration of cases — beyond the roughly 2,200 that have been documented so far in 49 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico.

For most people, the coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, like fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover.

Yet as the gravity of the crisis had seeped into public consciousness, suddenly everyone is shrinking from public gatherings of any real size for fear of contracting the virus, and organizers can't call off events fast enough.

The NBA and the NHL suspended the rest of their seasons. The NCAA dropped its wildly popular March Madness basketball tournament. Broadway is closed. St. Patrick's Day parades are scrubbed. Hunkered down at home, Americans are leaving restaurants empty, hotels vacant and jetliners unoccupied.

The danger to the U.S. economy stems from a fundamental reality: Consumers drive roughly 70 percent of growth. When spending halts, the economy can't grow. And while online shopping will likely surge as people sequester themselves at home, such purchases still account for just a small fraction of overall consumer spending.

"The economy is doomed to recession if the country stops working and takes the next 30 days off," Chris

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Rupkey, chief economist at MUFG Union Bank, wrote in a research note this week.

Compounding the threat, the very measures that are required to contain the outbreak — quarantines, reduced travel, an avoidance of crowds and gatherings — are sure to stifle economic activity.

The resulting slowdown across the globe has undercut the price of oil, intensifying pressure on energy producers and likely reducing business investment. And many U.S. companies, especially in the airline and energy industries, are heavily indebted and might have to respond to financial pressures by cutting expenses — including jobs.

Despite rebounding Friday on President Donald Trump's declaration of a national emergency to try to help stem the health crisis, the stock market remains in a bear market — the Dow Jones Industrial Average has shed nearly 22% in just a month — which stands to further dim the confidence of consumers. Investors whose stock market wealth shrinks typically become less likely to spend much.

"You can take to the bank that we're going to have negative growth in the second quarter," said Nathan Sheets, chief economist at PGIM Fixed Income.

Recessions are defined informally as two consecutive quarters of economic contraction. It isn't yet clear whether the coronavirus inflicted enough economic damage from January to March to turn GDP negative for the quarter or how deeply the harm will spread into the April-June quarter.

"It's pretty close now to a 50-50 proposition as to whether we see two quarters of negative growth," Sheets said. "Even if that condition is not technically satisfied, it's going to feel pretty bad. It's going to feel recessionary."

Officially, the U.S. unemployment rate remains just 3.5%, a half century low. During the Great Recession of 2007-2009, companies responded to a deteriorating economy by aggressively slashing jobs. This time, Sheets suspects that most of them will hold off on layoffs in hopes that the virus and its economic damage will subside in just a few months. If, however, many companies across the country were to cut jobs, the blow to the economy would worsen. In addition, the slowdowns in Asia and Europe, which are closely intertwined with the U.S. economy, are sure to weaken growth in the United States.

Intervention by the Federal Reserve, by slashing interest rates, and Congress, by moving toward approving financial aid to people affected by the crisis, could help mitigate the economic hardship. So would a relatively swift containment of the virus.

For now, though, the uncertainty is distressing businesses across the country. When Austin's South by Southwest gathering was canceled, Brent Underwood's 20-bed hostel lost about 20% of its annual income.

"I'm not sure how we'll keep our employees," Underwood said. "I'm not sure how we'll keep our manager of four years. I'm not sure how we'll keep the business open."

Normally, the hostel also receives bookings from people attending events at the University of Texas, and in the fall, from the annual Austin City Limits music festival. Underwood fears his income will suffer further if the university's graduation and the festival are canceled. He would like to cut expenses. But most of his costs are fixed, including a property tax bill due this month.

Andy Cooley has already had to cut the hours of three of the six workers at his printing company, Central Press in Millbrook, New York, because the foundations, hospitals and schools that are some of his major customers are canceling events. He's lost orders for printing invitations and programs.

"Earlier today, I received a call cancelling all printing related to a fundraiser happening in May," Cooley said. "I understand they have to do what they have to do, but the ripple effect is exactly that — we all feel the effect."

Economists say the U.S. economy has never faced a moment quite like this one. The 9/11 terrorist attacks 19 years ago, devastating as it was, caused only a short-lived downturn. And it presented consumers with starkly different challenge:

"Then the patriotic thing was go out and spend," said Louise Sheiner, policy director for the Brookings Institution's center on fiscal and monetary policy and a former Federal Reserve economist. "Now, the patriotic thing to do is not go out... It's like something we've never seen."

Thomas Grech, CEO of the Queens Chamber of Commerce in New York, urged residents who aren't

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quarantined to patronize neighborhood restaurants and corner stores.

"You've got to eat," Grech said. "Keep these guys alive because my fear is, if they close, they may not reopen."

Wiseman reported from Washington.

AP staff writers Joyce M. Rosenberg, Jennifer Peltz and Deepti Hajela in New York contributed to this report.

White House steps up virus precautions; House passes big aid

By **LISA MASCARO, ZEKE MILLER, ANDREW TAYLOR and JILL COLVIN** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House approved legislation Saturday to provide direct relief to Americans suffering physically, financially and emotionally from the coronavirus pandemic. Passage came after President Donald Trump had declared the outbreak a national emergency, freeing up money and resources to fight it, and threw his support behind the congressional aid package.

Trump's emergency declaration unleashed as much as \$50 billion for state and local governments to respond to the crisis.

The White House said Saturday it is now conducting temperature checks on any people in close contact with Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, as a precaution. The White House doctor said he still saw no need for Trump to be tested after his recent interactions with several people who tested positive for the virus.

Trump also announced a range of executive actions, including a new public-private partnership to expand coronavirus testing capabilities with drive-through locations, as Washington tries to subdue the virus whose spread is roiling markets, shuttering institutions and disrupting the lives of everyday Americans.

But he asserted "I don't take responsibility at all" for the slow rollout of testing.

The hard-fought aid package will provide free testing, sick pay for workers, enhanced unemployment benefits and bolstered food programs.

The House passed the bill after midnight on a bipartisan vote, 363-40. It now goes to the Senate..

"We did what we said we were going to do: Put families first," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Trump tweeted his approval, all but ensuring that wary Republicans would join with a robust vote. "Good teamwork between Republicans & Democrats as the House passes the big CoronaVirus Relief Bill," he tweeted Saturday. "People really pulled together. Nice to see!"

Trump's tweet of approval instilled fresh energy in the measure, all but ensuring that wary Republicans would join with a robust vote.

The crush of activity capped a tumultuous week in Washington as the fast-moving virus left ordinary Americans suddenly navigating self-quarantines, school closures and a changed way of life.

The White House was dealing with the crisis on multiple fronts as it became increasingly personal to the president.

Trump has been known to flout public health advice — and was eagerly shaking hands during an event Friday — but acknowledged he "most likely" will be tested soon. This, after he was exposed to several people who have tested positive for the virus. The White House physician indicated later that Trump's interactions were low-risk and testing is not necessary. But the White House subsequently said people close to the president and vice president are having their temperatures checked for any fever.

Trump took a number of other actions to bolster energy markets, ease the financial burden for Americans with student loans and give medical professionals additional flexibility in treating patients during the public health crisis.

Central to the aid package from Congress, which builds on an emergency \$8.3 billion measure approved earlier, are the free testing, sick pay and family leave provisions.

Providing sick pay for workers is a crucial element of federal efforts to stop the rapid spread of the infec-

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tion. Officials warn that the nation's healthcare system could quickly become overwhelmed with gravely sick patients, as suddenly happened in Italy, one of the countries hardest hit by the virus.

The ability to ensure paychecks will keep flowing — for people self-quarantining or caring for others — can help assure Americans they will not fall into financial hardship. The legislation also offers three months of paid family and medical leave. Small and mid-sized employers will be reimbursed through tax credits.

Pelosi negotiated the deal with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in days of around-the-clock negotiations with cross-town phone calls, even as Trump was speaking at the White House.

Voting in the Senate is not yet set, with senators out of town for the weekend. But Senate Leader Mitch McConnell canceled a planned recess week and senators were scheduled to return Monday. He said he expects most senators will want to "act swiftly."

Both Mnuchin and Pelosi promised a third coronavirus package will follow soon, with more aggressive steps to boost the U.S. economy, which economists fear has already slipped into recession.

The financial markets closed on an upswing after one of the worst nosedives since 1987.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to be over it.

Trump on Friday also told people to expect the imminent rollout of a web site "facilitated" by Google that would guide users through a series of questions to determine whether they should be screened for the virus. If testing is recommended, users would be directed to a local testing location, which could include parking lots at Walmart, Target, Walgreens and other chains.

"It's going to be very quickly done, unlike websites of the past," Trump said in a thinly veiled dig at the Obama administration's disastrous rollout in 2013 of its online health care marketplace.

But how quickly is in question. Google said the website, from its life science division Verily, is still "in the early stages of development." Verily first plans to roll out testing out in the Bay Area of San Francisco, with the hope of expanding more broadly over time, the company said in a statement.

Trump said he was gratified that Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro tested negative for the virus, after the pair sat next to each other for an extended time last weekend at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club. A senior aide to Bolsonaro tested positive.

The White House physician, Sean Conley, said in a memo late Friday that Trump was also exposed to a second guest at the club dinner, "sharing the table with the president." That guest has since tested positive for the virus. Still, Conley said he regarded the interactions as low risk and testing "is not currently indicated."

Trump's daughter, Ivanka Trump, worked from home Friday after meeting Australian Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton, now in isolation at a hospital after testing positive for the coronavirus.

Attorney General William Barr, who also met the Australian official, stayed home Friday, though he "felt great and wasn't showing any symptoms," according to his spokeswoman, Kerri Kupec.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon and State Department announced new guidance aimed at limiting movement of its personnel and promoting social distancing in hopes of reducing the impact of the pandemic on the agencies.

Deputy Defense Secretary David Norquist said the department is "halting all domestic travel, including Permanent Change of Station and Temporary Duty" from Monday until May 11. The travel restrictions also apply to military civilian employees.

The State Department announced it has begun rotational and telework schedules and issued general guidance calling on domestic and overseas personnel to engage in "mission critical" travel only.

Associated Press writers Aamer Madhani, Matt Lee, Alan Fram, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Luran Neergaard, Martin Crutsinger, Laurie Kellman, Michael Balsamo and Kevin Freking in Washington contributed

to this report.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

White House now conducting temperature checks amid outbreak

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House announced Saturday that it is now conducting temperature checks on anyone who is in close contact with President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence.

The move is being taken out of an abundance of caution in response to the coronavirus outbreak, said Judd Deere, a White House spokesman.

Trump has had multiple direct and indirect contacts with people who have tested positive for the pandemic virus. On Friday, he declared a state of emergency as schools and workplaces across the country shuttered, flights were canceled and Americans braced for war against the health threat.

Trump spent time last weekend at his private club in Florida with at least three people who have now tested positive.

The Brazilian Embassy in Washington announced late Friday that the country's chargé d'affaires, Nestor Forster, tested positive after sitting at Trump's dinner table. So, too, have a top aide to Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and an individual who attended a fundraiser Sunday with Trump, according to two Republican officials who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss private health matters.

Trump has been known to flout public health advice — and was eagerly shaking hands during an event Friday — but acknowledged he "most likely" will be tested soon. The White House physician has indicated that Trump's interactions were low risk and testing was not necessary.

A representative from the White House physician's office took the temperature of members of the media who were at the White House on Saturday, going around to each person and putting the device to their heads. A reporter with a suspected elevated temperature was not allowed into the briefing room for a news conference with Trump and Pence about the outbreak.

Public health officials say that individuals with a cough and elevated temperatures of 100.4 degrees or higher are deemed concerning.

Bev Banks contributed to this report.

Iraq officials: Rocket attack hits base housing US troops

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — A barrage of rockets hit a base housing U.S. and other coalition troops north of Baghdad on Saturday, Iraqi security officials said, just days after a similar attack killed three servicemen, including two Americans.

The U.S.-led coalition said at least 25 107mm rockets struck Camp Taji just before 11 a.m. Some struck the area where coalition forces are based, while others fell on air defense units, the Iraqi military statement said.

Five people were wounded in the attack including three coalition members and two Iraqi soldiers, according to spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition Myles Caggins. The nationalities of the wounded coalition members was not immediately known.

A statement from Iraq's military said the "brutal aggression" wounded a number of air defense personnel who remain in critical condition, but did not provide a number.

Iraqi forces later discovered seven platforms from which the rockets were in the Abu Azam area, north of Baghdad. Another 24 missiles were discovered in place and ready to launch.

The attack was unusual because it occurred during the day. Previous assaults on military bases housing

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U.S. troops typically occurred at night.

The earlier rocket attack against Camp Taji on Wednesday also killed a British serviceman. It prompted American airstrikes Friday against what U.S. officials said were mainly weapons facilities belonging to Kataib Hezbollah, the Iran-backed militia group believed to be responsible.

However, Iraq's military said those airstrikes killed five security force members and a civilian, while wounding five fighters from the Popular Mobilization Forces, an umbrella organization including an array of militias, including some Iran-backed groups.

Iran-backed Shiite militia groups vowed to exact revenge for Friday's U.S. strikes, signalling another cycle of tit-for-tat violence between Washington and Tehran that could play out inside Iraq.

Iraq's military also cautioned the U.S. from retaliating as it did on Friday without approval from the government. Taking unilateral action would "not limit these actions, but rather nurtures them, weakens the ability of the Iraqi state," the statement said.

America's killing of Iraqi security forces might also give Iran-backed militia groups more reason to stage counterattacks against U.S. troops in Iraq, analysts said.

"We can't forget that the PMF is a recognized entity within the Iraqi security forces; they aren't isolated from the security forces and often are co-located on the same bases or use the same facilities," said Sajad Jiyad, a researcher and former managing director of the Bayan Center, a Baghdad-based think tank.

"Now the (Iran-backed) groups who supported the initial strike in Taji, who were the most outspoken, feel obliged, authorized, maybe even legitimized to respond, ostensibly to protect Iraqi sovereignty but really to keep the pressure up on Americans," he added.

"There are no red lines anymore," Jiyad said.

Wednesday's attack on Camp Taji was the deadliest to target U.S. troops in Iraq since a late December rocket attack on an Iraqi base, which killed a U.S. contractor. That attack set in motion a series of attacks that brought Iraq to the brink of war.

After the contractor was killed, America launched airstrikes targeting Kataib Hezbollah, which in turn led to protests at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

A U.S. drone strike in Baghdad then killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani, a top commander responsible for expeditionary operations across the wider Mideast. Iran struck back with a ballistic missile attack on U.S. forces in Iraq, the Islamic Republic's most direct assault on America since the 1979 seizing of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.

The U.S. and Iran stepped back from further attacks after the Soleimani incident. A senior U.S. official said in late January, when U.S.-Iran tensions had cooled, that the killing of Americans constituted a red line that could spark more violence.

Trump disbanded NSC pandemic unit that experts had praised

By DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Public health and national security experts shake their heads when President Donald Trump says the coronavirus "came out of nowhere" and "blindsided the world."

They've been warning about the next pandemic for years and criticized the Trump administration's decision in 2018 to dismantle a National Security Council directorate at the White House charged with preparing for when, not if, another pandemic would hit the nation.

"It would be nice if the office was still there," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institute of Health, told Congress this week. "I wouldn't necessarily characterize it as a mistake (to eliminate the unit). I would say we worked very well with that office."

The NSC directorate for global health and security and bio-defense survived the transition from President Barack Obama to Trump in 2017.

Trump's elimination of the office suggested, along with his proposed budget cuts for the CDC, that he did not see the threat of pandemics in the same way that many experts in the field did.

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"One year later I was mystified when the White House dissolved the office, leaving the country less prepared for pandemics like COVID-19," Beth Cameron, the first director of the unit, wrote in an op-ed Friday in The Washington Post.

She said the directorate was set up to be the "smoke alarm" and get ahead of emergencies and sound a warning at the earliest sign of fire — "all with the goal of avoiding a six-alarm fire."

It's impossible to assess the impact of the 2018 decision to disband the unit, she said. Cameron noted that biological experts remain at the White House, but she says it's clear that eliminating the office contributed to what she called a "sluggish domestic response." She said that shortly before Trump took office, the unit was watching a rising number of cases in China of a deadly strain of the flu and a yellow fever outbreak in Angola.

"It's unclear whether the decision to disband the directorate, which was made in May 2018, after John Bolton became national security adviser, was a tactical move to downgrade the issue or whether it was part of the White House's interest in simplifying and shrinking the National Security Council staff," Cameron says.

The NSC during the Obama administration grew to about 250 professionals, according to Trump's current national security adviser, Robert O'Brien. The staff has been cut to about 110 or 115 staffers, he said.

When Trump was asked on Friday whether closing the NSC global health unit slowed the U.S. response, the president called it a "nasty" question because his administration had acted quickly and saved lives.

"I don't know anything about it," Trump said.

Earlier, when asked about it, he said: "This is something that you can never really think is going to happen."

On Saturday, John Bolton, a former Trump national security adviser, dismissed claims that "streamlining NSC structures impaired our nation's bio defense are false." In a tweet, he said global health "remained a top NSC priority, and its expert team was critical to effectively handling the 2018-19 Africa Ebola crisis. The angry Left just can't stop attacking, even in a crisis."

For many years, the national intelligence director's worldwide threat assessment has warned that a flu pandemic or other large-scale outbreak of a contagious disease could lead to massive rates of death and disability that would severely affect the world economy. Public health experts have been blowing whistles too.

Back in mid-2018, Fauci told Congress: "When you have a respiratory virus that can be spread by droplets and aerosol and ... there's a degree of morbidity associated with that, you can have a catastrophe. ... The one that we always talk about is the 1918 pandemic, which killed between 50 and 100 million people. ... Influenza first, or something like influenza, is the one that keeps me up at night."

The White House says the NSC remains involved in responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

A senior administration official said Friday that the NSC's global health security directorate was absorbed into another division where similar responsibilities still exist, but under different titles. The work of coordinating policy and making sure that decisions made by Trump's coronavirus task force are implemented is still the job of the NSC.

Some lawmakers aren't convinced.

Rep. Gerald Connolly, D-Va., and Rep. Steve Chabot, R-Ohio, have introduced a bill that would require future administrations to have experts always in place to prepare for new pandemics.

"Two years ago, the administration dismantled the apparatus that had been put in place five years before in the face of the Ebola crisis," Connolly said. "I think, in retrospect, that was an unwise move. This bill would restore that and institutionalize it."

Connolly said the bill is not meant to be critical of the Trump administration. He said it's a recognition that Trump had to name a coronavirus responder just like Obama had to name one for Ebola in 2014. "We can't go from pandemic to pandemic," Connolly said.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 4 passed the measure, which is co-sponsored by 37 Democrats and five Republicans. The full House has not yet voted on the bill.

Chabot said one of the bill's main goals is to would require personnel to be permanently in place preparing for pandemics.

"Specifically, we need someone, preferable at the NSC, to quarterback the U.S. government's response

since that response inevitably involves several agencies across the government," Chabot said. "Our bill would make this position permanent."

Former Obama administration officials insist that the Trump White House would have been able to act more quickly had the office still been intact.

"I think if we'd had a unit and dedicated professionals looking at this issue, gaming out scenarios well before ... we might have identified some of these testing issues," says Lisa Monaco, President Obama's homeland security adviser, said at a recent forum on coronavirus. "There would have been folks sounding the alarm in December when we saw this coming out of China, saying 'Hey, what do we need to be doing here in this country to address it?'"

Ron Klain, who managed the government response to contain and mitigate the spread of Ebola in 2014, agreed.

"If I were back in my old job at the White House ... I'd be pushing to have us do 30 million tests — to test people in nursing homes, to test people with unexplained respiratory ailments, to test the people who regularly visit nursing homes, to test healthcare workers," Klain said recently at the event hosted by the Center for American Progress in Washington.

Spain to follow Italy into lockdown as virus cases soar

By **JOSEPH WILSON** and **GEIR MOULSON** Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Spain was set to follow Italy on Saturday in declaring a nationwide lockdown as European countries took ever more sweeping measures to reduce contact among people and slow the accelerating spread of the coronavirus.

China, meanwhile, where the virus first emerged late last year, continued to relax its drastic measures in its hardest-hit region.

According to a draft government order seen by The Associated Press, Spain's government planned to announce a two-week state of emergency and tight restrictions on movement by the country's 46 million people. Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez was due to address the nation in the afternoon.

Airline flights bound for Spain turned around as word spread of the lockdown.

People will be allowed to leave their homes only to buy food and medicine, commute to work, go to hospitals and banks, or take trips related to the care of the young and the elderly. Those rules will take effect at 8 a.m. (0700 GMT) Monday.

Effectively immediately, Spain is also closing all schools, universities, restaurants, bars and hotels nationwide along with non-essential stores, a step some regions have already taken.

Health authorities in Spain said the number of coronavirus infections climbed past 5,700, half of them in the capital, Madrid. That represents a national increase of over 1,500 in 24 hours. The country had 136 deaths, up from 120.

Spain has the fifth-highest number of cases, behind China, Italy, Iran and South Korea. By Saturday, more than 145,000 infections and over 5,400 deaths had been recorded worldwide.

Shoppers packed some supermarkets in Spain early in the morning despite calls for calm from authorities. But overall, the normally bustling streets of the country's two biggest cities were noticeably quieter as the message sank in that social distancing is the only way to stop the pandemic.

"We had to close and remain shut for 15 days," restaurant owner Rachel Papparardo said in Barcelona. "But this is nothing. It is just so more people don't get infected and we can recover from this."

The number of new cases has dwindled in China, but the virus has in recent weeks spread exponentially in the Middle East, Europe and North America, leading President Donald Trump to declare a state of emergency for the United States on Friday.

Europe has now become the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, with countries imposing a cascade of restrictions in an effort to prevent their health systems from collapsing under the caseload.

Residents in Madrid and northeastern Catalonia had already awoken Saturday to shuttered bars, restaurants and other non-essential commercial outlets as ordered by regional authorities. Madrid ordered city

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parks closed and Seville canceled its Easter Week processions — one of Spain's most important religious and cultural events.

Spain's measures to date, though, had fallen short of those ordered by Italy, the worst-hit European country, where the number of cases climbed past 17,600, with 1,266 deaths. The government in Rome has ordered an unprecedented lockdown, ordering businesses to close and restricting people's movement.

Mayors of many Italian cities, including Rome and Milan, decided to close public playgrounds and parks. Under a decree issued earlier in the week, people had been allowed in parks as long as they kept at least a distance of 1 meter between each other.

While limiting public life to a minimum, Premier Giuseppe Conte has said production — particularly of food and health supplies — must not stop. On Saturday morning, union and industrial leaders reached an agreement on special measures to keep factories running.

At noon, people around Italy came out on their balconies, terraces or gardens or simply leaned out from open windows to clap for several minutes in a gesture of thanks to medical staff.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover in a matter of weeks.

Elsewhere in Europe, some countries moved to isolate themselves from their neighbors.

Denmark closed its borders and halted passenger traffic to and from the country. Travelers will be turned away at the border if they are unable to show that they have "a legitimate reason" to enter — for example, if they are Danish citizens or residents.

"I know that the overall list of measures is very extreme and will be seen as very extreme, but I am convinced that it's worth it," Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said.

Poland planned to close its borders at midnight and deny all foreigners entry unless they lived in Poland or had personal ties there. Non-citizens allowed in will be quarantined for 14 days. The Czech Republic and Slovakia took similar action. Lithuania said it was introducing border checks at the frontiers with Poland and Latvia for 10 days and was considering banning foreigners from entering.

Russia said its land borders with Norway and Poland will be closed to most foreigners beginning Sunday.

On the other side of the globe, New Zealand announced that incoming passengers, including New Zealand citizens, will be required to isolate themselves for 14 days, with few exceptions. Philippine officials announced a night curfew in the capital and said millions of people in the densely populated region should leave their homes only during the daytime for work or urgent errands.

The measures increasingly mirror those taken by China, which in January made the unprecedented decision to halt outbound transportation from cities with a combined population of more than 60 million people, starting with the epicenter, Wuhan, in the central province of Hubei.

The spread of COVID-19 in the country has slowed dramatically, according to China's National Health Commission. After reporting thousands of new cases per day only a month ago, the commission said Saturday that there were 13 new deaths and just 11 new cases, including people who recently arrived in China from other affected countries like Italy.

Wuhan is now the only city in Hubei still designated "high-risk." Several Hubei municipalities are gradually resuming public transportation and reopening businesses.

Hundreds of parks, museums and art galleries have reopened in Shanghai.

In Britain, the death toll nearly doubled from the day before to 21, and the number of people infected rose to over 1,100.

In the U.S., which has reported 51 deaths, Trump said the new emergency decree will open up \$50 billion for state and local governments to respond to the crisis. The president said the decree also gave the U.S. health secretary emergency powers to waive federal regulations to give doctors and hospitals more flexibility in treating patients.

Drug company executives vowed to work together and with the government to quickly expand the country's coronavirus testing capabilities, which are far behind those in many countries.

Cases topped 2,100 across the U.S., where thousands of schools have been closed, concerts and sporting events canceled and Broadway theaters shut down. Trump has halted his political rallies, following the lead of Democratic rivals Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders.

Moulson reported from Berlin. Associated Press writers Aritz Parra in Madrid, Yanan Wang in Beijing, Frances D'Emilio in Rome, Joseph Wilson in Barcelona, Spain, Andrew Taylor in Washington, Karel Janicek in Prague, Nick Perry in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Jim Gomez in Manila contributed to this report.

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'He's an inmate': Anguish mounts over virus-hit nursing home

By GENE JOHNSON and TED S. WARREN Associated Press

KIRKLAND, Wash. (AP) — Desperate to talk to their dad, Scott Sedlacek and his brother, Steve, stood outside his open nursing home window and shouted. They could barely hear his weak replies, but one came through clearly.

"I feel like (expletive)," the 86-year-old told them.

Chuck Sedlacek arrived at the Life Care Center of Kirkland three weeks ago for physical therapy, just before the suburban nursing home became the epicenter of the nation's worst coronavirus outbreak.

Now he's in worse shape than before.

He's in isolation after contracting the virus, but his symptoms haven't progressed enough to warrant moving him to a hospital. He came seeking rehab for a broken ankle and banged-up knee after a fall, but he hasn't gotten out of bed in two weeks. Though he previously lived independently in a senior community where he could walk the halls and visit old friends, he's now losing his mobility from lack of exercise.

His five children have hardly spoken with him because his near blindness and neuropathy in his hands make it tough for him to use a phone. And, they say, the overwhelmed Life Care staff has given him just two sponge baths since he arrived.

"He's an inmate as much as he is a patient," said Scott Sedlacek, 64, who also caught the virus. "We all love and really care about our dad, and we are absolutely scared. Loneliness kills a lot of people, too. We think this is a license for death."

The Sedlaceks' experience is a grim tale of what residents and their loved ones face as the coronavirus spreads around the country and enters other long-term care facilities. While most people recover from the virus and many have mild symptoms, elderly residents are especially at risk.

The virus has been confirmed in at least 11 nursing homes or senior apartments in western Washington. A cluster has also emerged at a veterans home in Lebanon, Oregon, where eight cases were confirmed in recent days.

Nursing homes around the country — which are frequently cited for infection control problems — are on high alert for coronavirus, boosting their cleaning regimens and clamping down on visitors.

The families of the remaining Life Care residents have reason to be terrified. More than two dozen coronavirus deaths have been linked to the facility, and more than half of those inside have tested positive.

The residents remain in a purgatory. They are mostly restricted to their rooms with no visitors. Roommates or neighbors across the hall have vanished without explanation. Some people are confused about what's going on.

The families, meanwhile, say their anguish has been compounded by mixed messages and a lack of information.

The nurses have told the Sedlaceks they check their father's temperature every four to eight hours, less

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often than the two hours promised by administrators. That's troubling, since the virus seems able to cause fevers to spike drastically in a short period. The family has no idea how or when they'll be able to transfer their father out of the center if he recovers from the virus.

Families also question why, long after the outbreak began in China, the U.S. health system was so ill-prepared to test for coronavirus that the facility was still admitting new patients, including Chuck Sedlacek, even after the first resident had been sent to the hospital with flu-like symptoms.

Life Care said there was no reason to think the coronavirus was present until it received news Feb. 29 that a resident had tested positive. Administrators said remaining workers — one-third are out with virus symptoms — are doing what they can to care for residents.

"All I can say is the nurses share your frustration," spokesman Tim Killian told the Sedlaceks when they questioned him during a media availability outside the nursing home this week. "We have diminished capability to take care of all the patients in the exact manner they need. ... We do need more help."

The inability to comfort confused parents has been especially painful.

June Liu's family used to pick her up several times a week for home-cooked Taiwanese meals and church services. The 93-year-old, who doesn't speak English, has lived at Life Care for two years since a small stroke.

During a flu outbreak there last year, she was able to leave the facility to stay with her daughter, Su Wilson. But now she's stuck at the facility after developing a cough two weeks ago and testing positive for the virus. She doesn't understand why no one is coming to visit her and why she can't go stay with her family.

"I think she's very, very depressed, not knowing what's going on," Wilson said. "This is sad for a lot of families and for us. The staff are trying to do their best, but are you caring for their mental health, or is it just 'Isolation! Isolation! Check vitals! IV!'"

Wilson has now taken to leaving homemade soup outside the nursing home for staff to bring inside to her mom.

There is hope that outbreaks at other nursing homes might be less severe as they adopt restrictions and learn from Life Care's experience.

For example, at the senior living community where Chuck Sedlacek typically lives, Emerald Heights in Redmond, a staff member at a skilled nursing facility developed symptoms early this month and immediately began staying home before a test confirmed the disease. Eleven residents deemed at risk were quickly isolated and tested; only one was positive.

Meanwhile, though, a resident of the separate independent living community has been confirmed to have the disease and is now in self-isolation.

"Despite our advanced planning, we're having to run very, very fast to stay ahead of this virus," said Kris Egskov, Aegis Living president, after a resident at Aegis Marymoor in Redmond, Washington, tested positive. "We are preparing for the long-haul and accept that this may in fact be an entirely new paradigm in which to protect our residents."

Scott Sedlacek visited his dad four times before Life Care was locked down to visitors on Feb. 29. No one inside was even wearing face masks, he said.

On March 1, the son's joints began to ache. He spent two days trying to get tested for COVID-19, asking doctors as well as public health officials. Even though he'd spent time at Life Care, the center of the worst U.S. outbreak, he couldn't obtain a test until after his fever spiked, he had trouble breathing and his wife brought him to a hospital emergency room, which cleared him of the flu and other illnesses.

He felt fine again within 12 hours of being treated with a bronchial nebulizer, and he quarantined himself until last Wednesday, when he cut the period short so he could visit his dad through the hospital window. He wore a yellow face mask as he yelled to him.

"This is supposed to be my last day of quarantine, but being with my dad is way more important," Sedlacek said that night. "He's in there and he's lonely. The big thing we wanted to convey to him was, 'We're here for you, we love you and we want you to get better — we just can't be in there with you.'"

Johnson reported from Seattle.

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49 detained in Russia at Moscow protest against repression

Associated Press undefined

MOSCOW (AP) — Police in the Russian capital have detained dozens of people at a protest against political repression outside the headquarters of the Federal Security Service.

The OVD-Info group that monitors arrests at demonstrations in Russia said 49 people were detained on Saturday.

It was not immediately clear what charges would be filed.

The detentions came as people stood in line to take part in a single picket protest. Russian law allows lone picketers without prior permission.

Rotating single pickets, in which each person stands for a short period before giving way to the next, is a frequent strategy.

The security service is the main successor to the Soviet KGB and its headquarters building on Lubyanka Square has strong symbolic resonance.

Debate questions: Biden, Sanders are finally to meet 1-on-1

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

And then there were two.

Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders are set to meet Sunday night in their first one-to-one presidential primary debate after months of Democratic free-for-alls that presaged a dramatic culling of the field since the opening round of the 2020 race.

Some key questions to look for about the debate, which takes place before the next round of primaries on Tuesday, when 577 delegates are at stake in Arizona, Florida, Illinois and Ohio.

A NEW OPENING, BUT FOR WHICH CANDIDATE?

The coronavirus outbreak has overturned American life, but it is unclear whether the unfolding crisis changes a race that Biden controls with more than half the delegates already awarded.

Both candidates have used the COVID-19 pandemic as a hook to try to justify their main themes, and can be expected to do so again Sunday.

Sanders has been saying that the pandemic demonstrates the need for his "Medicare for All" universal health insurance plan, along with other expansion of a social safety net. He said the shortage of medical goods, from masks and rubber gloves to diagnostic testing kits, is a consequence of decades of establishment trade policy that sent U.S. manufacturing prowess overseas. (Biden, Sanders has noted repeatedly, voted for some of those international trade deals as a Delaware senator.)

To Biden, it's a moment to make the case against President Donald Trump's competence. The former vice president has run against Trump from the beginning, so much so that it cost him embarrassing finishes in early-voting Iowa and New Hampshire. But Biden has rebounded in recent weeks.

On Thursday he outlined his own government-wide coronavirus response during an address in front of American flags, and he introduced a group of blue chip advisers. The unmistakable subtext: a candidate who can already see himself sitting behind the Resolute Desk.

HOW DOES A PRIVATE STUDIO CHANGE THE DYNAMICS?

Coronavirus forced network host CNN to dispense with a live audience in Phoenix and move the debate to Washington.

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Sanders' style is to speak before large audiences, feeding off their energy. Of course, he's also mixed it up with debate audiences, most recently in South Carolina, jeering back when people grumbled at one of his answers.

"Really? Really?" he retorted, gesturing out at the auditorium.

Biden has drawn smaller crowds than Sanders throughout his campaign, but he also has shown more spirit and energy as crowds have gotten larger and friendlier. On Sunday night, the veteran politicians will meet without being able to process how their answers and interactions are playing with any voters listening to them.

So far, the debates have highlighted the overall uneven nature of Biden's campaign. His aides have said for months that he would do better if he got a shot on a smaller stage. Sunday is just that.

HOW AGGRESSIVE IS SANDERS?

Sanders recently shut down a rally crowd that booed Biden. "Nope, nope, nope," Sanders admonished, calling Biden a "friend of mind" who's "wrong on the issues." But will that hold with Sanders now needing 57% of the remaining delegates to win the nomination?

He hasn't been shy about highlighting Biden's record. Sanders has cited Biden's Senate votes for international trade deals, his participation in budget negotiations that would curtail some entitlement spending, his support for the war powers that allowed President George W. Bush to invade Iraq in 2003 and Biden's fundraising from wealthy donors.

But does Sanders only highlight differences and emphasize his own vision? Does he argue simply that Biden's ideas such as tuition-free college for two years instead of four and adding a "public option" to existing health insurance markets rather than replacing private markets with a government system, amount to compromising before the legislative fight even begins?

Or does Sanders risk dividing the party by attacking Biden as another "corporate Democrat" selling out the working class?

Four years ago, when Sanders engaged Hillary Clinton in an extended, bitter battle well after the delegate math favored Clinton, the notion of a Trump presidency was only hypothetical. Now, Sanders and Biden have said repeatedly that neither wants to be viewed as responsible for the president's reelection.

HOW DOES BIDEN REACH OUT?

"Unifying the country" has been a pillar of Biden's campaign. It's mostly a play to independents, centrist Democrats and moderate Republicans worn out by Trump.

But Biden has reached out to the left flank in recent weeks. It's a balancing act given that he has harped on Sanders' identity as a "democratic socialist" and suggested that if Democrats "want a nominee who's a Democrat," they should back Biden.

So what's Biden's approach with Sanders standing nearby? Biden could promote his "progressive" and "bold" agenda to coax voters to his left. He could make the bottom-line appeal about the "common goal" of defeating Trump. Or he could skip the party unity talk altogether.

DOWN TO TWO OLDER WHITE MEN

Democrats took the stage last June with a historically diverse field in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, even sexual orientation.

Now the race has come down to two white men each approaching 80. To be fair, Biden and Sanders are the remaining major candidates in no small part because they drew more support from nonwhite voters than any of their rivals.

Yet it's a stark image for a party that prides itself on diversity. Biden, in the South Carolina debate, casually tossed out that he would like to nominate the first black woman to the Supreme Court.

Each candidate talks often about a wide coalition he wants to lead. But how might they acknowledge the juxtaposition of their own identities with the rest of the Democratic Party?

Apple temporarily shuts stores worldwide to fight virus

By **KELVIN CHAN Associated Press**

LONDON (AP) — Tech giant Apple is closing its stores outside of China for two weeks and will only sell online as part of efforts to fight the global viral pandemic.

"In our workplaces and communities, we must do all we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19," CEO Tim Cook tweeted Saturday. "Apple will be temporarily closing all stores outside of Greater China until March 27 and committing \$15M to help with worldwide recovery."

In a lengthier online statement, Cook said that Apple's stores in China have all now reopened and what the company has learned there has helped it develop "best practices that are assisting enormously in our global response."

One of the lessons Apple learned in China is that "the most effective way to minimize risk of the virus's transmission is to reduce density and maximize social distance," he said. That's why the company is taking new steps to protect workers and customers as the infection rate rises in other places.

Apple's online stores remain open. Workers will continue to be paid and office staff will work remotely if possible, Cook said in the statement issued Friday.

The iPhone maker has more than 500 retail stores worldwide, with about half in the United States. The company temporarily shut its 42 stores in mainland China at the height of the country's outbreak. It said last month it wouldn't meet its second-quarter financial guidance because of reduced demand and production of iPhones in China.

The announcement came hours after Apple said its annual Worldwide Developers Conference would take place entirely online this year. Thousands of engineers and customers attend the event in San Jose, California, which is in its 31st year.

The virus has infected more than 145,000 people worldwide. Most patients have only mild or moderate symptoms and recover fully, but the elderly and people with existing health conditions are particularly vulnerable. More than 5,400 have died.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Dems, GOP forge virus outbreak into '20 campaign issue

By **ALAN FRAM Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Coronavirus is already coloring the 2020 campaign, with Democrats convinced President Donald Trump's response to the outbreak leaves him and down-ballot Republicans vulnerable over the burgeoning health crisis, his competency and — potentially most damaging — the staggering economy.

Republicans are fighting back by accusing Democrats of politicizing the fight against the virus and COVID-19, the sometimes deadly disease it causes. But mostly, a nervous GOP is hoping administration actions will reverse the stock market's nosedive, avert a recession and control the coronavirus in just a few months.

That could allow time to prevent the problems from becoming Trump's Hurricane Katrina and defining November's election battles for the White House and Congress. President George W. Bush was harshly criticized for his administration's belated handling of the deadly 2005 storm, which battered New Orleans, damaged his presidency and contributed to the GOP's loss of House control the following year.

"The economy has been his whole schtick," said former Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., who once headed the House GOP's campaign committee. "If the market tanks and the economy goes down, I think Trump's whole reason for being in office goes away."

Added Whit Ayres, a veteran Republican pollster: "The way you respond to crises can be make-or-break moments for elected officials."

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People in both parties say a recession and rampant disease outbreak would cripple Trump's reelection and Republican efforts to capture House control and defend their Senate majority. That's an edge Democrats are primed to exploit.

"Every elected @GOP official owns this moment," Rep. Sean Casten, D-Ill., tweeted this past week after Trump delivered a prime-time national address that erroneously described several steps he's taking to try containing the virus. "They elected him. They coddled him. They cowered before him."

Democrats' first ads on the theme have only started trickling out. Yet they point to GOP soft spots Democrats detect and the emotional appeals they'll make.

Before quitting the Democratic presidential race this month, Mike Bloomberg ran two ads that implicitly challenged Trump's ability to manage the crisis by citing Bloomberg's efforts as New York City mayor right after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. "Trust is essential," Bloomberg said.

The Democratic-backed group Protect Our Care began airing a spot this week in Montana asserting that the state's GOP senator, Steve Daines, "doesn't worry" about families' health concerns including coronavirus. It depicts a concerned mom hovering over her daughter, who lies bedridden in a hospital.

Daines, who faces a competitive reelection race this November, has favored repealing former President Barack Obama's health care law, though there's no proof that Daines is unconcerned about coronavirus. Jesse Hunt, spokesman for the Senate GOP's campaign committee, said Democrats are running "disgusting attack ads that politicize a disease that knows no party."

Short of campaign ads, both sides have used press releases and emails to dual over the virus.

Christy Smith, a Democrat battling for an open House seat from Los Angeles, emailed supporters accusing Republicans of "legislative malpractice" for blocking a Democratic bill addressing the problem.

And an email from the Great America PAC, a group that supports Trump, says while Trump has been "working around the clock to keep Americans safe and healthy," he's been blamed by "the Left and Fake News media" for the outbreak.

Such emails are often used to generate lists of potential voters, volunteers and donors. Trump has repeatedly referred to criticisms of his administration's coronavirus performance as a "hoax."

Republicans say there is still time for Trump to tame the coronavirus and the economy and consign them to background noise before Election Day.

"If we do this right, in the mid-summer the economy and stocks will come roaring back," said Rep. Steve Stivers, R-Ohio.

A quick turnabout will be crucial for Trump, whose presidency has featured frequent high-profile clashes that often drown each other out. That includes his House impeachment and his acquittal just five weeks ago by the Senate, which have already been overshadowed by the latest crisis.

Above all issues, a feeble economy can spell an incumbent president's downfall, and things currently look grim. Plummeting financial markets, withering 401(k) accounts, growing layoffs, slowed consumer spending and travel and the shutdown of sports leagues and entertainment venues are hardly the stuff that lures voters.

Trump declared the coronavirus pandemic a national emergency Friday, saying that would provide \$50 billion to state and local governments for the outbreak. The Dow Jones average rose over 1,900 points Friday but was still in bear market territory, down over 20 percent from its all-time high last month.

Trump is also poised to sign a House-passed coronavirus relief package.

But in an example of his tendency to downplay the virus and his defensiveness about the administration's slow-footed reaction to it, he said, "I don't take responsibility at all" for the plodding roll-out of testing in the U.S.

That left the wounded economy and the virus irresistible targets for Democrats, who are tying them to criticism of Trump as incompetent.

"You wouldn't have had a massive fluctuation in the stock market this week if he wasn't really disturbing the confidence of investors," said Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., a former Democratic Party chairwoman. She said Trump's "fly by the seat of his pants, cover his own tuchus approach does not inspire confidence."

"President Trump has taken kind of malicious pride in asserting that he alone can make things happen," said Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt. "And he's run into his match with a coronavirus that simply doesn't respond to his tweets and insults."

Democratic presidential candidates have struck similar themes.

Joe Biden said "a pervasive lack of trust in this president" had hindered the response to the virus, compounded by Trump's leaving the country "woefully unprepared." The former vice president's chief rival, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, said the administration's "incompetence and recklessness have threatened the lives of many, many people."

Still, Republicans are watching to see if Democrats overstep.

The risk for Democrats is if they "look like they are cheering for a worsening of a very serious situation," said Ayres, the GOP pollster.

This story has been corrected to reflect that Rep. Sean Casten represents Illinois, not Wisconsin.

Trump's latest travel ban highlights gaps in containment net

By CANDICE CHOI, BERNARD CONDON and CARLA K. JOHNSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In the weeks before President Donald Trump spoke from the Oval Office to announce restrictions on travelers from more than two dozen countries in Europe, thousands of people from the region already had stepped off planes at U.S. airports, and an untold number of them carried the coronavirus.

The same can be said of flights from China in the weeks before the U.S. clamped down on those. Thousands who visited the country where the illness began had entered the United States without any kind of health review.

Such sobering realities highlight just one element of the federal government's shortcomings in getting ahead of the virus and halting its spread from overseas travelers.

A day-by-day review of the spread of an unfamiliar virus from its earliest days shows U.S. officials have often been slow to respond or steps behind, with critical gaps in containment measures such as travel restrictions and airport screenings that allowed the crisis to grow to more than 1,700 infections and 50 deaths.

"There have been gaps in the way the U.S. has approached its response, which has not been comprehensive enough to contain the virus at the early stages of the epidemic," said Josh Michaud, associate director of global health policy with the Kaiser Family Foundation in Washington.

That was evident from the very beginning of the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S. On Jan. 15, a 35-year-old man returned home to Washington state through the Seattle airport after traveling to Wuhan, China, where the virus was already spreading. He would become the nation's first known case. Shortly before, on Jan. 13, a woman in her 60s arrived home through the Chicago airport after traveling to Wuhan. She would be Chicago's first known case.

Both of those travelers came to U.S. days before the federal government began screenings for passengers who traveled through Wuhan at three U.S. international airports, New York's Kennedy, San Francisco and Los Angeles. That list was expanded on Jan. 21 to include hubs in Chicago and Atlanta. Seattle-Tacoma wouldn't be added to the list until Jan. 28.

Also, there's no guarantee those screenings — which involved passengers filling out health forms and having their temperatures taken — would have caught those early patients, who didn't report symptoms until later. U.S. researchers say screenings may miss half of COVID-19 infected people, since they may not develop symptoms for several days.

By Jan. 24, both the Chicago woman and Washington state man had sought medical care after feeling sick, and tests confirmed they had the virus. Learning of the two early cases, public health workers scrambled to reach hundreds of people who may have been exposed to them on flights and on the ground, knowing they wouldn't be able to find them all with certainty.

With infections in Wuhan multiplying at an alarming rate, the White House announced on Jan. 31 that non-residents who had recently been to mainland China would no longer be allowed entry.

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Americans returning from the Wuhan region would be subject to a mandatory two-week quarantine. In Boston, a man who would become the city's first case had returned after traveling to Wuhan just days earlier.

By mid-February, cases in China had pushed past 44,000. But the threat still seemed low in the U.S. and the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at its highest point ever amid investor optimism the trade wars initiated by Trump were being resolved.

Then on Feb. 24, a teenager at Jackson High School in Mill Creek, Washington, stayed home with fever, body aches and a headache. He was tested for flu at a clinic that week, but the test came back negative. Feeling better, he went to school on Feb. 28. Arriving on campus, he got a call to come home immediately. It was COVID-19.

The next day, Trevor Bedford, a Seattle scientist, tweeted about the "enormous implications" of finding genetic fingerprint similarities between the teenager's virus and the Washington man who became the first known U.S. case. "This strongly suggests that there has been cryptic transmission in Washington State for the past 6 weeks," he wrote on Twitter.

To some, containment still seemed like a possibility in the United States, which as recently as about two weeks ago had no deaths and just 60 known cases, mostly people who were under federal quarantine after being evacuated from China or a cruise ship in Japan.

"It may get a little bigger; it may not get bigger at all," Trump said in a national TV address at the time.

With cases rising above 1,000 in Italy and 3,000 in South Korea, the White House announced on March 1 that U.S.-bound passengers would undergo screenings before leaving those countries. But travelers from Italy who would eventually test positive were already on their way.

On March 4, California health officials announced that three of its six new cases were people who had visited northern Italy. A day later, Illinois announced its fifth confirmed case — a man who had recently returned from Italy. A day after that, Oklahoma announced its first case — a man who had returned from Italy about two weeks earlier. And a few days later, the state announced its second case had also traveled to Italy.

By the time Trump announced the European travel ban Thursday, cases in the region including Italy, Spain and France had mushroomed to more than 17,000. When a similar ban was announced on people traveling from China, that country had around 11,000 cases. Iran had about 600 confirmed cases when the U.S. banned travelers who had recently been there.

"The European Union failed to take the same precautions and restrict travel from China and other hotspots," Trump said. "As a result, a large number of new clusters in the United States were seeded by travelers from Europe."

Still, Trump's European travel restriction which began at midnight Friday includes a glaring exception: Britain, with nearly 800 infections.

Some experts question the effectiveness of any kind of travel restrictions given the heavy volume of global travel. Last year, for example, 4.2 million passengers arrived in the U.S. on flights from China and 2.2 million from Italy.

Holes in the containment net may sound alarming to the general public, but experts in controlling outbreaks assume the net will let some slip through. The point is to slow down or "flatten" rates of infection to keep the number of severely sick patients from overwhelming hospitals, which aren't big enough to accommodate a surge.

"We are essentially spreading this spread over a longer period of time to allow health systems time to adapt and respond," said Dr. Sandro Galea an epidemiologist at Boston University.

The benefit of stopping a portion of new infections from entering also depends on how aggressively officials are simultaneously controlling infections already within their borders, said Benjamin Cowling, an epidemiologist at the University of Hong Kong.

But nearly two months after the first U.S. case was confirmed, the persisting lack of testing capacity has left experts uncertain about how many more infected people aren't being identified. Some researchers say the true count of infections in the U.S. may be upwards of 14,000.

"It is a failing, let's admit it," said Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health on Thursday of

the testing limitations.

Most people who get infected with the virus experience moderate symptoms. and the vast majority of people recover. Others, including older adults and people with existing health issues, can become severely sick.

Patricia Herrick, the daughter of an 89-year-old woman who died last week in the Seattle-area nursing home that has become ground zero of the U.S. outbreak with at least 25 deaths linked to it, said testing should have started much earlier so the sick could be separated from the well.

"We let this thing advance so far. We didn't take this seriously enough," said Herrick, whose mother was never tested for COVID-19. "I don't know that she would still be living. ... It's tragic."

Kaiser's Michaud acknowledged government health officials may have been "flying blind at first" but the inability to test and identify cases has put them behind.

"We're trying to catch up. But we can't catch up at this point."

Johnson reported from Seattle. AP reporter Bernard Condon contributed from New York.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

US Hispanic Catholics are future, but priest numbers dismal

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — Maria Chavira, a senior administrator in the Diocese of Phoenix, says Spanish-speaking Catholic parishes in her area are "bursting at the seams" and celebrates the emergence of Hispanics as the largest ethnic component of the church nationwide.

Throughout the Southwest, where the surge has been dramatic, Roman Catholic leaders are excited by the possibilities -- and well aware of daunting challenges.

Hispanics now account for 40% of all U.S. Catholics, and a solid majority of school-age Catholics. Yet Hispanic Americans are strikingly underrepresented in Catholic schools and in the priesthood — accounting for less than 19% of Catholic school enrollment and only about 3% of U.S.-based priests.

In the Phoenix diocese, there are than 700,000 Hispanics out of a total of 1.2 million Catholics. Yet out of more than 200 priests, Catholic researchers counted only seven American-born Hispanics.

Extensive efforts are under way to narrow the demographic gaps. They have been highlighted in a nearly completed four-year study by U.S. Catholic bishops seeking to strengthen the church's engagement with Hispanics.

"We have a lot of opportunities," said Chavira, who oversees the Hispanic Mission Office and other departments in the Phoenix diocese. "There may be a little turbulence ahead, but we're going to make it."

Chavira is among more than two dozen Catholic leaders and activists who shared their thoughts about the Hispanic Catholic phenomenon with The Associated Press, some in telephone interviews and others face to face, during a reporting trip to Arizona and Texas' Rio Grande Valley.

Evidence of the change can now be seen each December, when thousands of Hispanic Catholics dance and march in downtown Phoenix to celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe. It can be seen in fast-growing, heavily Hispanic communities in Phoenix's western suburbs.

Nationwide, more than 1,200 Catholic schools have closed in the past decade, usually under financial stress. Yet in the suburb of Avondale, enrollment is surging at a handsome new Catholic high school.

The school, named for Pope John Paul II, opened in 2018. About 70% of its 220 students are Hispanic; plans call for rapid expansion to accommodate an enrollment of 1,000.

"We're serving people who've been underserved in this nation," said the principal, Sister Mary Jordan Hoover. "These young people are trying to learn to be the next teachers, the next administrators, writers, doctors. They're dreaming big."

The hopefulness contrasts with circumstances in some other regions. Hundreds of parishes have closed in

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the Northeast and Midwest. The long-running clergy sex abuse scandal has forced more than 20 dioceses across the U.S. into bankruptcy since 2004, most recently in the Northeast.

The scandals haven't spared the Southwest. The dioceses in Tucson, Arizona, and in Santa Fe and Gallup, New Mexico, are among those which declared bankruptcy.

But in states along the Mexico border, the past scandals don't diminish the excitement over a future Hispanic-accented Catholic church. More than 400 new parishes have opened since 1970 in the border states, and many Hispanic Catholics were elated by the recent election of Mexican-born Los Angeles Archbishop José Gómez as the first Hispanic president of the bishops' conference.

"It's the tale of two churches," said Hosffman Ospino, a professor of Hispanic ministry at Boston College. "In Boston, I see a Catholicism that's very reserved. In the Southwest it's very public, very expressive."

He said the median age for Hispanic Catholics in the U.S. is 29, compared to 55 for white non-Hispanic Catholics.

"You've got a lot of energy," he said. "You've got people who want to be recognized and have a voice in the decisions of their church."

Across the Southwest, there's tension arising from the restrictive immigration policies imposed by President Donald Trump's administration along the U.S.-Mexico border. Those moves have angered Catholic activists who assist migrants and trouble many Hispanics in the U.S. with relatives who lack legal immigration status.

"I wish our bishops would be a more solid voice denouncing this," said Sister Norma Pimentel, who runs a respite center for migrants in McAllen, Texas.

Looking ahead, Pimentel believes Hispanics could energize the entire U.S. church.

"One thing we haven't lost here is the sense of community," she said. "I hope young Catholics can sustain that and take joy in celebrating their faith. That's the future of our church."

A major challenge for the Catholic hierarchy: trying to convince more young men among the booming Hispanic population to become priests.

An example of that challenge: 30-year-old Diego Piña Lopez, of Tucson. He's devoted his life to the Catholic tenet of supporting the dignity of all people, including asylum seekers who visit Casa Alitas, the Catholic-run shelter in Tucson where he works.

Growing up in Nogales, Arizona, he sometimes considered becoming a priest, but opted instead to pursue graduate degrees in social work and public health. Why not the priesthood? "I wanted to have a family," he said.

It's a common response heard by Catholic recruiters.

By the latest count of the bishops' conference, there are about 37,300 U.S.-based priests. Among them are roughly 3,000 Hispanics — more than 2,000 of them foreign-born. The number is startlingly small, given Hispanics' 40% share of the U.S. Catholic population.

The gap may close, but perhaps not quickly. According to Catholic researchers at Georgetown University, 14% of the men scheduled to be ordained in 2019 were Hispanic — and many were foreigners.

One problem, said Hosffman Ospino, is that Hispanics in the U.S. have lagged behind other groups in regard to college-level education, limiting the pool of young men qualified for seminary.

"As long as the education levels of the Latino community are low, very few will become priests or teachers," he said.

But even as the second and third generations of many Hispanic immigrant families do pursue higher education, other factors are at play.

"With those generations, there's extremely heavy pressure to think more about economic success than the glory of God," said Daniel Flores, the bishop of Brownsville, Texas. "We need to teach them the concept of service, rather than you need to earn as much as you can."

Brownsville is among the nation's most heavily Catholic dioceses. About half of its roughly 120 priests are Hispanic, but about two-thirds of those are foreign-born.

Flores advises recruiters to personally engage with potential seminarians and their parents.

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"It's not enough to just send them an email or announce a vocations retreat," he said. "You need to go to invite them and learn from them."

The Phoenix diocese's vocation office -- which recruits and supports seminarians -- is headed by the Rev. Paul Sullivan, who also ministers to an overwhelmingly Hispanic parish. Of his latest batch of 11 seminary graduates, five are U.S.-born and five are from Mexico.

Sullivan acknowledges that desires to have a family and earn money dissuade some men from considering seminary.

"Priesthood is not your average path to take," he said.

Efforts to increase the Hispanic presence in Catholic leadership also are hampered by the school enrollment gap.

Overall enrollment in Catholic schools in the U.S. has plummeted in recent decades, from more than 5.2 million in the 1960s to about 1.73 million this year. Of the current students, only 18.5% are Hispanic, though Hispanics account for well over half of all school-age Catholics.

Experts cite several reasons. Many Hispanics in the U.S. come from Latin American countries where private schools, including Catholic ones, are viewed as bastions of the wealthy. With tuition averaging more than \$5,000 for elementary grades and \$10,000 for high school, Catholic education in the U.S. seems unaffordable to many families. And many Catholic schools are losing students to charter schools which are able to access government funds for their operations.

All these factors are present in the Brownsville diocese, where Catholic school enrollment has dropped sharply in recent years in the face of tougher competition from charter and public schools.

One of the elementary schools fighting to maintain its enrollment is St. Mary's Catholic School. Its principal for seven years, Ana Gomez, says 95% of her 350 students are Hispanic, including about 20 who cross over from Matamoros, Mexico, each school day.

She's been able to keep enrollment stable with strategies taught by the Latino Enrollment Initiative, a program based at Notre Dame University. Tactics include ensuring that schools are culturally in sync with Hispanic families, and helping parents fit tuition into their budgets.

About 80 St. Mary's students now get some financial aid, Gomez said.

Another participant in the Notre Dame initiative is St. Agnes Elementary School in Phoenix, where principal Christine Tax said she's boosted enrollment from 167 to 240 in four years. The student body was two-thirds Hispanic in 2016; the figure is now 95%, and virtually every student receives financial aid through state-approved tax credit programs.

Tax and her staff worked with every family that applies, touting the academic prowess of Catholic schools, helping them negotiate the multiple scholarship programs, ensuring that registration packets and other school communications are available to parents in Spanish, and adding Hispanic cultural celebrations such as the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe to the school calendar.

"Many low-income Hispanic families felt they were not worthy of a Catholic education," Tax said. "We worked to make them know their children are deserving of this."

Nationally, according to the National Catholic Education Association, less than 10% of the 162,000 faculty and staff at Catholic schools is Hispanic. Dioceses are trying to recruit more Hispanic teachers and, in places such as Phoenix, ensure that non-Hispanic staff speak Spanish.

Sister Mary Jordan Hoover, the principal of the new high school, is among those honing her language skills.

"I had to explain in Spanish to one woman about some problems with her son," Hoover said. "She understood -- she gave me a hug afterward."

While the Hispanic population in the U.S. is sure to grow, the extent of the Catholic Church's hold on them is uncertain. Last year, the Pew Research Center reported that U.S. Hispanics are no longer a majority-Catholic group, with 47% of them calling themselves Catholic, down from 57% in 2009. The number identifying as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular" increased from 16% to 23%; those identifying as

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Protestant rose from 23% to 26%.

Melba Salazar-Lucio, a professor and migrant-rights activist in Brownsville, says today's Catholic church seems too rigid for many Hispanics. Her mother no longer attends church, she said, and her three grown children are no longer practicing Catholics.

"There are other denominations -- they have more music, younger pastors who are more accepting of people's ways," Salazar-Lucio said. "The Catholic Church is not going to be changing with the times."

Yet in Phoenix, Catholic traditionalists would embrace the sentiments of Juan Carlos Briones, who attended a local high school and church, and is now in seminary.

"The priests of our parish were universally admired by parishioners young and old, rich and poor," he wrote on the diocese website. "Every Catholic youth should instinctively be open to, and not afraid of, a calling to religious life and the priesthood."

At a migrant outreach center in Nogales, Mexico, close to the Arizona border, Jesuit priest Sean Carroll ministers every day to asylum seekers who dream of joining the ranks of Hispanic Catholics in the U.S.

"They are bringing their culture, their gifts," he said. "The challenge for the church is to be open to receiving those gifts. How do we get them to see themselves as leaders? How do we get them to feel at home?"

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump, American exceptionalism and the virus

By CALVIN WOODWARD, HOPE YEN and DAVID RISING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans normally hear from President Donald Trump when he is opining on Twitter, riffing from a rally stage or otherwise improvising. This past week was different as he sat in the Oval Office with a script laid out for him to read on a matter grave enough for a prime-time address to the nation.

He addressed the coronavirus crisis that is spreading germs and fear. But his words were as factually fraught as many of his tweets.

Most broadly, Trump hailed American exceptionalism in health care and science — "The virus will not have a chance against us" — even as the public health system failed in making diagnostic testing accessible to all who need it.

It's been more than a week now since Trump assured the country: "Anybody, right now, and yesterday, anybody that needs a test, gets a test. They're there. They have the test. And the test is beautiful."

He persisted with that thought as recently as Thursday, a day after his Oval Office address, when he asserted "the testing has been going very smooth." This, as the government's top infection expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, was telling lawmakers: "It is a failing, let's admit it."

A review of Trump's recent rhetoric:

EXCEPTIONALISM?

TRUMP: "No nation is more prepared or more resilient than the United States." — Oval Office address Wednesday.

THE FACTS: American resilience will be measured over time. But the U.S. is not more prepared than all other countries. Seven weeks since the first U.S. case of coronavirus was announced, the government cannot account for what could be thousands of additional infections because of continuing stumbles on testing.

Nearly a month after U.S. health officials promised to tap into a national network of labs that monitor for flu, that system is only just getting started. Large-scale testing is a critical part of tracking the spread of infectious diseases and allocating resources for treatment. The lack of comprehensive figures means U.S. health providers could quickly be overwhelmed by undetected cases.

Fauci told a congressional hearing that other countries grappling with the virus have been making it easy for people to get tested, but in the U.S., "the system is not really geared to what we need right now."

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For most people, COVID-19 causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from it.

TRUMP: "If an American is coming back or anybody is coming back, we're testing. We have a tremendous testing setup where people coming in have to be tested. ... We're not putting them on planes if it shows positive, but if they do come here, we're quarantining. There's going to be a pretty strong enforcement of quarantine." -- remarks Thursday.

THE FACTS: That's not true. All people coming to the U.S. are not subject to mandatory, universal testing, nor are they being forced to quarantine.

As well, his proclamation detailing the broad travel restrictions that took effect midnight Friday night on visitors from most of Europe does not specify that everyone allowed in will have to be tested. Trump was probably referring to plans that are expected to be put in place soon to channel those arriving from many European countries to certain U.S. airports, where they will receive screening and be subjected to quarantine instructions, just like visitors from China.

TRUMP: "Taking early intense action, we have seen dramatically fewer cases of the virus in the United States than are now present in Europe." — Oval Office address.

THE FACTS: "Seen" so far may be true. But that does not mean Europe is being hit harder by infections than the United States. Because of test shortages in the U.S., many Americans with COVID-19 aren't being diagnosed and counted.

TRUMP: "The European Union failed to take the same precautions and restrict travel from China and other hot spots. As a result, a large number of new clusters in the United States were seeded by travelers from Europe." — Oval Office address.

THE FACTS: That's a distorted account of travel restrictions in Europe.

By the time U.S. travel restrictions were announced on Jan. 31, many major European airlines had already cut service to China. While restrictions in some European countries were not as widespread, others were much broader.

The Czech Republic had stopped issuing visas to Chinese citizens. Germany issued a travel advisory urging citizens to postpone nonessential travel to China. Italy had declared a state of emergency for six months. Russia had shut down its land border with China, as well as almost all train traffic and most flights there.

Trump on Jan. 31 signed an order that would temporarily bar entry to the U.S. of foreign nationals, other than immediate family of U.S. citizens and permanent residents, who have traveled in China within the last 14 days. The ban took effect Feb. 2.

A recent study from the journal Science found China's internal crackdown modestly delayed the spread of the virus but it cast doubt that travel restrictions elsewhere will do much compared with other preventive measures.

Despite Trump's boast of "early intense action," his former homeland security adviser, Tom Bossert, said restrictions on entry into the U.S. from Europe came too late. "We have nearly as much disease here in the US as the countries in Europe," he tweeted.

WHAT'S COVERED

TRUMP: "Earlier this week, I met with the leaders of (the) health insurance industry, who have agreed to waive all co-payments for coronavirus treatments, extend insurance coverage to these treatments, and to prevent surprise medical billing." — Oval Office address.

THE FACTS: No, they did not say they will cover copays for treatment.

As Vice President Mike Pence stated more accurately, the insurers agreed to cover coronavirus testing with no cost sharing — so no copays or deductibles. That assurance applies to tests that can confirm or

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rule out the virus, and doesn't extend to treatment or to other tests that the patient's doctor may order. Consumers should check with their insurance company because policies may vary on this. They should not count on the president's word.

What's more, in the process of diagnosing COVID-19, other tests may be ordered. Insurers have not pledged to waive cost-sharing for those. Copays and deductibles may apply for imaging tests such as X-rays or CT scans of the chest, for example, and hospital stays are also subject to cost-sharing.

Federal programs including Medicare, Medicaid, children's health insurance and "Obamacare" all cover the coronavirus tests. Of particular importance, clinical diagnostic tests are covered under Medicare with no cost-sharing, a longstanding policy. But cost-sharing may apply for other tests, such as imaging.

When people get sick from the coronavirus, there currently is no antiviral treatment that can cure the disease. Instead, the current treatment is geared to relieving patients' symptoms and helping them to recover. For those who are very sick, that can involve using machinery to help them breathe. Insurers cover such treatment based on the terms of the individual's health plan, including any applicable deductibles and copays.

TESTS & TREATMENT

TRUMP: "We are cutting massive amounts of red tape to make antiviral therapies available in record time. These treatments will significantly reduce the impact and reach of the virus." — Oval Office address.

THE FACTS: People with COVID-19 or those who get it in the outbreak should not expect those therapies to be available to them. Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health told a congressional committee Wednesday that while antivirals are being tested, "we don't know if it works. I don't want to promise anything."

An antiviral is a medicine that specifically attacks a virus to hasten recovery. An experimental drug named remdesivir, which was being developed to fight Ebola, is being tested in COVID-19 patients in the U.S. and abroad. There also are studies underway using combinations of some HIV-attacking drugs.

TRUMP: "For decades the @CDCgov looked at, and studied, its testing system, but did nothing about it. It would always be inadequate and slow for a large scale pandemic, but a pandemic would never happen, they hoped. President Obama made changes that only complicated things further.... Their response to H1N1 Swine Flu was a full scale disaster, with thousands dying, and nothing meaningful done to fix the testing problem, until now." — tweets Friday.

THE FACTS: His newfound disdain for the CDC's actions and his criticisms of the Obama administration are based on a faulty description of what happened in the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, initially called "swine flu."

Then, the CDC's flu surveillance network actually sounded the alarm, spotting two children in California who were the first diagnosed cases of the new flu strain. About two weeks later, the U.S. declared a public health emergency and the CDC began releasing anti-flu drugs from the national stockpile to help hospitals get ready. Trump declared a state of emergency Friday, nearly two months after the first COVID-19 case in the U.S. was announced.

As for thousands dying, it actually turned out that the new H1N1 strain was less deadly than average seasonal flu. But even that comparison is problematic because regular flu years are deadliest for the elderly while H1N1 was riskiest for younger people.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

TRUMP: "We will be suspending all travel from Europe, except the United Kingdom, for the next 30 days." — Oval Office address.

THE FACTS: He inaccurately described his own plan.

First, the restriction does not apply to legal permanent residents of the U.S. or their families when they are returning from Europe. It also does not apply to U.S. citizens coming back from Europe, as Trump acknowledged.

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As well, it apparently does not apply to Ireland, Romania, Croatia, Ukraine and several other European states. The proclamation released by the White House says the travel ban affects the 26 European countries in the Schengen Area. That's most of Europe, but not "all."

TRUMP: "These prohibitions will not only apply to the tremendous amount of trade and cargo, but various other things as we get approval." — Oval Office address.

THE FACTS: That is wrong. The White House quickly clarified that the restriction on movement from Europe "only applies to human beings, not goods and cargo."

CHEAP GAS

TRUMP: "Good for the consumer, gasoline prices coming down!" — tweet Monday after the price of oil fell nearly 20% and the stock market, already shaken by the coronavirus outbreak, took an even deeper dive.

TRUMP: "So with gasoline prices coming down, that's like a tax cut. Frankly, that's like a big tax cut, not a little tax cut for the consumer. So there's something about that that I like." — remarks Thursday.

THE FACTS: His affection for cheaper prices at the pump is widely shared. It's just that cheaper gas increasingly comes at a cost. The price decline could hurt overall economic growth, which is probably a bigger negative on balance than saving at the pump.

A drop in oil prices is not as helpful to the U.S. economy as it was when the country was massively dependent on foreign oil. That's because the fracking revolution has made domestic oil and natural gas production a major part of the U.S. economy. A drop in prices hurts that domestic industry. It leads to less drilling, fewer jobs, cuts in factory orders and a host of aftershocks that could leave the nation as a whole worse off.

The last time oil prices dropped by a comparable amount, in 2015-2016, it contributed to a slowing of economic growth from 2.9% to 1.6%.

Rising reported from Berlin. Associated Press writers Lauran Neergaard, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Josh Boak, Jill Colvin, Colleen Long, and Zeke Miller in Washington and Tom Murphy in Indianapolis contributed to this report.

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

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Putin approves law that could keep him in power until 2036

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a law on constitutional changes that could keep him in power for another 16 years, a step that must still be approved in a nationwide vote.

Putin signed the measure on Saturday, the Kremlin said, three days after it sailed through the Russian parliament with only one vote against. It must be approved by the country's Constitutional Court and in a referendum set for April 22.

Under current law, Putin would not be able to run for president again in 2024 because of term limits, but the new measure would reset his term count, allowing him to run for two more six-year terms. He has been in power since 2000.

Other constitutional changes further strengthen the presidency and emphasize the priority of Russian law over international norms — a provision reflecting the Kremlin's irritation with the European Court of Human Rights and other international bodies that have often issued verdicts against Russia.

The changes also outlaw same-sex marriage and mention "a belief in God" as one of Russia's traditional values.

AP Exclusive: Inside massive DEA raid targeting drug cartel

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

CHANTILLY, Va. (AP) — In the darkness, the team suits up quietly, putting on their helmets and tactical gear. Federal agents lug battering rams, bolt cutters and heavy weaponry by foot up a hill on a residential California street that's softly aglow from street lamps. Then the agents turn onto the walkway of their target's home.

"Police! Search warrant!" one officer yells as agents bang on the front door. "Police search warrant!" And then three thunderous bangs as the task force breaks down the front door.

Moments later, a reputed member of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, known as CJNG, is walked out in handcuffs.

In early-morning raids Wednesday, agents fanned out across the United States, culminating a six-month investigation with the primary goal of dismantling the upper echelon of CJNG and hoping to get closer to capturing its leader, one of the most wanted men in America. There's a \$10 million reward for the arrest of Nemesio "El Mencho" Oseguera.

The gang controls between one-third and two-thirds of the U.S. drug market. It is so violent that members leave piles of bodies in streets and hanging from overpasses in Mexico, and they fill the city of Guadalajara with mass graves. They carry machine guns and hand grenades. They once used rocket launchers to shoot down a Mexican military helicopter.

More than 600 people have been arrested during the operation in recent months, more than 15,000 kilos of meth was seized and nearly \$20 million taken as search and arrest warrants were executed. About 250 were arrested Wednesday.

"El Mencho and his associates prey on the addicts, and they prey on small towns where they can act as bullies and infiltrate these small towns," said Wendy Woolcok, the special agent in charge of Drug Enforcement Administration's special operations division. "They promise hope, and they deliver despair."

For the U.S, combating Mexico's fastest-growing and most violent gang is a top priority. Law enforcement officials believe the gang has drug distribution hubs in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Houston and Atlanta. It is believed to have a presence in 24 of Mexico's 32 states.

Unlike other cartels, CJNG shows no reluctance in directly attacking police and army patrols and is blamed for the deadliest attacks against law enforcement forces in Mexico. In eliminating rivals, it has carried out spectacular acts of violence.

"Their propensity to violence is a big part of it, they're very violent organization, they're a well-armed organization, but really the gasoline that was thrown on the fire was synthetic drugs," said Bill Bodner, the special agent in charge of the DEA's field office in Los Angeles.

The Associated Press had exclusive access to the raid outside Los Angeles and the national command center. In California, about a dozen team members prepped early Wednesday for their target. They searched the home, a stately, salmon-colored Spanish Colonial-style with a large chandelier in the foyer, palm trees in the front yard, and crawled on the ground to look under cars, including a black Lexus, in the driveway. No shots were fired.

Victor Ochoa, 34, was arrested on drug charges. The DEA alleges he acts as a stash house manager for the cartel. He remained in custody at the Los Angeles County jail Wednesday evening and it wasn't clear whether he had a defense attorney.

At the command center tucked inside a nondescript government building in northern Virginia, a group of a dozen analysts and agents sat behind computer screens inside a conference room that's been converted into a command center. As agents were banging down doors across the country, the phones rang at the command center and analysts recorded the number of arrests and amount of drugs seized on printed worksheets.

An analyst entered the information into a DEA computer screen as other analysts ran phone numbers, addresses and nicknames found inside the homes being searched.

The special agent in charge of the special operations division assembled with her team in front of a heat

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map — red dots glowing darker and darker as more arrests are made, primarily in Texas, California and New Jersey. By 9 a.m., more than 60 people had been taken into custody.

Assistant Attorney General Brian Benczkowski, head of the Justice Department's criminal division, called the operation "the most comprehensive action to date in the Department of Justice's effort to disrupt, dismantle and ultimately destroy CJNG"

While Mexican drug cartels made their money predominantly from marijuana in past decades, the market has somewhat dissipated with the state-level legalization of cannabis in dozens of states across the U.S.

Now, they've turned to methamphetamine and fentanyl, selling it at almost 14 times the price it cost to make and flooding the streets of the U.S., fueling homelessness and the opioid crisis, and leaving behind another trail of bodies: from overdoses.

The Jalisco Cartel was formed in 2010 from a wing of the Sinaloa cartel based in the western city of Guadalajara. While it once specialized in producing methamphetamine, like most Mexican cartels it has expanded into multidrug shipments including fentanyl, cocaine, meth and heroin.

The cartel is led by the elusive Oseguera, whose bodyguards once shot down a Mexican military helicopter to prevent his arrest. In recent weeks, prosecutors have brought charges against his son, Nemesio Oseguera, also known as "El Menchito" and his daughter, Jessica Johanna Oseguera.

And officials say he's more dangerous than reputed Mexican drug kingpin and escape artist Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, who as leader of the Sinaloa cartel ran a massive drug conspiracy that spread murder and mayhem for more than two decades.

"I think the threat from El Mencho and CJNG is greater right now because in my opinion, at the time Chapo was captured or at the time he was kind of at his at his heyday, so to speak, the Sinaloa Cartel was fractured, it was a little broken up," Bodner said.

El Chapo was a little flashier, but Mencho and the Jalisco gang see their drug business as just that -- business, Bodner said.

"They have a little bit more discipline. They're not necessarily into the partying and living the good life, it's just about the business of drug trafficking and control, and that's what makes them scarier, Bodner said.

The Jalisco cartel is also known for brazen tactics such as driving around in convoys of pickup trucks marked with the letters "CJNG" and for circulating videos of heavily-armed cartel gunmen in military-style dress. While Mexico says it is no longer concentrating on detaining drug lords, the Mexican government has extradited Oseguera's son and has detained some of his associates.

Associated Press writer Mark Stevenson in Mexico City contributed to this report.

Iraq's protesters struggle to keep waning movement going

By **SAMYA KULLAB** and **QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA** Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — At the once bustling hub of the largest anti-government protest movement in Iraq's modern history, crowds have dwindled, and donation boxes have sprouted up. Loudspeakers resound with calls by activists for funds to keep their hard-fought revolution alive.

The six-month-old movement has faced one setback after another, from the shifting positions of a mercurial Shiite cleric to an apathetic political class and, now, fears over an outbreak of the coronavirus that Iraq's decrepit health system has struggled to contain, with nearly 93 confirmed cases and nine deaths.

Where once Baghdad's Tahrir Square had seen thousands every day, now only a few hundred protesters turn up. Morale has been dampened among young Iraqis who first took to the streets on Oct. 1 to decry rampant government corruption, poor services and unemployment.

Protesters have found it difficult to revive the strength of their leaderless movement after scoring victories early on, like pressuring lawmakers to pass a key electoral reform bill and forcing former Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi to step down. Assassinations, abductions and threats targeting prominent protesters have contributed to blunting the momentum.

A looming economic crisis linked to the coronavirus pandemic and ongoing political dysfunction could

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eventually bring a new jolt that inspires Iraqis back to the streets. But for the moment, the movement is looking at what went wrong.

The difficulties of recent months caused the poles of authority among protesters to shift from the capital to the south, while some say shunning any form of central leadership was a mistake.

In Tahrir Square, a group of young men recently shared a hookah pipe under a tarp by a tunnel replete with the wall art of their revolution. Together, they embodied the spirit that first brought many into Iraq's central squares to protest.

Marwan Ali, 23, had attended university to study communication but could only find work as a barber after graduation. Mohammed Abbas, 19, didn't bother pursuing a higher education, convinced it wouldn't secure a job. So in October he picked up a banner and joined the movement.

Hussein al-Hind, 22, was a teenager when he heeded a call by Iraq's top Shiite cleric to take up arms and defeat the Islamic State group with what would later become the paramilitary Popular Mobilization Forces. He soon became disenchanted as his one-time war heroes joined the ranks of the political class by running in the May 2018 election.

The young men have also suffered the violence that has met the movement. Al-Hind showed off two bullet wounds from clashes with riot police; Abbas was detained by police for three days early on in the demonstrations; Ali's family has received messages from unknown groups threatening his life.

Now, the future of their hard-fought protest movement depends on the ability of these youth to keep to the streets.

When the conversation turned to the state of their movement, Marwan Ali took a moment's pause.

"We are disappointed," he said. Asked why he was still coming to Tahrir, he said, "This isn't about the homeland anymore, we are here for the blood of our martyrs." Over 500 people have been killed since October under fire by security forces who have used live ammunition, tear gas and recently pellet guns to disperse crowds.

In nearby Khilani Square, clashes still rage between a core group of protesters and security, with at least two demonstrators dead last week.

The movement was dealt a blow in January after radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who also heads a major political bloc, withdrew support after elites selected a prime minister candidate he backed, Mohammed Allawi. Al-Sadr's reversal instilled a climate of fear in the square as militiamen affiliated with his group, which once protected protest sites, intimidated demonstrators who refused to back Allawi, activists said. Allawi has since withdrawn from the post.

"We were tools in al-Sadr's game," said Kamal Jaban, an activist.

It was an eventuality that activists said they wanted to avoid when al-Sadr's followers first joined the movement.

As early as November, protesters bristled at the question of leadership and were quick to diminish the credibility of those making claims of authority over them. They tore down stages built by political parties in protest plazas, fearing the fate of previous grassroots movements that fizzled out when co-opted by political actors.

Three months since, protesters said in hindsight the lack of core leadership had hobbled their movement, enabling figures like al-Sadr to do exactly what they had feared.

"There is no one to represent us, put pressure on the government," said Ali, under the tarp in Tahrir.

Al-Sadr's move also diminished Tahrir Square's status as the central voice of the movement. Activists started looking to Haboubi Square in the southern city of Nasiriya for orders. Nasiriya's protesters have been resilient against infiltration by political parties, partly due to support from local tribes.

In hindsight, said Ali, this weakened the movement.

"Tahrir Square became tainted with al-Sadr supporters," he explained. "At first Nasiriya was listening to us, now we listen to them."

It was Nasiriya that gave political elites a deadline to make progress on protester demands, prompting an escalation in demonstrations across the country. Later, calls from the southern city led protesters in Baghdad to block the strategic Mohammed al-Qassim highway. When Haboubi Square raised the image

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of activist Alaa Rikabi as their choice for prime minister, Tahrir did the same.

Other protesters said fatigue from months on the street was taking a toll as donations for food and supplies were running short and temperatures dropped over the winter.

"Weak turnout was expected some time ago because the protesters who have been here for five months are tired, sleeping in cold and far from work, their families and school," said Murtada Emad, a protester and university student at Babil College of Basic Education. "I left school, but my family is pressuring me to go back."

By February, protesters were marginalized as political bickering over Allawi's government formation ignored the core demands of the street. Allawi withdrew as prime minister-designate on March 1 after failing to secure parliamentary support for his Cabinet.

Back in Tahrir, Ali Jumaili, 22, said all hope was not lost.

"Every day, I sit on the sidewalk with my friends and weep because of the weakening demonstrations," he said. "The revolution will repeat itself with more vigor in the future."

Trump says he's likely to be tested after repeat exposure

By JILL COLVIN, JONATHAN LEMIRE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Friday he will "most likely" be tested for the novel coronavirus, as questions swirled about why he, his top aides and his family weren't doing more to protect themselves and others after repeated exposure to COVID-19.

Trump has now had multiple direct and indirect contacts with people who have tested positive for the pandemic virus, which on Friday prompted him to declare a state of emergency as schools and workplaces across the country shuttered, flights were canceled and Americans braced for war against the threat.

Trump spent time last weekend at his private club in Florida with at least three people who have now tested positive. The Brazilian Embassy in Washington announced late Friday that the country's chargé d'affaires, Nestor Forster, tested positive after sitting at Trump's dinner table. So, too, have a top aide to Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and an individual who attended a fundraiser Sunday with Trump, according to two Republican officials who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss private health matters.

Several top administration officials, including Attorney General William Barr and Trump's daughter and senior adviser Ivanka Trump, also met last week with an Australian Cabinet minister who on Friday was confirmed positive.

Multiple lawmakers and citizens across the country who have had the same degree of exposure have opted to voluntarily quarantine themselves and get tested out of an abundance of caution.

But Trump, who has long tried to minimize the threat posed by the virus, insisted Friday — contrary to the advice of many medical professionals — that he did not need to isolate himself because he wasn't exhibiting symptoms. He conceded that he would "most likely" submit to testing "fairly soon," but continued to flout public health officials' advice by repeatedly shaking with attendees hands during a Rose Garden press conference on efforts to combat the pandemic.

Even so, Trump told the nation, "All Americans have a role to play in defeating this virus."

"Anyone can be a carrier for the virus and risk transmission to older Americans and those with underlying health conditions," Trump said, adding, "We must take all precautions and be responsible for the actions that we take and that we see other people take."

The president, according to two people close to the White House, has been reluctant to take the test for fear it would project weakness or worry. Trump has wanted to appear in full control during the crisis, especially as he tries to calm stock markets amid historic drops, and has expressed concerns that taking personal steps could undermine that appearance.

Asked whether he was being selfish by refusing to isolate himself to avoid potentially infecting others and what advice he had for people who may be receiving contradictory messages, Trump said, "I think they have to listen to their doctors."

White House officials insist Trump had only minimal contact with Fábio Wajngarten, Brazilian President

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Jair Bolsonaro's communications director, who has tested positive for the virus. Wajngarten posed for a photo with Trump, shook his hand and attended a birthday party held for Kimberly Guilfoyle, who is dating the president's eldest son. Trump had more extensive contact with Forster, but the White House physician said in a Friday night letter that because "all interactions occurred before any symptoms were onset," the White House considers them "low risk" so "there is no indication for home quarantine at this time."

In addition to his direct exposure, Trump has also had repeated contact with lawmakers who chose to isolate themselves after being exposed to people who later tested positive. That included Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz, who traveled aboard Air Force One with the president Monday and found out about the positive test mid-flight; South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, who was working from home after spending time at Mar-a-Lago and attending his own meeting with Peter Dutton, Australia's Minister for Home Affairs; and Florida Sen. Rick Scott, who also interacted with the Brazilian delegation.

White House spokesman Judd Deere said Ivanka Trump, who met with Dutton, worked from home Friday "out of an abundance of caution," but said Dutton had been asymptomatic during their interaction, so the White House Medical Unit determined she was "exhibiting no symptoms and does not need to self-quarantine."

White House counselor Kellyanne Conway said she'd received the same instructions, "in accordance with CDC guidance."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advise those who have been in "close contact with a person with symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19" to remain home and practice social distancing, but experts' guidance has been mixed when it comes to those who are not exhibiting symptoms.

People who are exposed to the virus don't show symptoms immediately; there is an incubation period of anywhere from two to 14 days. And the CDC is most concerned with close contact, which it defines as being coughed on or within about 6 feet of someone who is sick for a prolonged period of time. The CDC doesn't consider it risky to walk past someone with the virus or to be briefly in the same room with them.

Many doctors across the country, however, have been advising those with any exposure to take precautions. And Trump, who is 73, is considered to be at higher risk of developing serious complications because of his age.

The president should get tested, even if he is not exhibiting symptoms, said Stephen Morse, a Columbia University expert on the spread of diseases.

"Anyone who's infected is a risk of spreading it to other people," he said. "That can be true of people who are infected but don't have symptoms."

Dr. Leana Wen, an emergency physician and visiting professor at the George Washington University Milken School of Public Health who once served as the health commissioner for the city of Baltimore, said COVID-19 is "highly transmittable" and anyone who comes within six feet of someone who is infected could become infected and spread it, without even knowing they are sick.

"We are at a time of an international public health emergency," she said, so everybody should abide by public health guidelines, "no matter their position or their title."

Any administration official with known exposure, she said, "should follow the same guidance as anyone else" and be self-quarantining and monitoring their symptoms.

As for the president, she said, "in order to be the commander-in-chief of the country ... he needs to take care of himself."

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Luran Neergaard in Washington and Michael Stobbe in New York contributed to this report.

Trump declares virus emergency; House passes aid package

By LISA MASCARO, ZEKE MILLER, ANDREW TAYLOR and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday declared the coronavirus pandemic a national emergency, freeing up money and resources to fight the outbreak, and then threw his support behind an

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aid package in Congress that is on track to provide direct relief to Americans.

From the Rose Garden, Trump said, "I am officially declaring a national emergency," unleashing as much as \$50 billion for state and local governments to respond to the crisis.

Trump also announced a range of executive actions, including a new public-private partnership to expand coronavirus testing capabilities with drive-through locations, as Washington tries to subdue the new virus whose spread is roiling markets, shuttering institutions and disrupting the lives of everyday Americans.

But he denied any responsibility for delays in making testing available as his administration has come under criticism for being too slow to respond.

Trump said, "I don't take responsibility at all" for the slow rollout of testing.

As the House prepared to vote late Friday, Speaker Nancy Pelosi trumpeted the hard-fought package that will provide free testing, sick pay for workers, enhanced unemployment benefits and bolstered food programs.

"We did what we said we were going to do: Put families first," said Pelosi, flanked by Democratic lawmakers, including many freshmen. The House passed the bill after midnight on a bipartisan vote, 363-40. It now goes to the Senate.

Trump's tweet of approval instilled fresh energy in the package, all but ensuring that wary Republicans would join with a robust vote.

"I fully support H.R. 6201: Families First CoronaVirus Response Act," Trump wrote.

"I encourage all Republicans and Democrats to come together and VOTE YES!" He added, "Look forward to signing the final Bill, ASAP!"

The crush of late-day activity capped a tumultuous week in Washington as the fast-moving virus left ordinary Americans suddenly navigating self-quarantines, school closures and a changed way of life.

The White House was under enormous pressure, dealing with the crisis on multiple fronts as it encroached ever closer on the president.

Trump has been known to flout public health advice — and was eagerly shaking hands during the more than hour-long afternoon event — but acknowledged he "most likely" will be tested soon after exposures to individuals who have tested positive for the virus. The White House physician indicated later his interactions were low-risk and testing is not necessary.

Still, Trump said officials don't want people taking the test unless they have certain symptoms. "We don't want people without symptoms to go and do that test," Trump said, adding, "It's totally unnecessary."

Additionally, Trump took a number of other actions to bolster energy markets, ease the financial burden for Americans with student loans and give medical professionals additional "flexibility" in treating patients during the public health crisis.

"Through a very collective action and shared sacrifice, national determination, we will overcome the threat of the virus," Trump said.

Central to the aid package from Congress, which builds on an emergency \$8.3 billion measure approved last week, are the free testing, sick pay and family leave provisions.

Providing sick pay for workers is a crucial element of federal efforts to stop the rapid spread of the infection. Officials warn that the nation's healthcare system could quickly become overwhelmed with gravely sick patients, as suddenly happened in Italy, one of the countries hardest hit by the virus.

The ability to ensure paychecks will keep flowing — for people self-quarantining or caring for others — can help assure Americans they will not fall into financial hardship. The legislation also offers three months of paid family and medical leave. Small and mid-sized employers will be reimbursed through tax credits.

Pelosi negotiated the deal with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in days of around-the-clock negotiations with cross-town phone calls, even as Trump was speaking at the White House.

Hopes for swift passage stalled as talks dragged and Trump dismissed it during as "not doing enough." Republicans were reluctant to come on board without his backing, according to a person unauthorized to discuss the talks and granted anonymity.

Ahead of Trump's news conference, Pelosi delivered her own statement from the speaker's balcony at the Capitol, imploring Trump's party to "put families first" by backing the effort to provide Americans with relief.

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Voting in the Senate is not yet set, with senators out of town for the weekend. But Senate Leader Mitch McConnell canceled a plan recess week and senators were scheduled to return Monday. He said he expects most senators will want to "act swiftly."

Both Mnuchin and Pelosi, who said she did not speak directly to Trump during the negotiations, promised a third coronavirus package will follow soon, with more aggressive steps to boost the U.S. economy, which economists fear has already slipped into recession.

The financial markets closed on an upswing after one of the worst nosedives since the 1987 downturn.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to be over it.

Trump said he was gratified that Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro tested negative for the virus, after the pair sat next to each other for an extended period of time last weekend at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club. A senior aide to Bolsonaro tested positive.

The White House physician said in a memo late Friday that Trump was also exposed to a second guest at the club dinner, "sharing the table with the president," who has since tested positive for the virus. Still despite the incidents, the physician said Trump had only "LOW risk" interactions and testing "is not currently indicated."

Trump's daughter, Ivanka Trump, worked from home Friday after meeting with Australian Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton, now in isolation at a hospital after testing positive for the coronavirus. White House spokesman Judd Deere said she was evaluated by the White House Medical Unit.

Attorney General William Barr, who also met with the Australian official, stayed home Friday, though he "felt great and wasn't showing any symptoms," according to his spokeswoman Kerri Kupec.

Several lawmakers, including some close to Trump, have also been exposed to people who tested positive for the virus, and are self-isolating.

Among them are Republican Sens. Lindsey Graham and Rick Scott, who were at Trump's club on the weekend. Graham announced Friday that he also met with the Australian official who has now tested positive. And GOP Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, who had previously isolated himself after a potential exposure at a conservative conference in Washington, said Friday he met with a Spanish official and is now self-quarantining.

Hospitals welcomed Trump's emergency declaration, which they and lawmakers in Congress had been requesting. It allows the Health and Human Services Department to temporarily waive certain federal rules that can make it harder for hospitals and other health care facilities to respond to an emergency.

The American Medical Association said the emergency declaration would help ensure America's health care system has sufficient resources to properly respond to the ongoing outbreak.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, infectious disease chief at the National Institutes of Health, said more tests would be available over the next week, but warned, "We still have a long way to go."

Associated Press writers Aamer Madhani, Alan Fram, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Lauran Neergaard, Martin Crutsinger, Laurie Kellman, Michael Balsamo and Kevin Freking in Washington contributed to this report.

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For Chinese, US visa halt puts jobs, citizen hopes at risk

By **DAKE KANG** Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Courtney Huang fell in love with the U.S. as a nursing student in Texas. She ended up staying 13 years and wants to become a U.S. citizen.

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But Huang now finds her job, future, and dreams of citizenship on the line since the Trump administration barred entry last month to non-U.S. citizens and residents flying in from China over the coronavirus outbreak.

With crucial deadlines looming, her plans look increasingly at risk.

"I'm really scared," Huang said. "I have a lot there. If I don't go back, it's just going to be very difficult."

The U.S. suspended visa processing in China on Feb. 3, citing limited staffing during the virus outbreak. No deadline extensions have been announced and it's not known when the suspension will be lifted. That's put hundreds of Chinese citizens applying for U.S. work visas in limbo, fretting as their jobs look increasingly at risk.

Huang had returned to China to see her parents over the Lunar New Year holiday in late January. She had recently landed a new job in California and her work visa was on the verge of approval when the American Consulate in Shanghai announced it was returning everyone's passports.

After weeks of fretting and weighing her options at her parent's home in eastern China, Huang flew to Thailand. She now plans to wait out a mandated 14-day self-quarantine before seeing if she can get her visa from the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok.

Though Huang was born and raised in China, her whole life is now in Oakland, California, where she has an apartment, car, friends and job. With her Christian faith and gregarious, outspoken manner, the U.S. feels like home.

"I feel like I fit in better there. Free speech, free religion," Huang said. Clean air, better career opportunities for women and a liberal social environment were also draws, she added.

Huang obtained a nursing degree in Texas, then a master's degree in bioengineering from U.C. Berkeley. She's on the verge of completing an M.B.A., with an eye toward settling permanently.

Now, Huang is concerned those plans could fall apart. Though her new employers, a company that provides clinical support for physicians, are understanding, Huang worries that as the months go by, there's a possibility she may lose her job — and with it, her right to work in the U.S.

Like Huang, Kevin Yang, a Chinese doctoral student researching immunology at an American university, is also reconsidering his options. After moving to the U.S. eight years ago, Yang has returned home each winter holiday and had his student visa renewed without a hitch.

This year, though, Yang became one of many Chinese citizens caught up in the brutal tussle between Beijing and Washington over trade and technology.

When Yang applied for a visa in December, the State Department told him it was being delayed while they investigated his background for ties to the Chinese government. American officials have in recent years grown alarmed over the alleged theft of U.S. technology by China, casting a cloud of suspicion on Chinese citizens like Yang who work in the sciences.

Told the check would take four weeks, Yang changed his flights and prepared to stay longer.

Then in late January, the Chinese government began locking down whole cities to contain the virus. Soon after, Trump announced the U.S. travel ban. Yang got his passport back in the mail with no visa.

American officials told Yang's academic adviser that since Yang no longer had a visa, they could no longer pay his stipend or fund his research with federal grant money. Hospital surveys that Yang said he spent "thousands of dollars and thousands of hours" over two years to set up were now in peril, something he described as a crushing blow.

"Maybe it's time for me to start thinking about an alternative career," Yang said, mulling the possibility he won't be able to finish his Ph.D. "It's like restarting my life."

Discouraging high-skilled foreigners from immigrating could undermine the U.S. economy and its global prominence, said Anastasia Tonello, former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Nearly 2.5 million Chinese were in the U.S. as of 2018, according to the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute, and most are significantly better educated than the average American. China is also the main source of foreign students enrolled in U.S. higher education.

While health and safety are legitimate concerns, blanket travel bans aren't the answer, Tonello said.

"I just don't think this was thought through," she said. "These are just such broad strokes and can cause so much damage."

The U.S. isn't the only country currently restricting entry from China. Travelers face restrictions across the globe, from neighboring North Korea to far-flung New Zealand, Somalia, and Guatemala. Australia, a major destination for Chinese students and immigrants, also has banned arrivals and stopped issuing visas.

Such restrictions have been loudly criticized by China's Foreign Ministry, though Beijing frequently singles out the United States.

Yang and Huang both say they understand why a travel ban could help contain the virus. But they say the U.S. halt on new visas — with no deadline extensions or other accommodations — is frustrating and unreasonable.

Even more frustrating for Huang is the sense that the U.S. is trying to bar her from coming back.

"I'm not being respected. I work in the states as a talent; I pay my taxes diligently," Huang said. "This just makes me feel like, 'Oh, maybe I'm just not welcome in the states.'"

Even for Chinese with visas, the clock is ticking. Tom, a programmer from the epicenter of the outbreak, the city of Wuhan, had just obtained a master's degree in computer science from Emory University in Georgia. He has a U.S. visa but got stuck in Wuhan after the city was quarantined.

Under American law, foreign students have 90 days after graduation to start new jobs if they want to stay and work in the U.S. If Tom is still trapped in Wuhan by May, he'll lose both his new job at Amazon and his chance to work in America altogether.

"I'd have to start all over again," Tom said, declining to provide his last name for fear it could affect his visa and career prospects. "I just worry every day about whether I can go back to America."

Tom says his family spent around \$70,000 to send him to Emory for a shot at a better life in the U.S. He didn't want to work in China, deterred by the Chinese tech industry's notoriously-long hours, popularly known as "996" — 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week.

U.S. officials told him there was nothing he could do.

"We just want some help or advice," Tom said. "Please don't ignore us, it's something completely out of our control. That's the worst thing."

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AP Exclusive: Immigration hearings delayed, 1 court shut

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Seattle's immigration court will close down as the nation continues to grapple with managing the coronavirus pandemic, and several other large immigration courts will postpone certain hearings for immigrants who are not detained that often involve large groups.

The court in Seattle was temporarily shut down earlier this week over a report of a second-hand exposure to the virus and will remain shut until April 10. Seattle is among the areas hardest hit so far, with a cluster of deaths and dozens sickened. The number of cases in the U.S. was put at around 1,700 Friday, with about 50 deaths. But by some estimates, at least 14,000 people might be infected.

According to a statement obtained by The Associated Press from the Executive Office for Immigration Review, which manages the immigration court system, other courts will remain open where the virus has struck, including Boston, Los Angeles, New York City, San Francisco, Newark, New Jersey, and Sacramento, California. But "master calendar" dates for those who are not detained will be postponed. Those hearings can include dozens of people in a single courtroom.

"The agency continues to evaluate the dynamic situation nationwide and will make decisions for each location as more information becomes available," according to the statement from EOIR, which is a division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

There are 68 immigration courts nationwide; the others will operate as scheduled but officials with EOIR

said they are evaluating and will adjust as needed.

The U.S. immigration courts are dealing with a massive backlog of 1 million cases. There have been some delays of trials among the nation's criminal courts, and some states have closed courtrooms as the virus spreads.

There have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the immigration system, but it's not clear how frequently tests are being performed, if at all. There is often movement between detention facilities at the border, where some migrants enter the U.S. sick, and throughout the immigration system that has put employees on edge.

A union representing immigration judges has called for a temporary halt to the "master calendar" hearings. On Thursday, Judge Ashley Tabaddor, the head of the union, wrote to the leadership of EOIR asking for more measures be put in place to protect judges and employees.

"In the absence of uniform guidance, some immigration judges have attempted to implement their own risk mitigation strategies," she wrote. "However, these efforts have been frustrated by a time-consuming bureaucratic process that is simply not sufficient in the current circumstances."

Tabaddor also called the postponements in six cities "wholly inadequate to address the public health risk" and called on EOIR "to shut down all of these large group hearings in all immigration courts across the country."

In El Paso, Texas, some guards work shifts at both the long-term detention center and the public courts where people are not detained. On Friday, guards were seen interacting with two dozen migrants for a mass hearing in the non-detained court, which sits on the 7th floor of a building that also has public offices for the IRS and other federal agencies.

The migrants have been required to live in Mexico while they apply for asylum. They sleep in a network of shelters in Ciudad Juarez, along with migrants from other countries and other continents.

Separately on Friday, Immigration and Customs Enforcement said it would temporarily suspend social visits at all of its detention facilities across the U.S. Officials said there were no detainees in ICE custody who had confirmed cases of COVID-19 and said canceling visitation was precautionary to "further safeguard those in our care."

ICE holds more than 37,888 immigrants in more than 130 facilities, including local jails and prisons. But unlike other detention centers, have wide discretion on who can be released while their cases wind through the courts.

The federal Bureau of Prisons also shut down visitation; inmates at all 122 federal correctional facilities across the country will no longer be allowed visits from family, friends or attorneys for the next 30 days.

Associated Press Writer Cedar Attanasio contributed to this report from El Paso, Texas.

Lawyer: Man killed by officer was asleep when police fired

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

SILVER SPRING, Md. (AP) — A Maryland man who was shot and killed by a police officer was asleep in his bedroom when police opened fire from outside his house, an attorney for the 21-year-old man's family said Friday. The man's girlfriend was also wounded.

The Montgomery County Police Department said in a news release Friday that Duncan Socrates Lemp "confronted" police and was shot by one of the officers early Thursday. Rene Sandler, an attorney for Lemp's relatives, said an eyewitness gave a "completely contrary" account of the shooting. She said police could have "absolutely no justification" for shooting Lemp based on what she has heard about the circumstances.

"The facts as I understand them from eyewitnesses are incredibly concerning," she told The Associated Press.

The warrant that police obtained to search the Potomac home Lemp shared with his parents and 19-year-old brother doesn't mention any "imminent threat" to law enforcement or the public, Lemp's relatives said in a statement released Friday by their lawyers. Nobody in the house that morning had a criminal record,

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the statement adds.

"Any attempt by the police to shift responsibility onto Duncan or his family, who were sleeping when the police fired shots into their home, is not supported by the facts," the statement says.

A police department spokesman didn't immediately respond to the statements by the family or their lawyer.

The department's news release on Friday says tactical unit members were serving a "high-risk" search warrant around 4:30 a.m. when one of the unit's officers fatally shot Lemp. Police detectives recovered three rifles and two handguns from the home. Lemp was prohibited from possessing firearms, police said.

"Detectives were following up on a complaint from the public that Lemp, though prohibited, was in possession of firearms," the release says without elaborating.

Sandler said the family believes police fired gunshots, not a flashbang or other projectile, from outside the home, including through Lemp's bedroom window, while he and his girlfriend were sleeping. Nobody in the home heard any warnings or commands before police opened fire, she said.

"There is no warrant or other justification that would ever allow for that unless there is an imminent threat, which there was not," Sandler said.

The police department's news release says the "facts and circumstances of the encounter" are still under investigation. Prosecutors from neighboring Howard County will review the evidence at the conclusion of the investigation.

"An established agreement between the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office and the Howard County State's Attorney's Office stipulates that when an officer-involved shooting involving injury or death occurs in one county, the other county's State's Attorney's Office will review the event," police said.

Lemp was Caucasian, according to Sandler. She did not know the race of the unidentified officer involved in the shooting because she said the officers were wearing masks. The officer was placed on administrative leave, a standard procedure after police shootings.

Sandler said Lemp's grief-stricken family is traumatized. Their statement says they intend to "hold each and every person responsible for his death."

"We believe that the body camera footage and other forensic evidence from this event will support what Duncan's family already knows, that he was murdered," the statement says.

Lemp worked as a software developer and was trying to raise money for a startup company, according to friends and co-workers.

"He was a talented, smart guy. Super nice. Didn't deserve to get shot," said Samuel Reid, whose Canadian software company employed Lemp as an independent contractor.

Tsolmondorj Natsagdorj, 24, of Fairfax, Virginia, said he met Lemp in 2016 and bonded with him over their shared interest in cryptocurrency. They also talked about politics. He described Lemp as a libertarian who frequented the 4chan and Reddit message boards, sites popular with internet trolls.

"Duncan was a young guy with a bright future as an entrepreneur," Natsagdorj said. "He was working on things to change the world."

On social media accounts that friends said belonged to him, Lemp's username was "YungQuant." On an internet forum called "My Militia," someone who identified himself as Duncan Lemp, of Potomac, and posted under the username "yungquant" said he was "an active III%r and looking for local members & recruits." That's an apparent reference to the Three Percenters, a wing of the militia movement. The group's logo, the Roman numeral "III," has become popular with anti-government extremists, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

On his Instagram account, Lemp recently posted a photograph that depicts two people holding up rifles and included the term "boogaloo," slang used by militia members and other extremists to describe a future civil war in the U.S.

Friends said they never heard Lemp espouse any anti-government rhetoric. Sandler said Lemp was not a part of any anti-government or militia-type group.

"He was pro-America and supported wholeheartedly all the protections of the Constitution," she said.

Trump declares emergency; world steps up fight against virus

By **ANDREW TAYLOR** and **TIM SULLIVAN** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States declared a state of emergency Friday as many European countries went on a war footing amid mounting deaths as the world mobilized to fight the widening coronavirus pandemic.

At the White House, where President Donald Trump made the emergency decree, drug company executives vowed to work together and with the government to quickly expand the country's coronavirus testing capabilities, which are far behind those in many countries.

"We will defeat this threat," Trump told a news conference. "When America is tested, America rises to the occasion."

While the aggressive spread of the virus in Europe, North America and the Middle East has dashed any hopes for quick containment, dozens of countries have imposed increasingly severe measures over the past couple days — shutting borders, expanding testing, closing school for tens of millions of children and ordering tens of thousands of businesses to close their doors — to try to face down the disease.

The U.S. emergency decree will open up \$50 billion for state and local governments to respond to the outbreak, said Trump, who also gave the secretary of health and human services emergency powers to waive federal regulations to give doctors and hospitals "flexibility" in treating patients.

As the U.S. struggles to slow the spread of the virus, the governors of six states — Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, New York, Rhode Island and Washington — sought National Guard troops.

Trump's announcement came as tens of millions of students around the world faced weeks without classes, security forces went on standby to guard against large gatherings, and bars, restaurants and offices closed.

While the new coronavirus can be deadly, particularly for the elderly and people with other health problems, for most people it causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. Some feel no symptoms at all and the vast majority of people recover.

But the spreading pandemic showed that power and influence offer no protection. Among those testing positive were the Canadian prime minister's wife, a top aide to Iran's supreme leader, Miami's mayor, a Brazilian official who met with Trump, and an Australian Cabinet minister who met with the U.S. attorney general and Trump's daughter, Ivanka.

Pressed by reporters, Trump, who also met with the Brazilian official, said he will "most likely" be tested for the virus "fairly soon," reversing an earlier White House statement.

Channeling wartime rhetoric and tactics in the face of a microscopic enemy, leaders appealed for solidarity to battle a threat that appeared to expand exponentially. They vowed to protect not just the sick, but those sacrificing their livelihoods and education for the greater good. But new border checks were also on the rise, showing that solidarity had its limits in the face of a fast-moving threat.

In Europe, stocks clawed back some of their losses with promises of financial support from the European Commission, France and Germany, while in the U.S., stocks surged after Trump's announcement. The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped nearly 2,000 points — its biggest point gain ever.

At the same time, new infections in Italy soared by more than 2,500 and virus-related deaths made their biggest single-day jump there, increasing by 250. In the three weeks since the country identified its first virus cluster, Italy has reached a total of 17,600 confirmed cases, with 1,266 deaths. The government has ordered an unprecedented lockdown, ordering businesses to close and restricting movement.

"Europe has now become the epicenter of the pandemic," said World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "More cases are now being reported every day than were reported in China at the height of its epidemic."

New infections also rose sharply in Spain, and the government put 60,000 people in four towns on a mandatory lockdown Friday that echoed Italy's. In Madrid, which is struggling with nearly 2,000 infections, many in nursing homes, the government was pooling intensive care units and considering offers by hotel chains to transform rooms into sick wards.

In just 24 hours, the numbers of confirmed cases spiked ominously in some places: France saw an ad-

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ditional 800 cases to reach more than 3,600 by Friday; Britain went from 590 to 798 and New York state jumped 30 percent, hitting 421. In Africa, where experts warn that containment is key because of the continent's already-strained health care systems, six new countries confirmed infections.

Cases topped 1,700 across the U.S., where thousands of schools have been closed, concerts and sporting events canceled and even Broadway theaters shut down. Trump has halted his trademark political rallies, following the lead of Democratic rivals Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders.

The spread of the virus in Europe, North America and the Middle East has drawn contrasts with waning outbreaks in the hardest-hit nations in Asia. China, where the virus emerged late last year, still accounts for more than 60% of global infections but reported just eight new cases Friday and seven deaths.

In South Korea, which has had more than 8,000 cases overall, Friday marked the first day that recoveries outnumbered new infections. It reported another 107 cases Saturday.

In the U.S., hospitals were setting up circus-like triage tents, calling doctors out of retirement, guarding their supplies of face masks and making plans to cancel elective and non-emergency surgeries as they brace for an expected onslaught of coronavirus patients in the coming weeks.

Trump, who on Thursday ordered a 30-day travel ban for most foreign visitors coming to the U.S. from continental Europe, dismissed criticism that his administration has faced for the slow rollout of testing in the U.S., saying "I don't take responsibility at all" for the problem.

The public-private partnership that Trump announced at the White House will include drive-thru testing in some areas — something already being done in South Korea and Germany — and an online portal to screen those seeking to get tested.

Late Friday, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced a deal with the Trump administration for an aid package that would provide free tests, sick pay for workers and bolster food programs. The U.S. House was poised to vote on the deal.

Across America, where millions of children depend on school lunches as their main meals, schools were cobbling together ways to keep kids fed, from distributing grand-and-go meal sacks to cafeterias that remained open even as classrooms closed.

In Italy, the town of Codogno, which had all but shut down hours after recording the country's first locally spread coronavirus infection, showed that changing habits do make a difference. New infections have slowed drastically there compared to the rest of Italy, where draconian measures came far later.

"More than a sigh of relief, there was some concern over the risk that all of the sacrifices were in vain," said Mayor Francesco Passerini.

New travel restrictions sprang up practically by the hour on Friday: Switzerland, Sri Lanka, Portugal, the Czech Republic — all started barring entry to Europeans considered at risk. Ukraine announced it would halt all passenger air traffic, Poland said anyone entering the country will be put under a 14-day quarantine, while the Czech Republic and Slovakia have stopped almost all movement in and out of their countries. The European Union urged member countries to put health screening procedures in place at their borders.

Canada and Denmark joined the U.S. in advising citizens to avoid trips abroad, and Americans in Europe caught increasingly rare trans-Atlantic flights back home.

Sullivan reported from Minneapolis. Associated Press writers Lori Hinnant in Paris; Carley Petesch in Dakar; Kim Tong-hyung and Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul, South Korea; Jan Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark; Cuneyt Dil in Elk Grove, California and Lisa Mascaro, Jill Colvin and Zeke Miller in Washington contributed.

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Election officials: Tuesday primaries on despite virus fears

By **CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY** and **JULIE CARR SMYTH** Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Elections officials in the four states holding presidential primaries next week say they have no plans to postpone voting amid widespread disruptions caused by the coronavirus outbreak. Instead, they are taking extraordinary steps to ensure that voters can cast ballots and polling places are clean.

They have been scrambling to recruit replacements for poll workers dropping out over fears of contracting the virus, providing cotton swabs for voters to use on touchscreen machines and extending absentee voting deadlines. Only one state, Louisiana, announced plans to postpone its primary, from April to June.

"We're definitely voting," Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican, said during a news conference Friday. "They voted during the Civil War. We're going to vote."

The top elections officials from the four states — Arizona, Florida, Illinois and Ohio — said in a joint statement that the vote will go on Tuesday, saying they were confident the elections would be secure and safe. They encouraged healthy poll workers to show up.

For most people, the coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from the new virus.

Election officials routinely prepare for natural disasters and other disruptions, but the coronavirus outbreak poses a unique challenge as some areas of the country urge members of the public to work from home and avoid crowds. On Friday, President Donald Trump declared the coronavirus pandemic a national emergency.

Election Day voting in the U.S. largely relies on an army of poll workers who staff schools, community centers and government buildings open for the public to cast ballots in person. Because many poll workers are older, they may be especially concerned about the virus. School closures and safety concerns at senior living communities have thrown some polling places into question.

Nearly 50 of the roughly 600 paid volunteers have withdrawn in Volusia County, Florida. In that state, a group of voting and civil rights groups wrote to the governor and secretary of state urging them to extend early voting opportunities and the vote-by-mail deadline, open additional vote centers and take steps to notify voters of any changes to polling places or voting procedures.

Hundreds of poll workers and election judges in Illinois have canceled their assignments, leaving election officials, particularly in Chicago, scrambling.

In Georgia, where the average age for poll workers is 70 years old, about 300 poll workers have said they would no longer be available to work in the March 24 primary. Early voting for Georgia's upcoming primary continued Friday, as state election officials weighed their options, including whether to postpone.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued a disaster declaration but said it would not affect the state's May primary runoff elections that will decide congressional races. Wisconsin also said it planned to proceed with its April 7 primary.

But Louisiana officials decided the risk was too great. Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said he planned to sign an executive order delaying the April 4 primary until June 20, describing the step as "necessary to protect the health and safety of the people of Louisiana."

Some states might be able to send all voters ballots they can fill out and mail back, but that will largely depend on particular circumstances. For some, it may not be logistically possible.

Uncertainty surrounded how voting would happen Tuesday in Arizona's most populous county after the local official in charge of mail-in balloting decided to mail ballots to everyone who didn't already get one. Adrian Fontes, a Democrat, said he wanted voters to be able to fill out a ballot at home and drop it off at a polling place before polls close Tuesday.

Fontes said he acted after "a series of cancellations by polling place locations and election worker staff" in Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix and is home to 60% of Arizona's registered voters. He acknowledged there's no explicit legal authority for his move, but said it's also not strictly illegal.

"Considering this unprecedented emergency situation, we need to act to both enfranchise the voters

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and protect public health," Fontes said.

But the state's top election official, Democratic Secretary of State Katie Hobbs, said Fontes acted illegally and she pressed his mail vendor not to put the ballots in the mail. The state's attorney general, a Republican, asked a judge to block the mailing of the ballots, saying it was obviously illegal. The request was granted late Friday.

Maricopa County officials insist they have enough workers and disinfecting supplies for people to safely vote at the 151 remaining vote centers.

In Wyoming, state Democrats have canceled the in-person portion of their upcoming caucuses and will instead rely on ballots that were already mailed to all registered party members.

"Our priority is ensuring that people are healthy and safe," Wyoming Democratic Party Chair Joe M. Barbuto said in a statement Thursday. "Holding public events right now would put that in jeopardy, so this is the responsible course of action."

Officials in Maryland and New York have said they're considering mailing primary ballots to all registered voters.

In Ohio, which is under a statewide emergency because of the virus, a plea from the state's elections chief earlier in the week prompted more than 1,200 people to sign up for poll worker duty across the state after election boards reported some workers were dropping out amid virus fears.

One state official, Auditor Keith Faber, urged his entire staff to take a paid leave day to help out.

In Broward County, Florida, election officials were stocking its 421 polling locations with extra supplies including 4,000 rolls of paper towels, gloves and more than 400 bars of soap.

"We've purchased gallons of rubbing alcohol and are having them transferred to spray bottles," spokesperson Steve Vancore said. "We've ordered cases upon case of Clorox wipes so polls workers can frequently wipe down the equipment and wipe down the voting booths."

Cassidy reported from Atlanta.

Associated Press writers Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix; Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Frank Bajak in Boston; Brian Witte in Annapolis, Maryland; John O'Connor in Springfield, Illinois; Geoff Mulvihill in Cherry Hill, New Jersey; and Todd Richmond in Madison, Wisconsin, contributed to this report.

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Biden virtual town hall marks new normal for campaigning

By SARA BURNETT and BILL BARROW Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Joe Biden held a town hall in Illinois — or at least tried to — from 800 miles away in Delaware. Bernie Sanders is staging daily news conferences from Vermont, instead of his usual rallies around the country with thousands of supporters.

The global coronavirus pandemic has sent the 2020 presidential campaign into a virtual phase.

Big rallies and handshakes are out. Virtual phone banks and town halls are the new normal. Political parties and groups are canceling in-person gatherings.

States holding primaries in coming weeks have urged more voters to cast ballots by mail and extended hours for early voting centers in an effort to avoid election day crowds. On Friday, Louisiana's governor said he planned to postpone his state's April 4 primary to June.

The Biden campaign scrapped plans for a Chicago rally ahead of Illinois' Tuesday primary due to warnings from public and health officials against large gatherings. Instead, the Democratic front-runner was supposed to take questions Friday in a virtual town hall via Facebook live.

But it was a rocky start. The livestream started after Biden had begun speaking, cutting off his introduction, and at one point Biden — holding a cell phone in his hand — turned and walked partially off camera,

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so viewers could no longer see his face. The stream lasted less than five minutes before wrapping up, with the campaign apologizing for "technical difficulties."

"I'm sorry this has been such a disjointed effort here because of the connections," Biden said after answering a question about protecting endangered species. "There's a lot more to say but I've already probably said too much to you."

Sanders, Biden's rival for the Democratic nomination, has been holding daily press briefings from his home state, where he has blasted President Donald Trump and his administration's response to the virus. Biden did the same in an address Thursday.

Speaking to reporters Friday, Sanders was subdued — the emotional opposite of the big rallies that have helped fuel his support at the polls. He drew over 10,000 people at a Chicago rally on Saturday, before officials starting warning against large events. Sanders said his team has mastered the use of internet campaigning, livestreaming almost all of its events already.

COVID-19 causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, for most people. It can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, for some people, especially older adults and those with existing health problems. Most people recover from it. Those with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover, according to the World Health Organization.

With the coronavirus causing a sea change in presidential campaigning, candidates and their supporters worry that the virtual events won't have the same impact.

"We do more rallies than anybody else, and (they're) often very well attended. I love to do them," Sanders told reporters at a hotel in his home state of Vermont. "This coronavirus has obviously impacted our ability to communicate with people in the traditional way that we do. That's hurting."

In Chicago, Biden volunteer Lally Doerrer was preparing to have a few other supporters over to her home Friday to watch the virtual town hall. The retiree finished an online MBA program a few years ago and said it helped familiarize her with technology like virtual classrooms and the potential for it to reach many more people than a rally. And while she believes canceling large gatherings is the right thing to do, she doesn't think the virtual events will have the same impact as when people come together in person.

"There is a common physical element that comes from being face to face, or better yet marching side by side, and that's what is lost in this," Doerrer said.

At Biden headquarters, Friday is the last day before the campaign moves to a work-at-home model for everyone, from the most senior advisers to the newest organizer.

The policy extends to field offices around the country, as well — just as the campaign was looking to build out the campaign toward a potential general election matchup against President Donald Trump. Trump himself has canceled rallies, for now.

Biden advisers are reluctant to talk about what the coming weeks may look like, mostly because they don't know. They've not announced a public schedule beyond Friday's town hall and a similar event in Miami on Monday, both replacing scheduled rallies ahead of Tuesday primaries.

If anything, those events are tryouts for a new style, while aides continue monitoring public health advisories from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In a staff memo, Anita Dunn, Biden's top strategist, and Jen O'Malley Dillon, his new campaign manager, said that as of Thursday, that guidance still suggests that "small gatherings are safe," as long as no exposed persons participate. "We will continue to hold smaller events like roundtables, house parties and press statements," besides the virtual events.

It's not the first time this election cycle that candidates have had to get creative about reaching voters. Stuck in Washington for Trump's impeachment trial in the weeks before the kickoff Iowa caucuses, Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar held telephone town halls with Iowa voters, and Sanders held nightly online chats where he spoke to supporters via live stream, offering updates on the impeachment trial and his campaign.

Klobuchar, who said over 12,000 Iowa voters participated in one of her telephone town halls, also spoke via phone to voters in New Hampshire, the second state to vote. Warren held similar calls with voters in

New Hampshire and South Carolina ahead of those states' primaries, as she campaigned elsewhere. She suggested later while campaigning in person that she'd reached thousands of voters that way, but her campaign never released figures on how many people actually dialed in.

Biden has held at least one virtual fundraiser, a rather uneventful telephone gathering on Dec. 5, when he called in and essentially delivered a modified version of a stump speech that he's since overhauled. Last week, he called in to a fundraiser being held at a private residence in northern Virginia. Donors heard in person from former Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, who's endorsed Biden, and Steve Ricchetti, one of his closest and longest-serving advisers, before the former vice president called in.

Barrow reported from Atlanta. Associated Press reporter Will Weissert contributed from Washington.

Louisiana governor moves primary because of coronavirus

By MELINDA DESLATTÉ Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Louisiana's governor Friday postponed the state's presidential primaries due to fears of the coronavirus, making it the first state to push back its election because of the outbreak.

Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards signed an executive order delaying the April 4 primary until June 20, according to his spokeswoman Christina Stephens. In a statement, he described the step as "necessary to protect the health and safety of the people of Louisiana from the risk of COVID-19," the disease caused by the coronavirus.

Louisiana also postponed elections in 2005 after hurricanes Katrina and Rita and in 2008 after hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

Early voting in Louisiana's election was scheduled to start in a week. But with a large number of elderly poll workers and worldwide concerns about people gathering in groups, Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin asked Edwards to sign the executive order, saying he didn't feel comfortable continuing with the election plans.

"This weighty decision has been made out of an absolute abundance of caution for Louisiana's voters, voting officials and the general public as a whole," said Ardoin, a Republican.

As of Friday, the number of residents testing positive in the state had jumped to three dozen, centered largely in the New Orleans area, according to the state health department's latest figures. The tests are awaiting confirmation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For most people, the virus causes only mild or moderate symptoms such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. Most people recover within weeks.

Edwards had already declared a public health emergency for the state. On Friday, he announced that he was closing public schools through April 13 and banning large events with more than 250 people. State prisons have suspended visitation, and hospitals and nursing homes were limiting visitor access. As they were around the country, universities were moving to all-online classes.

The ban on large events prompted some of the city's biggest attractions to close. The National WWII Museum said officials don't know when it will reopen. The Audubon Zoo and aquarium, insectarium, planetarium and interpretive center are closing at least through March 28, the Audubon Nature Institute said.

Louisiana's decision to delay the primary puts the state outside the Democratic National Committee's deadline for holding primaries and naming delegates to be credentialed for the July 13-16 convention in Milwaukee.

Current rules require states to hold nominating contests by June 9 and submit delegate rosters for convention floor credentials by June 20, the new date that Louisiana has selected for its primary. Missing those deadlines could result in a state losing half of its votes on the convention floor.

In this case, that almost certainly would affect former Vice President Joe Biden negatively, since he is a heavy favorite to score a large net-delegate gain over Bernie Sanders in Louisiana. It's also possible, however, that Louisiana simply renders itself moot, with Biden pulling away in delegates and in position to make big gains, given that the March 17 primaries will take place as planned.

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Jim Roosevelt, co-chairman of the DNC's powerful Rules & Bylaws Committee, said Friday that, for now, the deadlines remain in place. But, he added, "We are sort of playing this process by ear." Roosevelt said the priority is to ensure "a fair process" that the campaigns can accept.

There is precedent for the national party cutting a state's delegates: Michigan and Florida suffered that outcome in 2008, but not because of a public health emergency. The two states moved their primaries into a window the DNC had reserved for early nominating states.

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Associated Press reporter Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

Stocks roar back on hopes for government's virus plan

By **ALEX VEIGA** and **DAMIAN J. TROISE** AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Wall Street roared back from its worst day in 30 years Friday with a broad rally that sent the Dow Jones Industrial Average nearly 2,000 points higher — its biggest point gain ever — after President Donald Trump declared the coronavirus pandemic a national emergency.

Fueled by a late-day surge while Trump was speaking, the Dow saw its largest percentage gain since 2008. The rally recouped many of the losses from a day earlier, when the index experienced its worst slide since the Black Monday crash of 1987 and European indexes had one of the worst drops on record. The major indexes each closed with gains of more than 9%.

The session capped a dizzying week on Wall Street, with wild swings driven largely by uncertainty over how much damage the coronavirus would cause to the global economy. By Thursday, the Dow had suffered two drops of more than 2,000 points and the longest-ever bull market had ended.

Then on Friday stocks rallied, shooting sharply upward in the last half-hour of trading as investors appeared to gain confidence that the Trump administration has a plan to combat the outbreak from both a health care and economic perspective.

Despite Friday's pickup, the market still ended the week with its second-worst weekly loss in the past 10 years. All the major indexes are in what traders call a bear market.

Investors have been clamoring for strong action from the U.S. government to combat the outbreak's effect on businesses and workers. News that the White House and Congress were close to announcing an agreement on a package to provide sick pay, free testing and other resources helped boost the market in the morning.

"We're finally getting that a little late to the party, but it's better to be late to the party than not to come to the party," said Ryan Detrick, senior market strategist at LPL Financial. He said the stimulus plan should help cushion the financial effects on people and businesses.

Trump spoke to the nation twice this week about the coronavirus, and the stock market had decidedly different reactions each time.

On Wednesday night, Trump announced restrictions on travel from Europe and some seemingly minor economic measures. Global markets sold off, fearful that the U.S. and other countries lacked a strong response to the outbreak. That changed Friday afternoon, when Trump declared the national emergency, which frees up funds for states and cities to fight the virus. He also announced measures to shore up oil prices, ease the economic burden on students and improve the level of testing in the U.S. for the virus.

Trump's news conference, which also featured remarks from health experts, helped reassure investors that the administration is now taking aggressive action to limit the spread of the virus, said Quincy Krosby, chief market strategist at Prudential Financial.

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"What the market was focused on today was the containment of the virus. That's always been the top concern and a concern that the administration was behind the curve on," Krosby said. She described the steps outlined by the president and experts as "positive and optimistic."

"And that's exactly what the market needed and the country needed today," she said.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced a deal Friday with the Trump administration for an aid package from Congress that would provide free tests, sick pay for workers and bolster food programs.

The market's rout intensified this week amid a torrent of cancellations and shutdowns worldwide. Business closures have fueled fear that a severe pullback in consumer and business spending will tip the U.S. economy into a recession and wreck corporate profits.

The virus has infected over 137,000 people worldwide. More than 5,000 have died, but half of those who had the virus have already recovered. The pandemic's new epicenter is Europe. In the United States, cases have topped 1,600, while 41 people have died, according to the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention.

Friday's rally was broad, with technology stocks accounting for a big slice of the gains. Shares in cruise line operators, airlines and hotels — among the hardest-hit stocks as people canceled vacations and companies shut down business trips — headed higher.

Investors' anticipation of a government stimulus effort and a rate cut by the Fed next week put traders in a buying mood.

On Thursday, the Federal Reserve unveiled a massive short-term lending program to try to help smooth trading in U.S. Treasuries. Many economists expect the Fed will move to cut interest rates by a full percentage point, to nearly zero, at its meeting of policymakers next Wednesday.

This week's historic sell-off helped to wipe out most of the big gains since President Trump took office in 2017. After hitting an all-time high on Feb. 19, the S&P 500 fell more than 20%, officially ending Wall Street's unprecedented bull-market run of nearly 11 years. The slide into a bear market has been the fastest since World War II.

The selling has been so swift and sharp that there remains the potential for a significant bounce after the virus and its impact begin to recede, Detrick said. The economy was already on solid footing, and well-known companies like Disney and Apple could help lead a recovery.

He also said there could be a recession on the horizon, but it would likely be mild. "It could be a shallow, quick, violent, scary recession, but one that bounces back quickly," Detrick said.

Also Friday, Warren Buffett said the annual shareholder meeting for Berkshire Hathaway will be streamed live in early May without any attendees, apart from maybe select journalists. The meeting normally draws a crowd to rival professional sporting events.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illnesses, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover in a few weeks.

For now, investors must wait for more information.

"What markets are trying to do is understand what the cycle of the virus is, and then the human reaction to it," said Thomas Martin, senior portfolio manager at Global Investments in Atlanta.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

AP Exclusive: Inside NCAA's attempt to save March Madness

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Sports Writer

As it became apparent the NCAA basketball tournaments could not be held during their usual three-week window because of concerns about the coronavirus, organizers scrambled to devise a plan for a 16-team event to salvage the postseason in one long weekend.

NCAA vice president of men's basketball Dan Gavitt told AP on Friday that he started to consider ways of condensing the tournament Wednesday night after the NBA announced one of its players tested positive

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for the virus and the league suspended its season.

But the reality set in that even a shortened tournament could not be pulled off without putting people at risk, and the NCAA's biggest event of the year was canceled Thursday afternoon.

The cancellation of the men's and women's basketball tournaments came a day after the NCAA had announced it planned to play the games while restricting fan access.

"We did spend a significant amount of time very late Wednesday night trying to figure out alternative models," Gavitt said.

The next morning, Gavitt presented the idea to the men's basketball selection committee. The women's selection committee was scheduled to meet later in the day.

Gavitt said the hope was to play games starting March 26 at State Farm Arena in Atlanta. The city had been scheduled to host the Final Four at Mercedes-Benz Stadium on April 4 and 6.

The idea was to have the selection committee choose the top 16 teams in the country, regardless of conference, to participate. The first three rounds would have been played from March 26-28, with a championship game on March 30. Gavitt said he believes eight or nine of the 32 Division I conferences could have been represented.

"Far from ideal. Far from perfect," Gavitt said. "Imperfect as it may be, that was one of the only reasonable options we thought we could at least maintain some level of our tournaments."

Gavitt said there was some hope early Thursday a full tournament could still be played. As that faded, the idea of holding a smaller event got "mixed interest" from committee.

"There was a real concern about not being inclusive enough, with only 16 teams," Gavitt said. "But the other thing that was in play at that point in committee members' minds, and we saw this play out at conference tournaments, once an NBA player was infected, I think it started to really hit home for the players, from what I've heard from coaches by text message and anecdotally."

NCAA President Mark Emmert said postponing the tournament indefinitely, in the hope of playing it later, also wasn't feasible.

"The immediate logistical problems were that we had this rapidly, continuing right now, number of schools that were shutting down," Emmert said. "We had the reality that if you start a tournament six weeks from now a bunch of our students our seniors and will have moved on. And when you looked at the projections of where the virus was going to be in six weeks it looks worse, not better."

Similar reasoning went into the cancellation of all spring championships, including sports such as baseball and softball with national tournaments that don't start for another two months. It was a move that surprised some athletic administrators.

But with hundreds of schools closing campuses, some through the semester, and conferences suspending athletic activities, the NCAA could have faced the possibility of holding national championships in sports where many of the usually participants were not fielding teams.

Emmert said he was open to reconsidering spring championships.

"If I have learned anything from this it's to be reminded to never say never," Emmert told AP. "And so the answer to that is of course the board and everyone else will consider anything that makes good public policy sense. Those decisions are going to be driven by medical science and there would have to be a very clear, unequivocal, all-clear determination by public health officials and our advisory panel. Sitting here today that's very hard to imagine."

Even Wednesday, when the NCAA seemed to have saved the tournaments by agreeing to play in mostly empty arenas, allowing only essential staff, limited family members of players and coaches, and some media, Emmert cautioned the public health crisis could force changes.

Things were looking up after that announcement, but nobody involved was able to even go to bed feeling good Wednesday night. It was revealed Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert had tested positive for the coronavirus, and the NBA quickly shut down.

"It was certainly a very important data point that triggered a lot more conversations and phone calls among my leadership team," Emmert said.

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The question became: Was it realistic to expect that over 3 1/2 weeks, no one involved with the games — players, coaches, officials, etc. — would contract the virus?

“It was becoming more and more difficult to see our way through to that,” Emmert said.

He added: “I want to be clear, I wouldn’t describe the NBA’s decision as a pivot point. It was one piece of the puzzle.”

NCAA chief medical officer Dr. Brian Hainline said the association’s COVID-19 advisory panel, comprised of some of the country’s leading infectious disease and public health experts, was gathering information about the spread of the virus and seeing conditions rapidly changing — and not for the better.

NCAA officials reconvened on Thursday morning, worry on the rise. Other professional sports leagues, such as the NHL and MLS, were moving to suspend play. Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told Congress the United States was failing on coronavirus testing.

“So we spent the morning then exploring a variety of options,” Emmert said. “Would it make any sense to do an abbreviated model to accelerate the calendar?”

Thursday was supposed to be one the the busiest — and best — days of the college basketball season. There were 58 Division I men’s games scheduled, with tournaments for most of the strongest conferences in full swing.

All of those games were canceled, some moments before tip-off around noon EDT. Emmert said there was a flurry of communication between conferences and NCAA officials in Indianapolis.

Emmert said the NCAA did not advise any conference to cancel its games, but it was not long after that when the prospects of saving March Madness became bleak.

“We got to noon (CDT) and it was becoming pretty clear that between the information we received from Brian (Hainline) and his team, the challenges of trying to do testing around the Sweet 16 model ... all of those issues coming together. The changes in the public policy environment among a lot of the states, that this just wasn’t going to work,” Emmert said.

A call was arranged with the 20-member Board of Governors at 3 p.m. EDT. They heard from Emmert, Hainline and Gavitt, all explaining why options like a mini-tournament or postponing wouldn’t work.

Ohio State University President Michael Drake, the chairman of the board, polled board members and gave them all an opportunity to speak.

“It was unanimous that making the decision to cancel was the only sensible approach,” Emmert said. “So before we sent any notice out, it was clear that the board was 100 percent supportive of the decision and everybody did it with, as you can imagine, deep regret. I told the board when we finished, I’ve never been so disappointed at having a unanimous vote before.”

Follow Ralph D, Russo on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP>

More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Trump scrambles to broaden coronavirus testing options

By **MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration scrambled Friday to broaden testing for the coronavirus with a flurry of new measures, and public confusion persisted over who should be tested and how to get checked for the disease.

Declaring a national emergency, President Donald Trump and senior staffers laid out a new testing strategy designed to screen hundreds of thousands of Americans at drive-thru centers based around major retail chains.

Countries including South Korea and Germany have been using that approach for weeks, allowing people to quickly provide a throat or nasal swab for testing without leaving their cars.

“We want to make sure that those who need a test can get a test very safely, quickly and conveniently,” Trump said at a news conference in the Rose Garden. But he added that the test is not intended for ev-

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everyone, such as those without symptoms.

The moves come a day after one of the government's top health officials called the initial testing effort "a failing" and health care professionals, politicians and patients across the country complained about lack of access to testing.

Vice President Mike Pence, who is leading the coronavirus task force, said the U.S. can currently test 15,000 to 20,000 patients per day, but added that the number would increase "very soon."

Health officials said Friday that a new website "facilitated" by Google would guide users through a series of questions to determine whether they should be screened. If testing is recommended, users would be directed to a local testing location, which could include parking lots at Walmart, Target, Walgreen's and other major chains. People will be able to log on to the screening website later to view test results, according to the administration.

Verily, a health care company under Google, confirmed that it is working to "help triage" people for screening and said the effort will first launch in the San Francisco Bay area. The company offered no details about what the tool would look like or when it would launch.

The administration's coordinator for the virus response acknowledged growing scrutiny of the government's testing effort.

"I understand a lot of this behind-the-scenes action over the last couple of weeks was invisible to the press and the American people," said Dr. Deborah Birx, a government researcher and health official.

For weeks, public health experts have warned that the U.S. testing effort is being stymied by the limited number of labs running the COVID-19 tests and confusion among health care workers over who can be tested.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tells people to seek testing if they have certain symptoms of the flu-like illness caused by the coronavirus – fever, cough and trouble breathing – and if they have traveled recently to a coronavirus outbreak area or have been in close contact with someone who's been infected.

Ultimately, it's up to the doctor to decide who should get tested.

In many states, health officials have parroted the CDC guidance when telling doctors who to test. But in some states, officials have varied a bit, depending on a range of factors, including availability of tests and whether the virus is known to be spreading there.

A New York man said he ran into hurdles trying to get tested after the death of a business associate who was infected with the coronavirus. Joseph Faraldo said he began feeling ill earlier this month and tested negative for the flu. He said he called the state health department and "they were useless," and then the city health department failed to call him back as promised.

His doctor sent him to a clinic where he was tested Wednesday. He expects results Friday.

"I think I was pretty lucky, they told me come on in," Faraldo said.

Oklahoma used more than half of the state's testing capacity Wednesday to test 58 members of the Utah Jazz basketball organization after player Rudy Gobert tested positive. Those tests results showed one other player, Donovan Mitchell, also tested positive.

Oklahoma state epidemiologist Laurence Burnsed said it would have been too risky to transport the team back to Utah for testing without knowing who might be positive.

The CDC also tells doctors to give priority to the elderly or those who have health conditions that make them more vulnerable to COVID-19, which can cause pneumonia. Doctors are supposed to prioritize medical workers or others who have been in contact with a confirmed case.

The agency recommends people be tested for flu, to rule that out, because many of the symptoms are similar and it is flu season.

Meanwhile, some researchers are trying to estimate how many Americans are actually infected.

Earlier research suggests that for every documented, confirmed case, seven or more people are infected but not diagnosed, said Jeffrey Shaman, a Columbia University scientist noted for his work on flu predictions.

That suggests there could be 14,000 or more infected people in the United States right now, he said.

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For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. The vast majority of people recover from COVID-19 in a couple of weeks.

The U.S. testing effort has been hobbled by a series of delays, including flaws with the testing kits first distributed by the federal government and bureaucratic hurdles that held up testing by private labs at hospitals, universities and testing chains.

Public health labs across the country are now running the tests, and large commercial labs like LabCorp and Quest are ramping up too. Broad-scale testing is a critical part of tracking and containing viral outbreaks.

Responding to complaints, the Trump administration named a testing "czar" at the Department of Health and Human Services. Brett Giroir, assistant secretary for health, will be responsible for coordinating between the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration, as well as private labs and state and local government.

Medicare also announced it will pay about \$36 for the CDC coronavirus test and around \$51 for tests from other providers. Private insurers have said they would cover the tests.

Swiss medical company Roche received emergency approval from the FDA to run coronavirus tests on its automated, high-volume testing system.

The approval is expected to help U.S. labs dramatically increase their testing capacity, although Roche's system is mainly available at large health facilities. Roche said the test takes about 3 1/2 hours to run and can deliver as many as 4,000 results per day.

Currently most U.S. labs are testing using a manual method that involves mixing chemicals and processing small batches. Testing times vary by lab and can range from four to eight hours.

Separately, the FDA posted on Twitter that labs having problems getting supplies for collecting patient samples for testing should call the agency's toll-free information hotline.

"The demand is very high," said Dr. Bobbi Pritt, a pathologist and lab director at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. "There are going to be shortages at first before we can really ramp this up."

Hospitals and other health systems will have to prioritize testing for patients who truly need it, versus those who may be worried but don't have symptoms, Pritt said.

Associated Press writers Mike Stobbe in New York and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar in Washington contributed to this report.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

US hospitals brace for 'tremendous strain' from new virus

By **LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer**

U.S. hospitals are setting up circus-like triage tents, calling doctors out of retirement, guarding their supplies of face masks and making plans to cancel elective surgery as they brace for an expected onslaught of coronavirus patients.

Depending on how bad the crisis gets, the sick could find themselves waiting on stretchers in emergency room hallways for hospital beds to open up, or could be required to share rooms with others infected. Some doctors fear hospitals could become so overwhelmed that they could be forced to ration medical care.

"This is going to be a fairly tremendous strain on our health system," warned Dr. William Jaquis, president of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

The United States is still facing an active flu season, and many hospitals are already running at capacity caring for those patients. The new virus will only add to that burden, said Dr. Bruce Ribner an infectious-disease specialist at Emory University's medical school.

Government health authorities are taking emergency steps to waive certain laws and regulations to help hospitals deal with the crisis. Hospitals, too, are getting ready.

To keep suspected coronavirus patients from mingling with others in the ER, the Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston, Maine, set up a tent in the parking lot where people with respiratory symptoms are

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diverted for testing. Lexington Medical Center in West Columbia, South Carolina, did the same outside its emergency room.

In Seattle, hit by the nation's biggest cluster of coronavirus deaths, most of them at a suburban nursing home, UW Medicine set up drive-thru testing in a hospital parking garage and has screened hundreds of staff members, faculty and trainees, with nurses reaching through car windows and using swabs to collect specimens from people's nostrils. Drive-thru testing is expected to be offered to patients as soon as Monday.

At Spectrum Health Gerber Memorial Hospital in Fremont, Michigan, Robert Davidson, an emergency medicine doctor, said hip and knee replacement surgery and other operations that aren't emergencies might be postponed if an outbreak hits the area. Authorities in New York state and Illinois are talking about doing the same.

If an outbreak hits, "things that don't need to be done right now won't be done right now," said Dr. Raj Govindaiah, chief medical officer for Memorial Health System, which runs hospitals in Springfield, Lincoln, Decatur, Jacksonville and Taylorville, Illinois.

Govindaiah said the hospitals are also hiding the freebie surgical masks usually offered to visitors in the lobby, so that doctors and nurses can use them instead if supplies run tight. At Blue Ridge Regional Hospital in the small mountain community of Spruce Pine, North Carolina, respirator masks are locked and under video surveillance.

"We've really got to ... expect that this is going to be bad," said Blue Ridge Regional's Dr. Gabriel Cade. "The situation in Italy is a huge eye-opener."

In New York state, which has a large outbreak, the Health Department is accelerating regulations to get nursing students certified to work more quickly and is asking retired doctors and nurses to offer their services, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said.

This week, the American Hospital Association, American Medical Association and American Nurses Association asked for a presidential emergency declaration that would allow doctors and nurses to work across state lines and would waive certain rules to free up hospital beds. Similar declarations were issued during Hurricane Katrina and the swine flu outbreak.

On Friday, President Donald Trump responded by issuing an emergency declaration and said he was giving the U.S. health secretary authority to waive federal regulations and laws to give doctors and hospitals "flexibility" in treating patients.

Trump also announced a government partnership with major businesses to set up drive-thru testing centers and a website to help people who think they might have the virus. Those testing locations could include parking lots at Walmart, Target, Walgreens and other major chains.

The American Medical Association praised the action. In a statement, Dr. Patrice Harris, AMA's president, said the emergency declaration is needed to help ensure that the U.S. health care system "has sufficient resources to properly respond to the ongoing outbreak, prevent further spread of illness and keep our communities safe."

How bad U.S. hospitals will be hit is unclear, in part because mistakes on the part of the government in ramping up widespread testing for the virus have left public health officials uncertain as to how many people are infected.

The number of cases in the U.S. was put at around 1,700 Friday, with about 50 deaths. But by some estimates, at least 14,000 people might be infected.

Experts fear that when the problems with testing are resolved, a flood of patients will hit the nation's emergency rooms. But large-scale testing will also give health authorities a clearer picture of the outbreak, enabling them to allocate resources where they are needed.

"What's most important now is that we get the testing done," said Richard Pollack, president of the American Hospital Association.

In hard-hit Italy, doctors have been forced to make agonizing decisions about which critically ill patients receive care. Doctors fear that could happen in the United States, too.

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"Studies predict that a moderate outbreak could result in 200,000 patients needing intensive care," said Dr. Leana Wen, an emergency medicine specialist at George Washington University. "The U.S. only has 100,000 intensive care beds, and most are already occupied. If tens of thousands become sick at once, people will simply not receive the care that they need."

That would affect not only coronavirus patients but also trauma victims and people suffering heart attacks or strokes, Wen said.

In Wuhan, China, where the outbreak originated in late December, patients died because they couldn't access care. "We are at risk of that happening in the U.S., too," Wen said.

Seattle-area scientists are working to estimate how soon infections will overwhelm hospital beds there. Under the worst-case scenario, the number of active infections will exceed the number of beds by a large margin in the next two weeks, the Institute for Disease Modeling in Bellevue, Washington, said in a report this week.

For most people, the virus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. Most people recover from the virus in a matter of weeks, as has happened in mainland China.

Reacting to reports of dwindling supplies of respirator masks, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention posted relaxed recommendations this week for protective gear and said looser-fitting surgical masks are OK for doctors and nurses to wear when treating patients who may be sick from the coronavirus.

In another change, the CDC said coronavirus patients can be cared for in single-patient rooms with the door closed and do not need to be placed in specialized airborne-infection isolation rooms.

AP reporters Mary Esch and David Sharp, and Medical Writers Carla K. Johnson and Mike Stobbe contributed.

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Masters, Boston Marathon postponed due to coronavirus

By BERNIE WILSON AP Sports Writer

The shock waves from the coronavirus outbreak rattled sports for another day as two rites of spring, the Masters and Boston Marathon, were postponed.

There was at least some relief Friday that those events are expected to take place later in the year, unlike the stunning announcement the day before that the NCAA was canceling March Madness, one of the biggest events on the U.S. sports calendar.

"Well, postponed is a comforting word," pro golfer Xander Schauffele said. "Canceled is another."

Golf and car racing came around and called off weekend events, leaving fans with nothing to look forward to for several weeks.

Augusta National offered no details for when the green jacket will be slipped over the shoulders of a new champion, except for Chairman Fred Ridley saying he hopes the postponement puts the club in the best position to safely host the Masters "at some later date."

The Masters had been scheduled for April 9-12.

The Boston Marathon, the world's most celebrated footrace, was postponed from April 20 until Sept. 14.

Mayor Marty Walsh announced the decision. The Boston Athletic Association, which oversees the marathon, had held off deciding the fate of the race even as other high-profile sports events were canceled or postponed around the globe.

But pressure had mounted in recent weeks from officials in Boston and the seven cities and towns along the course. Some had expressed worries not only for the health of the 31,000 registered runners but also the estimated 1 million spectators who traditionally line the route, giving athletes hand slaps and even kisses as they pass.

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Walsh drew on the city's rallying cry in the aftermath of the bombings that killed three and injured scores of others at the marathon finish line in 2013.

"We've shown before that whatever the challenge to our marathon and to our city, we are Boston Strong," he said. "The marathon is Boston. It connects us. It reflects us. It brings out our community spirit and our resiliency."

The Boston Marathon has never been canceled outright since its first running in 1897, though there was a de facto cancellation in 1918, when the end of World War I and a global influenza pandemic prompted organizers to switch to a relay race format.

Until Friday, not even the Great Depression or ferocious storms had interrupted the 124-year-old race, a bucket list quest for runners worldwide. About a third of this year's runners were from outside the U.S.

Friday's announcements didn't come at the same crazy headline-a-minute pace as Thursday.

They were still stunning, though, as they left fans facing an empty sports calendar for some time.

NASCAR and IndyCar reversed course and pulled the plug on racing this weekend, with IndyCar also suspending its season through the end of April/

NASCAR called off Sunday's race at Atlanta Motor Speedway and next weekend's events at Homestead-Miami Speedway. Both events were already scheduled to be run without spectators.

IndyCar was scheduled to open its season Sunday on the streets of downtown St. Petersburg without fans. Formula One also canceled its season opening race in Australia, leaving the first full weekend of global motorsports without a major event.

If IndyCar resumes in May, the season would begin at Indianapolis Motor Speedway first with a race on the road course and then the showcase Indianapolis 500 on Memorial Day weekend.

"Anything from this point is going to be strange, right now is strange," five-time IndyCar champion Scott Dixon said. "I think that would be a fantastic start because that would mean everything is moving in the right direction, but we don't even know that now. Hopefully we are racing by then."

The NBA and NHL have suspended their seasons indefinitely. Major League Baseball has postponed the start of its season. Colleges have canceled spring sports.

The final three rounds of The Players Championship were canceled after the first round was played without fans.

Major league baseball encouraged players to go home, a day after canceling the rest of the spring training schedule and postponing opening day by at least two weeks.

Ballparks in Florida and Arizona were locked down as the sport considered how to proceed. Teams speculated the season might not start until sometime in May, necessitating a reduced schedule.

Many teams said they planned to close for the weekend and re-open camps Monday. Commissioner Rob Manfred met Friday with the players' association leadership, and a decision was made to encourage players to leave camp in the afternoon.

"We don't have a playbook for this," Cleveland Indians President Chris Antonetti said. "We are learning on the fly. We are taking the approach that we will continue to prioritize the health and wellness of our players, our staff, their families, everyone at the complex, everyone throughout the organization. That is evolving day to day."

College basketball players and coaches from Siena to San Diego State — which finished 30-2 and might have been a No. 1 seed for the first time — were left wondering, what if.

Siena won the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference regular-season title and was crowned champion of the conference tournament after the league halted play because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Siena hasn't played in the NCAA Tournament in a decade.

"It's tough," said Carmen Maciariello, the first-year coach at his alma mater in Loudonville, New York. "I think you can always look at it as a teaching moment. When you have a group of guys like we had and kind of the journey we've been on this season, the joy is in the journey. I truly believe we were on the brink of doing something extraordinary, especially as a first-time head coach, to have these guys believe in me just makes it hard. To ... have it evaporate before your eyes is really hard."

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"When it's all said and done, it is for the greater good and you want to make sure everybody is safe," he said Friday. "People are dying, so we have to be mindful of that. There's always a bigger picture."

AP Golf Writer Doug Ferguson; AP Auto Racing Writer Jenna Fryer; AP Sports Writers Jake Seiner, John Kekis and Jimmy Golen; and Associated Press Writer William J. Kole contributed to this report

Census faces challenges as it aims to hire up to 500,000

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER** and **ANGELIKI KASTANIS** Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The U.S. Census Bureau said it has reached its goal of recruiting more than 2.6 million applicants for the once-a-decade head count that launched for most of America this week — but it has been a bumpy road getting there and the new corona virus will likely make the path even more difficult.

The nation's abundance of jobs has complicated the effort, and some rural areas — particularly in New England, Appalachia and some Rocky Mountain states — are falling behind recruitment goals as the agency works to hire up to a half-million temporary workers before May. Falling short could threaten the count in some parts of the country, which in turn could lead to underrepresentation in Congress and less federal funding.

An analysis by The Associated Press shows how low unemployment has affected the bureau's ability to attract workers, with urban counties, especially large ones, more likely to hit recruitment goals than rural areas. The bureau has yet to account for how hiring could be affected by novel coronavirus concerns. The virus may dampen workers' enthusiasm for going door to door, but it could also create a new application pool of workers who have been laid off.

On Friday, Census Bureau officials told U.S. lawmakers that concerns about the virus hadn't yet caused a drop in staffing levels, according to a statement from the House Committee on Oversight and Reform.

The Census Bureau hasn't ruled out extending the count past the end of July, when it was scheduled to end, and bureau officials will make a decision after reviewing response rates. The bureau also is shifting training for temporary census-takers online and providing safety equipment for workers, according to the House committee.

The 2020 census started this week with the online questionnaire going live and notices being sent out for people to start answering the questions. In response to coronavirus concerns, the Census Bureau said this week, "It has never been easier to respond on your own, whether online, over the phone or by mail — all without having to meet a census taker."

Some advocates leading census outreach efforts on Friday worried that the coronavirus would lead some census takers to quit their jobs, said Jeri Green, 2020 census senior adviser for the National Urban League.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover.

While the Census Bureau has reached its recruiting goal nationally, hiring has varied widely from place to place. States with populations concentrated in large metro areas — Georgia, Illinois, Maryland and Nevada — have overrecruited. Mostly rural states with high numbers of older residents — Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire and West Virginia — are well below recruitment goals.

If the bureau can't find enough applicants in those areas, "it may have difficulty hiring enough staff to complete upcoming operations, leading to delays, increased costs and eroded data quality," J. Christopher Mihm of the Government Accountability Office said during a congressional hearing last month.

"Recruitment and hiring success in one area may provide little advantage to an area where efforts are lagging," Mihm said. "The census, while a national effort, is implemented locally in communities and neighborhoods across the country."

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Most of the workers will be hired to knock on the doors of households whose residents haven't responded by May to the census either online, by telephone or through the mail in what is the federal government's largest peacetime mobilization. The Census Bureau hopes to hire people from the areas they will be working in because they know their communities best.

In Vermont, part of the problem is the number of jobs. Its unemployment rate was just 2.4% at the end of 2019.

"Vermont is a rural, small state, and I know we have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation," said state librarian Jason Broughton, who is chairing a committee on encouraging census participation. "That plays a huge factor. A lot of people already are working two or three jobs, so everybody is already working."

The extremes in recruiting can be found in Teton County, Wyoming — home of the Jackson Hole ski area — and Clayton County, Georgia, in metro Atlanta, home of the world's busiest airport. In Teton County, the Census Bureau reached below 17% of its recruiting goal as of Feb. 24. In Clayton County, home to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the bureau had recruited more than double its goal.

Census Bureau officials insist there's no reason to be worried. As of the end of February, there were more than 22,500 temporary workers on the payroll, the bureau reported last week.

There are at least three recruits for every position in every part of the country, and in some parts, there are four or five applicants, Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham told lawmakers last month.

"We are not behind," Dillingham said.

The census helps determine the allocation of \$1.5 trillion in federal spending and how many congressional seats each state gets. For the first time, the bureau is encouraging most people to fill out their forms online.

Finding such a large, temporary workforce in the current labor market had been a formidable challenge, U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, whose department oversees the Census Bureau, testified before a Senate committee last week. But he said the bureau had reached out to college students, previous census-takers and private companies like Walmart that have a large number of temporary workers.

"I feel quite comfortable that we will accomplish what we need to," Ross said.

After recruiting efforts hit a plateau last December, the Census Bureau increased its hourly wages by around \$1.50 in almost three-quarters of U.S. counties. The hourly wages now range from \$14 to almost \$30 an hour, depending on the city, with workers in California, Chicago and the Northeast earning the most.

U.S. Reps. Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Deb Haaland of New Mexico told Census Bureau officials last month that residents had applied for jobs but never heard back. The two Democrats worried that recruiting and hiring problems would lead to undercounting of hard-to-count communities in their districts, which both have large numbers of minority groups.

The Census Bureau says the bulk of the hiring wouldn't start until this month.

In New Mexico, the recruiting shortfall seems most drastic in Hispanic communities and Indian country, Haaland said.

"Those I would say largely are rural communities where the unemployment rate is higher, so I almost feel like that would be a great place to find people," she said.

Dillingham, the bureau's director, promised to ensure those communities are properly staffed.

"It is very important that we meet the needs of particular states and particular communities within those states," he said.

Kastanis reported from Los Angeles.

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

Semenya switches to 200, still aiming to turn up in Tokyo

By GERALD IMRAY AP Sports Writer

Caster Semenya is looking for another Olympic run.

A different one, too.

Banned from competing in her favorite race and defending her title, the Olympic 800-meter champion is trying to make the Tokyo Games anyway — by switching to the 200 meters.

Semenya announced her decision on her Instagram account on Friday, saying her desire “to compete at the highest level of sport” drove her to try to qualify for the Olympics in an unfamiliar race for her.

“This decision has not been an easy one but, as always, I look forward to the challenge and will work hard, doing all I can to qualify for Tokyo and compete to the best of my ability for South Africa,” she said.

Under the world track and field body’s highly criticized testosterone regulations, Semenya and other female athletes with high natural testosterone are barred from races from 400 meters to one mile at top-level meets like the Olympics and world championships unless they undergo treatment to reduce their hormone levels for six months prior to running.

Semenya has refused to do so, calling the rules and the medical intervention required unfair and unethical. Athletes are given three choices to lower their testosterone: birth control pills, hormone-blocking injections or surgery.

But the regulations don’t apply to the 200 meters and that gives Semenya a chance to run at her third Olympics, even if it’s not in the race she wants to run in.

It won’t be easy.

Semenya has rarely run the 200 meters, and only at lower-level events. She didn’t compete at all over the distance between 2016 and early 2019, and she is well off the pace of the world’s leading women.

The 29-year-old South African needs to improve her personal best by nearly two seconds just to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics. Her best is 24.26 seconds, in South Africa in February 2019. The Olympic qualifying standard for the women’s 200 is 22.80 seconds. Semenya’s PB wouldn’t have got her out of the heats at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

But at least Semenya has a goal now after being in limbo for nearly a year after making an unsuccessful appeal of World Athletics’ testosterone regulations at the Court of Arbitration for Sport last May.

That left Semenya with a choice: Submit to medical treatment to lower her testosterone or stay away from the 800 meters. Defiant, she chose to stay away and hasn’t run an 800-meter race since winning at the Prefontaine Classic in June last year, her 31st straight victory over two laps. She wasn’t able to defend her title at last year’s world championships.

Semenya’s decision to try the 200 may signal she has given up on her second legal challenge against the regulations. That second appeal is still being considered by the Swiss Federal Tribunal and a ruling is due in the coming weeks. She lost her first appeal at CAS last year by a 2-1 majority of the panel of judges.

A favorable decision from the Swiss supreme court could still overturn the testosterone rules and allow Semenya to compete in the 800 again without hormone-reducing treatment, but her chances of winning the appeal are seen as slim.

World Athletics’ new testosterone rules apply to female athletes like Semenya with conditions known as differences of sex developments (DSDs). Semenya was born with the typical male XY chromosome pattern but also female traits. She was legally identified as female at birth and has been identified as female her entire life, but World Athletics says she is “biologically male” — an assertion she has rejected angrily.

World Athletics says higher testosterone gives women like Semenya an unfair athletic advantage.

Semenya’s story has been one of the most contentious in sport ever since she arrived as an unknown teenager and won gold at the 2009 world championships amid a gender-test storm.

She has won two Olympic titles and three world titles in the 800 meters and is the reigning Olympic champion but has now been barred from running twice in her career. The first time she was sidelined by World Athletics, then known as the IAAF, was in 2009 in the wake of the gender controversy at the world championships.

Semenya hinted she might switch to the 200 when she won a rarely run 300-meter race and broke the South African record last month, her first race over any distance in eight months.

After that victory, she declared: "I'm here to stay. Track and field, you will still see my face."

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Business fallout: Apple goes online, Delta slashes flights

By The Associated Press undefined

Apple said its annual developers conference would take place entirely online this year, joining a growing list of companies that are canceling big, in-person events as the coronavirus spreads.

Thousands of engineers and customers attend the Worldwide Developers Conference, or WWDC, which is in its 31st year.

Apple said it would give \$1 million to organizations in San Jose, California, to help with the money they would lose from Apple canceling the in-person event. The event had been held in San Jose for the past few years.

Google and Facebook also canceled their flagship developers conferences in the face of coronavirus health concerns.

Meanwhile, Berkshire Hathaway chairman Warren Buffett told shareholders Friday that they won't be allowed to physically attend the company's May 2 annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, because of the coronavirus threat.

The virus has infected 137,000 people worldwide. Most patients have only mild or moderate symptoms, but the elderly and people with existing health conditions are particularly vulnerable. More than 5,000 have died.

Among other ways the virus is impacting businesses:

FLYING LOW: Delta is slashing its flying by 40% to handle an unprecedented nosedive in air travel demand. It's the largest cut in Delta's history.

CEO Ed Bastian said the downturn in demand is unlike anything the company has ever seen, not even after the Sept. 11 attacks. He said he's optimistic about getting help from the White House and Congress. But, he said, Delta can't wait for Washington to act, so it is preserving cash and cutting costs.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Washington will consider aid for the airline industry. "Just as after Sept. 11, we are very committed to make sure that our U.S. airlines have the ability and have the liquidity to get through this," Mnuchin told CNBC.

The federal government provided aid including loan guarantees to U.S. airlines after the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, when the number of people flying also dropped sharply.

GETTING ONLINE: U.S. phone and cable companies say that they won't cut off home-internet and cell-phone service for people and small businesses that are unable to pay because of the coronavirus pandemic, which is causing workplace shutdowns and layoffs. They'll also waive late fees and make their networks of Wi-Fi hotspots available to the public.

The companies acted at the request of Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai, who is also encouraging — but not requiring — them to take further steps to make sure people can stay connected to each other, their schools, jobs and doctors as the country increasingly shuts down.

He suggested that the internet service providers increase and improve their low-cost internet offerings for low-income people, relax their data caps and try to help schools and libraries with remote learning, for example.

FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel, a Democrat, has called on the FCC to do more to help families whose children's schools have shut down, like beefing up a program that helps schools loan Wi-Fi hotspots to kids stuck at home. The AP has found that 3 million students have no internet access at home.

Some companies are taking additional steps like those Pai suggested. Cable companies Comcast and Cox are boosting internet speeds on their low-cost plans and offering one or two months of free service for

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new low-income customers. AT&T is waiving fees if people go over home-internet data caps.

The development comes as Ford and General Motors are asking white collar employees to work from home if possible, starting Monday. Factory workers for both companies still must report. Fiat Chrysler says it's accelerating deployment of remote working.

AT THE MOVIES: AMC Theaters and Regal Cinemas, the country's two largest movie theater chains, plan to fill their theaters no more than 50%. AMC said it would begin the policy Saturday and keep it until the end of April to help facilitate social distancing. In larger auditoriums, the chain will no longer sell more than 250 tickets for a showing.

Meanwhile, The Walt Disney Co. says its shutting down many of its live-action productions, including "The Little Mermaid" and Ridley Scott's "The Last Duel," due to the coronavirus. It has delayed the releases of several upcoming films, including "Mulan."

IMF STAFFERS SENT HOME: The International Monetary Fund said Friday that a staff member had tested positive for the coronavirus. As a result, all staffers at the IMF's Washington, D.C., headquarters have been advised to work from home until further notice. The 189-nation lending institution said that the staffer who has been diagnosed was self-isolating and receiving medical care. The IMF said all of its staff missions to European countries with a large number of coronavirus cases had been suspended and only essential travel will be allowed to other countries. Even with headquarters staff working from home, the IMF said the agency remained fully operational in terms of helping its member countries.

NOT REAL NEWS: Falsehoods around the virus and politics

By BEATRICE DUPUY and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the real facts:

CLAIM: If you don't have health insurance and can't afford to take a \$3,200 test for the virus, donate blood because screeners must test donors for the virus.

THE FACTS: Blood banks said they do not test for the novel coronavirus as part of the donation process, and they caution that people should not go to donation centers if they fear they have been exposed to it. "We do a whole range of testing on blood donations as required by the FDA, but screening or testing for coronavirus is not happening," said Kate Fry, chief executive officer of America's Blood Centers, a North American network of nonprofit blood centers. The network oversees more than 600 blood collection sites. Dr. Pampee Young, chief medical officer of the American Red Cross, told the AP that screeners do not test for the coronavirus as part of the process. "The last thing we would want is for people who are not healthy coming just to try to get tested," she said. A tweet claiming blood banks would test people for the virus received more than 250,000 likes this week before it was deleted Wednesday and the person who posted it apologized. Still, the false information continued to circulate on Facebook. The Red Cross has instituted safety protocols and asks those who have traveled in coronavirus outbreak areas, including China and Italy, to wait 28 days before giving blood. Young added there is no data or evidence that coronavirus or respiratory viruses can be transmitted through blood transfusions.

CLAIM: As the weather gets warmer, mosquitoes will spread the coronavirus after they bite people who are infected.

THE FACTS: There is no evidence that mosquitoes transmit coronavirus. The World Health Organization addresses the claim on their "myth busters" page, saying: "To date there has been no information nor evidence to suggest that the new coronavirus could be transmitted by mosquitoes." The novel coronavirus spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose. The false mosquito claim spread across social media platforms, including on TikTok, where one post received more than one million likes.

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CLAIM: There is a simple self-check that can be done every morning to see if you have the coronavirus. Take a deep breath and hold it for more than 10 seconds. If you complete it successfully without discomfort, stuffiness or tightness it proves there is no fibrosis in the lungs, basically indicating no infection.

THE FACTS: Medical experts say that the test would not provide a clear indication of whether someone has the virus. The claim, which has three parts, first says that if a coronavirus patient goes to the hospital too late their lungs will experience 50 percent fibrosis, scarring of the lungs that restricts breathing. It then suggests the 10 second breathing test, finally stating that drinking water every 15 minutes will kill the virus. Social media users have falsely attributed the claims to Japanese doctors, Taiwanese experts and Stanford University. Lisa Kim, Stanford Health Care and school of medicine spokeswoman, said in an email that the widely distributed breathing test claim did not come from Stanford University. Despite medical experts and even the World Health Organization debunking these claims, people continue to share them on and off social media. Dr. Robert Legare Atmar, an infectious disease specialist at Baylor College of Medicine, told The Associated Press that there is no clear evidence that coronavirus causes 50 percent pulmonary fibrosis. Experts also said that the 10 second test being shared online would not be a reliable way to determine whether someone has the virus. "This approach may be helpful in identifying persons with more serious lung disease," Atmar said. "But it will not identify persons who are infected and have mild to no symptoms." There are many things beyond coronavirus that could lead to restricted breathing, including asthma, anxiety or heart disease, said Dr. Gregory Poland, head of vaccine research at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Also, while staying hydrated by drinking water is important for overall health, it does not prevent coronavirus, according to the WHO.

CLAIM: Actor Daniel Radcliffe tested positive for coronavirus.

THE FACTS: Radcliffe, known widely for his role in the Harry Potter film series, does not have coronavirus despite posts sharing that claim Tuesday. A Twitter account made to closely resemble a BBC News account, with the handle @BBCNewsTonight, spread the claim, which was later retweeted by social media users, including celebrities on their verified accounts. Scott Boute, who represents Radcliffe, told The Associated Press in an email that the claim was not true. Screenshots of the tweet with the claim continued to circulate on Facebook after the false Tweet was taken down. "Breaking: Daniel Radcliffe tests positive for coronavirus," the tweet reads. "The actor is said to be the first famous person to be publicly confirmed." The tweet from the impostor account included a link that took users to a BBC News Alerts page with posts from 2017. The fake account had about 125 followers; the verified BBC Breaking News Twitter account has 41.7 million. A Twitter spokesperson told the AP that the account was suspended for violating Twitter's rules on platform manipulation. Jemimah Norman, a spokesperson for the BBC, also confirmed to the AP that the tweet was from an account not affiliated with the BBC.

CLAIM: Photo shows the actor Tom Hanks quarantined at a hospital in Australia with a volleyball that looks like Wilson, his make-believe friend in the movie "Cast Away."

THE FACTS: The photo was manipulated. It was not taken in Australia where Hanks and his wife, actress Rita Wilson, were hospitalized Thursday in stable condition. Users began sharing the manipulated photo on social media shortly after Hanks announced he and his wife had tested positive for the virus. In the fabricated photo, Hanks holds a white volleyball made to resemble Wilson, the inanimate object that became his best friend in "Castaway," a movie about a FedEx executive who was stranded on an island after a plane crash. The photo appears to have been taken in a hospital. The image of the 63-year-old was taken at a New York Rangers game in 2015 and can be found online. The image of Hanks was placed in a European Pressphoto Agency photo of a hospital room. "The Australian government says Christmas Island has the best available facilities," states the caption on the original hospital photo, which does not include Hanks. Social media users shared the fabricated photo with posts saying that hospital staff in Australia had brought Hanks the volleyball to keep him company in quarantine. It first circulated as satire. Hanks is

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in Australia shooting an Elvis Presley biopic directed by Baz Luhrmann. Hanks shared the news about his positive tests on Instagram and Twitter on Wednesday.

CLAIM: President Donald Trump tweeted on Feb. 25, 2015: "If the Dow Joans ever falls more than 1000 'points' in a Single Day the sitting president should be 'loaded' into a very big cannon and Shot into the sun at TREMENDOUS SPEED! No excuses!"

THE FACTS: The tweet was not written by Trump. It was fabricated and it was first posted in 2018, not 2015. Social media users recirculated a screenshot of the fabricated tweet Monday as the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 2,013 points. It was created in 2018 to make it appear Trump tweeted it when Barack Obama was president. The steep drop in the Dow, following concerns over the spread of the novel coronavirus and a crash in oil prices, led to an automatic halt in trading on the New York Stock Exchange, a step that had not been taken in two decades. Shaun Usher, author and blogger, first shared the post in 2018 as a joke and later said he did not intend for his tweet to be taken seriously. On Monday, he addressed the tweet again after retweeting a Snopes fact check of the tweet. The screenshot of the false tweet was shared on Twitter and Facebook where it received thousands of likes. Many of the posts shared the false image with comments suggesting that Trump's words were coming back to haunt him. Trump did tweet about the stock market on Monday, writing: "Saudi Arabia and Russia are arguing over the price and flow of oil. That, and the Fake News, is the reason for the market drop!"

CLAIM: Billionaire philanthropist George Soros owns Smartmatic voting machines. Don't throw your vote away if you live in a state that uses them. Ask for a paper ballot. Under federal law the polling place must provide one.

AP'S ASSESSMENT: Soros, who donates to liberal political causes, does not own Smartmatic, a company that specializes in voting technology. A post circulating on Facebook featuring a photo of Soros and titled "Defeat Election Fraud" falsely claims he owns the company and names 16 states as places that use them. Three of the states — Michigan, Missouri and Washington — were holding primaries on Tuesday. Similar false claims have circulated previously with posts dating as far back as 2016. Michigan has three voting system vendors approved for the state, which are Dominion Voting Systems, Election Systems and Software and Hart InterCivic. Samira Saba, a spokeswoman for Smartmatic, told The Associated Press in an email that Los Angeles County is currently the company's only client in the U.S. While the chairman of SmartMatics and the SGO Group, Mark Malloch-Brown, serves on the Open Society Foundations Global Board -- founded by George Soros -- SmartMatics is not owned by Soros himself, despite what the post circulating widely on social media suggested. The company's website noted that "George Soros does not have and has never had any ownership stake in Smartmatic." Smartmatic took part in its first U.S. election during the 2005-06 election cycle, when it offered its services to 16 states, according to their website.

CLAIM: Video shows Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden at a campaign event in St. Louis, Missouri, endorsing Republican President Donald Trump, saying "we can only re-elect Donald Trump!"

THE FACTS: A video viewed millions of times on Facebook and Twitter does not show Biden mistakenly endorsing Trump, and he was talking to supporters in Kansas City, Missouri -- not St. Louis. A full review of Biden's 15-minute speech at the Saturday rally, which was broadcast by local news stations, shows he stumbled over his words as he urged the crowd to reject negative attacks in the Democratic primary contests. "We cannot win this re-election, excuse me, we can only re-elect Donald Trump, if in fact we get engaged in this circular firing squad here," Biden said to the crowd. Social media accounts clipped the last part of his sentence about engaging in "this circular firing squad here," making it sound as though Biden had accidentally endorsed Trump. The video was circulated by Trump, multiple accounts managed by his campaign and his supporters. Various versions of the video had been viewed more than 10 million times by Monday afternoon.

This is part of The Associated Press' ongoing effort to fact-check misinformation that is shared widely

online, including work with Facebook to identify and reduce the circulation of false stories on the platform.

Find all AP Fact Checks here: <https://apnews.com/APFactCheck>

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Death toll at 21 as Egypt storms, flooding enter 2nd day

CAIRO (AP) — Thunderstorms and flooding around Egypt entered a second day Friday, interrupting daily life in much of the country, including the capital Cairo, as the death toll rose to 21, authorities said.

Most of the victims were in rural areas and slums. At least six children died either from electrocution or when their houses collapsed on them.

Since the rains hit late Wednesday and early Thursday, social media has been inundated with images and video showing flooded roads and villages as well as water-filled apartments in some of Cairo's richest neighborhoods.

Chaos always accompanies bad weather in Egypt, raising questions about the country's poor infrastructure and dilapidated sewage and drainage systems. To minimize the impact of bad weather, the government closed down schools and suspended work in businesses and government offices after forecasters warned of heavy rains and flooding across much of the country through Saturday.

Late on Thursday, Cairo's Water Authority announced it had suspended water service to the entire megacity because heavy rain had overwhelmed the vast sewage system. By Friday morning water had returned to some parts of the city.

The floods forced the country's railway authorities to suspend train service nationwide. Power outages were also reported in several parts of the country, including parts of Cairo.

Federal prosecutors in NYC add to R Kelly's legal woes

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal prosecutors hit R. Kelly with more criminal charges Friday, accusing the disgraced R&B singer of having unprotected sex with a girl in 2015 without disclosing he had herpes.

The new racketeering charges were included in a revised indictment filed in New York City a week after the 53-year-old Kelly pleaded not guilty to a separate updated federal indictment in Chicago involving child pornography, sexual exploitation of children and other allegations.

The court papers in New York allege that the "I Believe I Can Fly" singer arranged for the minor — referred to only as "Jane Doe #5" — to travel to New York and other locations to have sex with him without informing her "he had contracted herpes and obtaining her consent to sexual intercourse in these circumstances."

A message was left with Kelly's attorney seeking comment. There was no arraignment date set for the new charges in federal court in Brooklyn.

The new charges further a string of dozens of other counts of state and federal sexual misconduct charges in Illinois, Minnesota and New York, from sexual assault to heading a racketeering scheme aimed at supplying Kelly with girls. He has denied ever abusing anyone.

The Grammy-award winning musician was jailed in July and has been awaiting trial at a Chicago federal jail a block from the courthouse where he attends pretrial hearings. He has participated in hearings in his New York case by video.

Federal prosecutors in Chicago have signaled they will file more charges, prompting a judge there to push Kelly's trial date there to Oct. 13. A trial in Brooklyn is set to begin July 7.

No rite of spring for golf: Masters postponed due to virus

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Augusta National on Friday postponed the Masters, another massive hit to the spring sports calendar from the new coronavirus that already is responsible for the loss of March Madness and the delay of opening day baseball.

So much for that annual rite of spring and the first week in April devoted to the brilliance of dogwoods and azaleas, Amen Corner and Tiger Woods chasing another green jacket.

“Unfortunately, the ever-increasing risks associated with the widespread coronavirus have led us to a decision that undoubtedly will be disappointing to many, although I am confident is appropriate under these unique circumstances,” Masters chairman Fred Ridley said in a statement.

The Masters had been scheduled for April 9-12.

Ridley said he hoped the decision puts Augusta National in the best position to host the Masters and its two other amateur events “at some later date.”

He did not indicate when the Masters could be played. The private club traditionally closes in May and does not open for its members until October.

“That’s not a fun message to get,” said J.T. Poston, among PGA Tour winners who had qualified for their first Masters. “That’s a tournament that I’ve been looking forward to since I was a kid, and still very much looking forward to it. I know I’ll get my chance at it. Just won’t know when that’ll be.”

The decision comes 12 hours after PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan canceled four tournaments, starting with the final three rounds of The Players Championship and its \$15 million purse.

Players already were bracing for the Masters to be postponed as they left the TPC Sawgrass on Friday morning. The virus has a grip on the sporting world, and golf’s decision to cancel — after first wanting to try to playing The Players Championship without fans — was inevitable.

“Well, postponed is a comforting word — canceled is another,” said Xander Schauffele, who was a runner-up to Woods last year at the Masters. “As long as it says ‘postponed,’ I think the players will find hope in that word and just wait for go time.”

Even so, these were odd times for golfers who usually only step away for a month at a time at the end of the year. Schauffele said it felt like the last day of school.

“A lot of good golf, a big stretch of golf coming up, and we’ll be sitting at home waiting for someone to tell us when and where,” he said. “It’s a very strange feeling.”

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, with the vast majority recovering in about two weeks.

The NBA and NHL have suspended their seasons indefinitely. Major League Baseball has postponed the start of its season, and one of the biggest events to be called off was the NCAA basketball tournament — March Madness — that captivates the country for three weeks. The championship game is the Monday night before the Masters.

Colleges are canceling spring sports.

The Masters has finished in April every year since 1935 — the first tournament was in late March — except when it was canceled from 1943 to 1945 because of World War II.

“It’s hard to think this is on that scale, but the last time a lot of events were canceled (was) due to World War II. This coronavirus has just changed our world,” Matt Kuchar said.

The club also hosts the Augusta National Women’s Amateur that ends on the Saturday before the Masters, and Sunday is reserved for the Drive, Chip and Putt Finals for youngsters who qualify all year throughout the country.

No other golf tournament gets better ratings than the Masters, the only major held on the same course every year. Ticket prices are among the cheapest for a major sporting event — \$375 this year for a Thursday-Sunday badge — though the club gets much of its non-broadcast revenue from its merchandise shops. It does not have an online store.

Local businesses also figure to suffer mightily, particularly hotels that often charge as much as five times

the normal rate during the week of the Masters.

The next major is scheduled to be the PGA Championship in San Francisco on May 14-17, and the PGA of America already is contemplating scenarios if it's not safe to play.

"The world is not coming to an end, but it's a little reality check," Kevin Na said. "Golf is not that big of a deal when you look around at what's going on in the world. I know Masters is being postponed. I think they're doing the right thing, and I look forward to hopefully playing the Masters later this year."

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

US general: US strikes destroy weapons depots, more remain

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. retaliatory airstrikes against militants in Iraq destroyed five weapons depots, but the top U.S. commander for the Middle East acknowledged Friday that there are many similar sites that the U.S. has so far not hit because of potential civilian casualties and political sensitivities with the Iraqi government.

Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie said the U.S. decision to target the Iranian-backed Shiite militia group that killed American and British troops in a rocket attack this week sends a strong message to Iran and its proxies. But he said that as the threat of continued attacks remains high and tensions with Iran have not gone down, the U.S. is beefing up military assets in the region.

"What should now be obvious to everyone is you're not going to be able to fire those at a U.S. or coalition base, hurt or kill our people, and escape unscathed," McKenzie told Pentagon reporters Friday. He said the U.S. has been aware of the weapons sites and knows where more are, but has exercised "restraint" in bombing them because in some cases strikes would kill "a lot" of civilians. He said the U.S. works with the Iraqi military to take out the sites, but at times that doesn't work.

Kataib Hezbollah, the group the U.S. blames for the Wednesday attack at Camp Taji base that killed two U.S. and one British service members and wounded 14 other personnel, has not commented on the strikes, but another Iranian-backed group has vowed revenge.

The tit-for-tat strikes potentially signal another cycle of violence between Washington and Tehran that could play out inside Iraq. And they threaten to hamper ongoing U.S. negotiations with the Iraqi government to keep American troops in the country.

In fact, Iraq's military said three Iraqi army commandos and two federal police officers were killed in the U.S. strikes. And a Shiite endowment in the holy city of Karbala said one civilian in an airport complex being constructed by the endowment was also killed.

Asked about the Iraqi deaths, McKenzie said the U.S. talked with the Iraqi military and they knew the U.S. attack was imminent.

"If Iraqis were there and Iraqi military forces were there, I would say it's probably not a good idea to position yourself with Kataib Hezbollah in the wake of a strike that killed Americans and coalition members."

Due to the ongoing threat, McKenzie said Defense Secretary Mark Esper has agreed to keep two Navy aircraft carriers — the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower and the USS Harry S. Truman -- in the Gulf region "for a period of time." He said this is the first time since 2012 that the U.S. has had two carriers in the region at the same time.

He also said that Patriot air defense missile systems are being moved into Iraq to provide defenses against ballistic missile attacks like the January strike by Iran that hit an Iraqi air base where U.S. troops were present. No Americans were killed in that attack but dozens suffered mild traumatic brain injury. Since then, Washington has been negotiating with the Iraqi government to permit the Patriot deployment.

The latest strikes mark a rapid escalation in tensions with Tehran and its proxy groups in Iraq, just two months after Iran carried out a massive ballistic missile attack against American troops at a base in Iraq. They came just hours after top U.S. defense leaders threatened retaliation for the Wednesday rocket attack, making clear that they knew who did it and that the attackers would be held accountable.

"The United States will not tolerate attacks against our people, our interests, or our allies," Esper said. "As we have demonstrated in recent months, we will take any action necessary to protect our forces in Iraq and the region."

According to the U.S. military, the locations of the strikes were largely around the Baghdad region. The strikes hit weapons storage facilities in Karbala, Al-Musayib, and Arab Nawar Ahmad and a missile storage and propellant production facility in Jurf al-Sakher,

Prior to the strikes top U.S. officials, including President Donald Trump and Esper had suggested retaliation was coming. And McKenzie told senators in a public hearing that the deaths of U.S. and coalition troops created a "red line" for the U.S.

Two U.S. troops and one British service member were killed and 14 other personnel were wounded when as many as 15 rockets hit the base Wednesday. The U.S. military said the 107 mm Katyusha rockets were fired from a truck launcher that was found by Iraqi security forces near the base after the attack.

Asked why there were no systems at Taji to intercept the rockets, McKenzie said that such systems are limited and can't be everywhere. He said to put a system there, he would have to take it away from another location where it's also needed.

Kataib Hezbollah was also responsible for a late December rocket attack on a military base in Kirkuk that killed a U.S. contractor, prompting American military strikes in response.

That in turn led to protests at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. They were followed Jan. 3 by a U.S. airstrike that killed Iran's most powerful military officer, Gen. Qassem Soleimani, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, a leader of the Iran-backed militias in Iraq, of which Kataib Hezbollah is a member. In response to the Soleimani killing, Iran launched a massive ballistic missile attack on Jan. 8, at al-Asad air base in Iraq, that resulted in traumatic brain injuries to more than 100 American troops.

Associated Press writers Robert Burns in Washington and Qassim Abdul-Zahra in Baghdad contributed to this report.

Supreme Court petitioned on police officers' legal immunity

By MATTHEW BARAKAT Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. (AP) — James King had no idea that the men who grabbed him and took his wallet were plainclothes officers looking for a fugitive. So he ran off. And when they caught him, he took a monstrous beating.

Bystanders also were confused. One called 911 to report the beating, telling a dispatcher: "They're going to kill this man."

King, 27, was a college student at Grand Valley State in Michigan in 2014 when he was beaten. He sued the officers who arrested him, but a judge tossed out the case, ruling that the officers were entitled to immunity for their actions.

King's case is one of several taken up by the Arlington-based Institute for Justice in an effort to get the U.S. Supreme Court to reconsider the "qualified immunity" doctrine, which frequently shields police officers and other government agents from lawsuits when they are accused of violating a person's constitutional rights.

"The biggest problem is, these doctrines have no basis in the history of this country," said Anya Bidwell, one of King's lawyers with the institute. "They are inconsistent with our founding principles."

The qualified immunity doctrine was first enunciated by the Supreme Court in 1967, and expanded greatly by the court in the 1980s. As it currently stands, officers can only be held liable for their actions if a court has previously found officers liable in an analogous circumstance, Bidwell said.

The Institute also has petitioned the high court to take the case of Shaniz West, whose home in Caldwell, Idaho, was destroyed by officers looking for her ex-boyfriend. They hope to learn as soon as later this month whether the justices will review the cases.

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One of the officers sued by King is an FBI agent who was participating in a federal-local task force in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The FBI and a Grand Rapids spokesman declined comment. A spokeswoman for the City of Caldwell did not respond to an email seeking comment.

In a phone interview, King said he feels lucky to be alive after being beaten by officers who seemed unfazed by the fact that bystanders were witnessing the attack in broad daylight. He said one of his lawyers told him that if he'd been black, he would have been killed.

"I thought I was going to be killed," he said. "And there are people all over the country who deal with this on a daily basis."

King was charged with resisting arrest and assaulting a police officer. Court records indicate he bit one of the officers who had him in a chokehold. A jury acquitted King on all charges.

Justices have signaled some interest in the topic. In 2017, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote that the court should find an appropriate case to reconsider the doctrine. As with other elements of criminal justice reform, a left-right coalition of liberals concerned about police abuse and conservatives concerned about unaccountable government has emerged to agitate for change.

While there is strong momentum for reconsidering the qualified immunity doctrine, it has its defenders. In a Notre Dame Law Review Journal titled "A Qualified Defense of Qualified Immunity," professors Aaron Nielson and Christopher Walker write that the doctrine is entitled to a significant measure of deference now that it has been in place for 50 years, and indeed expanded by the high court over time.

"Absent dramatic new information, until and unless Congress says otherwise, qualified immunity should remain our law," the authors write.

Cities and local governments also support the immunity, arguing that police need a measure of protection to do their job without looking over their shoulders.

Lisa Soronen, executive director of the State and Local Legal Center, which advocates for local governments before the Supreme Court, said qualified immunity is key to the financial solvency of state and local governments which could otherwise be overwhelmed by lawsuits.

Also, it's important for officers to know they have some legal protection on the job, she said.

"You don't want an officer hesitating," she said. "They have to act in these hard situations."

She said the doctrine has been under attack since it was targeted by a libertarian think tank, the Cato Institute. But she said changing a doctrine that has stood for decades could end up confusing the immunity issue rather than clarifying it.

"Relaxing the idea may sound like a good idea, but where do you draw the line?" she asked.

Tax on internet ads gets traction in Maryland

By BRIAN WITTE Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — A measure to make Maryland the first state in the nation to tax companies like Facebook and Google for money they make from digital ads on the internet is making steps forward in the state's legislature.

Opponents, however, say the state would have a hard time enforcing it and that the measure violates federal law, as well as the First Amendment.

The state Senate is poised to take up the bill this weekend, as lawmakers work on an expedited basis on priority legislation, in case they decide to adjourn early due to coronavirus.

The measure would impose a tax based on global annual gross revenues for companies that make more than \$100 million globally. It would require companies to file a tax return with the state. Supporters are describing it as a necessary step to overhaul the state's tax methods in response to significant changes in how businesses advertise.

"Fundamentally, the idea is the ads that are served up in the state of Maryland on platforms, the revenue that is generated from the service of those ads in the state of Maryland would be subject to an excise tax," Senate President Bill Ferguson, a Baltimore Democrat who is a bill sponsor, said.

The revenues companies make on digital ads would be subject to a tax of between 2.5% to 10%, based

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on estimates made by the companies on how much of their advertising is seen in the state.

State analysts have estimated the measure could raise as much as \$250 million a year to help pay for a far-reaching and expensive education measure, which is estimated to cost billions of dollars over the next decade.

Opponents say the measure violates the federal Internet Tax Freedom Act, which prohibits discrimination against electronic commerce, as well as other federal laws. They also note that Maryland does not currently tax advertising at all.

"I think the day it would come into law, there will be an injunction and it'll be a significant court case, so I think it will be delayed a long time," said Sen. Andrew Serafini, a Republican who opposes the measure.

Sen. James Rosapepe, a Democrat who supports the bill, said it took 25 years and a series of court decisions to enable states to collect sales tax from Amazon on e-commerce.

"Folks don't like to pay taxes, so I'm sure these big boys will try to fight every way they can, but in the end they're going to lose, because it's the right thing to do," Rosapepe said in a recent interview.

Only Nebraska has similar legislation pending, according to the National Conference on State Legislatures, but it would impose a sales tax on digital advertising, rather than a gross receipts tax. The measure isn't getting traction so far in Nebraska.

Facebook and Google declined to comment, referring instead to positions against the bill taken by a trade association that represents leading global internet companies.

"Internet companies have real concerns about discriminatory and punitive measures, like Maryland's proposed digital advertising tax, that specifically or disproportionately target online goods and services in ways that don't impact their offline equivalents," said Robert Callahan, the association's senior vice president of government affairs.

Christopher Oswald, senior vice president for government relations with the Association of National Advertising, testified at a bill hearing in Maryland that taxes on advertising have failed in other states. Arizona, Iowa and Florida have passed broad advertising taxes before, only to repeal them, because they hurt local economies and proved impossible to administer, he said.

"Since 1987, the year Florida adopted and later repealed a state tax on advertising just eight months later, broad advertising taxes have been considered in more than 40 states and rejected by all of them," Oswald said at a January bill hearing.

A 16-page letter of legal advice from the Maryland attorney general's office concluded that "although there is some risk" a court would find the measure invalid on constitutional grounds, the legislation is not "clearly unconstitutional."

"The law does not always fit neatly with emerging technologies and that makes it difficult to predict how a court would rule on legal challenges to regulation of those technologies," said the Feb. 7 letter from the attorney general's office to Serafini.

Boston Marathon postponed until Sept. 14 amid virus concerns

By WILLIAM J. KOLE and JIMMY GOLEN Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The Boston Marathon on Friday was postponed for five months due to the coronavirus pandemic, sacrificing the customary Patriots Day start in the hopes of preserving the uninterrupted 124-year tradition of the world's most prestigious long-distance run.

In delaying the marathon from April 20 to Sept. 14, the city avoids for now an event that draws more than 30,000 runners from around the world, packs them in buses and starting corrals and then sends them off on a 26.2-mile (42.2-kilometer) trek from Hopkinton to Boston's Back Bay. An estimated 1 million people line the course as it winds through eight cities and towns, high-fiving, hugging and even kissing the runners along the way.

The Boston Marathon has never been canceled since the first edition in 1897, when 15 men drew a starting line in the dirt in Ashland and headed for the city to commemorate the first modern Olympic Games

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the previous year. In 1918, the format was modified to a relay race due to World War I; the 2013 race was stopped when two bombs exploded at the finish line, several hours after the winners had finished but while many runners were still on the course.

"We've shown before that whatever the challenge to our marathon and to our city, we are Boston Strong," Mayor Marty Walsh said at a news conference on Friday, when the city's signature event joined virtually every college or professional league worldwide in canceling or postponing competition. "The marathon is Boston. It connects us. It reflects us. It brings out our community spirit and our resiliency."

The Boston Athletic Association had been silent on the fate of the race even as other high-profile sports events were scuttled. The Masters was postponed indefinitely on Friday; previously the NBA and NHL suspended their seasons, Major League Baseball halted spring training and put off opening day, and all NCAA championships were canceled, including the March Madness basketball tournament that is one of the highlights of the sports calendar.

"The B.A.A. understands the city's decision that the Boston Marathon cannot be held on April 20, 2020," race organizers said in a statement. "We offer our full support to take all reasonable efforts to postpone."

It is the first time that the race won't be held in April. For the first 49 years, the marathon was held on April 19, the anniversary of the first Revolutionary War battles in Lexington and Concord, or on the 20th if Patriots Day fell on a Sunday.

The state holiday was changed to the third Monday in April in 1969. The race has been on that day ever since — traditionally with the Red Sox playing in the morning so the baseball fans can wander over to Kenmore Square after the game to see the runners pass by with one mile to go.

"It won't look right on the calendar," Gov. Charlie Baker said. "But it's the right thing to do."

The new date moves the race from the spring season to a crowded fall, with the London, Paris and Barcelona marathons also postponing until after the summer over COVID-19 concerns; Rome's race was canceled. And it would come about one month after the world's top runners are expected to — but with diminishing certainty — line up for the Olympic marathon in Japan. (Because of the distance's physical toll, most elite marathoners run no more than two races per year.)

But Walsh said postponing the race was preferable to canceling, citing a estimated \$211 million pumped into the city's economy each year. The B.A.A. and marathon runners also raise about \$40 million for charity.

The mayor said there was no thought of excluding the tens of thousands of amateur runners who consider running Boston a bucket list achievement. The Tokyo Marathon went on as scheduled earlier this month with just over 200 elite runners but not the 38,000 recreational runners who had signed up; spectators at the Los Angeles Marathon were advised to practice social distancing.

"That's not the Boston Marathon. We're an inclusive marathon," he said. "The Boston Marathon is for everyone."

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover.

Race organizers had said they worked with the WHO and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as state officials. Baker has already declared a state of emergency.

Walsh discouraged runners — known as bandits — from taking to the course anyway on Patriots Day. The B.A.A. said its 10,000-runner 5K on marathon weekend will also be rescheduled.

"The B.A.A.'s mission of promoting health through sports, especially running, has guided our organization for more than a century," CEO Tom Griik said. "We look forward to welcoming the world to Boston in September in celebration of the 124th Boston Marathon."

Philip Marcelo and Mark Pratt in Boston contributed to this story. The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science

Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Ex-Canadian football player admits to college scam

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A former Canadian Football League player pleaded guilty Friday to participating in a college admissions cheating scheme by hiring someone take the SATs in place of his two sons.

David Sidoo, a businessman from Vancouver, British Columbia, pleaded guilty to a mail fraud conspiracy charge in Boston federal court. The plea deal calls for Sidoo to serve 90 days in prison and pay a \$250,000 fine and must be approved by the judge.

Sidoo was among 50 prominent parents, university athletic coaches and others charged last March in the scheme, which authorities say involved rigged entrance exams and bogus athletic credentials to make applicants look like star athletes for sports they didn't play.

Sidoo paid the admissions consultant at the center of the scheme \$200,000 to have someone pose as his sons using a fake ID to secure higher scores on their SATs, prosecutors said.

Sidoo, 60, said little in court except to answer questions from the judge about the plea agreement. His lawyer, Martin Weinberg, declined to comment after the hearing. Sidoo is scheduled to be sentenced in July.

He had been scheduled to go on trial in January alongside six other prominent parents still fighting charges in the case. Eight other parents, including "Full House" actress Lori Loughlin and her fashion designer husband, Mossimo Giannulli, are scheduled to stand trial in October.

Sidoo joins nearly two dozen parents, including "Desperate Housewives" star Felicity Huffman, who have already pleaded guilty. Huffman was sentenced to two weeks in prison. Sentences for other parents range from no prison time to nine months behind bars.

Sidoo played professional football for six years for the Saskatchewan Roughriders and BC Lions, according to his website. He was CEO of mining firm Advantage Lithium Corp. when he was arrested last year and was also a founding shareholder of an oil and gas company that was sold in 2010 for more than \$600 million.

The test taker, Mark Riddell, pleaded guilty last April and has been cooperating with investigators. He has not yet been sentenced.

Premier League, Champions League call off matches

By JAMES ELLINGWORTH AP Sports Writer

DÜSSELDORF, Germany (AP) — The Premier League and the Champions League were both suspended Friday as the chaos stemming from the coronavirus outbreak continues to impact soccer.

The French and German leagues also dropped plans to play this weekend. After Spain and Italy previously made similar moves, all five of Europe's biggest national competitions are now on hold.

Matches in England will be stopped until at least April 3 after five Premier League clubs said some players or staff were in self-isolation. Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has tested positive for the virus, as has Chelsea winger Callum Hudson-Odoi.

"I had the virus for the last couple of days, which I've recovered from," Hudson-Odoi said in a video posted on social media. "I'm following the health guidelines and self-isolating myself from everybody for the week. I hope to see everybody soon and hopefully be back on the pitch very soon. Take care."

UEFA said it was stopping next week's games in all competitions, including the two remaining Champions League matches which had not been already called off — Bayern Munich vs. Chelsea and Barcelona vs. Napoli, both scheduled for Wednesday.

Games involving Juventus and Real Madrid had already been postponed because those clubs quarantined their players.

There have been more than 128,000 cases and 4,700 deaths globally since the virus outbreak started late last year. Most people quickly recover from the virus after experiencing only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it

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can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks.

The decision from UEFA comes four days ahead of a meeting to decide the European soccer calendar, including the possible one-year postponement of the 2020 European Championship.

Eight Europa League games scheduled for next Thursday were also postponed. The quarterfinal draws in both the Champions League and Europa League, scheduled for next Friday, were postponed as well.

Earlier Friday, Everton said one of its players had reported symptoms consistent with coronavirus. Bournemouth later said reserve goalkeeper Artur Boruc and four members of staff also had symptoms. Leicester said Thursday that three players had "extremely mild illness."

The suspension in England also covers the Championship, League One, League Two and the top two women's divisions.

The German league had planned to hold this weekend's games in empty stadiums before voting on a suspension from Tuesday to April 2. Hours later, it backtracked and called the games off.

"This is crazy. Please stop fooling around and land on reality," Bayern Munich midfielder Thiago Alcantara wrote on Twitter. "Let's be honest, there are much more important priorities than any sport."

In the German second division, two players from Hannover 96 and one from Nuremberg have tested positive for the virus. Bundesliga club Paderborn said coach Steffen Baumgart tested negative for the virus but it was still waiting for results for an unspecified number of players.

The French league suspended all games indefinitely after an emergency meeting following an address to the nation by President Emmanuel Macron. The league is due to meet again Tuesday.

Soccer in Scotland was also postponed until further notice, hours before a game was due to start. That measure also affects Sunday's Old Firm match between Glasgow rivals Rangers and Celtic. Domestic games in Wales and Northern Ireland are also off.

The lone holdouts in UEFA's top 10 ranked leagues are Russia, where some games have restrictions on the number of supporters, and Ukraine, where games are being played without fans.

Four places in the 24-nation line-up for Euro 2020 still have to be decided in playoffs scheduled for March 26 and 31. Those playoffs seem unlikely to be played on time.

The Euro 2020 tournament was expected to be played in 12 host nations. The plan requires teams, fans and officials to travel across the continent — an added risk to spread the virus.

After more than half of the host nations suspended their domestic leagues, or will play without spectators, Russia said it was willing to take on extra European Championship games on top of its current allotment of four in St. Petersburg.

"We absolutely could expand the tournament program," Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko said in comments reported by state news agency Tass. "Russia is ready for however the situation develops, we have plans."

AP Sports Writer Ciaran Fahey in Berlin contributed to this report.

More AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/Soccer> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Pentagon reconsiders Microsoft contract after Amazon protest

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon is reconsidering its awarding of a major cloud computing contract to Microsoft after rival tech giant Amazon protested what it called a flawed bidding process.

U.S. government lawyers said in a court filing this week that the Defense Department "wishes to reconsider its award decision" and take another look at how it evaluated technical aspects of the companies' proposals to run the \$10 billion computing project.

The filing doesn't address Amazon's broader argument that the bidding was improperly influenced by President Donald Trump's dislike of Amazon and its CEO, Jeff Bezos. Bezos owns The Washington Post, a news outlet that Trump has often clashed with.

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Amazon Web Services is a market leader in providing cloud computing services and had long been considered a leading candidate to run the Pentagon's Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure project, known as JEDI. The project will store and process vast amounts of classified data, allowing the U.S. military to improve communications with soldiers on the battlefield and use artificial intelligence to speed up its war planning and fighting capabilities.

Amazon sued the Pentagon after Microsoft won the contract in October. Work on the project has been halted as the lawsuit proceeds.

The judge who is presiding over the bid protest in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims said earlier this month that Amazon's challenge likely had merit on some technical grounds involving pricing.

The Pentagon is asking her for 120 days to reconsider "certain aspects" of its decision. Amazon said in a statement it is pleased the government is taking corrective action if it "fully insulates the re-evaluation from political influence and corrects the many issues affecting the initial flawed award."

Wedbush analyst Dan Ives said one possible outcome is that the Pentagon could end up splitting the award between Microsoft and Amazon, or with other vendors. That would move the project forward and get it out of the courts, he said.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, March 14, the 74th day of 2020. There are 292 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 14, 1794, Eli Whitney received a patent for his cotton gin, an invention that revolutionized America's cotton industry.

On this date:

In 1883, German political philosopher Karl Marx died in London at age 64.

In 1885, the Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera "The Mikado" premiered at the Savoy Theatre in London.

In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt signed an executive order designed to prevent Japanese laborers from immigrating to the United States as part of a "gentlemen's agreement" with Japan.

In 1962, Democrat Edward M. Kennedy officially launched in Boston his successful candidacy for the U.S. Senate seat from Massachusetts once held by his brother, President John F. Kennedy. (Edward Kennedy served in the Senate for nearly 47 years.)

In 1964, a jury in Dallas found Jack Ruby guilty of murdering Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, and sentenced him to death. (Both the conviction and death sentence were overturned, but Ruby died before he could be retried.)

In 1965, Israel's cabinet formally approved establishment of diplomatic relations with West Germany.

In 1967, the body of President John F. Kennedy was moved from a temporary grave to a permanent memorial site at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

In 1976, movie musical director and choreographer Busby Berkeley, 80, died in Palm Springs, California.

In 1980, a LOT Polish Airlines jet crashed while attempting to land in Warsaw, killing all 87 people aboard, including 22 members of a U.S. amateur boxing team.

In 1990, the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies held a secret ballot that elected Mikhail S. Gorbachev to a new, powerful presidency.

In 2001, inspectors tightened U.S. defenses against foot-and-mouth disease a day after a case was confirmed in France.

In 2002, the government charged the Arthur Andersen accounting firm with obstruction of justice, securing its first indictment in the collapse of Enron. (Although Arthur Andersen was later found guilty, its conviction was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court; however, the damage to the firm's reputation was enough to put it out of business.)

Ten years ago: French voters, scarred by their country's economic crisis, dealt President Nicolas Sarkozy

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(sahr-koh-ZEE') and his conservative leadership a stern blow by strongly favoring leftist candidates in regional elections. Actor Peter Graves died in Los Angeles at age 83, four days short of his birthday.

Five years ago: Robert Durst, a wealthy eccentric linked to two killings and his wife's disappearance, was arrested by the FBI in New Orleans on a murder warrant a day before HBO aired the final episode of a serial documentary about his life. (Durst is now on trial for murder in Los Angeles.) Math enthusiasts observed "Pi Day," in which the date — 3-14-15 — lined up with the first five digits of the mathematical constant pi: 3.1415.

One year ago: Former Texas congressman Beto O'Rourke jumped into the 2020 Democratic presidential race. (His candidacy would fail to recapture the enthusiasm and interest generated by his 2018 Senate bid, and he would drop out of the race in November.) The Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that gun-maker Remington could be sued over how it marketed the rifle that was used to kill 20 children and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012. (The U.S. Supreme Court later rejected an appeal from Remington Arms and allowed the lawsuit to go forward.) Former Sen. Birch Bayh, a liberal Democrat who championed the Title IX federal law banning discrimination against women in college sports, died at his Indiana home at the age of 91.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Phil Phillips (Song: "Sea of Love") is 94. Former astronaut Frank Borman is 92. Actor Michael Caine is 87. Composer-conductor Quincy Jones is 87. Actor Raymond J. Barry is 81. Movie director Wolfgang Petersen is 79. Country singer Michael Martin Murphey is 75. Rock musician Walt Parazaid (payr-ah-ZAY'-dur) (formerly with Chicago) is 75. Actor Steve Kanaly is 74. Comedian Billy Crystal is 72. Former Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., is 72. Actor-writer-comedian-radio personality Rick Dees is 69. Country singer Jann Browne is 66. Actor Adrian Zmed is 66. Prince Albert II, the ruler of Monaco, is 62. Actress Laila Robins is 61. Actress Tamara Tunie (tuh-MAH'-ruh TOO'-nee) is 61. Actress Penny Johnson Jerald is 60. Producer-director-writer Kevin Williamson is 55. Actress Elise Neal is 54. Actor Gary Anthony Williams is 54. Actress Megan Follows is 52. Rock musician Michael Bland is 51. Country singer Kristian Bush is 50. Rock musician Derrick is 48. Actress Betsy Brandt is 47. Actress Grace Park is 46. Actor Daniel Gillies is 44. Actor Corey Stoll is 44. Actor Jake Fogelnest is 41. Actor Chris Klein is 41. Actor Ryan Cartwright (TV: "Kevin Can Wait") is 39. Actress Kate Maberly is 38. Singer-musician Taylor Hanson (Hanson) is 37. Cong. Dan Crenshaw, R-Texas, is 36. Actor Jamie Bell is 34. Rock musician Este Haim (HY'-uhm) (Haim) is 34. NBA star Stephen Curry is 32. Actor Ansel Elgort is 26. Olympic gold medal gymnast Simone Biles is 23. Actor James Freedson-Jackson (Film: "The Strange Ones") is 18.

Thought for Today: "Any fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius — and a lot of courage — to move in the opposite direction." — Albert Einstein, German-born American physicist (born this date in 1879, died 1955).

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