

# Groton Daily Independent

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"MIRACLES COME IN  
MOMENTS. BE READY  
AND WILLING."  
-WAYNE DYER



Chicken Soup  
for the Soul.



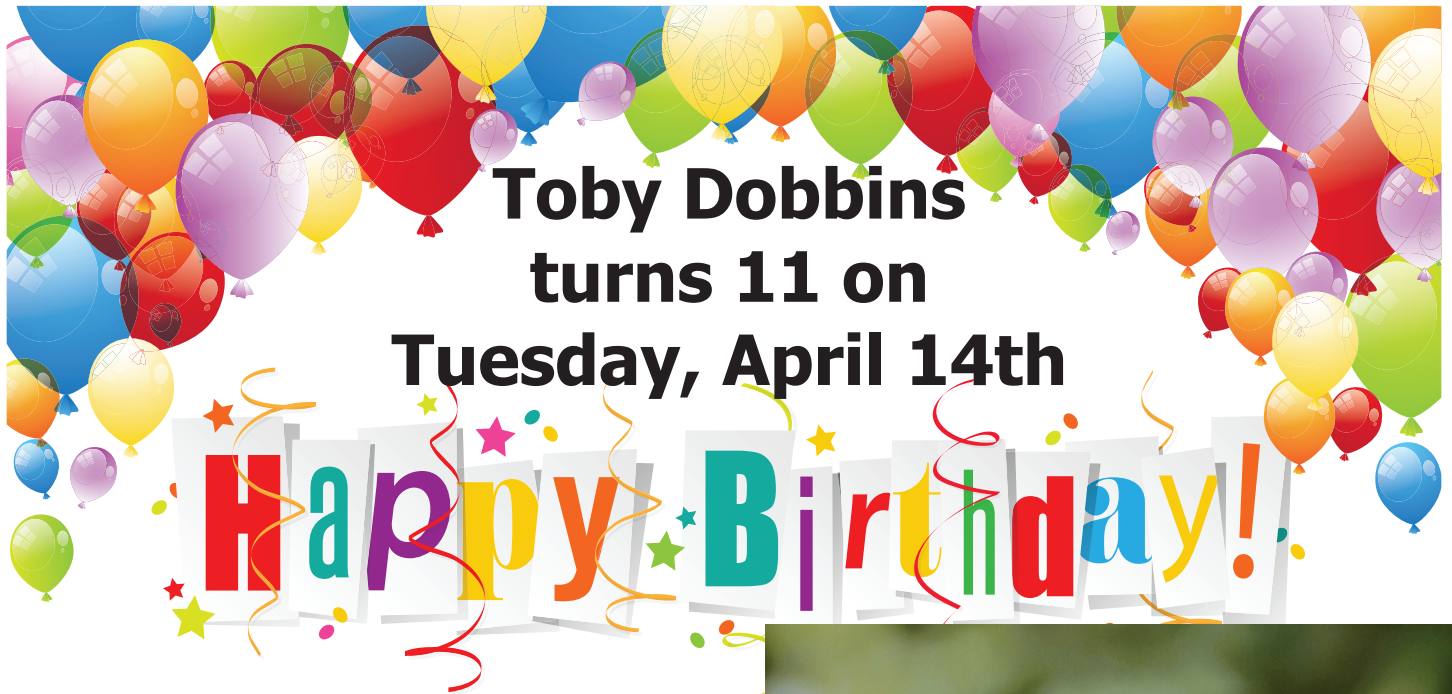
Cheer someone up!  
Send a balloon!  
These are \$6  
(includes delivery in Groton & Tax)  
Groton Daily  
Independent  
21 N Main  
605-397-NEWS (6397)



## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2019 Groton Daily Independent



At this time with the virus, he can't have a party with his friends, but we can still celebrate with cards in the mail or a birthday balloon from the Groton Independent!

**Toby Dobbins**  
**307 N 5th St**  
**Groton, SD 57445**

Toby is the son of Peryn and Angela Dobbins and the grandson of Kay and Doug Daly.



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## Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller

Entering the Easter weekend, our improving trends continue to hold. We're at 495,249 cases in 50 states, DC, and 4 US territories, a 6.9% increase from yesterday. NY continues to lead with 170,512 cases and NJ follows with 54,588, increases of 6.6% and 7%, respectively. Doubling times for the nation and these top 2 states were, at their worst, in 3-day territory; we're now up around 10 days, a massive change for the better. The raw numbers are huge yet, but that's because of where we've been, not, with luck and continuing to do the right things, where we're going. Together, they have 45% of US cases. Rounding out the top 10 are MI - 22,646, CA - 21,150, MA - 20,974, PA - 20,043, LA - 19,253, FL - 17,960, IL - 17,887, and TX - 11,930. Also over 10,000 cases is GA. There are 6 more states over 5000 cases, 22 more + DC over 1000, 6 more + PR and GU over 500, and 5 more over 100. VI and MP remain below 100 cases.

There have been 18,592 deaths in 49 states, DC, and 4 US territories. Wyoming is still not reporting any deaths. NY has reported 7844, NJ 1932, MI 1280, LA 755, IL 608, MA 599, and CA 582. Another 14 states report over 100 deaths, 10 more over 50, 12 more + DC and PR over 10. 6 states + GU, MP, and VI report fewer than 10 deaths.

The WHO marked yesterday at 100 days since the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed in the world. A lot has changed for virtually everyone in the world since then. The official global reported deaths exceeded 100,000 people today.

The VA hospital system has been acting as a back-up for community hospitals, as well as treating veterans; and there are reports of serious equipment shortages and masks being worn for a week at a time by workers. There were thousands of staff vacancies in the system before the pandemic began, and now their workers are becoming ill; at least seven have died.

The New England Journal of Medicine published some very preliminary results from use of Remdesivir, that developed-for-Ebola-but-never-approved drug being permitted for compassionate use. The report covers 53 patients, 22 of whom were in the US, treated with the drug. The results look promising, although they are difficult to interpret without a controlled study. The report says there was an improvement in oxygen-support status in 68% of patients with a 13% mortality rate over the 18 days they were followed. In another study of use of lopinavir-ritonavir, patients who started out with less severe disease had mortality rates more like 22%; but the authors hasten to tell us the patient populations in the different studies are not comparable and the follow-up period was shorter. So it appears this drug is helping, but it is impossible to be sure what these numbers mean until those studies start coming in. They did note that about half of patients experienced side-effects from rashes to acute kidney injury; but I did not see any indication of the numbers of patients with more or less severe side effects. I presume that would be in the original paper, but I haven't acquired it yet to check--NEJM website appears to be down. Seems like important information though. I'll have to see whether I can get a look at the original source.

In what is unambiguously good news, the federal government has walked back their announced plan to end their support for community-based testing at 41 sites around the nation today. There was quite a fuss on Wednesday when the original announcement was made, and that appears to have been effective. We definitely shouldn't be pulling back on testing at all, so this is a good thing.

In other news, in NY, the number of patients in ICUs decreased today for the first time since this crisis began--only by 17 patients, but it's another baby step in the right direction. And the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington has revised its earlier estimate that almost 94,000 people would die from this virus in the US by late summer downward to about 60,400. This is another

direction we'd like to see continue. The revisions is almost certainly in light of the continuing compliance with social distancing and other restrictions.

So there are hopeful trends heading into the holiday weekend. That said, there are going to be people going it alone this Easter without their families and friends. This is, unfortunately, the way things are this time around. Please consider reaching out to someone who is alone and just connecting with them. Let them know you're thinking of them, maybe take over a meal--not so much for the food as for the caring it shows. Have the kids draw them a picture of the Easter bunny or the risen Lord or whatever fits with your own way of celebrating. One way to get the kind of world you wish to live in is to build it yourself, so grab some tools and go to work.

As always, stay safe. Be kind. And we'll talk again.

## Potential COVID-19 Exposure at Two Sioux Falls Businesses

PIERRE, S.D. – State Health officials announced today that employees at two separate businesses in Sioux Falls reported working while able to transmit the virus to others.

An employee at the Get-n-Go #20 at W. 33rd Street and Minnesota Avenue in Sioux Falls reported working April 4 through April 6 while able to transmit the virus. The employee worked during these times:

Saturday, April 4 – 10 am-6 pm

Sunday, April 5 – 7 am-3 pm

Monday, April 6 – 3 pm-10 pm

A separate individual employed at Lewis Drug at 37th Street and Minnesota Avenue in Sioux Falls reported working April 5 through April 6 while able to transmit the virus. The employee worked during these times:

Sunday, April 5 – 10 am-6 pm

Monday, April 6 – 9 am-6:30 pm

Due to the risk of exposure, customers who visited the these locations during the designated dates should monitor for symptoms for 14 days after the date they visited. A CDC screening tool is available at [COVID.SD.GOV](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/screening-tool/), which can help recommend when to call your medical provider if you develop symptoms.

State Health officials remind all South Dakotans to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Refrain from touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects.
- Individuals at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness, such as older adults and people who have chronic medical conditions like heart, lung or kidney disease, should take actions to reduce your risk of exposure.
- Create a family plan to prepare for COVID-19 and develop a stay at home kit with food, water, medication, and other necessary items.

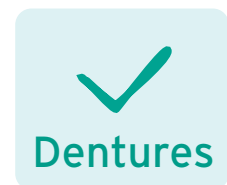
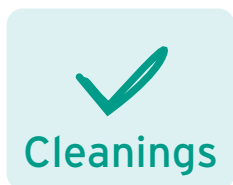
If you develop symptoms:

- Call your health care provider immediately.
- Individuals who are concerned they have COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider via phone before going to a clinic or hospital to prevent spread in healthcare facilities.
- Avoid contact with other people.
- Follow the directions of your provider and public health officials.

For more information and updates related to COVID-19 visit the [COVID.SD.GOV](https://www.covid.sd.gov) or [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-997-2880.

## Dental Insurance

Get the dental care you deserve with dental insurance from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. It can help cover the services you're most likely to use –



- ◆ Preventive care starts right away
- ◆ Helps cover over 350 services
- ◆ Go to any dentist you want - but save more with one in our network
- ◆ No deductible, no annual maximum

Call now to get this **FREE**  
Information Kit!

**1-877-239-8147**

**dental50plus.com/grotondaily**



Here's the information  
you requested on Dental



Product not available in all states. Includes the Participating Providers and Preventive Benefits Rider. Acceptance guaranteed for one insurance policy/certificate of this type. Contact us for complete details about this insurance solicitation. This specific offer is not available in CO, NY; call 1-888-799-4433 or respond for similar offer. Certificate C250A (ID: C250E; PA: C250Q); Insurance Policy P150 (GA: P150GA; NY: P150NY; OK: P150OK; TN: P150TN). Rider kinds B438/B439. 6154-0120



Physicians Mutual®  
Insurance for all of us.®

## Governor Noem encourages South Dakotas to sign up

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem on Thursday encouraged people to use a mobile app that can retrace the steps of people who test positive for the virus.

The Care19 app was created in North Dakota by a Microsoft engineer, and was originally developed to help North Dakota State University football fans traveling to Texas. North Dakota rolled it out this week.

Noem said use of the app is voluntary and that it has privacy measures in place, including the ability to delete your data at any time. She explained it could help the Department of Health investigate the spread of infections and identify people who have come into contact with someone with the coronavirus.

Health officials reported 54 new confirmed cases of the coronavirus, bringing the state's total to 447. Officials reported no new deaths from COVID-19, but six people have died so far.

Minnehaha County, the state's most-populated area, saw the largest jump in confirmed infections, with 46 new cases. That county alone accounts for over 60% of all confirmed cases.

Many of the infections in Minnehaha have been linked to an outbreak at the Smithfield pork processing plant in Sioux Falls. Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon said on Wednesday that over 80 employees have tested positive but declined to give an update on the number of confirmed cases on Thursday.

Smithfield is temporarily closing the plant starting on Saturday to clean and install physical barriers between workers.

Noem praised the action, saying it showed Smithfield cared about their workers.

"The Smithfield situation is a difficult one, and we're going to continue to do all that we can to make sure the situation is rectified and people's health is protected," she said.

The Republican governor said she has been encouraging businesses to find ways to stay open. But the state has not been able to avoid the massive layoffs seen around the country. Almost 8,000 people made new claims for unemployment last week.

"These numbers are historical in our state in the very worst way," Noem said, noting that she was not aware of a worse week since the state started tracking unemployment data.

## Places You've Visited



Congratulations! Your phone is correctly configured to collect location data.

We haven't detected any visited places yet. Our goal is to only collect visits where you stop for at least 15 minutes. This is in line with CDC guidelines.

If you are prompted in the future, please select "ALWAYS ALLOW" for location collection.



Visited Places



Participants



About

**I got this message this morning on my phone so I clicked on "ALWAYS ALLOW." Last night when I checked, there were 615 participants in South Dakota. Yesterday morning, there were 2,606. This morning it's at 4,840!**

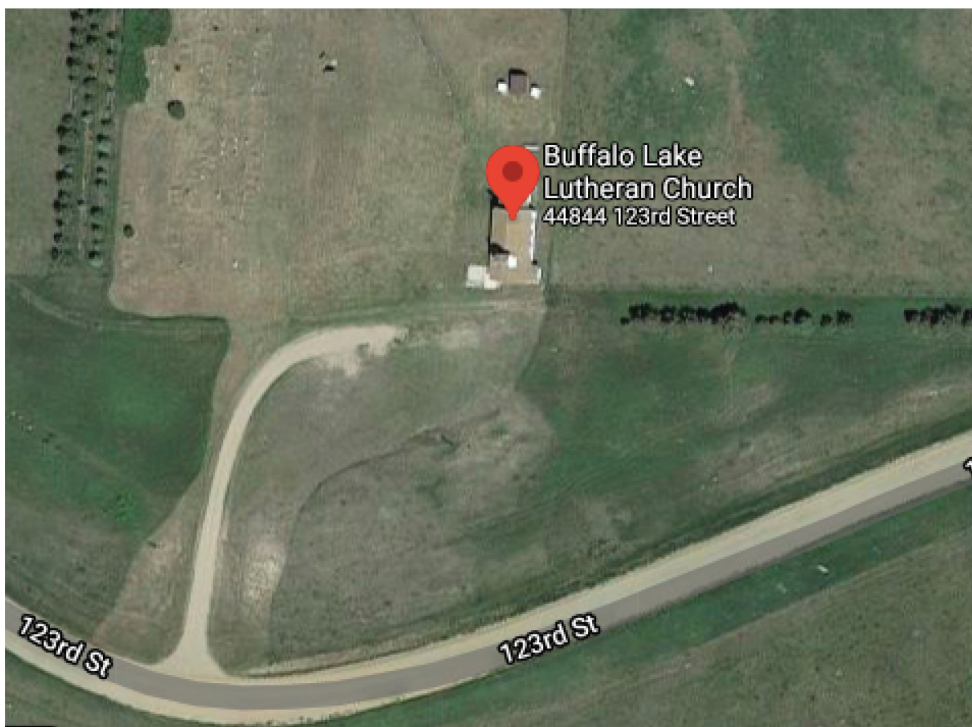
**Currently, it's only available on the Apple App store. The android version is coming soon.**

## *It's Easter Sunday Service at Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church*

Message by Pastor Paul Irvin Kosel

10:30 a.m.

44844 123rd St., Rural Eden



Anyone from west of Roslyn will need to go north to Langford, then to Eden to get there. The road east of Roslyn is under water.

### **Here are the Rules!**

- 1) Stay in your vehicle. Make sure your vehicle has an FM receiver or bring an FM receiver.
- 2) Be ready to sing-Sheila Oreskovich is playing.
- 3) Plenty of parking.
- 4) Put your tithing in a zip lock or similar clear plastic bag.
- 5) Be ready to honk your horn at the end of the service for the wonderful resurrection of Jesus!
- 6) Call/Text Paul with any questions. 605/397-7460.

## South Dakotans Called to Let It Shine During Coronavirus Pandemic Success of Sioux Falls "Lighting Up the Night" Inspires Statewide Event

Sioux Falls, SD – Momentum is building around a statewide community formed with the mission of spreading hope and light to those impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic.

On March 30, 2020, Sioux Falls came together to light up the night. The purpose was to show support and appreciation for healthcare workers here and around the world; to spread hope to those who are sick during this pandemic; and to honor businesses that have closed their doors, people who have lost their jobs, and those who are struggling with mental health. The event was an overwhelming success.

As a result, organizer Tony Erickson decided to take the event statewide. "These are trying times for everyone whether you're a frontline worker, someone who is sick, a business owner that is hurting, or a person trying to work from home and help your children learn," said Erickson. "But, as South Dakotans, we are strong, we are resilient, and we're good at being there for one another."

On or about the night of May 1st, residents, communities, schools, and businesses across the state are invited to go outside to "let it shine."

Helicopters, planes, and drones will take to the skies, and photographers will be a safe distance on the ground, to capture photos of businesses, schools, and households. Everyone is urged to turn on their lights that night. At the Sioux Falls event, families took to their driveways and yards, using flashlights, fire pits, Christmas lights and everything in between. A Facebook livestream of that event had reached almost 90-thousand people and 36-thousand people engaged in the post.

"As I hung out the side of the helicopter with my camera that night, I was blown away by all the twinkling lights over Sioux Falls. I could see everything and it's almost hard to put into words," said Collin McKenzie, partner with Storybuilt Media which helped with the project. "I'm looking forward to seeing what South Dakota looks like all lit up as well."

In addition to shining hope, the mission is to also raise funds for the South Dakota Community Foundation's Coronavirus Response Fund. The purpose of the fund is to ensure that South Dakotans impacted financially by the pandemic get the financial help and support they need. T-shirts are also being developed as part of the fundraiser.

"Momentum is building," said Erickson, "and details continue to come together. We cannot wait to see what our communities come up with to show their support."

Currently plans are being made to light up school stadiums across the state. Black Hills Aerial Adventures has committed helicopters to the event. And efforts continue to secure drones, videographers, and photographers. Tee shirts are being designed and proceeds from the sale will also go to the Coronavirus Response Fund.

Weather will play the biggest role in the timing of the event. But, for now it is planned for 9:30 pm CST on May 1, 2020.

While organizations and families plan how they will light up the night, safety is encouraged first and foremost. "This is not an invitation for people to gather in large groups," stresses Erickson. "We need to practice safety and social distancing. Have fun, get creative, but do so in a way that is respectful of everyone's health and wellness."

Special thanks to all who are donating their time and talents to the effort: Storybuilt Media, Robb Long Photography, Ascending Innovation, writer Shannon Steffke, musician Kory Van Sickle, Black Hills Aerial Adventures, and MRG Sports and Promo. More sponsors and individuals will surely be added to the list.

Follow us on Facebook for the most up to date details on the event and the growing community.



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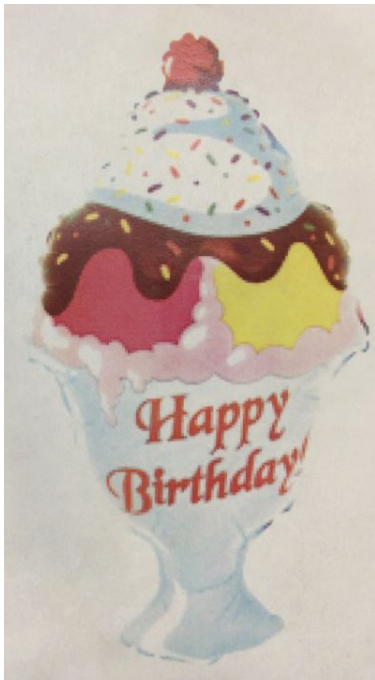
Brighten someone's day with a balloon from the Groton Independent. Call/Text Paul at 605/397-7460 or Tina at 605/397-7285. Delivery in Groton.



27" Cone  
\$9 delivered in Groton



18" Emoj  
\$6 delivered in Groton



32" Sundae  
\$9 delivered in Groton



18" Stars  
\$6 delivered in Groton



34" Stars  
\$8 delivered in Groton



24" Balloon  
\$9 delivered in Groton



18" Swirls  
\$6 delivered in Groton



30" Mighty Bright  
\$9 delivered in Groton

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## AREA COVID-19 CASES

	Mar. 29	Mar. 30	Mar. 31	Apr. 1	Apr. 2	Apr. 3	Apr. 4	Apr. 5	Apr. 6	Apr. 7
Minnesota	503	576	629	689	742	789	865	935	986	1,069
Nebraska	120	153	177	214	255	285	323	367	412	478
Montana	161	177	198	217	241	263	281	298	319	319
Colorado	2,307	2,627	2,966	3,342	3,728	4,173	4,565	4,950	5,172	5,429
Wyoming	87	95	120	137	150	166	187	200	212	221
North Dakota	98	109	126	147	159	173	186	207	225	237
South Dakota	90	101	108	129	165	187	212	240	288	320
United States	143,055	164,610	189,633	216,722	245,573	278,458	312,245	337,933	368,079	399,929
US Deaths	2,513	3,170	4,081	5,137	6,058	7,159	8,503	9,653	10,923	12,911

Minnesota	+62	+73	+53	+60	+53	+47	+76	+70	+51	+83
Nebraska	+12	+33	+24	+37	+41	+30	+38	+44	+45	+66
Montana	+14	+16	+20	+19	+25	+22	+18	+17	+21	0
Colorado	+246	+320	+339	+376	+386	+445	+392	+385	+222	+257
Wyoming	+3	+8	+25	+17	+13	+16	+21	+13	+12	+9
North Dakota	+4	+11	+17	+21	+12	+14	+13	+21	+18	+12
South Dakota	+22	+11	+7	+21	+36	+12	+25	+28	+48	+32
United States	+18,369	+21,555	+25,023	+27,089	+28,851	+32,885	+33,787	+25,688	+30,146	+31,850
US Deaths	+322	+657	+911	+1,056	+921	+1,101	1,344	+1,150	+1,270	+1,988

	Apr. 8	Apr. 9	Apr. 10
Minnesota	1,154	1,242	1,336
Nebraska	523	577	648
Montana	332	354	377
Colorado	5,655	6202	6,510
Wyoming	230	239	253
North Dakota	251	269	278
South Dakota	393	447	536
United States	431,838	466,396	501,701
US Deaths	14,768	16,703	18,781

Minnesota	+85	+88	+94
Nebraska	+45	+54	+71
Montana	+13	+22	+23
Colorado	+226	+547	+308
Wyoming	+9	+9	+14
North Dakota	+14	+18	+9
South Dakota	+73	+54	+89
United States	+31,909	+34,558	+35,305
US Deaths	+1,857	+1,935	+2,078

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## Dakotas COVID-19 Update

Positive Cases: +89 (536 Total)

Negative Cases: +411 (7111 total)

Deaths: 6 (no change)

Ever Hospitalized: +2 (29 total)

Recovered: +18 (177 total)

The Smithfield facility is a hot spot in South Dakota with 190 positive cases, six of which need extra health care.

Governor Noem said, "Our goal is to keep people out of the hospital. We have the lowest hospitalization rate in the nation." South Dakota is 46th among the 46 states that are reporting hospitalization.

A Health Emergency has been declared for Minnehaha County. It is a Public health intervention order which comes from the Dept. of Health, and it is outlined in law in how to use it. If people don't comply, the state can use the judicial branch to enforce it. It was activated because the positive case has doubled in the last three days in Minnehaha County.

The Public Health Intervention was used once with COVID-19 in South Dakota and that was an individual in Lyman County.

Governor Noem said that what South Dakotans are doing is making a difference. She said she had anticipated much higher positive numbers at this time in South Dakota.

Beadle: +1 positive (21 total)

Bon Homme: +1 recovered (2 of 3 recovered)

Brookings: All 7 of 7 are now recovered

Charles Mix: +1 positive (3 total)

Codington: +1 recovered (11 of 12 fully recovered)

Hamlin +1 recovered (1 of 1 recovered)

Lake: +1 recovered (1 of 2 recovered)

Lincoln: +5 positive, +1 recovered (16 of 38 recovered)

Minnehaha: +78 positive, +8 recovered (56 of 352 recovered)

Pennington: +1 positive (8 total)

Yankton: +1 positive (19 total)

County	Total Positive Cases	# Recovered
Aurora	1	1
Beadle	22	19
Bon Homme	3	2
Brookings	7	7
Brown	14	9
Charles Mix	3	1
Clark	1	1
Clay	6	3
Codington	12	11
Corson	1	0
Davison	3	3
Deuel	1	1
Fall River	1	1
Faulk	1	1
Hamlin	1	1
Hughes	4	3
Hutchinson	2	2
Jerauld	1	0
Lake	2	1
Lawrence	9	8
Lincoln	38	16
Lyman	2	1
Marshall	1	1
McCook	2	1
Meade	1	1
Miner	1	0
Minnehaha	352	56
Oglala Lakota	1	0
Pennington	8	5
Roberts	4	3
Spink	3	2
Todd	1	1
Turner	5	1
Union	3	2
Yankton	19	12

The N.D. DoH & private labs are reporting 618 completed tests today for COVID-19, with 9 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 278. NDDoH reports one new death.

State & private labs have reported 9,608 total tests with 9,330 negatives.

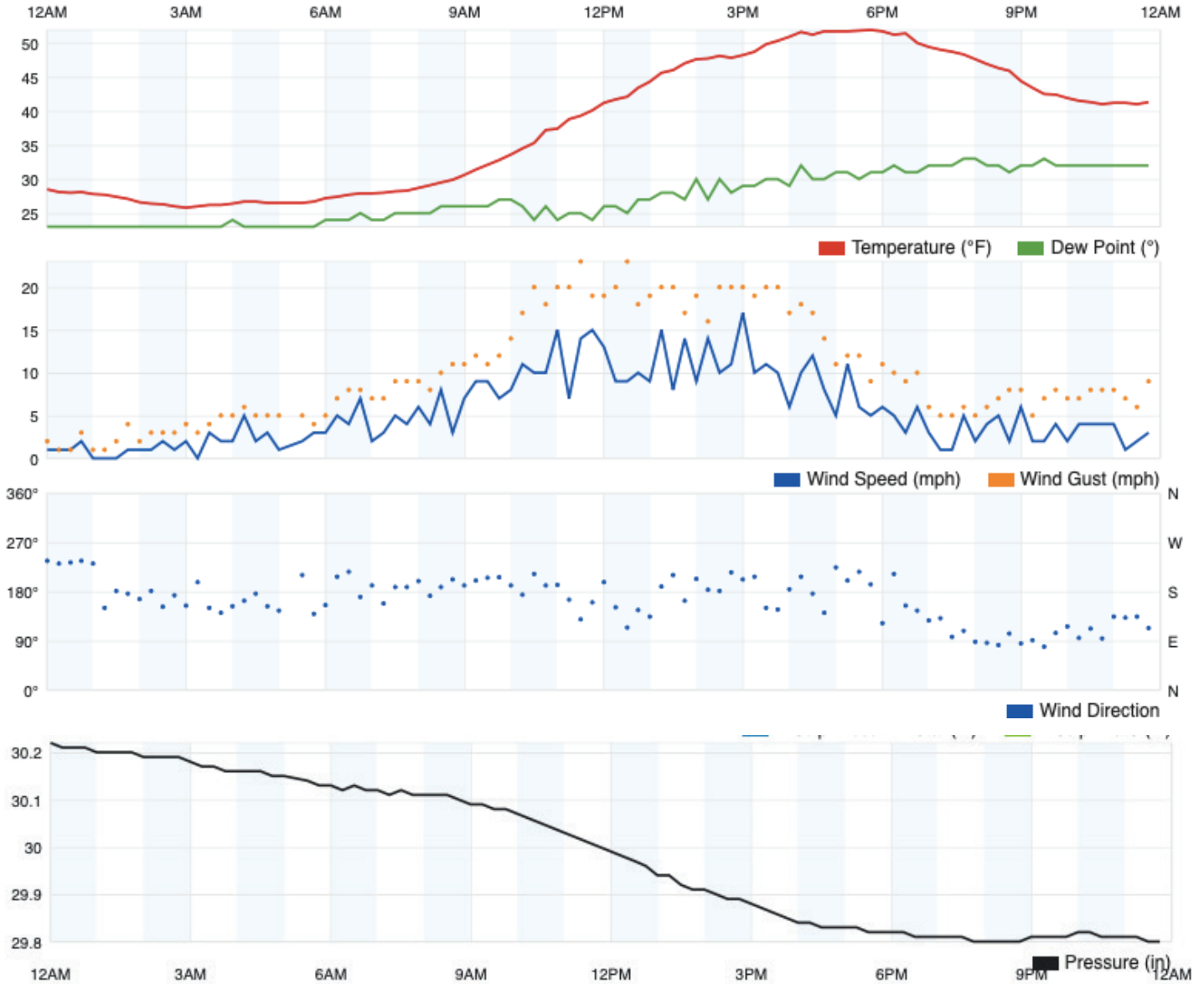
105 ND patients are recovered.

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0 to 19 years	16	0
20 to 29 years	103	0
30 to 39 years	133	0
40 to 49 years	88	0
50 to 59 years	109	2
60 to 69 years	66	1
70 to 79 years	12	1
80+ years	9	2

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Broton Daily Independent

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Today

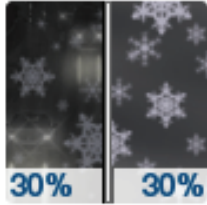


30%

Breezy.  
Mostly Cloudy  
then Chance  
Rain

High: 48 °F

Tonight



30% 30%

Chance  
Rain/Snow  
then Chance  
Snow

Low: 28 °F

Sunday



40%

Breezy.  
Chance Snow  
then Mostly  
Cloudy

High: 37 °F

Sunday  
Night



Decreasing  
Clouds

Low: 21 °F

Monday



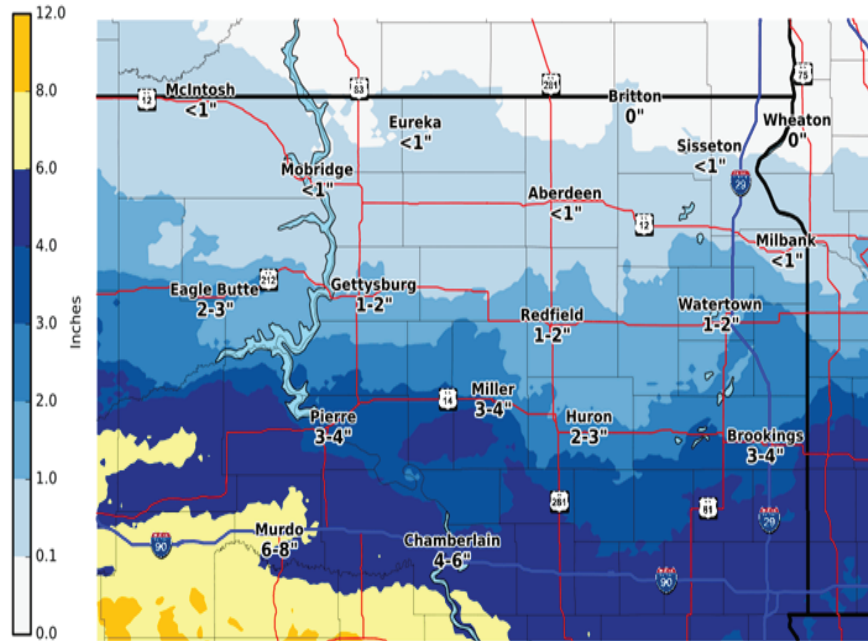
Mostly Sunny  
then Mostly  
Cloudy and  
Breezy

High: 36 °F

**Snow  
Tonight  
Through  
Sunday  
Mid-Day**

## Expected Snowfall - Official NWS Forecast

Valid: 04/11/2020 07:00 PM - 04/12/2020 07:00 PM CDT



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen SD  
04/11/2020 03:56 AM CDT

Follow Us: [f](#) [t](#) [v](#)  
weather.gov/Aberdeen/winter



Models have trended northwards a tad, which means more precipitation and thus... snow. Here is the updated expected ranges, with light accumulations now even up towards highway 212!

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## Today in Weather History

March 11, 1991: A developing winter storm, centered to the south of the Black Hills, caused heavy snow to fall on the northern Black Hills the evening of March 11 until the morning of March 12th. Snowfall totals of 3-9 inches were reported, including 9 inches at Custer, 8 inches at Deerfield, and 8 inches at Lead.

March 11, 2011: A very intense low-pressure area moving across North Dakota brought widespread blizzard conditions to central and northeast South Dakota. The low-pressure area brought 1 to 3 inches of snowfall to the region. This new snow combined with 30 to 50 mph winds with gusts to 60 to 70 mph brought widespread whiteout conditions. Traffic was brought to a standstill, with many motorists having to be rescued and taken to a shelter. Hundreds of cars were stranded on mainly Highway 12 and Interstate-29. Two people traveling on Highway 10 in McPherson County told about how they became stuck and were picked up by another vehicle and that it took them over 2 1/2 hours to travel just a few miles to safety. Interstate-29 was closed from Watertown to Sisseton from 6 pm on the 11th until noon on the 12th. Many events were affected, including the Girls State Basketball Tournament in Watertown. There were several overturned semis along with several vehicle accidents across the area. Some of the highest wind gusts included 56 mph at Watertown; 58 mph at Mobridge, Sisseton, and Faulkton; 59 mph at Aberdeen; 61 mph at Bowdle; 66 mph near Hillhead, and 71 mph west of Long Lake.

1888: The Great Blizzard of 1888 paralyzed the east coast from the Chesapeake Bay to Maine on March 11 through the 14th. The blizzard dumped as much as 55 inches of snow in some areas, and snowdrifts of 30 to 40 feet were reported. An estimated 400 people died from this blizzard.

1897: The coldest March reading at Medicine Hat, Alberta Canada, occurred as the temperature dropped to 38 degrees below zero.

1911: Tamarack, California, reported 451 inches of snow on the ground, a record for the U.S.

1990: Forty-four cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Record highs included 71 degrees at Dickinson and Williston, North Dakota and 84 degrees at Lynchburg Virginia, Charleston, and Huntington West Virginia. Augusta Georgia and Columbia South Carolina tied for honors as the hot spot in the nation with record highs of 88 degrees.

1965 - Severe thunderstorms in the Upper Midwest spawned fifty-one tornadoes killing 256 persons and causing more than 200 million dollars damage. Indiana, Ohio and Michigan were hardest hit in the "Palm Sunday Tornado Outbreak". (David Ludlum)

1987 - Ten days of flooding in the northeastern U.S. finally came to an end. Damage from flooding due to rain and snow melt ran into the billions of dollars. The collapse of the New York State Thruway Bridge over Schoharie Creek claimed ten lives. (Storm Data)

1988 - Sixteen cities in the western U.S., nine in California, reported new record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 95 degrees at Sacramento CA and 96 degrees at Bakersfield CA were the warmest of record for so early in the season. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Forty-four cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported new record low temperatures for the date. Lows of 25 degrees at Conway AR, 29 degrees at Dallas/Fort Worth TX, and 22 degrees at Ozark AR, were April records. Lows of 26 degrees at Hot Springs AR and 31 degrees at Shreveport LA equalled April records. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - While showers produced heavy rain over much of the northeastern U.S., heavy snow blanketed northern Maine, with 13 inches reported at Telos Lake. Strong southwesterly winds accompanying the rain and snow gusted to 68 mph at the Blue Hill Observatory in Massachusetts. Rainfall totals of 1.04 inch at Pittsburgh PA and 1.52 inch at Buffalo NY on the 10th were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

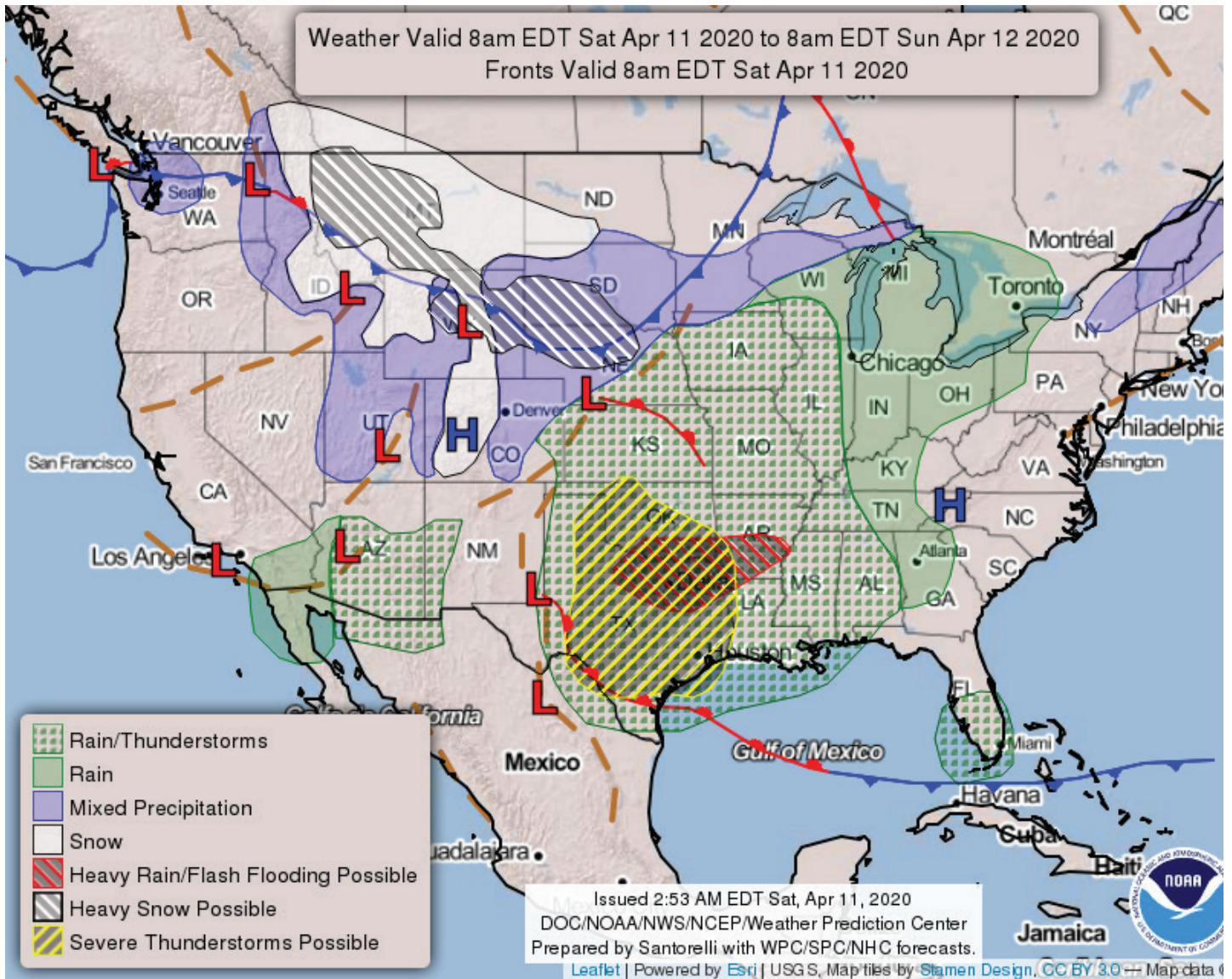
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 52 °F at 5:41 PM**  
**Low Temp: 26 °F at 2:56 AM**  
**Wind: 24 mph at 11:48 AM**  
**Precip:**

**Record High: 86° in 1910**  
**Record Low: 8° in 1939**  
**Average High: 55°F**  
**Average Low: 30°F**  
**Average Precip in April.: 0.47**  
**Precip to date in April.: 0.94**  
**Average Precip to date: 2.65**  
**Precip Year to Date: 1.29**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:16 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:53 a.m.**



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## WILLPOWER OR WILTPOWER?

Little Debbie looked at her mom with sadness in her eyes. "Please, Mom, may I have one more cookie?" "Sweetheart," replied her mom, "you've already had 'one more' three times." "I know, Mom," she whined, "but they are so good. Just one more? Please?" "All right," agreed her mom, "one more and that's all!" "Thanks, Mom!" exclaimed Little Debbie. "You sure don't have much willpower. You gave in without even thinking."

Giving in to temptation is easy if we do not call on the Lord when we face the slippery slopes of life. The easy way out, however, is rarely the best way out. When we give in without counting the cost involved in taking the "easy way" we are usually giving up something of value.

Paul reminds us that we all face the same type of temptations. In fact, he says, "they – your temptations - are no different from what others experience." Why is it, then, that some Christians have better "survival rates" than others?

It's because of two words: focus and depend. If we focus and depend on ourselves for the strength to overcome the "evil one," we will surely lose the battle. But if we look to and call upon the Lord, the battle becomes His and victory is assured. Stay focused and depend on Him!

Prayer: Lord, when we are tempted, may we focus our minds on Your Word, open our hearts to Your Spirit, and depend completely on Your strength for our survival. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: 1 Corinthians 10:13 The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.



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## 2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
  - **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
  - **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
  - **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
  - 04/26/2020 Father/Daughter dance.
  - **CANCELLED** 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

### Dakotas fishing resorts approach crunch time due to virus

By DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

The reservation line at Woodland Resort in northeastern North Dakota, home to some of the best walleye fishing in the country, is normally quiet this time of year because anglers have booked long in advance. Now it's ringing with some cancellations.

Owner Kyle Blanchfield has dealt with several challenges on Devils Lake, not the least of which has been an ever-expanding body of water that has forced him to build dikes and relocate buildings. But the coronavirus is different.

"When it comes to chronic flooding, you can pencil out a road map of what you have to do to get from point A to point B," Blanchfield said. "With this challenge, it's hard to draw up a road map; hard to draw up a solution. Until the virus is under control, there really isn't an answer."

Blanchfield said safety is paramount and he has altered his cancellation policy in an attempt to salvage some outings. However, he's already lost May and is worried about saving the summer for his customers, about 75 percent of whom come from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Nebraska.

"This could be tough for a lot of people in the tourism industry and hospitality," Blanchfield said. "We're kind of on the front lines for getting whipped on this deal."

For now, he said, he and his 25 employees at the resort are keeping busy with spring projects "so we're all plugging away."

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has already acted on some aspects of the fishing season. The month-long paddlefish season in northwestern North Dakota has been cancelled because the snaggers concentrate in large numbers in a small area. The department is also prohibiting all fishing tournaments through May.

North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum is promoting the outdoors and encouraging anglers to come from out of state, but warns against crowds on boat ramps and people standing too close to each other while fishing from shore.

"Instead of closing the whole season for the whole state, we'll close the fishing bridge, we'll close the boat ramp and try to bring targeted action to those who aren't following the rules," Burgum said.

Another typical hot spot for walleyes is Lake Oahe in South Dakota. Tammy Nelson, who along with her husband Terry owns the West Prairie Resort north of Pierre, said they haven't received any cancellations from customers, many of whom come from Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska.

"We really don't get people until June," she said. "We're all hopeful that everything is going to be safe by then."

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department is leaving the decision whether to cancel or postpone fishing tournaments up to individual event organizers. State officials are welcoming out-of-state anglers as long as they follow guidelines on social distancing.

One person who isn't encouraging anglers or anyone else to head to the Dakotas is Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, who has extended a stay-at-home order to May 4.

"I don't think travel in general is wise right now. ... I'm certainly not encouraging people to go to North Dakota or elsewhere," Walz said. "My folks up north in Minnesota are concerned about people moving. We think it's best to be sheltered close to home ... not to travel somewhere and get others involved with this."

Walz has called off this year's Minnesota Governors Fishing Opener, the promotional kickoff to the walleye season that will open on May 9.

## Standing Rock Reservation copes with coronavirus pandemic

By MIKE McCLEARY The Bismarck Tribune

FORT YATES, N.D. (AP) — When Gov. Doug Burgum ordered all restaurants, bars and similar establishments to close on-site services to help slow the spread of the coronavirus, the owner of The Rock Pizza and Grill in Fort Yates turned the dining room chairs upside down on top of the tables and turned down the lights.

The restaurant still offers carry-out and drive-thru service, but shift supervisor Mike Archambault said customer traffic is down considerably.

"Business has gone way down," he told The Bismarck Tribune. "We still have our regulars, and they are ordering mostly pizza and chicken."

With the loss of about half of The Rock's daily income, the nine-person staff is limited to just two or three workers per shift. They're taking all of the necessary precautions to stay safe, such as washing hands frequently and disinfecting surfaces.

"We feel like we are doing everything that we can to stay open," Archambault said.

The situation on American Indian reservations in North Dakota mimics what is happening across the state as a whole. Tribes are taking steps to safeguard health and safety, and working to maintain some sense of normalcy in turbulent times. Tribes also are working closely with the state, according to North Dakota Indian Affairs Commissioner Scott Davis, who noted that "this virus, it's everywhere," and "it's time to come together."

### Disaster declaration

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Mike Faith issued a tribal health emergency disaster declaration for the residents and tribal members in Sioux County and the rest of the 9,251 square-mile reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border. Faith's order was in conjunction with the governor's March 13 executive order declaring a state of emergency in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Officials on March 18 closed tribal headquarters in Fort Yates to the public and limited it to tribal employees only. The employees also can work remotely from home.

In a statement posted on the tribe's Facebook page, Faith asked tribal members and residents to follow the recommendations of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to reduce the spread of the virus and to protect their communities.

"We don't want our people to panic, but we want to be prepared," he said. "We are asking that you stay home as much as possible and go out (only) if necessary."

Sioux County, which encompasses the North Dakota portion of the reservation, recently recorded its first positive test -- a man in his 60s who was tested in Morton County while receiving medical treatment.

### Daily life

Kristen Carry Moccasin said she and her husband are trying their best to adhere to the chairman's orders.

"We sanitize everything even more," she said from the porch outside her home. "It's very scary."

Carry Moccasin watched her two nieces and nephew play outside while caring for her four young children, including 3-month-old twins. The neighborhood was quiet, with a few children playing outside in their yards. Carry Moccasin said the older children she watches are sad they can't play with their friends because of the stay-at-home guidelines.

"We are cleaning everything and I'm having them wash their hands every time they come in from playing outside," she said.

"People need to wake up and realize what's going on," added Robin Miller-Dogskin, Carry Moccasin's mother.

The coronavirus isn't the only thing on the mind of Carry Moccasin. One of her 3-month-old twins is in a Bismarck hospital battling pneumonia, an illness not related to the outbreak. Carry Moccasin and her husband are allowed to visit their daughter in the neonatal intensive care unit only for short periods due to coronavirus constraints put in place by the hospital.

"It's hard for me," Carry Moccasin said. "I can't hold her because she is hooked up to so many machines."

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She said that as soon as her daughter improves, doctors will move her to another, more accessible room. On the other end of town near the intersection of 92nd Street and Standing Rock Avenue, the parking spaces in front of the White Buffalo Foods store are full.

"Right now we're sitting pretty good," owner Mike Dowling said. "What we are going to look like (the community) two months down the road, that's my main concern."

He said food distributor SpartanNash is doing a good job allocating its inventory and not neglecting the smaller grocery stores in favor of the larger supermarkets across nine states.

He said his customers are still stocking up on meat and other necessities and are able to find what they need without having to travel to Bismarck-Mandan and compete with customers over the sparsely filled shelves.

"People here are trying to take this (coronavirus) seriously," Dowling said. "We have a very old population, and they are very nervous."

## Learning and lunches

Standing Rock Community Schools is delivering learning packets to students after complying with North Dakota Department of Public Instruction guidelines on distance learning. The statewide effort is to educate students K-12 for the rest of the 2019-20 school year without having them congregate in large gatherings at schools. The packets will be delivered each Thursday by staff to nine locations across the reservation.

Since schools in the state were closed on March 16, the Standing Rock district has been distributing sack lunches to students and families at the schools or delivering them through the neighborhoods in school buses.

Lynn Landereaux, school maintenance and custodian worker at the St. Bernard Mission School in Fort Yates, with the help of teachers conducted a deep clean of the school building.

"I can't wait until this all blows over," he said.

Until that happens, Landereaux is helping hand out 30-40 sack lunches to children and families each weekday.

"(The families) have been very appreciative, he said. "For some it may be their only meal for the day. They depend on the school meal to get them through."

Landereaux said he also delivers sack lunches to families without access to transportation. "And then I go straight home," he said.

## Working together

North Dakota tribes are working closely with the state on the coronavirus response, according to Davis. Tribal leaders are having weekly calls with state officials to coordinate.

"We work together, and it's worked very well," Davis said, adding that "I think it's no different than some of the smaller towns and cities that have limited resources. The tribes are in that same situation."

Whether reservation businesses have to follow a governor's executive order depends on where they are. For example, a bar or restaurant in a state-incorporated city like New Town would need to follow the governor's directive to shut down, but a casino restaurant on tribal land would not. But all tribes have still shut down their casinos.

Tribes also have incident command centers in place that are working closely with medical facilities on reservations, according to Davis.

"I think we feel pretty good about where things are at now," he said.

Dowling feels the same way.

"Not many people are going to Bismarck," the grocery store owner said. "They're not finding what they need there."

## Black Hills seamstresses mobilize to make masks in outbreak

By JIM HOLLAND Rapid City Journal

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — In her 88 years, Kazimeira Kolano has endured more than her share of upheaval — from world war and economic hardship to political oppression.

And while at her age she may have earned a rest from those earlier struggles, she is eagerly confronting a new crisis, the outbreak of the coronavirus, with a steadfast resolve and her sewing machine.

Kazimeira, Kazia for short, has joined other Black Hills seamstresses in stitching together protective personal masks to help stop the spread of the virus.

According to information provided by her family, Kazia decided to sew masks after a phone call with her daughter, Stasia, a nurse at a senior care center in Seminole, Florida, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"My daughter works in a high-risk area and medical staffs need more masks," Kazia said.

"I can help here in Spearfish. Anyone with a sewing machine can do their part," she said.

Kazia spends several hours each day making masks from cotton material for the air filter, with elastic loops to hold the masks in place.

Her masks are for use by other Spearfish residents, along with members of the local medical community, including hospital and senior care facility employees.

"My fingers are not so fast as they used to be," she said, "but my sewing machine is."

According to her family, Kazia's early childhood in Lezajsk, Poland, was spent during the dark days of the Nazi occupation of Europe during World War II.

Even after the fall of the Nazi regime, Kazia and her family still lived under communist rule of Eastern Europe until her family was able to emigrate to the United States, first settling in Passaic, New Jersey.

Kazia and her husband found their way to the Black Hills when a son-in-law, an engineer, took a job with the Homestake Mining Co.

Kazia is just one of many local seamstresses who have picked up needle and thread to make masks in response to the pandemic.

Annie Albright of Bakery Fabrics of Belle Fourche posted instructions for sewing masks on the shop's Facebook page.

She said masks may be fashioned from layers of 100% cotton or even unused vacuum-cleaner filters and bags.

"Anything you can find that will capture the smaller particles," she said. "Even two layers of cotton will catch a huge amount of that."

Albright estimates her shop sells enough material each day for 100 masks.

Most of the mask-makers are giving away their products free of charge to police officers, home health workers and others who simply want to protect themselves and others from the spread of the disease through small droplets expelled by a cough, sneeze or even normal speech.

"It's our responsibility to do everything we can to stay healthy," Albright said.

"If wearing a mask can help, especially with those people who may not know they have (the virus), it behooves us to give it our best shot," she said.

Other members of Kazia's family still live in Spearfish. A majority of their conversations are in Polish.

Most of the television programs Kazia watches are satellite Polish channels.

Reports of the worldwide spread of the pandemic galvanized her call to action.

"Nikt nie powinien tam siedzieć i nic nie robić.

Zdrowie i przetrwanie Ameryki to nasza odpowiedzialność.

"Wolność jest naszą odpowiedzialnością," she recently told her daughter in Scottsdale, Arizona, in a telephone conversation.

The English translation: "Nobody should just sit there and do nothing. America's health and survival is all of our responsibility. Freedom is our responsibility," she said.

## Free signs to inspire hope, encouragement during quarantine

By **MAKENZIE HUBER** Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — About 30 signs stood outside the Messiah New Hope Church in northern Sioux Falls on March 28.

The signs read words of encouragement like “I love you,” “I miss you,” and “Imagine” — part of a project Cyndy Huber started to fight back against isolation during the COVID-19 outbreak. Her husband, Scott, and their 8-year-old grandson, Koi Rettig, joined in the project.

By Monday, the signs were gone.

“Even the ‘Free signs’ sign was taken,” Scott told the Argus Leader.

The demand indicated just how much others wanted to see positivity and community around them, Cyndy said. Her hope was that people would place the signs outside of nursing home or homes where their loved ones were quarantined. When the person looked out the window, they’d see a sign and be reminded that they’re loved.

“It struck me — the domino effect that one sign can make,” Cyndy said. “We have enjoyed making them. People that pick out one sign, you see a smile on their face. Whoever they give it to hopefully also smiles, and others who see it too.”

“We’re kind of hoping those smiles are more infectious than this rotten disease,” Scott said.

The Hubers are planning to stake another 25 signs outside their church this weekend, and they’re hoping they’ll be gone shortly after as well. It’s been humbling to see how their actions have inspired other people, Cyndy said.

They thought maybe two people would pick up a sign, and they would have been happy with that. When they decided to make more, a neighbor dropped off a gallon of leftover paint from a house project to use.

“It’s all of the things that people have been doing — Light Up Sioux Falls, the bear hunts, hearts and rainbows in the windows, handing out goodie bags and checking in on neighbors,” Cyndy said. “I think a lot has been pushed aside and, now with this virus, it’s coming to the forefront of our minds that we need to care for each other. It’s remarkable how everybody seems to be doing something to spread the love.”

## SD Lottery

By **The Associated Press**

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

Mega Millions

02-11-21-57-60, Mega Ball: 13, Megaplier: 2

(two, eleven, twenty-one, fifty-seven, sixty; Mega Ball: thirteen; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$136 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$195 million

## After Wisconsin mess, South Dakota out to lift absentee vote

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota is sending absentee applications to all registered voters to encourage people to mail in their ballots rather than going to the polls for the June 2 primary, just weeks before coronavirus infections are expected to peak in the state.

It’s the first time the state has made such a move, Kea Warne, the elections director in the secretary of state’s office, said Friday. And it comes after widespread criticism of Wisconsin for carrying out its spring primary election this week amid virus fears.

South Dakota still plans to conduct in-person voting, even though the timing of the election has raised the same concerns as in Wisconsin. Gov. Kristi Noem has projected that COVID-19 cases will peak in South Dakota in mid-June.

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The absentee plan was first reported by the conservative blog Dakota War College on Thursday.

Normally, voters must request an absentee ballot application from their county election official. To get an absentee ballot, voters must still complete the application and send it back to their county election official, along with a copy of their photo ID.

State Rep. Spencer Gosch, a Glenham Republican, said he saw the election that unfolded in Wisconsin after the state's Democratic governor couldn't persuade the Republican-controlled Legislature to delay the election. But Gosch thought South Dakota could avoid problems by encouraging people to vote absentee.

Wisconsin encouraged voters to vote absentee, and more than 1 million requested ballots to do so. But the state lost many poll workers who were afraid to risk their health; in Milwaukee, thousands had to line up at just five polling locations.

Bob Litz, the Minnehaha County auditor, said holding an election a couple weeks before the governor has predicted infections to peak was a "gap in logic," but he hoped an increase in absentee voting would keep polling locations sparse come Election Day. Minnehaha County has been the hardest-hit by the virus, with over half of confirmed cases in the state.

Litz plans on having all 71 polling locations open, although many of his usual poll workers have not committed to working that day. He's acquired plastic shields and sanitation kits to protect poll workers and noted that many are at higher risk for complications from the virus.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

Litz said, "80% of my workers are over 60 years old."

He also expects he will need more workers than usual because several local races have been pushed back to that date. Voters will be filling out two ballots, requiring four or five poll workers at every location.

The Legislature passed an emergency bill in March to push local elections back to the primary. Lawmakers struck a proposal from the governor that would have allowed her to move the primary if necessary. That means a special legislative session would need to be called if lawmakers or the governor want to change the election date.

House Speaker Steven Haugaard, a Sioux Falls Republican, said he did not think that would be necessary. He was fine with the potential increase in absentee ballots, but said, "I just don't want to see us doing something that compromises the integrity of the vote."

## Drums, dancers livestream as virus moves powwows online

By FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — The names pop up quickly on Whitney Rencountre's computer screen, and he greets them as he would in person.

What's up, y'all? Shout out to you. How's it going? Ya'at'eeh. Good to see you, relatives.

He spots someone from the Menominee Nation, a Wisconsin tribe that hosts competitive dancers, singers and drummers in traditional regalia in late summer.

"Beautiful powwow there," he says.

The emcee from the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in South Dakota typically is on the powwow circuit in the spring, joining thousands of others in colorful displays of culture and tradition that are at their essence meant to uplift people during difficult times. Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the gatherings are taking on a new form online.

"Sometimes we have this illusion that we're in total control, but it takes times like this of uncertainty and the challenges of the possibility of death to help us step back and reevaluate," said Rencountre, a co-organizer of the Facebook group Social Distance Powwow, which sprung up about a month ago as more states and tribes advised people to stay home.

Normally this time of year, a string of powwows hosted by Native American tribes and universities would be underway across the U.S., with tribal members honoring and showcasing their cultures — and social-

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izing, like family reunions. The powwows represent an evolution of songs and dances from when tribal traditions were forced underground during European settlement, Rencountre said.

The pandemic has canceled or postponed virtually all of them, including two of the largest in the U.S. — the Denver March Powwow and the Gathering of Nations in Albuquerque, New Mexico, held in April.

Social Distance Powwow has helped fill the void, quickly growing to more than 125,000 members.

Members from different tribal nations post photos and videos of themselves and loved ones dancing, often in their regalia. The page has become a daily dose of prayer, songs, dances, well wishes, humor and happy birthdays.

In one video, Jordan Kor sits in his vehicle after a shift at a San Jose, California, hospital emergency department. An old Dakota war song he learned as a child that can be a rallying cry was bouncing around his head. He pulls off his mask and cap and sings, slapping a beat on the steering wheel.

"The biggest ones, social distance, keep working in whatever it is that brings you joy and helps you keep connected," said Kor, who is Tarahumara and Wapetonwon Lakota. "And wash your hands!"

The page also hosts a weekly, live powwow with the organizers — Rencountre, Stephanie Hebert and Dan Simonds — assembling a lineup of volunteer drum groups, singers and dancers for the hours-long event. This past weekend, Rencountre patched people in from across the country on the live feed.

A marketplace on the site lets vendors showcase their paintings, beadwork, jewelry, basketry and clothing.

An online powwow may lack some of the grandeur of being in person and seeing hundreds of performers fill an arena for the grand entry. But it offers a way to keep people connected.

"When we dance, we are dancing for prayer and protection," said member Mable Moses of the Lumbee Tribe in North Carolina. "No matter what we do, may the Lord always protect us whether we're living or dying."

Moses learned to dance later in life and now competes in the "golden age" category at powwows. In a video of her Southern Traditional dance, she moves around a dogwood tree in her yard slowly but with high energy.

"Even though I'm 72, I'm like 29," she said.

Moses said the dance meant to calm people helps her cope with the fear surrounding the coronavirus, and the difficulty of staying away from others.

Tribal members also are posting elsewhere on social media, including youth hoop dancers from Pojoaque Pueblo in New Mexico.

For those viewing for the first time, Rencountre encourages an open mind.

"We ask them to break down the wall, to feel the dances, to feel the songs, as you're watching," he said. "Don't think about it from a technical point of view. Understand the creation of these songs and dances comes from a place of uplifting."

Leiha Peters grew up doing jingle dress dance meant for healing. The dress is characterized by cone-shaped jingles typically made from the lids of tobacco cans. Now, she does beadwork for her children's outfits and is a Seneca language teacher.

She recently posted a video of two of her children and their cousins doing smoke dance in the living room of her home on the Tonawanda Indian Reservation northeast of Buffalo, New York. Its origins are mixed as a dance for men to bless themselves before they went to battle and a way to clear smoke from traditional homes called longhouses, she said.

Her children grow up knowing the respect and the protocol that accompany the dance and its songs. They also have fun with it, sometimes competing in the family's backyard to win cups of Kool-Aid or bags of candy, Peters said.

"For them, dancing is medicine on its own. It's everything to us," she said. "It's energy, it's athleticism, it's staying healthy and living a better life with food choices. It's not easy doing what they do."

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



## Industry scrambles to stop fatal bird flu in South Carolina

By DAVID PITT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — An infectious and fatal strain of bird flu has been confirmed in a commercial turkey flock in South Carolina, the first case of the more serious strain of the disease in the United States since 2017 and a worrisome development for an industry that was devastated by previous outbreaks.

The high pathogenic case was found at an operation in Chesterfield County, South Carolina, marking the first case of the more dangerous strain since one found in a Tennessee chicken flock in 2017. In 2015, an estimated 50 million poultry had to be killed at operations mainly in the Upper Midwest after infections spread throughout the region.

"Yes, it's concerning when we see cases, but we are prepared to respond very quickly and that was done in this case," said Lyndsay Cole, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The USDA has been working in recent months with scientists and farmers in North Carolina and South Carolina, where a low pathogenic — or less severe — strain of bird flu had been detected.

Low pathogenic bird flu causes few clinical signs in infected birds. However, two strains of low pathogenic bird flu — the H5 and H7 strains — can mutate into highly pathogenic forms, which are frequently fatal to birds and easily transmissible between susceptible species.

Low pathogenic cases were already in an area near the South Carolina and North Carolina state line and USDA was closely monitoring and testing. The case in Chesterfield County, South Carolina was expected to be another low pathogenic case, but it came back from the laboratory high pathogenic which means the less severe virus mutated into the more severe version, Cole said.

"Our scientists at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory had looked at the virus characteristics of the low path virus and they had previously indicated that this was one that was probably likely to mutate so they were watching it very closely," Cole said.

A laboratory in Ames, Iowa, confirmed the virus with that had been killing turkeys was a high pathogenic H7N3 strain of avian influenza.

A report on the outbreak indicates it was discovered on April 6. It has killed 1,583 turkeys and the remainder of the 32,577 birds in the flock were euthanized.

State officials quarantined the farm, movement controls were implemented and enhanced surveillance was already in place in the area.

"The flock was quickly depopulated and will not enter the marketplace," said Joel Brandenberger, president of the National Turkey Federation, an industry trade group. "Thorough disinfecting and cleaning procedures have already been initiated on premises as well as surveillance of commercial flocks in the surrounding area. This occurrence poses no threat to public health. Turkey products remain safe and nutritious."

He said poultry farmers implement strict biosecurity measures year-round and routinely test flocks for avian influenza.

These measures were implemented after an H5N2 avian influenza outbreak that began in December 2014 swept commercial chicken, egg laying and turkey populations throughout much of 2015 killing 50 million birds and causing as much as \$3 billion in economic damage. That outbreak is believed to have originated in wild birds.

Nearly 90 percent of the bird losses were on egg-laying chicken farms in Iowa and turkey farms in Minnesota. The bulk of other cases occurred in the adjacent states of Nebraska, Wisconsin, and South Dakota.

Cole said since 2015 significant planning, exercises and coordination has occurred between the federal government, state agencies and the industry.

Cole said the coronavirus pandemic has not affected the ability of the government to respond to the bird flu.

A highly pathogenic H7N9 bird flu strain was detected in Lincoln County, Tennessee, in a chicken flock of 73,500 birds in early March 2017. Ten days later samples from a commercial flock less than two miles away also tested positive for the same strain. The birds were euthanized and buried and the virus didn't spread further indicating immediate mitigation action can stop spread.

## South Dakota governor: 190 virus cases tied to pork plant

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem on Friday reported that 190 cases of COVID-19 have been tied to an outbreak at a Smithfield Foods pork processing plant in Sioux Falls.

The Republican governor said the state Health Department has stepped up mitigation efforts at the plant and declared a public health emergency in Minnehaha County, where the plant is located. The outbreak tied to the plant is the largest known hotspot in the state, accounting for 1 in 3 confirmed cases.

State epidemiologist Josh Clayton said the 190 cases were primarily plant employees.

Smithfield Foods announced Thursday it would be closing the plant for three days over the weekend to clean and install barriers. There has been no evidence that the coronavirus is being transmitted through food or its packaging, according to the Department of Agriculture.

Noem called Smithfield's actions so far "appropriate," although some workers and their families have said the company hasn't done enough.

Noem said six people from the Smithfield outbreak have required hospitalization or health care so far.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. Older adults and people with existing health problems are among those particularly susceptible to more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

The state reported Friday that 536 people have tested positive for the virus statewide, an increase of 89 people from the day before. That's the largest day-to-day jump in confirmed cases in South Dakota so far. Six people have died.

The governor intensified her action in Minnehaha County with the declaration of a public health emergency that would allow health officials to compel people affected by COVID-19 to quarantine.

She defended Smithfield's efforts to clean the Sioux Falls plant, distance workers in lunchrooms, and screen their temperature at the facility entrance, saying that media reports detailing worker's complaints had not told the full story.

Noem said she had not spoken directly with the union representing workers at the plant, but had spoken with Smithfield CEO Ken Sullivan multiple times this week.

"I'm having really honest, frank conversations with Smithfield," she said.

She said that overall, she felt the state is in a good place with its COVID-19 numbers, noting that they are lower than what she projected a month ago.

## Doctor gambles on clot-busting drug to save virus patients

By **LAURAN NEERGAARD** AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The woman was dying. New York's Mount Sinai Hospital was about to call her husband and break the news that there was nothing left to try. Then Dr. Hooman Poor took a gamble.

With high-stress, high-stakes decisions, doctors around the world are frantically trying to figure out how COVID-19 is killing their patients so they can attempt new ways to fight back. One growing theory: In the sickest of the sick, little blood clots clog the lungs.

Poor couldn't prove it. The tests required would further endanger his staff, who were already at risk of getting the virus. But the lung specialist saw clues that were "screaming blood clots." So Poor pulled out a drug best known for treating strokes, and held his breath.

"I said, 'What do we actually have to lose?'" Poor told The Associated Press. "That's when I decided to give not just a blood thinner but a blood clot buster."

Exactly what's going on with blood clots in at least some COVID-19 patients is a mystery.

Chinese doctors were first to sound the alarm. In March, Chinese heart specialists advised the American College of Cardiology to watch for clots and said certain blood tests showing a rise in clot risk might signal which patients were in greatest danger. Other reports suggested the clots can show up all over the body. But were they a cause of deterioration or an effect?

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Already, many hospitals are attempting preventive doses of blood thinners to keep clots from forming. There's huge debate over what kind to try, what dose is safe — the drugs can cause dangerous bleeding — and how soon to start.

In New York, Poor was going a step further with a drug named tPA that doesn't prevent clots — it breaks them up.

It's an example of how, with no vaccine or approved treatment for the coronavirus, many overwhelmed doctors are following trails of clues to figure out what to try next.

Poor's 55-year-old patient wasn't getting enough oxygen even after doctors rolled her onto her stomach for an extreme ventilation technique called "prone positioning." She was in shock. Other organs were failing fast.

Twenty minutes after the injection of tPA, her oxygen levels rose. Poor was elated. But not for long.

"She gets better, but then she starts to get worse," he said. "Most likely we're breaking up the clot, but she is immediately forming the clot again."

So he next tried something novel, putting the woman on a low-dose drip of tPA for about 24 hours together with a blood thinner, in hopes of chipping away at existing clots while blocking new ones.

To Poor's dismay, the experimental treatment bought the woman only a few more days of life. A sudden, different complication killed her on Friday.

But last weekend, Poor's team tested the new clot-fighting approach in four additional severely ill patients. One didn't survive, dying of cardiac arrest from a massive blood clot in his heart.

The rest saw improvement in oxygen levels and shock. As of Friday, three remained on ventilators but were doing better, especially one who had been treated soon after her lungs failed. In a new report, Poor called for urgent study of whether abnormal clotting drives at least some people's deterioration, even as his own hospital updated treatment advice for its sickest patients.

Others are onto the same lead. Specialists at the University of Colorado and Harvard recently published a similar tPA research call, and cited three additional cases where it was tried as hospitals in Colorado and Massachusetts prepare for a study.

"We're taking care of extremely ill patients that are dying in front of us, and we can't get any diagnostic testing," yet still have to make treatment decisions, said Dr. Steven Pugliese, a lung specialist at the University of Pennsylvania.

Pugliese called Poor's tPA report "very intriguing" and concluded: "What these doctors did in these very ill patients who were dying was a judgment call, and it was the right thing to do."

But with the bleeding risk, it has to be studied in carefully chosen patients, Pugliese said, especially with no good way to tell in advance who really has these tiny clots.

Poor first noticed oddities as his ICU filled with patients who just weren't responding to care the way doctors expected. They were on breathing machines after developing ARDS, acute respiratory distress syndrome. It's an inflammatory form of lung failure that, when caused by other infections, stiffens lungs.

At least early on, Poor didn't see that.

"It was like 'Groundhog Day' with each patient," he said, referring to the movie where the same events repeat day after day. They had severe abnormalities in oxygen and carbon dioxide levels but "shockingly, their lungs were not stiff."

He recalled Italian doctors who spotted the same thing and wrote in an American Thoracic Society journal that COVID-19 was causing atypical ARDS.

Back in Poor's hospital, when ventilated patients looked improved enough to let them wake up a bit, alarms would sound as their blood oxygen levels immediately plummeted.

"The residents would yell at me, 'So and so is desaturating!'" Poor recalled. "Classically in ARDS, we think that's because the lung is collapsing." But it wasn't.

Poor often treats an emergency called pulmonary embolism, a large clot in the lungs that can quickly kill. The COVID-19 patients didn't look quite like that. Nor were their hearts struggling to pump blood into the lungs.

Then as he was doing laundry at 2 a.m., Poor remembered a rare disease in which some lung blood

vessels abnormally dilate even as others are clogged. If that explains the COVID-19 contradictions, he thought, a clot-buster might help.

"I did a case series of five. This does not prove anything," he cautioned. "Perhaps it brings light to possibilities where further research can delve into what exactly is going on."

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.

## Trump leaves trail of unmet promises in coronavirus response

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For several months, President Donald Trump and his officials have cast a fog of promises meant to reassure a country in the throes of the coronavirus pandemic. Trump and his team haven't delivered on critical ones.

They talk numbers. Bewildering numbers about masks on the way. About tests being taken. About ships sailing to the rescue, breathing machines being built and shipped, field hospitals popping up, aircraft laden with supplies from abroad, dollars flowing to crippled businesses.

Piercing that fog is the bottom-line reality that Americans are going without the medical supplies and much of the financial help they most need from the government at the very time they need it most — and were told they would have it.

The U.S. now is at or near the height of COVID-19 sickness and death, experts believe.

There's no question that on major fronts — masks, gowns, diagnostic tests, ventilators and more — the federal government is pushing hard now to get up to speed. Impressive numbers are being floated for equipment and testing procedures in the pipeline.

But in large measure they will arrive on the down slope of the pandemic, putting the U.S. in a better position should the same virus strike again but landing too late for this outbreak's lethal curve.

Concerning ventilators, for example, Trump recently allowed: "A lot of them will be coming at a time when we won't need them as badly."

Two weeks ago, Trump brought word of an innovative diagnostic test that can produce results in minutes instead of days or a week. The U.S. testing system, key to containing the spread of infection, has been a failure in the crunch, as public health authorities (but never Trump) acknowledged in March. The rapid test could help change that.

Like other glimmers of hope that may or may not come to something, Trump held out these tests as a "whole new ballgame." The new machines and testing cartridges are being sent across the country, and may well hold promise. But they are not ready for actual use in large numbers.

New Hampshire, for one, received 15 rapid-test machines but 120 cartridges instead of the 1,500 expected. Only two machines can be used. "I'm banging my head against the wall, I really am," Republican Gov. Chris Sununu said Wednesday. "We're going to keep pushing on Washington multiple times a day to get what we need."

False starts and dead ends are inevitable in any crisis, especially one driven by a virus never seen before. By its nature, a crisis means we're not on top of it. Desperation is the mother of invention here and officials worldwide are winging it, many more successfully than in the U.S.

But bold promises and florid assurances were made, day after day, from the White House and a zigzagging president who minimized the danger for months and systematically exaggerates what Washington is doing about it.

"We're getting them tremendous amounts of supplies," he said of health care workers. "Incredible. It's a beautiful thing to watch." This was when Americans were watching something else entirely — doctors wearing garbage bags for makeshift protection.

MASKS, GLOVES, GOWNS

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In hospitals, masks, gloves and other protective garb come with the territory. But doctors, nurses, flight attendants and other front-line workers have had to go begging for such basics, even before public health leaders flipped and recommended facial coverings for everyone outside the home.

The mere scale of the pandemic stretched supplies even in better prepared countries. Yet the enduring shortages in the U.S. are not just from a lack of foresight, but also from hesitancy as the pandemic started to sicken and kill Americans.

It was not until mid-March, when some hospitals were already treating thousands of infected patients without enough equipment and pleading for help, that the government placed bulk orders for N95 masks and other basic necessities of medical care for its stockpile, The Associated Press reported. Washington dithered on supplies for two months after global alarm bells rang about a coming pandemic in January.

And the Strategic National Stockpile, it turns out, is not the supply fortress you might have thought from its formidable name.

It maxed out days ago, before the pandemic's peak in the U.S., and never filled its purpose of plugging the most essential and immediate gaps in supplies, though it helped. This past week officials said the stockpile was 90% depleted of its protective equipment, with the remainder to be held back for federal employees only.

Some shipments to states were deficient. The wrong masks were sent to Illinois in a load of 300,000. Michigan got only half of the number that was supposed to be in a shipment of 450,000. When he was trying to get 10,000 ventilators in late March, Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom of California said he received 170 broken ones from the national stockpile as well as good ones.

When officials in Alabama opened a shipment of medical masks from the stockpile, they found more than 5,000 with rot. They had expired in 2010, officials in the state said, yet been left in place first by the Obama administration and then the Trump administration.

When it became clear that critical shortages weren't being solved, the self-styled "wartime president," who had gone to Norfolk, Virginia, to send off the USS Comfort Navy hospital ship to New York City, blamed the states and declared the federal government isn't a "shipping clerk."

## TESTS

"Anybody that needs a test, gets a test," Trump said on March 6. "They have the tests. And the tests are beautiful." He said the same day: "Anybody that wants a test can get a test."

Whether it's a case of needing a test or only wanting one, his assurance was not true then, it's not true now and it won't be true any time soon.

The greatly expanding but still vastly insufficient capacity to test people is steered mostly to those who are already sick or to essential workers at the most risk of exposure.

If you're sick with presumed COVID-19 but riding it out at home, chances are you haven't been tested. If you worry that you've been exposed and might be carrying and spreading the virus but so far feel fine, you're generally off the radar as well.

Trump tries to assure people who need to fly that passengers are tested getting on and off flights. He is wrong. Instead, some major airports do screenings, which means asking passengers questions and checking their temperature, not swabbing their nasal passages to find out for sure.

Many people with the virus will never get sick from it. Others who have it will get sick eventually. Both groups are contagious. But there is no capacity in the days of greatest danger to test apparently healthy people in large numbers, so precautionary distancing remains the best defense, like in ancient times.

Within three weeks of China's New Year's Eve notification to global health authorities about a mysterious cluster of pneumonia cases, China had sequenced the genetic makeup of the virus, German scientists had developed a test for detecting it and the World Health Organization had adopted the test and was moving toward global distribution.

Ten days behind, officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention bypassed the WHO test and sponsored their own, which was flawed out of the gate. Trump said the WHO test was flawed, but it wasn't.

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Precious time was lost as the U.S. test was corrected, distributed narrowly, then more broadly but still not up to par with the countries most on top of the crisis. Testing most lagged during the critical month of February as the virus took root in the U.S. population.

Germany, in contrast, raced ahead with aggressive testing of a broad segment of the population when it had fewer than 10 cases in January. It has experienced far fewer deaths proportionally than the United States.

"There were many, many opportunities not to end up where we are," Dr. Ashish K. Jha, director of the Global Health Institute at Harvard, told AP.

Trump told Americans on March 13 that a division of Google's parent company was coming out with a website that would let people determine online if they should get a test and, if so, swing by a nearby place to get one, a notable shortcut in theory. But a game-changer in practice?

"It's going to be very quickly done," he said. The website is up but operational in just four California counties. Drive-through sites that he promised would expedite testing were plagued with shortages and delays in state after state, such that many people with symptoms and a doctor's order were turned away.

## VENTILATORS

Trump dusted off the Defense Production Act, empowering him to order manufacturers and shippers to make and deliver what the country needs in the crisis. His move raised expectations that a new wave of emergency supplies generally and ventilators in particular could come to the aid of patients and the people looking after them. He and his advisers inflated those hopes.

Under the president's "vigorous, swift" order to General Motors, said Peter Navarro, White House point man on the emergency supply chain, new ventilators would be ready in "Trump time, which is to say as fast as possible."

Yet Trump has held off on using his full powers under the act to command production from private companies. A presidential directive to GM on ventilator manufacturing essentially told the company to do what it was already doing.

While most people get better from COVID-19 without needing medical care, the sickest cannot breathe without a ventilator bridging them to recovery. The ventilator shortfall has been the most frightening deficiency as more people get infected and die by the hour. In the current chaos, the size of the shortfall nationally is not known.

In the absence of what they regard as dependable federal leadership, several states formed a supply consortium to coordinate purchases and boost their buying power. The federal government has pitched in with states and private companies to spur supplies, though not exactly in an atmosphere of trust.

Governors accuse Washington of shortchanging states on machines. Washington accuses some of them of trying to build an unreasonable cushion that deprives other, more desperate states.

According to the scientific model most favored by federal authorities, the country probably needs nearly 17,000 ventilators to be operating for COVID-19 patients alone at the pandemic's peak, right about now, a figure that exceeds 35,000 under a worst-case scenario.

"We have over 100,000 being built right now or soon to be started," Trump said a week ago. He acknowledged they won't come in time.

## WHERE'S THE MONEY?

"This will deliver urgently needed relief," Trump said in signing an economic rescue package into law. The need may be urgent but the delivery hasn't been.

More than two weeks later, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said with some exaggeration, but not much, that "no money has gone out the door yet."

Because of the bureaucracy.

Because of website glitches.

Because of confusion among lenders with the money to farm out and among those who need it to keep

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their businesses afloat.

So much for Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin's prediction that loans could be turned around and money transferred to businesses' bank accounts the same day applications were received.

Yet because of the flood of pending loans, Congress is already having to find more money for subsidies to help businesses cover payroll. Only a tiny fraction of loans has been released.

Meantime state officials are slammed as they try to administer jobless benefits that Washington expanded and is paying for but having states try to manage.

Frustration with the virus package is going viral.

In Portland, Maine, a furloughed orthopedic medical assistant, Margaret Heath Carignan, called the unemployment office on a day set aside for people with surnames starting with A through H. And called and called. Altogether, she said, 291 times before she gave up.

Associated Press writers Amanda Seitz in Chicago, Matthew Perrone and Michael Biesecker in Washington and Ken Sweet in New York contributed to this report.

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

## 'Don't do silly things': Europe tries to stop Easter travel

By **GEIR MOULSON** and **JOE McDONALD** Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — European countries Saturday sought to keep people from traveling in sunny Easter weather and grappled with how and when to start loosening the weeks-long shutdowns of much of public life. The United States' death toll from the coronavirus closed in on Italy's, the highest in the world.

In Asia, South Korea announced plans to strap tracking wristbands on people who defy quarantine orders. The Japanese government appealed to the public nationwide to avoid bars, clubs and restaurants, broadening a measure announced earlier for seven urban areas, including Tokyo.

In Europe, beautiful weather across much of the continent provided an extra test of people's discipline over the long Easter weekend.

Italian authorities stepped up checks, particularly around the northern Lombardy region, which has borne the brunt of the COVID-19 outbreak. Roadblocks were set up on main thoroughfares in and out of Milan and along highway exits to discourage people from going on holiday trips.

"Don't do silly things," said Domenico Arcuri, Italy's special commissioner for the virus emergency. "Don't go out, continue to behave responsibly as you have done until today, use your head and your sense of responsibility."

He added: "The virus has not been defeated, but we are on the right path. We see the indicators but not the end of the tunnel. In fact, the end of the tunnel is still far away."

In Spain, which recorded its smallest day-to-day increase in deaths in nearly three weeks, or 510, police set up thousands of roadblocks around the country.

In Britain, police were urged to keep a close watch on gatherings in parks and at the seaside on what was set to be the hottest day of the year. Police seized a motorcycle from a rider making a nonessential journey in central England.

The pandemic's epicenter has long since shifted to Europe and the United States, which now has by far the largest number of confirmed cases, with more than half a million. As of Saturday morning, the U.S. death toll was just short of Italy's, which stood at about 18,850.

"I understand intellectually why it's happening," said Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York, where deaths rose Friday by 777, to more than 7,800. "It doesn't make it any easier to accept."

Still, New York officials said the number of people in intensive care dropped for the first time since mid-March and hospitalizations were slowing: 290 new patients in a single day, compared with daily increases of more than 1,000 last week. Cuomo said if that trend holds, New York might not need the overflow field

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hospitals that officials have been scrambling to build.

President Donald Trump said he will not lift U.S. restrictions until conditions are safe but announced an Opening Our Country task force and said, "I want to get it open as soon as possible."

The Easter holidays coincide with mounting hope in Europe of the beginning of a slow return to normal as rates of infection slow in many cases. At the same time, politicians and public health officials are warning that they must act cautiously or else the virus may flare up all over again.

Some countries are already planning small first steps out of the shutdown. Austria aims to reopen small shops on Tuesday.

Spain, with more than 16,300 dead, is preparing to start rolling back the strictest of its measures Monday, when authorities will allow workers in some nonessential industries to return to factories and construction sites after a nearly complete two-week stoppage.

Health Minister Salvador Illa said the government will distribute reusable masks at subway stations and other public transportation hubs.

"We think that with these measures we will prevent a jump in infections," Illa said.

Italy continued to include all nonessential manufacturing in an extension of its national lockdown until May 3. But Premier Giuseppe Conte held out hope that some industry could re-open earlier if conditions permit.

Arcuri said that the exit from the lockdown will include increased virus testing, the deployment of a voluntary contact-tracing app and mandatory blood tests as Italy seeks to set up a system of "immunity passports."

German officials are set to consider on Wednesday how to proceed after several weeks of restrictions on public life. Officials have sounded a cautious note, pointing to the risk of undoing the gains the country has made.

"A second shutdown would be hard to cope with, economically and socially," Winfried Kretschmann, the governor of Baden-Wuerttemberg state, told the daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

India extended its lockdown of the nation of 1.3 billion people by two more weeks.

But Iran reopened government offices and businesses outside the capital after a brief nationwide lockdown to help contain the worst outbreak in the Middle East. Businesses in Tehran will be allowed to reopen next weekend.

Meanwhile, in Africa, where infections are on the rise, there is fear that the poor health care system and a lack of help from developed nations facing their own crisis could lead the virus to spread unchecked.

In Congo, corruption has left the the population largely impoverished despite mineral wealth, and mistrust of authority is so entrenched that health workers have been killed during an Ebola outbreak that has not yet been fully defeated.

Worldwide, confirmed infections rose above 1.7 million, with over 100,000 deaths, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Close to 400,000 people have recovered.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. But for others, especially older adults and people with health problems, it can cause severe symptoms like pneumonia.

Britain on Saturday reported 917 more deaths, down from the peak of 980 recorded a day earlier. The country's overall death toll neared 10,000. At the same time, data suggest that the number of hospital admissions in Britain is leveling off.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the first major world leader confirmed to have COVID-19, continued to recover at a London hospital, where he was able to take short walks between periods of rest, according to his office.

In China, where the pandemic began in December, the number of new daily cases has declined dramatically, allowing the ruling Communist Party to reopen factories and stores.

China also is the biggest producer of surgical masks and other medical products and has increased output following the outbreak, but there have been complaints that shoddy or substandard goods are



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being sold abroad. Chinese regulators said that ventilators, masks and other supplies will now be subject to quality inspections.

McDonald reported from Beijing. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed to this report.

Follow AP news coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

## **Bodega owner: Coffee, food but no customers in 'ghost town'**

**By DEEPTI HAJELA and DAVID R. MARTIN Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — The shelves are stocked, the coffee percolating at Deli-licious delicatessen.

The only thing missing are the customers — the office workers who would come by for breakfast or lunch, the neighborhood residents stopping in for a quick purchase of a drink or a snack.

But in the days of coronavirus and sheltering in place, "it's been a ghost town," said Alex Batista, 28, who with his brother owns the bodega in the Glendale neighborhood of Queens.

These days, "you don't get that kind of crowd," he said. "Mostly we're just staying open, trying to help out the community."

They have had one consistent source of business, sadly, as the virus has ravaged the city, killing more people than were lost in the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks: "Funeral homes guys, they usually come in too a lot. They're busy, too, unfortunately," he said.

They've shortened the hours at the store, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and cut staff hours. When the occasional customer comes in, they maintain distance, bumping elbows across the sandwich counter instead of exchanging handshakes.

The Associated Press followed 10 New York City residents on Monday, April 6, as they tried to survive another day in the city assailed by the new coronavirus. For more, read 24 Hours: The Fight for New York.

The cat, a mainstay of many a New York City bodega, strolls around the store, no one around to bother it.

It's been hard for Batista, who with his brother grew up watching their father run a bodega after coming to New York City from the Dominican Republic as children and being raised in East New York.

"I'm the type of guy, I keep it busy," he said. Normally, he would be up at 5:30 a.m. to get to the store by 6:30 a.m. to open it up, and going to the gym, going to the wholesalers.

Now, "I go home, watching the news. You get a headache from the news, you see the same thing over and over."

He said the first week, sales dropped precipitously, around 60 percent. The week after, it picked up somewhat with deliveries, but not enough to make it up.

It can't keep going on like this, he said.

"Three or four months of this, and that's it, we have to shut down," he said.

For now, he's waiting, "just trying to get on with it, see what's going to come next," he said.

"Hopefully this is the worst it could get before it gets better."

## **The Latest: New York schools close for rest of academic year**

**By The Associated Press**

The Latest on the coronavirus pandemic. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death.

TOP OF THE HOUR

— Worldwide coronavirus death toll hits 100,000.

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- New York schools to close for remaining academic year.
- British PM Boris Johnson makes 'very good progress' in London hospital.
- Italy plans increased testing, voluntary contact tracing

**NEW YORK** — Mayor Bill de Blasio says public schools in New York City's 1.1 million-student district will be shuttered for the rest of the academic year.

He says online education will continue for students.

School buildings in the nation's largest public system have been closed since March 16. A massive effort to move instruction online has met mixed success. Many low-income students lack Wi-Fi and devices for connecting to their virtual classrooms.

Officials in other states, including Virginia and Pennsylvania, previously announced schools will be closed for the rest of the year.

**LONDON** — The British government is reporting 917 more deaths from the coronavirus, totaling 9,875 people in the U.K. who have died in the hospital after testing positive for COVID-19.

The increase was slightly lower than the daily high of 980 recorded in the previous 24-hour period. That increase was higher than the daily peaks recorded in Italy and Spain, the two European countries with the highest total number of coronavirus-related deaths.

Comparisons may not be precise. The U.K. deaths reported each day occurred over several days or even weeks, and the total only includes deaths in hospitals.

**MILAN** — Musicians from the La Scala Philharmonic Orchestra have collaborated on a video performance of Pachelbel's Canon to honor medical professionals fighting the coronavirus.

The video was released on social media Saturday ahead of a call for people to play instruments or the recording from their windows and balconies on Easter Sunday.

The orchestra chose Pachelbel's Canon for its "universality and for its wonderful architecture: a simple musical passage that repeats itself in increasingly complex variations."

It's easily recognizable and has been adapted by all genres of music, from jazz to rock to pop.

Marco Ferullo, who coordinated the project, says "It is in the DNA of people. In its simplicity, it becomes complex. It's an analogy of life, of relaunching, of hope."

**ROME** — The Shroud of Turin, a burial cloth some believed covered Jesus, will be on display through video streaming for the faithful worldwide.

Turin Archbishop Cesare Nosiglia says he had received thousands of requests from people young and old. The linen, which is kept behind bulletproof glass, will be viewed by streaming on the evening of Holy Saturday, the vigil of Easter. Pope Francis wrote to Nosiglia during Holy Week to express appreciation for the gesture.

Skeptics say the linen bearing the figure of a crucified man is a medieval forgery. The cloth belongs to the Vatican, which has allowed scientific testing.

**ROME** — Italy plans to increase testing for the coronavirus and use voluntary contact tracing whenever it exits from a lockdown that's currently in effect until at least May 3.

Italy's special commissioner for the virus emergency Domenico Arcuri told SKYTG 24 there will be mandatory blood tests to set up a system of "immunity passports."

The voluntary contact tracing mobile apps will allow people to know if they have come in contact with someone who is positive for the virus. Then they can be tested in an effort to limit further spread of the virus.

The blood tests identifying anti-bodies are still being developed. Virologists have cautioned the tests will not prove immunity but will give a snapshot whether a person has been in contact with the virus. If an anti-body test is positive, more testing would be needed to know if the virus is still active.

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The goal of public health officials is to determine how long immunity to the virus lasts.

**UNITED NATIONS** — United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is appealing to religious leaders of all faiths “to work for peace around the world and focus on our common battle to defeat COVID19.”

The U.N. chief says Christians will be celebrating Easter, Jews are marking Passover and Muslims will soon begin the holy month of Ramadan.

Guterres says the coronavirus pandemic, with its lockdowns and social distancing, has led to a “surreal world” of silent streets and worry “about our loved ones who are equally worried about us.”

The secretary-general urged people to remember the “vulnerable around the world” and health workers on the front lines.

Guterres says, “Together, we can and will defeat this virus – with cooperation, solidarity, and faith in our common humanity.”

**MOSCOW** — Russian President Vladimir Putin’s spokesman says the traditional parade marking the defeat of Nazi Germany will take place even if it doesn’t happen on the May 9 Victory Day holiday.

The Red Square parade featuring thousands of soldiers and an array of military equipment is a centerpiece of Russia’s most important secular holiday. There have been concerns about whether it would be held amid the restrictions imposed to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Dmitry Peskov says on state TV Saturday that “no one should have doubts that the Victory Day parade and the celebration of Victory Day will be obligatory. I don’t know whether it will be May 9 or later, but it will be obligatory.”

**LONDON** — The office of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson says he “continues to make very good progress” in a London hospital after contracting COVID-19.

The 55-year-old Johnson was diagnosed with COVID-19 more than two weeks ago, becoming the first world leader confirmed to have the illness. His office has said he’s taken “short walks” between periods of rest and had spoken to his doctors to thank them “for the incredible care he has received.”

His coronavirus symptoms at first were mild, including a cough and a fever. He was admitted to St. Thomas’ Hospital on Sunday after his condition worsened. He was transferred to the intensive care unit the following day where he received oxygen but was not put onto a ventilator.

He spent three nights there before moving back to a regular ward on Thursday night.

**DHAKA, Bangladesh** — Bangladesh recorded three more deaths and 58 more cases of infection from coronavirus.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque says over the last 24 hours, 954 samples have been tested and 54 cases confirmed positive.

The total number of deaths stood at 30, with 482 infections since the first case was reported on March 8.

Bangladesh has extended its nationwide lockdown until April 25 to keep its 160 million people at home and help contain the virus.

Security officials, including army soldiers, are enforcing social distancing rules.

**ROME** — Italy’s special commissioner for the virus emergency urged people to stay at home for Easter and Easter Monday, days when Italians customarily visit friends and relatives or take outings into the countryside.

Domenico Arcuri says, “The virus has not been defeated, but we are on the right path. We see the indicators, but not the end of the tunnel. In fact, the end of the tunnel is still far away.”

He says the next phase, a gradual reopening, would be complex and require discipline to prevent another wave of contagion. He says, “This dramatic emergency will only be behind us when an efficient and effective vaccine is discovered.”

This week also marks the 11th anniversary of the earthquake in L’Aquila that killed nearly 300 people.

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Arcuri noted in just four days, the virus claimed 3,226 lives.

**NICOSIA, Cyprus** — Leaders of rival sides in Cyprus renewed a pledge to strengthen cooperation because of the coronavirus.

Cyprus' government spokesman Kyriakos says next week it will deliver medication and protective equipment to Turkish Cypriots in the island nation's breakaway north.

The medication will include quantities of chloroquine, an anti-malaria drug that Cypriot authorities are prescribing to virus patients with mild symptoms who are convalescing at home.

Koushios says the delivery will be made on the request of Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci during a phone call with President Nicos Anastasiades. Both agreed Akinci to stay in contact and to bolster the work of a health committee made up of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

All nine crossing points along a 120-mile U.N. controlled buffer zone separating the north from the internationally recognized south were shut last month. U.N. spokesman Aleem Siddique says the peacekeeping force is ready to assist both sides in the delivery.

**NEW DELHI** — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended the nationwide lockdown by two more weeks to help contain the coronavirus.

New Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal agreed in a tweet with the decision. Modi held a meeting Saturday with at least 13 chief ministers of Indian states through video conferencing. The unprecedented order for lockdown is meant to keep India's 1.3 billion people at home and prevent the virus from surging and overwhelming the nation's already strained health care system.

The country's current three-week lockdown was to expire Tuesday. Authorities have reported 6,565 confirmed cases and 239 deaths.

**BEIJING** — Chinese regulators say ventilators, masks and other supplies being exported to fight the coronavirus will be subject to quality inspections following complaints that substandard goods were being sold abroad.

The customs agency says masks, ventilators, surgical gowns, goggles and other supplies will be treated as medical goods. That requires exporters to show they meet the quality standards of their destination market.

The agency gave no details, but the newspaper Beijing Daily says shipments would be inspected by a government agency before being approved for export.

China is the biggest producer of surgical masks and other medical products and has increased output following the coronavirus outbreak.

Regulators in Australia, the Netherlands and other countries have complained masks, virus test kits and other products were faulty or failed to meet quality standards.

**JOHANNESBURG** — Nigeria is the latest African nation to publicly confront China over the mistreatment of Africans in the Chinese city of Guangzhou.

Some African traders have reported being evicted or discriminated against amid coronavirus fears.

In an unusually open critique, the speaker of Nigeria's House of Representatives tweeted a video of him pressing the Chinese ambassador on the issue.

"It's almost undiplomatic the way I'm talking, but it's because I'm upset about what's going on," Femi Gbajabiamila says. "We take it very seriously," Ambassador Zhou Pingjian replies.

Nigerian Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama also summoned the ambassador to express "extreme concern" and call for an immediate government response. Kenya also has spoken out about the mistreatment.

Sierra Leone in a separate statement says African diplomats in Beijing have met with Chinese officials and "stated in very strong terms their concern and condemnation of the disturbing and humiliating experiences our citizens have been subjected to."

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**MADRID** — Spain has reported its lowest daily death count in nearly three weeks after 510 people died from the coronavirus between Friday and Saturday. That is down from a national high of 950 fatalities reported on April 2.

The country saw a slight uptick with 4,830 new cases reported, compared to 4,576 the day before.

Spain has confirmed 161,852 infections and 16,353 deaths since the beginning of the outbreak, making it and Italy the hardest hit countries in Europe. Over 59,000 Spaniards have recovered from COVID-19.

A month-long national lockdown has helped Spain slow the daily increase in the numbers of infected people from over 20% two weeks ago to 3%.

Given the harsh economic impact of the measures which threaten to hurl the country into recession, the government will start to roll back some controls on Monday when factory and construction workers will be allowed to return to work for the first time in two weeks. All other activities, except for leaving home for essential food and medicine, will still remain prohibited.

Roadblocks have been set up to prevent unauthorized travel during the Easter holidays.

**LONDON** — British Health Secretary Matt Hancock says it is too soon to determine whether the peak of coronavirus infections in the country has passed.

That's despite data suggesting that the rate of increase in the number of people being hospitalized with the COVID-19 disease is leveling out.

Hancock tells BBC radio that the "good news" is that the number of hospital admissions shows signs of flattening out. However, he says the government requires more evidence before it can start making changes to its lockdown measures.

Britain has been in lockdown for nearly three weeks and the government is expected to extend the restrictions in coming days.

On Friday, the government said a total of 8,958 people had died in hospital after testing positive for the coronavirus, up 980 from the previous day. That daily increase was bigger than anything witnessed in Italy and Spain, the two European countries with the greatest number of coronavirus-linked fatalities.

Hancock also says that 19 front-line workers in the National Health Service have died after contracting the virus.

**TOKYO** — Japan has broadened a request for people to stay away from bars, clubs and restaurants across the whole country.

The measure previously covered seven urban areas, including Tokyo.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe says at a meeting of the national coronavirus task force that "many cases of infections have been confirmed at places where people are going out at night, and that spread is nationwide."

Japan's state of emergency, issued April 7, carries no penalties but asks people to stay home as much as possible.

Abe reiterated his plea for companies to allow people to work from home, stressing that commuter train crowds had thinned, but more was needed. Although department stores and movie theaters have closed, some retail chains are still open.

Japan has about 6,000 coronavirus cases and about 100 deaths.

**SEOUL**, South Korea — In a controversial step, South Korea's government says it will strap electronic wristbands on people who defy self-quarantine orders as it tightens monitoring to slow the spread of the new coronavirus.

Senior Health Ministry official Yoon Tae-ho acknowledged the privacy and civil liberty concerns surrounding the bands, which will be enforced through police and local administrative officials after two weeks of preparation and manufacturing.

But he says authorities need more effective monitoring tools because the number of people placed under self-quarantine has ballooned after the country began enforcing 14-day quarantines on all passengers arriving from abroad on April 1 amid worsening outbreaks in Europe and the United States.

Lee Beom-seok, an official from the Ministry of the Interior and Safety, admitted that the legal grounds for forcing people to wear the wristbands were "insufficient" and police and local officials will offer consent forms for the devices while investigating those who were caught breaking quarantine.

Under the country's recently strengthened laws on infectious diseases, people can face up to a year in prison or fined as much as \$8,200 for breaking quarantine orders. Lee says those who agree to wear the wristbands could be possibly considered for lighter punishment.

Follow AP news coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## Crime drops around the world as COVID-19 keeps people inside

By STEFANIE DAZIO, FRANKLIN BRICENO and MICHAEL TARM Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The coronavirus pandemic that has crippled big-box retailers and mom and pop shops worldwide may be making a dent in illicit business, too.

In Chicago, one of America's most violent cities, drug arrests have plummeted 42% in the weeks since the city shut down, compared with the same period last year. Part of that decrease, some criminal lawyers say, is that drug dealers have no choice but to wait out the economic slump.

"The feedback I'm getting is that they aren't able to move, to sell anything anywhere," said Joseph Lopez, a criminal lawyer in Chicago who represents reputed drug dealers.

Overall, Chicago's crime declined 10% after the pandemic struck, a trend playing out globally as cities report stunning crime drops in the weeks since measures were put into place to slow the spread of the virus. Even among regions that have the highest levels of violence outside a war zone, fewer people are being killed and fewer robberies are taking place.

Still, law enforcement officials worry about a surge of unreported domestic violence, and what happens when restrictions lift — or go on too long.

It's rare for a city to see a double-digit drop in crime, even over a much longer period. During New York City's 1990s crime decline, one of the biggest turnarounds in American history, crime dropped about 40% over three years. That makes the drop-offs occurring now — in a period of just a couple of weeks — even more seismic.

Across Latin America, crime is down to levels unseen in decades.

"Killings are down, and the gangsters aren't harassing so much," Eduardo Perdomo, a 47-year-old construction worker, said while getting off a bus in San Salvador. "I think they're afraid of catching the virus, and they aren't going out."

El Salvador reported an average of two killings a day last month, down from a peak of 600 a day a few years ago.

Much of the decrease has taken place because of tougher security policies and gang truces. But the imposition of near-total limits on movement is likely driving it down further, according to analysts and national statistics.

In Peru, where crime levels fell 84% last month, Lima mortician Raúl González usually has as many as 15 bodies a day — many are homicide victims. This week he napped on a bench after six hours without a client.

"There are almost no killings or car accidents these days," González said.

In South Africa, police reported a stunning decline during their first week of lockdown measures. Police Minister Bheki Cele said reported rapes were down from 700 to 101 over the same period last year. Serious assault cases plummeted from 2,673 to 456, and murders fell from 326 to 94.

The U.S. virus epicenter in New York saw major crimes — murder, rape, robbery, burglary, assault,

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grand larceny and car theft — decrease by 12% from February to March. In Los Angeles, 2020 key crimes statistics were consistent with last year's figures until the week of March 15, when they dropped by 30%.

"There's a lot fewer opportunities for criminals to take advantage of," said Joe Giacalone, a former New York Police Department sergeant who now teaches at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "Most burglars, they wait for you to leave the house."

Policing has also changed in the face of the pandemic. Officers are increasingly getting sick; the NYPD, the country's largest department with more than 36,000 officers, has more than 7,000 officers out and more than 2,000 diagnosed with COVID-19.

And U.S. authorities say they're issuing citations instead of making low-level arrests, policing social distancing and putting detectives into patrol cars — which could, in turn, bring down crime rates.

While departments are unlikely to announce they've backed off policing certain crimes, "that's going to be the case," said Bowling Green State University criminologist Philip Stinson.

"In many respects, over the next weeks, they're really in survival mode," he said.

But while narcotics arrests are down, drug sales continue, with dealers likely forced to change their strategies, said Rodney Phillips, a former gang member in Chicago who now works as a conflict mediator in the city.

"These guys already face poverty and death in these areas," he said. "They might be selling more online now. But they aren't going to give up just because of the coronavirus."

A Maryland man accused of operating a Darknet store selling prescription opioids boasted on his vendor page: "Even with Corona Virus the shop is running at full speed."

He told an undercover FBI agent he was just waiting for a shipment because "this corona virus (sic) is (expletive) up inventory," according to court documents.

Other crimes, however, may be fueled by shutdown orders.

Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo said the city's aggravated assaults were up 10% in the last three weeks, and half of those were domestic violence, a significantly higher proportion than normal. Calls to Missouri's child abuse and neglect hotline dropped by half as the virus first struck the state. Advocates said the calls aren't made because the kids aren't in school.

And Chicago did see a spike in gun violence this week, according to the Chicago Sun-Times, which reported 60 shootings — 19 fatal — between Sunday and Thursday.

San Jose, California, Police Chief Eddie Garcia hopes the downward trend will continue after the pandemic is over. But his officers are preparing for the worst.

"The longer we're in a lockdown," he said, "the more we're playing with fire."

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. But for others, especially older adults and people with health problems, it can cause severe symptoms like pneumonia. More than 1.5 million cases have been diagnosed worldwide.

Dazio reported from Los Angeles, Briceno from Lima. Contributing to this report were Associated Press writers Marcos Aleman in San Salvador, Jake Bleiberg in Dallas, Don Babwin in Chicago, Michael R. Sisak in New York, Don Thompson in Sacramento, Claudia Lauer in Philadelphia, Colleen Long in Washington, and Gerald Imray in Cape Town.

## Politics mixes with science as states turn to virus models

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

State leaders are relying on a hodgepodge of statistical models with wide-ranging numbers to guide their paths through the deadly coronavirus emergency and make critical decisions, such as shutting down businesses and filling their inventory of medical supplies.

During hurricane season, coastal states can trust the same set of computer models to warn of a storm's track. During this pandemic, there is no uniform consensus to predict the toll and direction of the virus that is tearing through communities around the country.

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With little agreed-upon information, governors and local officials are basically creating do-it-yourself sources of information with their own officials and universities.

The models have resulted in conflict in several locations.

About 75 protesters on Thursday called on Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine to reopen businesses and questioned the models used by his health director to continue the state's shelter-at-home order. Critics have denounced an Iowa Health Department a matrix as arbitrarily devised and being used by the governor to rationalize her decision to not issue a stay-at-home order.

The federal government and many states rely on a University of Washington model that's the closest thing to a benchmark but it is so imprecise that the latest projection for the death toll had a range of more than 100,000. In Washington D.C., health officials took the unusual step of publicly announcing that they didn't trust the University of Washington's updated model and embraced far more pessimistic predictions from a model created by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania.

Some states, including Alaska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Louisiana, are incorporating the work of local researchers and other experts to fine-tune their models.

Some elected officials have cited the most dire forecasts in issuing stay-at-home orders. Others have seized on more optimistic figures from their models to justify their calls to loosen restrictions.

"We know now that a lot of the models out there are not accurate," Missouri Gov. Mike Parso said in describing why he waited until Monday to issue his stay-at-home order.

President Donald Trump's handling of the pandemic could well decide whether he is reelected, and the models the White House relies on for forecasting will be an issue if they miss the mark.

Unlike with the National Hurricane Center, the federal government doesn't have a national clearinghouse for virus models. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hasn't publicly released any coronavirus models of its own. The Trump administration favors the University of Washington model, but the CDC hasn't identified a modeling consensus for states to follow.

Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, said some public officials tend to act according to what "politically plays the best" instead of "following the science."

"It's good to have optimistic models, but I prefer to be more of a pessimist when you don't know what's going," Benjamin said.

States worry about what models show because they believed there were more ventilators and other needed equipment stockpiled by the federal government than what actually exists, said Craig Fugate, who was head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency under President Barack Obama. Fugate said states are having difficulty planning and coping because the CDC, which is supposed to lead the pandemic response for the federal government, seems to be disappearing.

"When you do not hear from the CDC directly and you have all these other filters (of information), we're losing the message," Fugate told The Associated Press.

White House coronavirus task force members Drs. Deborah Birx and Anthony Fauci have delved into modeling at numerous briefings. Birx has said the task force has consulted a range of outside models to make the case for the need for social distancing to flatten the curve.

The federal government is trying to amass and process a trove of data on testing, disease levels, hospital capacity and other factors that could help improve modeling and maybe even focus down to the community level. It's unclear how far the effort has gotten, particularly given all the other challenges that governments at all levels are facing dealing with the outbreak.

The model from the University of Washington, the one most frequently cited at White House press briefings, predicts daily deaths in the U.S. have peaked and will decline through the summer. The updated model on Friday shows that 26,487 to 155,315 Americans will die in a first wave stretching into the summer. A few days earlier, the same model had projected up to 136,401 deaths.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards, a Democrat whose state has had one of the deadliest outbreaks of COVID-19, has said his administration is doing its own modeling. It's a collaboration between the state health department, Louisiana State University, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, a medical system



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and Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Edwards called it “heartening” to see the University of Washington’s updated model forecasting a lower death toll. But he said, “the numbers in that particular model don’t match up so well with what we’ve already experienced, so we’re trying to reconcile the assumptions that underlie that model with the assumptions that underlie ours.”

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has used his daily press briefings to explain how models have helped his administration forecast the pandemic’s impact on the Empire State. The Democrat has relied on projections from McKinsey & Company and Weill-Cornell medical center and consulted the World Health Organization.

But he has described the range of estimates as “maddening” and concedes that projections of an apex could change every day.

Natalie Dean, an assistant professor of biostatistics at the University of Florida’s College of Medicine, has seen an overreliance on modeling and confusion about the role it should play in responding to a pandemic. She said some of the most valuable information can be anecdotal, gleaned from people working on the front lines of the response.

“Models need to input parameters. You need to input a lot of assumptions about what you think is happening, and there’s still a lot we don’t know. We have to view numbers with skepticism,” said Dean, who is working with other experts on COVID-19 vaccine strategies.

Kunzelman reported from Silver Spring, Maryland. Associated Press reporters Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar in Washington; Seth Borenstein in Kensington, Maryland; Steve Karnowski in Minneapolis; Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Meg Kinnard in Columbia, South Carolina; David Lieb in Jefferson City, Missouri; Ryan Foley in Iowa City, Iowa; Michael Rubinkam in northeastern Pennsylvania; Ashraf Khalil in Washington; and Marina Villeneuve in Albany, New York; contributed to this report.

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## **Congo, weary from Ebola, must also battle the coronavirus**

**By CARLEY PETESCH and AL-HADJI KUDRA MALIRO Associated Press**

BENI, Congo (AP) — Congo has been battling an Ebola outbreak that has killed thousands of people for more than 18 months, and now it must also face a new scourge: the coronavirus pandemic.

Ebola has left those living in the country’s east weary and fearful, and, just as they were preparing to declare an end to the outbreak, a new case popped up. Now, they will now have to manage both threats at once.

The new virus has overwhelmed some of the world’s best hospital systems in Europe and ripped through communities in New York. In Congo, it could spread unchecked in a country that has endured decades of conflict, where corruption has left the the population largely impoverished despite mineral wealth, and where mistrust of authority is so entrenched that health workers have been killed during the Ebola outbreak. It’s also unclear how forthcoming international support will be at a time when the whole world is battling the coronavirus.

“It all feels like one big storm,” said Martine Milonde, a Congolese community mobilizer who works with the aid group World Vision in Beni, which has been the epicenter of the Ebola outbreak. “Truly, this is a crisis within a crisis within a crisis. The community suffers from insecurity, and suffered under Ebola, and now may have to face COVID-19.”

In early March, an Ebola patient whom many hoped would be the last was discharged, and the outbreak was supposed to be officially declared over Sunday. But the World Health Organization on Friday announced a new case in Beni.

The outbreak has claimed more than 2,260 lives since August 2018 — the second largest the world has ever seen, after the 2014-2016 outbreak in West Africa.

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Still, there is some hope: Many of the tools used to fight Ebola — hand-washing and social distancing chief among them — are also key to combating the coronavirus.

In Beni, which has reported two cases of the new coronavirus, “the communities here hold onto some hope that they are going to overcome this pandemic the way they had been working to overcome Ebola,” said Milonde. “They are counting on the caution, vigilance and hygiene practices that they have been performing to save their families.”

Community advocates in Beni — who walk around with megaphones to talk about Ebola — have started to include warnings about the coronavirus.

Messages explaining COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, and where to go if sick are being spread on radio stations, through text message blasts and by religious leaders. Schools, churches and mosques are already armed with hand-washing kits.

Beni’s mayor, Nyonyi Bwanakawa, says many of the measures will be familiar — but the recommendations to stay home are more stringent than what is required for Ebola, and officials are prepared to take “dramatic measures” if people resist.

Unlike Ebola, which kills about half of the people it infects, the new coronavirus causes mostly mild or moderate symptoms in about 80% of people. Spreading Ebola typically requires an exchange of bodily fluids, and people have often been infected when caring for loved ones or mourning in traditional funerals that involve close contact with the body. In contrast, the new coronavirus is far more contagious and mostly spread by people coughing or sneezing, including those with only mild flu-like symptoms.

That means the task of controlling the virus’ spread in Congo will be massive: The government has only limited control in parts of the vast country, there are also some dense population centers with poor sanitation and infrastructure, and the country’s mineral-rich east is beset by violence from various armed groups.

Dr. Michel Yao, program manager for emergency response at the WHO’s Africa office, said implementing robust testing and contact tracing will be key. But getting the community fully involved in fighting the disease might be even more important.

That means not just speaking at communities, “but giving them responsibility and roles to play.”

Initially, efforts to control Ebola were met with resistance, one of the major contributors to its spread. Amid the insecurity in the country’s east, superstitions arose, and some clinics to treat Ebola patients were attacked and health workers killed.

The capital, Kinshasa, a tightly packed city of 14 million located on the country’s western border, remains another major worry, said Yao, who is based at WHO’s African headquarters in the neighboring Republic of Congo.

“If it reaches this place, it would be a big disaster,” he said.

“Africa is only partly ready,” said Yao. “If we stick to sporadic cases, this can be managed.”

But many more developed countries have seen cases surge, and a sizable outbreak in Congo could easily overwhelm its hospital system. Advanced equipment to deal with severe respiratory illness, which the coronavirus can cause, is lacking: The Health Ministry says there are about 65 ventilators — all in Kinshasa — and 20 more on order for a country of more than 80 million people.

There have been 215 confirmed cases of the new coronavirus in Congo, with 20 deaths, the ministry said Friday.

And health workers will also need to find a way to continue to treat people infected with the many other diseases that regularly torment the population. Over the past year, for instance, a measles outbreak killed more than 6,000 people in Congo.

In addition, because donor countries are themselves dealing with outbreaks, help from abroad could be less forthcoming. The key, Yao said, is training more people locally to care for the ill.

The challenge will be rallying again after many months of trying to contain Ebola.

“The job wasn’t yet finished, and we have to deal with another emergency,” Yao said.

Katungo Methya, 53, who volunteers for the Red Cross in Beni, expressed a weariness many feel.

“It’s so upsetting to have this second disease. We lost so many people through Ebola, a lot of deaths, now corona,” she said. “Everyone is really afraid.”

Petesch reported from Dakar, Senegal. AP medical writer Maria Cheng in London contributed from London.

## Coronavirus ravages storied New Orleans Mardi Gras group

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — On Fat Tuesday, 51-year-old Cornell Charles was taking part in a storied New Orleans Mardi Gras tradition central to the city's African American community — driving a car in the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club's parade.

A month later his wife of three decades was watching him take his last breath, a victim of the coronavirus epidemic raging through the city.

"I talked to him. I told him how much I was going to miss him," said his wife, Nicole, describing those last minutes on March 24. "He literally took his last breath in front of my face and that was it."

In a city ravaged by the coronavirus outbreak, members of the Zulu krewe, one of the groups that sponsor Mardi Gras parades and balls, have paid a heavy price. Four of the fraternal organization's members have died from coronavirus-related complications, said Zulu President Elroy A. James. Two others have also died since the pandemic began, though it's not known if their deaths were caused by the virus, he said.

An additional 20 have tested positive. Some are self-quarantining at home, some were hospitalized and released, while others are still hospitalized, James said.

James spends his days on the phone, texting with and calling board members and officers of the roughly 800-member Zulu organization.

"Members are calling every day checking on each other: 'How's this member doing? How's this family member doing?'" he said.

It's also taken a financial toll. Many Zulu members work in the hospitality sector and are out of work, James said, a widespread problem in a city with an economy closely tied to the restaurants, bars and nightclubs now largely shuttered due to the statewide stay-at-home order.

"Zulu is really a microcosm of the city of New Orleans," said state Sen. Troy Carter, a longtime Zulu member. "We're made up of every social and economic background that you can imagine. Our members come from all different walks of life."

The predominantly African American club is in some ways a reflection of how the disease has affected the black community in Louisiana. More than 70 percent of the state's coronavirus patients who have died are black, according to state data released this week.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild symptoms like fever and a cough that resolve in two to three weeks. But for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, more severe symptoms can occur, including pneumonia, that can lead to death.

For over a century Zulu members have paraded for Mardi Gras in their distinctive grass skirts and black face inspired by a 1909 vaudeville skit, according to a history compiled for the group's 100-year anniversary in 2009. It was not just a Mardi Gras parade group but one of the benevolent societies that played an important role in African American history by providing life insurance or funeral costs to its dues-paying members.

Over the decades Zulu Mardi Gras parades have featured ever-larger floats, with costumed float riders tossing out beads and trinkets, including the group's hand-decorated coconuts, among the event's most-coveted throws. The most famous man to reign as Zulu king was Louis Armstrong in 1949. Members are also elected to be one of the group's coveted characters, such as Mr. Big Stuff or The Big Shot.

"Nobody has more fun than Zulu," said Mardi Gras historian, Arthur Hardy. But, he emphasized, there's a lot more to the group than the parade. Zulu is known for its philanthropic works all year round, including the Junior Zulu program that reaches out to disadvantaged children and an annual Christmas bike giveaway.

That spirit of service is what drew Charles, said his wife, Nicole.

"The brotherhood, what they have given to the community. He loved that. My husband loved parades, so that was definitely an attraction, but he liked what he saw outside of the fun part of it," she said.

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Charles started work every day by 3 a.m. as a courier delivering medication to hospitals and medical facilities. But his real passion, his wife said, was coaching young people. The football, baseball and basketball practices and games kept "Dickey" as he was often called, busy, but the father of two daughters always made time for family, his wife said.

She has been amazed at the outpouring of support from people telling her how much her husband meant to them. His likely would have been a big funeral with one of the jazz parades often seen in New Orleans funerals, but social distancing guidelines meant only a handful of people could be there.

Nicole hopes the coronavirus risk will have receded by June 23 — his birthday — so that family and friends can come together for the memorial service he deserves.

Lost opportunities to come together one last time to honor members is being felt keenly. Carter, the state senator, said a Zulu member's service in normal times might include a performance by the organization's gospel choir, a proclamation read by the group's president and a musical procession that begins on a somber note and ends with a "full fledged energetic celebration of life."

"I'm not sure if anyone else in the world does it the way New Orleans does," he said.

The organization plans a large memorial service in the safer future, complete with a "grand second-line," said James, the group's president, referring to a parade during which onlookers fall in behind the band and mourners, forming a "second line."

The group has weathered hard times before. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, at least 10 members died, many members' homes were flooded and the group's headquarters on Broad Street was swamped with water. But come Mardi Gras 2006 they paraded, believing it was an important part of the city's rebuilding.

James said he's confident that Zulu will play a role in the city's post-coronavirus resurgence.

"We also need to show the world that the city of New Orleans will return after this pandemic," he said.

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

## Every 15 seconds: Outbreak overwhelms NYC's emergency system

By MICHAEL R. SISK and TOM HAYS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The coronavirus crisis is taxing New York City's 911 system like never before.

Operators pick up a new call every 15.5 seconds. Panicked voices tell of loved ones in declining health. There are multitudes of cardiac arrests and respiratory failures and others who call needing reassurance that a mere sneeze isn't a sign they've been infected.

The system is so overwhelmed, the city has started sending text and tweet alerts urging people to only call 911 "for life-threatening emergencies."

As the city staggered through its deadliest week of the pandemic, its emergency response system and army of operators, dispatchers and ambulance crews were pushed to the brink.

The Fire Department said it has averaged more than 5,500 ambulance requests each day — about 40% higher than usual, eclipsing the total call volume on Sept. 11, 2001.

"When you hang up with one call, another one pops in," said 911 operator Monique Brown. "There's no time for a minute's rest."

"It's back to back, nonstop," said dispatcher Virginia Creary.

"We just pick up call after call after call," said paramedic Ravi Kailayanathan.

Between the torrent of calls and so many requiring immediate intervention, like IVs and breathing tubes, it's taking longer for help to arrive.

The Fire Department said response times for the most serious calls have been averaging more than 10 minutes, up from about 6½ to 7 minutes under normal circumstances. People with mild symptoms or a minor injury could wait hours.

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## 'NEW YORK CITY 911'

Operators begin each 911 call in the nation's largest city with the same question: "Do you need police, fire or medical?" Then they evaluate the call's urgency, prioritizing them on the fly.

Brown and her colleagues often work mandatory 16-hour shifts, crammed into Bronx and Brooklyn call centers behind screens that flash call details.

The fevers and coughing that crowded the city's 911 lines early in the crisis have given way to frantic calls about grave illnesses. Creary said she has noticed cardiac arrest calls spike. Some people call back within hours to report symptoms suddenly worsening.

The Fire Department said it is seeing more than 300 cardiac arrest calls per day, with well over 200 of those patients dying. A year ago, the department averaged 64 calls for cardiac arrest per day.

"The worst thing is taking a call and hearing somebody screaming because their loved one has stopped breathing or they're in distress and they don't know what to do," said Creary, who's also an EMT. "You just feel utterly helpless."

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. But for others, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause severe symptoms like pneumonia.

## 'WE CANNOT HANDLE THIS'

After the 911 operator, medical dispatchers like Creary take charge. They find an ambulance to respond and act as a liaison between crews in the field and the hospitals.

Hospitals swamped by the surge of patients sometimes make ambulances line up outside, with crews waiting upward of 40 minutes to hand over a patient.

Hospitals have told Creary twice in recent days to divert ambulances elsewhere, she said. A nurse she alerted about an impending arrival pleaded: "We cannot handle this. We have no beds. We have no oxygen. We have no equipment. They cannot come here."

Nearly a quarter of the city's emergency medical services workers have been out sick, the Fire Department said. On one day last week, 3,000 members of the Fire Department were sidelined, including about 950 of the city's 4,300 EMS workers.

The federal government sent 250 ambulances and 500 EMTs last week to supplement the city's fleet. The Fire Department has deployed seven rapid-response vehicles, operated by firefighters, to the Bronx to provide care until an ambulance arrives.

"It's mentally taxing," said Creary, who copes with the stress at home by playing trumpet and learning bagpipes. "We're short-staffed. We're short ambulances. Everybody's basically overwhelmed."

## 'IT'S JUST HEARTBREAKING'

Kailayanathan, a paramedic responding to more than a dozen calls each day, stepped off his ambulance tired, hungry and emotionally drained after another 16-hour day.

Nearly every patient he saw on a recent 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. shift needed to be hospitalized and hooked up to a ventilator. Some patients have had to be resuscitated in the back of the ambulance.

"It's just heartbreaking," Kailayanathan said.

The state has instituted a triage protocol that instructs ambulance crews to question patients from a distance to screen for symptoms before initiating an examination with protective gear.

Kailayanathan's assignment varies depending on where the dispatch system detects a surge in calls. Two weeks ago, he was in Queens, the hardest-hit borough. Last week, he was shuttling patients to Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx.

The daughter of an elderly woman Kailayanathan treated pleaded to ride with her, but to curb the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, family members are no longer allowed in ambulances and hospitals have banned visitors.

"There's a good chance that the daughter is not going to see her mother again," he said. "That's just re-

ally, really draining.”

## ‘NO WAY TO AVOID IT’

At least 688 EMS workers and other Fire Department employees have tested positive for the coronavirus. A paramedic, Christell Cadet, has been in intensive care for three weeks. Throughout the city’s emergency response system, workers fear they’ll be next.

Kailayanathan said he has been taking steps to avoid introducing the virus into his body.

There is no sink in the ambulance to wash hands, so he mainly uses hand sanitizer. After his last run, he showers twice — at work and again at home. Then he has his first meal since 6 a.m.

Kailayanathan worries about infecting his elderly parents. Creary is looking into a temporary living arrangement so she doesn’t bring the disease home to her elderly mother.

The union for 911 operators is demanding that the Police Department, which runs the call centers, space workers out to protect their health. Instead of social distancing, they’re “sitting on top of each other,” said Alma Roper, of District Council 37’s Local 1549.

The NYPD said it is doing “all it can to promote social distancing” at call centers, including seating operators at every other call-taking position, cleaning workspaces at least twice per shift and, starting Saturday, screening workers’ body temperatures and directing them to see a doctor if it’s higher than 100.4 degrees (38 degrees Celsius).

“For us, it’s not an if, it’s a when. When are these symptoms going to start? When are we going to start getting sick?” Creary said. “Because there’s no way to avoid it.”

Follow Michael Sisak at [twitter.com/mikesisak](https://twitter.com/mikesisak) and Tom Hays at [twitter.com/aptomhays](https://twitter.com/aptomhays). Follow AP news coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

## He led a neo-Nazi group linked to bomb plots. He was 13.

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and JARI TANNER Associated Press

HELSINKI, Finland (AP) — He called himself “Commander” online. He was a leader of an international neo-Nazi group linked to plots to attack a Las Vegas synagogue and detonate a car bomb at a major U.S. news network.

He was 13 years old.

The boy who led Feuerkrieg Division lived in Estonia and apparently cut ties with the group after authorities in that tiny Baltic state confronted him earlier this year, according to police and an Estonian newspaper report.

Harrys Puusepp, spokesman for the Estonian Internal Security Service, told The Associated Press on Thursday that the police agency “intervened in early January because of a suspicion of danger” and “suspended this person’s activities in” Feuerkrieg Division.

“As the case dealt with a child under the age of 14, this person cannot be prosecuted under the criminal law and instead other legal methods must be used to eliminate the risk. Cooperation between several authorities, and especially parents, is important to steer a child away from violent extremism,” said Puusepp, who didn’t specify the child’s age or elaborate on the case.

The police spokesman didn’t identify the child as a group leader, but leaked archives of Feuerkrieg Division members’ online chats show “Commander” referred to himself as the founder of the group and alluded to being from Saaremaa, Estonia’s largest island.

A report published Wednesday by the weekly Estonian newspaper Eesti Ekspress said Estonian security officials had investigated a case involving a 13-year-old boy who allegedly was running Feuerkrieg Division operations out of a small town in the country. The newspaper said the group has a “decentralized structure,” and the Estonian teen cannot be considered the organization’s actual leader but was certainly one of its key figures.

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The Anti-Defamation League has described Feuerkrieg Division as a group that advocates for a race war and promotes some of the most extreme views of the white supremacist movement. Formed in 2018, it had roughly 30 members who conducted most of their activities over the internet, the ADL said.

Oren Segal, vice president of the ADL's Center on Extremism, said children aren't just a target audience for online forums that glorify white supremacy and violence. They also maintain such sites, captivated by their ability to join or influence an international movement from a home computer, he said.

"That young kids are getting that sense of belonging from a hate movement is more common than most people realize and very disturbing. But accessing a world of hate online today is as easy as it was tuning into Saturday morning cartoons on television," Segal said in a text message.

Feuerkrieg Division members communicated over the Wire online platform. The FBI used confidential sources to infiltrate the group's encrypted chats, according to federal court records.

An FBI joint terrorism task force in Las Vegas began investigating 24-year-old Conor Climo in April 2019 after learning he was communicating over Wire with Feuerkrieg Division members, a court filing says. Climo told an FBI source about plans to firebomb a synagogue or attack a local ADL office, authorities said. Climo awaits his sentencing after pleading guilty in February to felony possession of an unregistered firearm.

Another man linked to Feuerkrieg Division, U.S. Army soldier Jarrett William Smith, pleaded guilty in February to separate charges that he provided information about explosives to an FBI undercover agent while stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas, last year. An FBI affidavit said Smith, 24, talked about targeting an unidentified news organization with a car bomb. CNN reported that it was the target.

The ADL said Smith was associated with Feuerkrieg Division at the time of his arrest. The group expressed its "consternation" about Smith's arrest in an expletive-laden post on its public Telegram channel, the ADL reported.

In March, a left-leaning website called Unicorn Riot published eight months of leaked chats by Feuerkrieg Division members. After "Commander" disappeared from the group's chat room in January, other members discussed whether he had been detained or arrested and speculated that his electronic devices had been compromised, the website said.

The messages don't indicate that other Feuerkrieg Division members knew the group leader was 13, according to Segal, who said the ADL also independently obtained the group's chat archives.

Based on a comment the boy posted on Wire, ADL linked "Commander" to the gaming platform Steam. The Steam account lists his location as a village in Estonia and his URL as "HeilHitler8814," Segal said.

Feuerkrieg Division has been part of a growing wing of the white supremacist movement that embraces "accelerationism," a fringe philosophy that promotes mass violence to fuel society's collapse. The man who recently pleaded guilty to attacking two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, and killing 51 people last year devoted a section of his manifesto to the concept of accelerationism.

The Estonian security police's bureau chief, Alar Ridamae, said parents, friends and teachers can help authorities protect children from internet-fueled extremism.

"Unfortunately, in practice there are cases where parents themselves have bought extremist literature for their children, which contributes to radicalization," Ridamae said in a statement provided to AP and Estonian media on Thursday.

Estonia, a former Soviet republic that regained its independence in 1991, is among Europe's most technologically advanced nations. Estonia has paid relatively little attention to homegrown extremism. But the case of the right-wing extremist Anders Breivik, who killed 77 people in a 2011 massacre in Norway, served as a major wake-up call for security officials in the Baltic nation of 1.3 million.

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Kunzelman reported from Silver Spring, Maryland.

## Italy begins to grapple with how to ease virus restrictions

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

SOAVE, Italy (AP) — With warmer weather beckoning, Italians are straining against a strict lockdown to halt the coronavirus that is just now showing signs of ebbing at the end of five weeks of mass isolation.

Italy was the first Western democracy to be hit by the virus, and it has suffered the most deaths of any nation: nearly 19,000. Now it is likely to set an example of how to lift broad restrictions that have imposed the harshest peacetime limits on personal freedom and shut down all nonessential industry.

Right now, schools are closed and children are not permitted to play in parks. Walks outdoors are limited to a distance of 200 meters (yards) and any excursion not strictly a matter of necessity risks hefty fines.

The official line is patience with measures that have shown success in slowing the virus spread, until there is a clear decline in the number of new cases. Still, officials have begun grappling with the question of how to manage social distancing on mass transit, re-open ordinary commerce and relaunch manufacturing without risking another peak.

The so-called Phase II is being described as a cautious reopening, as society continues to live alongside the virus until a vaccine can be developed, perhaps in 12 to 18 months.

"We obviously don't want to delude ourselves that everything will change," Premier Giuseppe Conte told Italians this week.

On Friday, Conte extended the nationwide lockdown through May 3. That includes all nonessential industry, after which, "I hope we can start again with caution and gradually — but restart," he said.

A technical committee advising the government is working to expand testing for COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, to get a better picture of how widespread it is in Italy before measures can be eased. Preparations are also underway to launch a mobile app that will allow people to know if they have been near anyone who is positive, something that is expected to take at least a month.

"With this you can allow people to have more freedom of movement," said Walter Ricciardi, a public health expert and member of the World Health Organization board advising the Italian government.

The technology for the app already exists but authorities were working on technical details on how to deploy it.

Experts in Italy are coordinating with their European partners so the tracking can be applied across borders, which have been de facto closed by the virus. The goal is to establish a common technology, which could help in re-establishing freedom of movement between EU nations.

Using the app would be voluntary for anyone wanting to know whether they have come into contact with an infected person that they would have no other way of identifying. Any contacts would be tested, and if positive treated, according to the WHO initiative: trace, test and treat.

Advocates insist that anonymity would be protected and that no personal data would be at risk, likening the app to other widely used applications like Google Maps or TripAdvisor, which help users identify specific data.

Italy's hardest hit regions in the north are also floating proposals for immunity certificates based on antibody blood tests, which have not yet proved reliable. Virus experts caution that such documents are a long way off.

"The blood test only tells us if the person has been in contact with the virus," not if the subject is actually immune, said Andrea Crisanti, an expert at the University of Padova who is helping to coordinate the coronavirus response in the northeastern region of Veneto. Significantly, he said, the tests also don't show whether antibodies are active, their quantity or how long they might last.

"On a social level, the blood test would allow us to understand to what extent the virus has spread in various sectors of the population and geographical areas, where we could then test to see if the virus is active," Crisanti said. "We are a very long way from immunity passports."

Some regions already require facial masks, though not necessarily surgical-grade ones, which remain in short supply. Lombardy, which has borne the brunt of the epidemic, has made masks mandatory for anyone venturing outside their home — but due to the continuing shortage, scarves can be used. Veneto



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has distributed a basic mask to most households, requiring them to be used in supermarkets and on public transportation.

The mayor of Milan, Europe's first major metropolis to close because of the virus, is telling citizens that any re-opening could be "stop-and-go," and is discussing strategies with other European mayors.

Giuseppe Sala said Milan officials are studying how to guarantee social distancing when more people begin to access public spaces, from public transportation to cinemas. Sala is considering having younger city employees return to work first, since they have generally proven less susceptible to the virus. Remote working, where possible, will continue to be encouraged.

"Until we have a vaccine, it will be an anomalous situation," Sala said.

Public health officials warn that the easing phase could prove to be the most dangerous.

"The fact of pandemics is that they move in waves, and normally the second wave is more dangerous than the first, because the guard has been lowered, you think you can return to normal and a heavier blow arrives," said Ricciardi, the Italian government liaison to WHO. "We need to be careful and not make vain all of the sacrifices that have already been made."

The good news is that Italians' beloved summer holidays don't appear to be ruled out.

"It will be a summer during which we will have to maintain social distance, avoid gatherings and limit movements. There will not be a lot of facility to travel by airplane or train, where it is difficult to maintain a secure distance," Ricciardi said.

"We need to think of making vacation plans that are more prudent."

## Indonesian starts business to make hazmat suit for hospitals

By EDNA TARIGAN Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Her friends who worked in hospitals cried, and Indonesian businesswoman Maryati Dimursi listened: They did not have the protective gear they needed to treat patients suspected of having COVID-19. Some had resorted to wearing plastic raincoats.

She listened, and then she acted.

She asked her friends about what might be done -- what kinds of protective clothing might do the job, what materials would be needed to make them.

"One of them sent me the hazmat suit so I can make a prototype from it," Dimursi said.

Now, Dimursi has designed such a suit, and she aims to make hundreds of them and provide them to hospitals for free.

She went door-to-door looking for partners in Depok, the West Java city where she runs her merchandising business near the capital. She found five who run home-based garment businesses, and they agreed to only charge for the cost of labor to make the suits.

"It will help the tailors to continue their life, too," Dimursi said.

One of her partners, Tating, has three tailors who usually make Muslim clothing for sale online. He's now postponing other orders to finish the hazmat suits first.

"This is the least I can do as a person who is working in the fashion industry," said Tating, who like many Indonesians uses one name.

Some hospitals and clinics asked to buy the suits, but Dimursi insists they will get them for free.

Her fundraising announcement on social media was answered with donations as well as volunteers to help produce and distribute the suits. She first thought she would provide 50, but enough was donated to produce 1,000.

Dimursi has a list of 20 hospitals that urgently need them. GMZ Hospital in Lampung province will be among the first recipients. When a recent patient was being monitored for possible COVID-19, the hospital had only eight hazmat suits left. The pharmacist, the registration official and others wore plastic raincoats.

Dimursi admits she had some doubts after people commenting on her Instagram post questioned the quality of the suits, which use material that doesn't fit the usual specifications for surgical hazmat suits.

"Then there was a friend, who is a doctor, urged me to keep providing hazmat suits. He told me that the

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hazmat suit would be much better than the plastic raincoat" in an emergency, Dimursi said.

Wednesday, two weeks after she started working on her idea, the fabric arrived and tailors got to work. They are racing against time; Dimursi planned to distribute the suits next week.

One of Tating's tailors, Zaenury, said he wants to do something that can help contain the pandemic and is confident his sewing can produce good quality hazmat suits.

"But I do not want to do it for a long time. If I do it longer, it means there are more people infected," Zaenury said.

While news about the effects of the coronavirus has become commonplace, so, too, are the stories about the kindness of strangers and individuals who have sacrificed for others. "One Good Thing" is an AP series reflecting these acts of kindness.

## Hopeful birdsong, foreboding sirens: A pandemic in sound

By **LEANNE ITALIE** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Hopeful birdsong and foreboding sirens. Chiming church bells and bleating ferry horns. The coronavirus crisis has drastically transformed the world in sound. The routine cacophony of daily life has calmed, lending more weight to the noises left behind. And in those mundane sounds, now so unexpectedly bared, many have found comfort, hope and dread.

Here in the U.S., in the grind of the pandemic, sound has become a shared experience, in joy and sadness. The eyes may be windows to the soul, but these days, as isolation persists, the ears feel tethered to our hearts.

"After 9/11, I remember we actually wanted to hear the sound of ambulances on our quiet streets because that meant there were survivors, but we didn't hear those sounds and it was heartbreaking. Today, I hear an ambulance on my strangely quiet street and my heart breaks, too," said 61-year-old Meg Gifford, a former Wall Streeter who lives on Manhattan's Upper East Side.

In European hot spots, there's balcony singing. In New York, at 7 p.m. for the duration, the city ignites for a few moments in whoops and claps as the home bound lean out their windows making noise together.

It's not the sounds but the silence that has made us master eavesdroppers, with an eerie recognition of overheard snippets in New York streets and parks as the sheltered venture out, if just for a little while:

"It looks good long," a woman reassures.

"Don't touch buddy. You can't touch anything, remember," a father warns.

"Yeah but we're not making any money right now, so," a businessman explains.

"Look, mama, the birds," a small girl notices, looking up into trees.

In another hard-hit city, San Francisco, 58-year-old Markus Hawkins is a visually impaired musician and massage therapist who lives alone in the Tenderloin district above a bakery, still open, and next to a restaurant, ordered shut.

His life is guided by aural cues, and they've changed dramatically. With the city largely silent, his world feels intensely louder.

"Oh my God, it's been difficult," Hawkins said.

There's the constant door slamming from the bakery, and an industrial compressor for a freezer or refrigerator that clicks on every two to three minutes, 24 hours a day, creating "this horrible buzz." Pre-lockdown, they went ignored.

At night, he lost his soothing white noise: an exhaust fan from the restaurant. And he hears conversations. Lots of conversations, because "nothing is drowning them out."

Kamil Spagnoli, a 42-year-old single mom of two grade-schoolers, is also visually impaired. She uses a cane to get around Stony Brook, where she lives east of Manhattan near a hospital with a high-level trauma center. When the virus first struck the city in a big way, sending her and her kids into isolation as well, she heard an unusually high number of medical helicopters overhead — four or five a day.

"Did it mean people were getting treated?" Spagnoli wondered. "Now, there's nothing."

She, too, is doing without familiar sounds that help with routine things. She listens for traffic flow to cross streets. The silence feels dangerous.

"Now there's no traffic. I'm not going anywhere," Spagnoli said. "I can't get a sense of what's around me visually and I need that sound feedback."

In Seattle, another early U.S. hot spot, fewer ferries means fewer familiar horns that normally punctuate each day like an extra clock. There are worries there as well playing out in sound and silence.

Is that fire truck in the distance rushing to help someone who can't breathe? Will the noisy weekend crowds return to the city's popular, now empty Space Needle?

Early in the American outbreak, the Life Care Center in the Seattle suburb of Kirkland saw more than 129 people sickened and more than three dozen die from the virus, making it the epicenter before the insidious spread.

The sounds of sirens as ambulances turned up a hill to the nursing home brought on immediate dread for loved ones and others gathered outside. Weeks later, after the threat moved on, fewer ambulances made that turn, continuing to other destinations.

But where? The emergency is too big to know exactly.

Other sounds now soothe. As spring descends, birdsong is prevalent.

There's the quirky squeak of the American goldfinch, owl-like coos of mourning doves and the whinnying of the downy woodpecker as Central Park offers avid urban birders some respite.

There are no services to announce or ceremonies to mark in locked down areas, yet church bells ring on, uplifting many of all faiths who barely took notice in happier — and noisier — times. It's a phenomenon Isaac Weiner finds historically ironic.

The associate professor at Ohio State University researched centuries of church bell ringing and controversy for his 2013 book, "Religion Out Loud: Religious Sound, Public Space, and American Pluralism."

"There are traditions that during times of plague and epidemic, many churches would often voluntarily refrain from ringing bells," Weiner said. "There was fear that the bells might exacerbate people's illnesses in their time of convalescence."

As the sick and dying multiply, the bells of today serve as a steadfast call to action: Keep listening.

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## Calling Trump: When connections help steer virus supplies

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was early on a Friday when Jared Kushner said he received a call from his father-in-law, President Donald Trump. Trump was hearing from friends in New York that the city's public hospital system was running low on critical supplies to fight the new coronavirus — something city officials, nurses and doctors had been saying for weeks.

Kushner, who has taken a lead role in the federal government's response, called Dr. Mitchell Katz, who runs the city's hospital system, to ask what was most needed.

And not long after, Trump was on the phone with New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announcing that the Federal Emergency Management Agency would be sending a month's worth of N-95 masks to the city's front-line workers.

"The president's been very, very hands-on in this," Kushner told reporters. "He's really instructed us to leave no stone unturned."

It was a happy ending to one chapter of a dreadful story: Critical supplies went to a place with critical needs.

But the president's intervention underscored what watchdogs say is a troubling pattern when it comes to how the Trump administration is doling out lifesaving resources. Despite building a data-driven triage

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system in which FEMA allots supplies based on local needs, those who are politically connected and have the president's ear have, at times, been able to bypass that process and move to the front of the line.

White House officials reject the notion that the process is being circumvented, stressing that everyone has been working to quickly get supplies to the places that need them most. That includes navigating complicated global supply chain issues and coordinating complementary efforts by private companies like Apple and billionaires including New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft, casino magnate Sheldon Adelson and Chinese business giant Jack Ma. If state and local leaders need assistance, they said, all they need to do is call.

"It's outrageous that some would even speculate that the resources being delivered by the federal government to the states is somehow based on politics," said White House spokesman Judd Deere. "This is about saving lives."

But sometimes it helps to know those in charge.

It was just after 8 p.m. last Saturday when Republican Rep. Lee Zeldin of New York took to Twitter to sound the alarm about critical needs on Long Island, a coronavirus hotspot with about 25,000 people infected. Suffolk County's stockpile had run out of personal protective equipment — PPE — needed by local hospitals, nursing homes and first responders, including masks and gowns.

"We need fellow Americans who can help to PLEASE send us PPE ASAP!" Zeldin wrote.

Minutes later, his call was answered.

"I posted a tweet and I received a call within minutes — literally within minutes — from Jared Kushner wanting to help," said Zeldin. A day later, the congressman said, 150,000 surgical masks were delivered by a company he'd been connected with by someone close to the White House who had also seen his message. And 250,000 N-95 masks were delivered by the federal government days later.

"Honestly I couldn't be happier with how quick the turnaround has been," Zeldin said earlier this week.

While Zeldin isn't considered a top Democratic target, Trump has also helped vulnerable Republicans secure supplies, raising concerns from critics that he may be using the shipments to bolster political allies.

The president tweeted Wednesday that he would be "immediately sending 100 Ventilators to Colorado" at the request of Sen. Cory Gardner, a Republican who is considered among the party's most vulnerable senators. To Colorado Rep. Diana DeGette, a Democrat, that looked like "playing politics w/ public health."

On Friday, another vulnerable GOP senator, Martha McSally, took to Twitter to relay the "huge news" that Arizona would be getting 100 ventilators and to thank "President Trump and @VP for hearing our call."

Allies of the president have intervened in other ways. Republican fundraiser Ray Washburne helped arrange a call between Trump and high-end restaurateurs including Wolfgang Puck and Jean-Georges Vongerichten, a tenant of Trump International in New York. Trump quickly embraced a proposal to restore the tax break allowing corporations to fully deduct the costs of restaurant meals and entertainment.

"I'll just get the president on the phone," Washburne recalls telling the group. "He was fantastic."

Members of Trump's private Mar-a-Lago club also have contacted the White House, asking for advice about where to send supplies they had privately procured.

Noah Bookbinder, executive director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, a government watchdog group, said it's always problematic when presidents make decisions based on what they're hearing from friends, business associates and customers.

"But when we're talking about life and death decisions that will affect the future of not just individuals but whole communities, it's particularly appalling that these decisions are made based on the whim of the president and the input of the people who happen to have his phone number," Bookbinder said.

Billionaire philanthropist Ken Langone, namesake of New York's NYU Langone Medical Center, panned the idea that anyone was receiving special treatment and applauded the administration's efforts to make sure everyone gets what they need.

"I'm very impressed with the team effort that's going on," he said, adding, "I wish my having known Trump had got me special treatment."

"There is none of that ... otherwise we wouldn't have shortages."

As for Zeldin, the congressman said he had been relying on the process set up by the White House, in which states go through FEMA to get supplies. But "when the stockpile gets down to zero," he said, "then you have to find another way."

In any case, he said, now isn't the time to point fingers.

"There will be an after-action report that is done here and part of what will be done here is analyzing the process of how the federal government communicates and works with the states and how the states communicate and work with the counties," he said. But for now, "Everyone's in the same foxhole with their rifles pointed in the same direction and that's the only way to get through this."

\_\_\_ Follow Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

## White House points to hopeful signs as deaths keep rising

By JILL COLVIN and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — At the end of a week officials had warned would be this generation's Pearl Harbor, White House officials pointed to hopeful signs that the spread of the coronavirus could be slowing, even as President Donald Trump insisted he would not move to reopen the country until it is safe.

At the same time, Trump said he would be announcing the launch of what he dubbed the "Opening our Country" task force, next Tuesday to work toward that goal.

"I want to get it open as soon as possible," he said at a Good Friday briefing, while adding: "The facts are going to determine what I do."

With the economy reeling and job losses soaring, Trump has been itching to reopen the country, drawing alarm from health experts who warn that doing so too quickly could spark a deadly resurgence that could undermine current distancing efforts.

But Trump, who had once set Easter Sunday as the date he hoped people in certain parts of the country might begin to return to work and pack church pews, said he would continue to listen to health experts like Drs. Anthony Fauci and Deborah Birx as he considers what he described as the "biggest decision I've ever had to make."

While "there are both sides to every argument," he said, "we're not doing anything until we know that this country is going to be healthy. We don't want to go back and start doing it over again."

Trump's comments came at the end of a week officials had warned would be a devastating one for the country. Hours earlier, Johns Hopkins University announced that the worldwide death toll from the coronavirus had hit a bleak milestone: 100,000 people. That includes about 18,000 in the U.S., where about half-million people have been confirmed infected.

More than 40% of the deaths in the U.S. so far have happened in New York state, which reported 777 new deaths on Friday. But there were also signs of hope. State officials reported that the number of people in intensive care dropped for the first time there since mid-March. Hospitalizations are also slowing, with 290 new patients admitted in a single day versus daily increases of more than 1,000 last week.

While bemoaning the death numbers as "so horrible," Trump said "tremendous progress" is being made.

"In the midst of grief and pain, we're seeing clear signs that our aggressive strategy is saving countless lives," he said, pointing to models that are now forecasting far fewer U.S. deaths than had originally been predicted.

Health experts have warned, however, that if the country rolls back restrictions too quickly, case levels could once again begin to soar, especially without widespread testing to determine who might be a carrier of the virus. While the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. And research has shown that people can be highly infectious even if they are not displaying symptoms.

Fauci, the nation's top infectious-diseases expert, told CNN that the timeline for reopening the country would be informed by a team that has been reviewing data day-by-day and presenting that information to the president.

"The virus kind of decides whether or not it's appropriate to open it," he said. "The one thing you don't

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want to do is you don't want to get out there prematurely and then wind up backtracking."

Still, he cautioned that there will most certainly be cases when that day comes.

"When we decide, at a proper time, when we're going to be relaxing some of the restrictions, there's no doubt you're going to see cases," he said. "The question is how you respond to them."

As a clearer picture of the virus begins to emerge, data has begun to show that it is having a particularly devastating impact on an already vulnerable population — black Americans.

Of the victims whose demographic data was publicly shared by officials — nearly 3,300 of the nation's 13,000 deaths thus far — about 42% were black, according to an Associated Press analysis. African Americans account for roughly 21% of the total population in those places. Black adults suffer from higher rates of underlying health conditions like obesity, diabetes and asthma, which put them at higher risk for severe complications.

To that end, U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams on Friday made a plea to minority communities to follow social distancing guidelines — if not for themselves, then for their family members.

"Do it for your abuela. Do it for your granddaddy. Do it for your Big Mama. Do it for your Pop Pop," he said, adding that they should also avoid alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

"We need you to understand, especially in communities of color, we need you to step up and help stop the spread so that we can protect those who are most vulnerable," he said.

Asked whether his comments could be deemed offensive for viewers, Adams, who is black, said that was not his intention.

"That's the language that we use and that I use," he said.

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Associated Press writer Kevin Freking in Washington contributed to this report.

## **New York area walloped as global virus deaths pass 100,000**

**By MATT SEDENSKY, MIKE CATALINI and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — The worldwide death toll from the coronavirus surged past 100,000 Friday as the epidemic in the U.S. cut a widening swath through not just New York City but the entire three-state metropolitan area of 20 million people connected by a tangle of subways, trains and buses.

In the bedroom communities across the Hudson River in New Jersey, to the east on Long Island and north to Connecticut, officials were recording some of the worst outbreaks in the country, even as public health authorities expressed optimism that the pace of infections appeared to be slowing.

As of Friday, the New York metropolitan area accounted for more than half the nation's over 18,500 deaths, with other hot spots in places such as Detroit, Louisiana and Washington, D.C.

"Once it gets into the city, there are so many commuters and travel, it gets everywhere," said Matt Mazewski, a Columbia University economics student who tried to get away from the epicenter by leaving his apartment near the New York City campus for his parents' house in Long Valley, New Jersey.

Confirmed infections reached about 1.7 million worldwide, while they surpassed half a million in the U.S., according to a Johns Hopkins University count.

The U.S. is on track to overtake Italy as the country with the highest number of dead, though the true figures on infections and lives lost around the world are believed to be much higher because of limited testing, government cover-ups and different counting practices.

In places such as New York, Italy and Spain, for example, many victims who died outside a hospital — say, in a house or a nursing home — have not been included in the count.

With Christians around the world heading into Easter weekend, public health officials and religious leaders alike urged people to stay home, warning that violating lockdowns and social distancing rules could cause the virus to come storming back. Authorities in Europe put up roadblocks, used helicopters and drones, and cited drivers who had no good reason to be out.

Even in places where the crisis seemed to be easing, the daily death totals were hard to bear.

"I understand intellectually why it's happening," said Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York, where deaths

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rose by 777, to more than 7,800. "It doesn't make it any easier to accept."

But New York officials also said the number of people in intensive care dropped for the first time since mid-March and hospitalizations were slowing: 290 new patients in a single day, compared with daily increases of more than 1,000 last week. Cuomo said that if the trend holds, New York might not need the overflow field hospitals that officials have been scrambling to build.

New Jersey's outbreaks began with the state's first confirmed infection, in a man who commuted between New York and his Fort Lee apartment. The virus is now in all 21 New Jersey counties.

Some suburbs had an infection rate even higher than New York City's, including Rockland County, where the rate was double.

As of Friday, Nassau County, on New York's Long Island, had over 700 deaths. Bergen County, New Jersey, and Westchester County, New York, had around 400 each. Essex County, New Jersey, and Suffolk County, New York, both recorded more than 350. Fairfield County, Connecticut, had about 180.

Officials said many Connecticut infections can be traced to cases in New York's Westchester County.

"This is a virus that knows no borders," Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont said last month.

For several days, two of the globe's other worst-hit places, Italy and Spain, reported that new infections, hospitalizations and deaths have been leveling off even as the daily death tolls remain shocking.

Spain recorded 605 more deaths, its lowest figure in more than two weeks, bringing its overall toll to more than 15,800. Italy reported 570 additional deaths for a total of more than 18,800.

With some signs of hope emerging, questions intensified about when restrictions might be loosened. Spain said factories and construction sites could resume work Monday, while schools, most shops and offices will remain closed. In Italy, there were pleas to restart manufacturing.

Though U.S. President Donald Trump insisted he would not lift restrictions until it's safe, he announced an "Opening our Country" task force and said, "I want to get it open as soon as possible."

The head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, warned that easing restrictions prematurely could "lead to a deadly resurgence."

Italy, Ireland and Greece were among the countries extending lockdown orders into May.

As the threat receded in some places, it increased elsewhere. In the U.S., Michigan announced 205 new deaths Friday, its highest daily total, up from 117 a day earlier. In Europe, Britain recorded 980 new deaths, likewise a one-day high, for close to 9,000 dead in all.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson remained hospitalized with the virus but was out of intensive care. His father, Stanley Johnson, said the prime minister needs to "rest up" before returning to work.

On Good Friday, some churches worldwide held services online, while others arranged prayers at drive-in theaters.

In Paris, services were broadcast from a nearly empty, closed-to-the-public Notre Dame Cathedral, still heavily scarred from a fire a year ago. In Warsaw, Poland, priests wearing masks heard confessions in a parking lot. And in New Orleans, the Catholic archbishop sprinkled holy water from the Jordan River from a biplane traveling overhead.

Sedensky reported from Philadelphia and Catalini from Morrisville, Pa. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed to this report.

Follow AP news coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

## Apple, Google to harness phones for virus infection tracking

By FRANK BAJAK and MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writers

Apple and Google fueled hopes for digital technology's promise against a fast-moving, invisible killer, announcing a joint effort to help public health agencies worldwide leverage smartphones to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

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New software the companies plan to add to phones would make it easier to use Bluetooth wireless technology to track down people who may have been infected by coronavirus carriers. The idea is to help national, state and local governments roll out apps for so-called "contact tracing" that will run on iPhones and Android phones alike.

The technology works by harnessing short-range Bluetooth signals. Using the Apple-Google technology, contact-tracing apps would gather a record of other phones with which they came into close proximity.

Such data can be used to alert others who might have been infected by known carriers of the novel coronavirus, typically when the phones' owners have installed the apps and agreed to share data with public-health authorities.

Developers have already created such apps in countries including Singapore and China to try to contain the pandemic. In Europe, the Czech Republic says it will release an app after Easter. Britain, Germany and Italy are also developing their own tracing tools.

No such apps have yet been announced in the United States, but Gov. Gavin Newsom of California said Friday that state officials have been in touch with the companies as they look ahead at how to reopen and lift stay-at-home orders.

"We were on the phone just this morning, for example, with Apple," he said at a news conference.

Privacy and civil liberties activists have warned that the apps need to be designed so governments cannot abuse them to track their citizens. Apple and Google said in a rare joint announcement that user privacy and security are baked into the design of their plan.

The technology might serve as a stopgap until there is widespread testing for the novel coronavirus, which in the U.S. remains limited after production problems and limited federal coordination of the tests' production and distribution.

"It's not a replacement for just having widespread testing, which would be more accurate," said Tiffany Li, a visiting law professor at Boston University who studies privacy and technology. "But clearly we have a huge shortage of tests."

Bluetooth signal tracking, as Google and Apple plan to use it, can protect privacy far better than other options such as GPS or cell-tower based location data, which allow centralized authorities access to the information.

But Li noted it could still lead to numerous mistaken alerts — for instance, if someone were in full protective gear or in an adjacent apartment while physically close to an infected person.

Pam Dixon, executive director of the World Privacy Forum, said a conversation with Apple's senior director for global privacy, Jane Horvath, assured her that the initiative will protect people's privacy.

Sensitive information will stay on individual phones in encrypted form — no personally identifiable data would be collected — and alerts would be handled by public health agencies, not the tech companies, according to briefing paper seen by The Associated Press. It says location data for users won't be used and the identity of people who may have been infected will be protected by encryption and anonymous identifier beacons that change frequently.

"I think they've taken care of some of the really big problems," Dixon said, noting the companies say they can turn off the system when it's no longer needed. "The government is not going to have identity information of those testing positive."

Asked about the Google-Apple effort at his daily news briefing, President Donald Trump called it "very interesting," but expressed concern that "a lot of people worry about it in terms of a person's freedom. We're going to take a look at that."

Security experts note that technology alone cannot effectively track down and identify people who may have been infected by COVID-19 carriers. Such efforts will require other tools and teams of public health care workers to locate people in the physical world, they say. In South Korea and China, such efforts have included the use of credit-card and public-transit records.

In general, epidemiologists say contact tracing won't be effective without widely available testing. In the Czech Republic, the plan is to have soldiers perform testing; medical students have been trained to staff



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call centers for notifying people at high risk of infection.

The Czech app will use both Bluetooth technology and geolocation data from wireless carriers and banks to create “memory maps” that trace the movement of infected people. That will help them identify others they came into close proximity with in the five to 10 days before they tested positive.

The hope is to quickly isolate people who may be affected so the virus can be contained and restrictions on movement relaxed. The app builds on a popular cellular-location mapping app used by one in 10 Czechs, who number 10 million.

The Google-Apple solution will also be voluntary — or opt-in — but with far greater privacy protections, something the European Commission specified as a central requirement of any such apps in a policy recommendation this week for the 27-nation bloc.

Given the great need for effective contact-tracing — a tool epidemiologists have long employed to contain infectious disease outbreaks — Google and Apple will roll out their changes in two phases. In May, they will release software that will support public-health apps for both Android and iOS phones. In coming months, they will also build the functionality directly into the underlying phone operating systems.

On Friday, the companies released preliminary technical specifications for the effort, which they called “Privacy-Preserving Contact Tracing.”

AP reporters Karel Janicek in Prague; Darlene Superville in Washington and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, California contributed to this report.

## What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press

The worldwide death toll from the coronavirus hit 100,000 on Friday as Christians around the globe marked a Good Friday unlike any other — in front of computer screens instead of in church pews. The U.S. had over 18,000 dead, putting it on track to overtake Italy for the country with the highest death toll.

Public health officials and religious leaders alike warned people against violating lockdowns and social distancing rules over Easter and allowing the virus to come storming back. Authorities resorted to roadblocks and other means to discourage travel.

With economies hit hard by the pandemic, some governments faced mounting pressure to restart some industries and fend off further economic devastation from the coronavirus.

Here are some of AP’s top stories Friday on the world’s coronavirus pandemic. Follow [APNews.com/VirusOutbreak](https://www.apnews.com/VirusOutbreak) for updates through the day and [APNews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak](https://www.apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak) for stories explaining some of its complexities.

**THE FIGHT FOR NEW YORK:** Listen to AP’s coronavirus podcast, “Ground Game: Inside the Outbreak,” for an interview with three AP reporters who worked on “24 Hours: The Fight for New York,” a multiformat package following 10 New Yorkers as they negotiate life in a city transformed by the virus.

### WHAT’S HAPPENING TODAY:

—Pope Francis presided over a torch-lit Good Friday procession in an otherwise empty St. Peter’s Square, with nurses and doctors among those holding a cross as the COVID-19 pandemic upended the traditional ceremony at Rome’s Colosseum.

—More than half of a group of severely ill coronavirus patients improved after receiving an experimental antiviral drug, although there’s no way to know the odds of that happening without the drug because there was no comparison group. Doctors say more testing is needed for remdesivir, a Gilead Sciences drug that has shown promise against other coronaviruses in the past.

—The Trump administration and congressional leaders appear poised to launch bipartisan talks on a new coronavirus aid package with hopes for action as soon as next week. Top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer says the goal is to replenish a \$350 billion “paycheck protection” program for businesses that’s

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being depleted.

—Inmates at a Kansas prison where at least 28 people are sickened by the coronavirus rampaged through offices, breaking windows and setting small fires for several hours before the facility was secured. Two inmates were injured in the disturbance involving about 20 men at the Lansing Correctional Facility.

—New York COVID-19-related deaths jumped yet again by more than 700 in a day, but hospitals battling the outbreak reported encouraging news as the number of people hospitalized stayed relatively flat. Still, the New York metropolitan area accounted for more than half the nation's over 18,000 deaths.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. 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.

Here are the symptoms of the virus compared with the common flu.

One of the best ways to prevent spread of the virus is washing your hands with soap and water. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends first washing with warm or cold water and then lathering soap for 20 seconds to get it on the backs of hands, between fingers and under fingernails before rinsing off.

You should wash your phone, too. Here's how.

**TRACKING THE VIRUS:** Drill down and zoom in at the individual county level, and you can access numbers that will show you the situation where you are, and where loved ones or people you're worried about live.

## ONE NUMBER:

**\$550 BILLION:** Governments from the 19 countries that use the euro have agreed on measures that could provide more than a half-trillion euros (\$550 billion) for companies, workers and health systems to cushion the economic impact of the virus outbreak.

## IN OTHER NEWS:

—**NURSES' QUESTIONS:** U.S. nurses are facing a fundamental question that pits their professional principles against their personal welfare: Did they sign up to become heroes?

— **SOCIAL DISTANCE POWWOWS:** With the largest powwows in the country canceled and postponed amid the spread of the coronavirus, tribal members have found a new outlet online with the Social Distance Powwow.

— **THE HOWLING:** From California to New York, some Americans are taking a moment each night to howl as a way of thanking the health care workers and first responders. It's an American twist on the applause and singing for besieged health care workers in Europe.

— **VIRTUAL SEDER:** Rabbi Shlomo Segal is among the spiritual leaders adapting to a Passover in the shadow of COVID-19. The 40-year-old self-described "liberal" Orthodox rabbi has brought his Seder to YouTube.

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

## In a test of faith, Christians mark Good Friday in isolation

By **JOSEPH KRAUSS** and **ELANA SCHOR** Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — On the day set aside to mark Christ's crucifixion, most churches stood empty. Streets normally filled with emotional processions were silent. St. Peter's Square was almost deserted. And many religious sites in the Holy Land were closed.

Instead, Christians around the world commemorated Good Friday behind closed doors, seeking solace in online services and trying to uphold centuries-old traditions in a world locked down by the coronavirus

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pandemic.

Inside Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the chanting of a small group of clerics echoed faintly through the heavy wooden doors, as a few people knelt outside to pray. In St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis presided over a candle-lit procession, with nurses and doctors among those holding a torch.

The Jerusalem church, built on the site where Christians believe Jesus was crucified, buried and rose from the dead, is usually packed with pilgrims and tourists. But on Friday, four monks in brown robes and blue surgical masks prayed at the stations of the cross along the Via Dolorosa, the ancient route through the Old City where Jesus is believed to have carried the cross before his execution at the hands of the Romans. It runs past dozens of souvenir shops, cafes and hostels, nearly all of which are closed.

In any other year, tens of thousands of pilgrims from around the world retrace Jesus' steps in the Holy Week leading up to Easter. But flights are grounded and most travel canceled as authorities try to prevent the spread of the virus.

James Joseph, a Christian pilgrim from Detroit dubbed "the Jesus guy" because he wears robes and goes about barefoot, lives near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher year-round. On Friday morning, he had the plaza outside to himself. He said Good Friday has special meaning this year.

"The crucifixion is the saddest thing possible, and he felt what we feel right now," he said. "But thanks be to God. ... He rose from the dead and changed the world on Easter."

In Rome, the torch-lit Way of the Cross procession at the Colosseum is normally a highlight of Holy Week, drawing large crowds of pilgrims, tourists and locals. It's been scrapped this year, along with all other public gatherings in Italy, which is battling one of the world's worst outbreaks.

In the United States, the Good Friday fast typically observed by Catholics was taken up by some in other denominations as a means to connect more deeply with their faith during difficult times.

"The savior himself declared that certain things go not out but by prayer and fasting," said Russell Nelson, president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as he called for a worldwide day of fasting and prayer to help bring relief from the pandemic.

Members of the Utah-based faith widely known as the Mormon church normally fast one day a month in a practice they believe prepares people to receive God's blessings. They do it more often in times of crisis.

Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, held a national prayer that was streamed online.

"God gave his own son for us, so we know that he will deliver us from this evil of the coronavirus," Gomez said.

The new virus causes mild to moderate symptoms in most patients, and the vast majority recover. But it is highly contagious and can be spread by those who appear healthy. It can cause severe illness and death in some patients, particularly the old and infirm.

In Italy, where the virus has killed more than 18,000 people, the pope led a Good Friday ceremony where health care workers in white coats provided a stark reminder of how the virus outbreak has infused almost all walks of life.

Just a few dozen volunteer actors witnessed Latin America's most famous re-enactment of the crucifixion Friday in Mexico City, capping a spectacle that in recent years had drawn about 2 million spectators.

The detailed performance has played out in the borough of Iztapalapa since 1843, but was closed to the public for the first time in 177 years because of the virus. It was transmitted live so people could watch at home. It was first performed in 1843 after a cholera outbreak threatened the then-rural hamlet.

The coronavirus has killed more than 100,000 worldwide, according to data gathered by Johns Hopkins University.

In Paris, a ceremony closed to the public was held in the charred and gutted interior of Notre Dame Cathedral, which was nearly destroyed by fire a year ago.

Archbishop Michel Aupetit and three other clergymen wore hard hats as they entered the damaged cathedral. Standing before a large cross and beneath a gaping hole in the roof, they sang, prayed and venerated a crown of thorns that survived the flames.

The bishop said the ceremony, which was broadcast live, showed that "life is still here," even as the

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pandemic is "spreading death and paralyzing us."

One American archbishop, Gregory Aymond of New Orleans, took to the skies in a gesture of devotion. Aymond, who himself has recovered from the coronavirus, flew over the city in a World War II-era biplane and took with him holy water from the Jordan River where Christ was baptized to sprinkle over the city, and the Eucharist, to bless those the afflicted by the virus as well as first responders.

In the Philippines, where churchgoers were told to stay home, Josille Sabsal treated the moment as a test of faith. The 30-year-old Catholic missionary tried to replicate an altar in her Manila home by setting up a laptop, a crucifix and small statues of Jesus and the Virgin Mary on a table.

"I miss that moment in church when you say, 'Peace be with you,' to complete strangers and they smile back," she said.

Schor reported from New York. Associated Press writers Frances D'Emilio in Rome; Sergio Rodrigo in Aguilar de la Frontera, Spain; John Leicester in Paris; Jim Gomez in Manila, Philippines; Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland; Darlene Superville in Washington; Travis Loller in Nashville, Tennessee; and Brady McCombs in Salt Lake City contributed to this report.

## Doctors, nurses in Good Friday procession at Vatican

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — A pair of white-coated doctors who care for coronavirus patients participated in a torch-lit Good Friday procession, watched over by Pope Francis and held in a hauntingly nearly empty St. Peter's Square instead of at Rome's Colosseum because of the safety measures aimed at containing the virus' spread.

Francis presided over the late-night ceremony from the steps outside St. Peter's Basilica as the procession circled 10 times around the square's central obelisk, slowly following a path marked by candles set on the square's cobblestones. Besides the two doctors, who are part of the Vatican's health service, were a former prison inmate and the chaplain of prison in Padua, northern Italy, a uniformed penitentiary police officer and nurses.

The Way of the Cross procession, also known by its Latin name, Via Crucis, evokes Jesus suffering on his way to be crucified.

In another break with tradition, Francis didn't deliver a homily or offer remarks at the end of the 90-minute procession. Instead, for several minutes, he prayed silently, with his head bowed and hands clasped, before a wooden crucifix which had been carried in Rome during the early 16th-century when the city was suffering through a plague.

By then, the procession participants had left the square, and except for an aide, some camera crew and very few other Vatican personnel, Francis was left alone with his thoughts as he looked out across the vast empty space, where normally tens of thousands of people attend his audiences or outdoor Masses.

During the procession, Francis listened to meditations being read aloud on the theme of suffering. Among those composing the reflections were inmates at the prison, the family of a woman slain in domestic violence, an inmate's mother and the daughter of an inmate serving a life-sentence, the Vatican said.

While the pope gave no speech at the end of the procession in St. Peter's Square, earlier in the day, in a phone chat with the host of an Italian state TV talk show, Francis offered thoughts about the COVID-19 outbreak.

Francis said he thinking "about the crucified Lord" as well as the "stories of the crucified in history, to those of today, of this pandemic." He went on to praise doctors, nurses, nuns and priests who "died on the front lines, as soldiers, who gave their life for love."

Earlier in the day, at a Good Friday service inside the basilica, the papal preacher said the pandemic has alerted people to the danger of thinking themselves all-powerful. During that service, in a sign of humble obedience, Francis prostrated himself for a few minutes on the basilica floor.

With rank-and-file faithful not allowed into the basilica in accordance with virus containment measures,

and as Francis listened attentively, the Rev. Raniero Cantalamessa said that "it took merely the smallest and most formless element of nature, a virus, to remind us that we are mortal" and that "military power and technology are not sufficient to save us."

Cantalamessa said that when the pandemic is over, "returning to the way things were is the 'recession' we should fear the most." He added that the virus broke down "barriers and distinctions of race, nation, religion, wealth and power."

The Vatican has said there are eight COVID-19 cases among Vatican city residents or employees.

All of the Vatican's Holy Week ceremonies have been barred to the public, in keeping with Italy's lockdown measures to contain contagion. Italy is living through a fifth week of lockdown with at least three more weeks to go.

The Colosseum Good Friday Way of the Cross procession normally draws tens of thousands of pilgrims and Romans who clutch candles and prayer books, while the pope watches from a rise overlooking the ancient arena. But Italy's stay-at-home measures sent tourists and pilgrims fleeing the country weeks ago, and Romans must stay at home except to go to essential jobs or do vital tasks like buying food or medicine.

## A funeral director fights for New York's coronavirus dead

By JAKE SEINER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Jesus Pujols has fetched the deceased from emergency rooms. He has stepped over bodies in refrigerated trailers. The funeral homes he serves are storing remains by the dozen, often in chapels chilled by cranked-up air conditioners.

The 23-year-old funeral director is sleeping some nights in his minivan — the same one he uses to transport the dead. He thinks he worked nearly 80 hours last week, but he hasn't really kept count.

"Right now, money is not worth it. It's not worth it," he said. "I would give up my job any day for like a normal, normie job. I'd much rather be quarantined in my house right now."

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The Associated Press followed 10 New York City residents on Monday, April 6, as they tried to survive another day in the city assailed by the new coronavirus. For more, read [24 Hours: The Fight for New York](#).

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Monday was Pujols' day off.

That's what the schedule said, at least. He knew that wouldn't work out.

First, the overnight undertaker had to finish his shift from Sunday. He pulled into his first hospital at 8:30 a.m. that day, and finally collapsed into his bed around 4:30 Monday morning.

At midnight, he was outside a hospital dealing with yet another delay. The only attendant working the morgue had been pulled away by another emergency, so Pujols waited.

A familiar, frustrating routine.

Hospitals are begging funeral directors to chauffeur away the deceased, but some don't have the resources to coordinate the pickups. Last week, Pujols visited one hospital twice and couldn't find the body he needed. On his third try, he was told the remains were still in the intensive care unit.

"I understand there's so many people dying," Pujols said. "But there's no excuse to lose a person."

He woke up at 11:30 a.m. Monday to a request from a friend. His uncle died in Valhalla, New York, and the body needed to be delivered to a funeral home in Brooklyn. So Pujols drove an hour each way, unloading the remains at De Riso funeral home that evening.

He was back on the clock by 7. De Riso had a body in need of preparation before its final disposition, but there was no room. Pujols packed the remains into his minivan and took them to a different home.

First, though, he sat for a moment at De Riso, running fingers through his curly, black hair and glaring angrily out the front door.

Pedestrians strolled by along a sun-soaked 4th Avenue in Brooklyn, many without masks or gloves.

"I thought the virus died for a second," he said. "There's so many people outside. This is the most amount of people I've seen outside in like three weeks."

The virus, of course, isn't dead. It's devastating.  
He sees that more clearly than most, despite his bleary eyes.  
"We're not catching up at all."

Follow Jake Seiner: [https://twitter.com/Jake\\_Seiner](https://twitter.com/Jake_Seiner)

## 1st results in on Gilead coronavirus drug; more study needed

By **MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Chief Medical Writer**

More than half of a group of severely ill coronavirus patients improved after receiving an experimental antiviral drug, although there's no way to know the odds of that happening without the drug because there was no comparison group, doctors reported Friday.

The results published by the New England Journal of Medicine are the first in COVID-19 patients for remdesivir. The Gilead Sciences drug has shown promise against other coronaviruses in the past and in lab tests against the one causing the current pandemic, which now has claimed more than 100,000 lives.

No drugs are approved now for treating the disease. At least five large studies are testing remdesivir, and the company also has given it to more than 1,700 patients on a case-by-case emergency basis.

Friday's results are on 53 of those patients, ages 23 to 82, hospitalized in the United States, Europe, Canada and Japan. Thirty-four of them were sick enough to require breathing machines.

All were given the drug through an IV for 10 days or as long as they tolerated it.

After 18 days on average, 36 patients, or 68%, needed less oxygen or breathing machine support. Eight others worsened.

Seven patients died, nearly all of them over age 70. That 13% mortality rate is lower than seen in some other reports, but no true comparisons can be made without a study rigorously testing the drug in similar groups of patients, the authors noted.

A dozen patients had serious problems but it's not clear whether they were from the drug or their disease. Those included septic shock and trouble with kidneys and other organs. Four discontinued treatment because of health problems they developed.

"It looks encouraging," said Dr. Elizabeth Hohmann, an infectious disease specialist at Massachusetts General Hospital who is helping lead one of the studies testing the drug. The problems that occurred were not unexpected given the disease, she said.

Dr. Derek Angus, critical care chief at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center who wasn't involved with the research, said the recovery rate is good but "there is no way of knowing from this series if remdesivir was helpful."

Results from more rigorous studies are expected by the end of this month.

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.

## NOT REAL NEWS: A week of false news around the coronavirus

By **ARIJETA LAJKA and BEATRICE DUPUY 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 facts:

**CLAIM:** Tonic water or quinine supplements can be used to prevent or treat coronavirus symptoms.

**THE FACTS:** Medical experts say as of now there is no proven medication or home remedy that can cure coronavirus. Posts circulating on Facebook and Twitter suggest that drinking tonic water from Schweppes or Fever-Tree will work to treat the new coronavirus because the drinks contain quinine. Quinine is a compound found in the bark of the Cinchona tree and has been used to treat malaria. Malaria drugs like chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine are the synthetic form of quinine. "I would not encourage anyone to

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drink tonic water to prevent or treat covid at all," said Dr. Michael Angarone, assistant professor of infectious diseases at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Social media users appear to be suggesting there is no difference between quinine and hydroxychloroquine, which has been touted by President Donald Trump as a treatment for coronavirus. Hydroxychloroquine has not been approved as a drug to treat coronavirus and medical experts have not concluded whether the drug is safe or effective for this use. "The data so far in terms of therapeutic efficacy are pretty shaky," said Dr. David Hamer, a professor at Boston University School of Public Health and School of Medicine and physician at Boston Medical Center. Other posts tout a combination of tonic water and zinc, an idea that gained traction after a St. Louis chiropractor posted a video recommending the combination. Experts say there is no scientific evidence that quinine would have any impact if used in this way. The concentration used for medical use is different from the concentration of quinine used in soft drinks, said Dr. Humberto Choi, a pulmonologist at Cleveland Clinic. As far as taking tonic water and zinc, Choi said while zinc has been studied to see if it could help protect organs against low oxygen supply in cases of severe lung infection or inflammation, it has not been proven to treat the infection itself. "I don't think people should be fooled to think they are ingesting something that is causing any benefit to them," he said. Tonic water companies like Fever-Tree are debunking the myth online. "We would not advise using our tonic water for anything other than making a tasty drink to keep your spirits up during this difficult time," the company states on its website.

**CLAIM:** Maps show a correlation between confirmed COVID-19 cases and locations where 5G wireless service has been installed.

**THE FACTS:** There's no evidence that 5G, fifth generation wireless, is related to or causes COVID-19. Photos of two maps placed side by side are being used on social media to suggest they show a correlation between 5G networks and coronavirus hot spots. One map claims to show where confirmed coronavirus cases are located in the U.S., while the other map claims to show where 5G technology was installed. Both are highlighted around population centers. "Im just gonna leave this right here... For those folks that still dont see whats really going on," one Facebook post claimed. For months, conspiracy theories have circulated attempting to link the rise in coronavirus cases to 5G networks. The bogus claim gained fresh attention on social media when China rolled out 5G wireless around the time that coronavirus cases spiked in the country. Then, in early April, numerous cell towers in the U.K. were set on fire after false conspiracy theories circulated linking the coronavirus to 5G networks. "As we see it, there is absolutely no connection between COVID-19 and the 5G cellular service," professor Myrtill Simkó told the AP. Simkó is the scientific director of SciProof International in Sweden, and author of a report examining 5G wireless communication and health effects. Experts studying or working on the rollout of 5G service said the map used in the Facebook post showing service availability does not provide an accurate picture of what's happening with 5G expansion. For example, T-Mobile has 5G coverage wider than what is shown on the map used in the Facebook post. And Ookla, a company that provides fixed broadband and mobile network testing applications, also has a map that shows 5G service in the U.S. extending beyond what is depicted by the post. "Telecom providers tend to roll out new technologies (not just 5G) in urban areas where the most people can experience the new technology the quickest. That's why some people see a seeming correlation between 5G availability and urban populations where COVID-19 epicenters have been identified," a representative with Ookla said in an email to the AP. Beyond such comparisons, there is other evidence to refute the link. South Korea was the first to launch 5G wireless in April 2019, months before COVID-19 cases were announced in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. On the flip side, Japan didn't launch 5G until March, yet the country reported its first coronavirus infection in January.

**CLAIM:** Former President Barack Obama said that he would not "allow white people to kill Africans with their toxic vaccines."

**THE FACTS:** The fabricated claim shared across social media grew out of a French TV segment where two doctors suggested that a tuberculosis vaccine be tested in Africa in trials to fight the coronavirus. The doctors were accused of racism for the comments they made on the French news channel LCI earlier

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this month, with celebrities like soccer star Didier Drogba and actor John Boyega sharing their outrage on Twitter after a video with the doctors' comments circulated online. Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, the World Health Organization's regional director of Africa, also shared a clip of the doctors on Twitter, calling the video deeply upsetting. "All research including on #COVID19 in this global crisis must be ethical and based on principles," she said. The French National Institute of Health and Medical Research tweeted on April 2 that the edited video had been taken out of context on social media. Shortly after the video emerged online, social media users began sharing posts suggesting that Obama had asked Africans not to accept vaccines from America and Europe and urged people to share the message everywhere. "I'll be an accomplice if I don't denounce this evil act white people want to do to Africans, first of all I was born in America but I'm African blood, I'm not going to allow white people to kill Africans with their toxic vaccines," the false post reads. "I ask Africans to be smart, and to ensure that coronavirus vaccines do not enter African territories, there is a Machiavellian plan they invent saying we come to help Africans, or that they will come to kill you." Obama did not say this and is pro-vaccination, said Katie Hill, his spokeswoman. Obama has tweeted about the virus urging people to protect themselves by washing their hands and he has shared multiple news articles about the virus. The fabricated quote was shared hundreds of times across WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in English and French. Some posts with the false information included a photo of Obama crying during a speech on gun violence that referenced the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School that left 26 people dead, including 20 children.

**CLAIM:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, effective immediately, Walmart is adopting a staggered shopping schedule based on age.

**THE FACTS:** Walmart is offering special hours for seniors but has not designated times for people to shop by age group. Stores around the U.S. — including Walmart — are offering special hours to cater to seniors, who experts have said could be more vulnerable to the new coronavirus. A post circulating on Facebook, which features logos for Walmart and Sam's Club, falsely states that the discount retailer is establishing shopping days based on age groups. The post apologizes for any inconvenience before breaking out when age groups can shop; Monday age 66+, Tuesday 56-65, Wednesday 46-55, Thursday 36-45, Friday 25-35, Saturday 24 and below, Sunday shopping emergency only. Rebecca Thomason, a Walmart spokeswoman, said in an email that the staggered shopping schedule featured in the posts is false. Walmart revised its shopping hours to provide for greater social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic. They are posted on the company's website. "From March 24 through April 28, Walmart stores will host an hour-long senior shopping event every Tuesday for customers aged 60 and older. This will start one hour before the store opens," the company states on its site.

**CLAIM:** Photos show that "electromagnetic radiation" killed birds in Italy.

**THE FACTS:** A set of photos circulating on Facebook that shows dozens of dead birds scattered in the street and on sidewalks was falsely described as showing the effects of electromagnetic radiation. "Can you imagine what the 5G will do to us," wrote one Facebook user who shared the photos. The photos date to Feb. 4, when strong winds knocked over a tree on Viale del Policlinico, a road in Rome. According to Italian media outlets, when the tree fell over, a man was injured and a several birds that had made their nests in the tree were killed. Photos and video published at the time showed the fallen tree next to dozens of dead birds. The World Health Organization states on their website that 5G in wireless technologies does not pose health risks. "To date, and after much research performed, no adverse health effect has been causally linked with exposure to wireless technologies."

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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## Drums, dancers livestream as virus moves powwows online

By FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — The names pop up quickly on Whitney Rencountre's computer screen, and he greets them as he would in person.

What's up, y'all? Shout out to you. How's it going? Ya'at'eeh. Good to see you, relatives.

He spots someone from the Menominee Nation, a Wisconsin tribe that hosts competitive dancers, singers and drummers in traditional regalia in late summer.

"Beautiful powwow there," he says.

The emcee from the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in South Dakota typically is on the powwow circuit in the spring, joining thousands of others in colorful displays of culture and tradition that are at their essence meant to uplift people during difficult times. Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the gatherings are taking on a new form online.

"Sometimes we have this illusion that we're in total control, but it takes times like this of uncertainty and the challenges of the possibility of death to help us step back and reevaluate," said Rencountre, a co-organizer of the Facebook group Social Distance Powwow, which sprung up about a month ago as more states and tribes advised people to stay home.

Normally this time of year, a string of powwows hosted by Native American tribes and universities would be underway across the U.S., with tribal members honoring and showcasing their cultures — and socializing, like family reunions. The powwows represent an evolution of songs and dances from when tribal traditions were forced underground during European settlement, Rencountre said.

The pandemic has canceled or postponed virtually all of them, including two of the largest in the U.S. — the Denver March Powwow and the Gathering of Nations in Albuquerque, New Mexico, held in April.

Social Distance Powwow has helped fill the void, quickly growing to more than 125,000 members.

Members from different tribal nations post photos and videos of themselves and loved ones dancing, often in their regalia. The page has become a daily dose of prayer, songs, dances, well wishes, humor and happy birthdays.

In one video, Jordan Kor sits in his vehicle after a shift at a San Jose, California, hospital emergency department. An old Dakota war song he learned as a child that can be a rallying cry was bouncing around his head. He pulls off his mask and cap and sings, slapping a beat on the steering wheel.

"The biggest ones, social distance, keep working in whatever it is that brings you joy and helps you keep connected," said Kor, who is Tarahumara and Wapetonwon Lakota. "And wash your hands!"

The page also hosts a weekly, live powwow with the organizers — Rencountre, Stephanie Hebert and Dan Simonds — assembling a lineup of volunteer drum groups, singers and dancers for the hours-long event. This past weekend, Rencountre patched people in from across the country on the live feed.

A marketplace on the site lets vendors showcase their paintings, beadwork, jewelry, basketry and clothing.

An online powwow may lack some of the grandeur of being in person and seeing hundreds of performers fill an arena for the grand entry. But it offers a way to keep people connected.

"When we dance, we are dancing for prayer and protection," said member Mable Moses of the Lumbee Tribe in North Carolina. "No matter what we do, may the Lord always protect us whether we're living or dying."

Moses learned to dance later in life and now competes in the "golden age" category at powwows. In a video of her Southern Traditional dance, she moves around a dogwood tree in her yard slowly but with high energy.

"Even though I'm 72, I'm like 29," she said.

Moses said the dance meant to calm people helps her cope with the fear surrounding the coronavirus, and the difficulty of staying away from others.

Tribal members also are posting elsewhere on social media, including youth hoop dancers from Pojoaque Pueblo in New Mexico.

For those viewing for the first time, Rencountre encourages an open mind.

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"We ask them to break down the wall, to feel the dances, to feel the songs, as you're watching," he said. "Don't think about it from a technical point of view. Understand the creation of these songs and dances comes from a place of uplifting."

Leiha Peters grew up doing jingle dress dance meant for healing. The dress is characterized by cone-shaped jingles typically made from the lids of tobacco cans. Now, she does beadwork for her children's outfits and is a Seneca language teacher.

She recently posted a video of two of her children and their cousins doing smoke dance in the living room of her home on the Tonawanda Indian Reservation northeast of Buffalo, New York. Its origins are mixed as a dance for men to bless themselves before they went to battle and a way to clear smoke from traditional homes called longhouses, she said.

Her children grow up knowing the respect and the protocol that accompany the dance and its songs. They also have fun with it, sometimes competing in the family's backyard to win cups of Kool-Aid or bags of candy, Peters said.

"For them, dancing is medicine on its own. It's everything to us," she said. "It's energy, it's athleticism, it's staying healthy and living a better life with food choices. It's not easy doing what they do."

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

## White House points to hopeful signs as deaths keep rising

By JILL COLVIN and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — At the end of a week officials had warned would be this generation's Pearl Harbor, White House officials pointed to hopeful signs Friday that the spread of the coronavirus could be slowing, even as President Donald Trump insisted he would not move to reopen the country until it is safe.

At the same time, Trump said he would be announcing the launch of what he dubbed the "Opening our Country" task force next Tuesday to work toward that goal.

"I want to get it open as soon as possible," he said at a Good Friday briefing, while adding: "The facts are going to determine what I do."

With the economy reeling and job losses soaring, Trump has been itching to reopen the country, drawing alarm from health experts who warn that doing so too quickly could spark a deadly resurgence that could undermine current distancing efforts.

But Trump, who had once set Easter Sunday as the date he hoped people in certain parts of the country might begin to return to work and pack church pews, said he would continue to listen to health experts like Drs. Anthony Fauci and Deborah Birx as he considers what he described as the "biggest decision I've ever had to make."

While "there are both sides to every argument," he said, "we're not doing anything until we know that this country is going to be healthy. We don't want to go back and start doing it over again."

Trump's comments came at the end of a week officials had warned would be a devastating one for the country. Hours earlier, Johns Hopkins University announced that the worldwide death toll from the coronavirus had hit a bleak milestone: 100,000 people. That includes about 18,000 in the U.S., where about half-million people have been confirmed infected.

More than 40% of the deaths in the U.S. so far have happened in New York state, which reported 777 new deaths on Friday. But there were also signs of hope. State officials reported that the number of people in intensive care dropped for the first time there since mid-March. Hospitalizations are also slowing, with 290 new patients admitted in a single day versus daily increases of more than 1,000 last week.

While bemoaning the death numbers as "so horrible," Trump said "tremendous progress" is being made."

"In the midst of grief and pain, we're seeing clear signs that our aggressive strategy is saving countless lives," he said, pointing to models that are now forecasting far fewer U.S. deaths than had originally been predicted.

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Health experts have warned, however, that if the country rolls back restrictions too quickly, case levels could once again begin to soar, especially without widespread testing to determine who might be a carrier of the virus. While the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. And research has shown that people can be highly infectious even if they are not displaying symptoms.

Fauci, the nation's top infectious-diseases expert, told CNN that the timeline for reopening the country would be informed by a team that has been reviewing data day-by-day and presenting that information to the president.

"The virus kind of decides whether or not it's appropriate to open it," he said. "The one thing you don't want to do is you don't want to get out there prematurely and then wind up backtracking."

Still, he cautioned that there will most certainly be cases when that day comes.

"When we decide, at a proper time, when we're going to be relaxing some of the restrictions, there's no doubt you're going to see cases," he said. "The question is how you respond to them."

As a clearer picture of the virus begins to emerge, data has begun to show that it is having a particularly devastating impact on an already vulnerable population — black Americans.

Of the victims whose demographic data was publicly shared by officials — nearly 3,300 of the nation's 13,000 deaths thus far — about 42% were black, according to an Associated Press analysis. African Americans account for roughly 21% of the total population in those places. Black adults suffer from higher rates of underlying health conditions like obesity, diabetes and asthma, which put them at higher risk for severe complications.

To that end, U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams on Friday made a plea to minority communities to follow social distancing guidelines — if not for themselves, then for their family members.

"Do it for your abuela. Do it for your granddaddy. Do it for your Big Mama. Do it for your Pop Pop," he said, adding that they should also avoid alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

"We need you to understand, especially in communities of color, we need you to step up and help stop the spread so that we can protect those who are most vulnerable," he said.

Asked whether his comments could be deemed offensive for viewers, Adams, who is black, said that was not his intention.

"That's the language that we use and that I use," he said.

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Associated Press writer Kevin Freking in Washington contributed to this report.

## Yemen has 1st confirmed virus case, more than 10k in Israel

By MAGGIE MICHAEL Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Yemen's internationally recognized government announced Friday the first confirmed case of the new coronavirus in the war-torn country, stoking fears that an outbreak could devastate its already crippled health care system.

The case is a 73-year-old Yemeni national who works at the port of al-Shahr in Hadramawt province, Yemen's Minister of Health Nasser Baoum told The Associated Press. The man is in stable condition, the minister added, without providing further details.

Yemen is a uniquely dangerous place for the coronavirus to spread. Repeated bombings and ground fighting over five years of war have destroyed or closed more than half its health facilities. Deep poverty, dire water shortages and a lack of adequate sanitation have made the country a breeding ground for disease.

Health officials have dreaded the virus' eventual appearance in the country.

"We have been saying since the declaration of the pandemic that the introduction of such a case in Yemen would be catastrophic," said Altaf Musani, representative of the World Health Organization in Yemen.

The Saudi-led coalition fighting the Iran-backed Houthi rebels declared a cease-fire on Thursday on humanitarian grounds, to prevent the spread of the pandemic. However, fighting continued unabated on Friday, diminishing hopes of a truce that could open doors for peace talks.

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Yemen's war erupted in 2014, when the rebels seized the capital, Sanaa, and much of the country's north. The U.S.-backed, Saudi-led coalition intervened to oust the rebels and restore the internationally recognized government. The conflict has killed over 100,000 people and largely settled into a bloody stalemate.

The U.N. has described Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian disaster. Over 24 million people in the country require humanitarian assistance, many of them on the brink of starvation.

Hadramawt recently witnessed an outbreak of dengue fever, with hundreds of cases filling the public hospital of al-Shahr, where the coronavirus case was detected.

In Yemen's under-equipped and barely functioning health system, it's hard to distinguish among different viral diseases. Some of the symptoms of dengue fever are similar to the ones in COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus, including muscle aches, fever and difficulty breathing.

"That makes it very difficult to say whether or not coronavirus has already spread in Yemen," said Yousra Semmache, advocacy director for Save the Children.

One young man with dengue fever died after a hospital in Mukalla, the provincial capital of Hadramawt, refused to admit him for fear he was carrying the coronavirus, two local aid and government officers said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to reporters.

To try to curb the spread of the virus, provincial Gov. Farag al-Bouhsni announced on his Facebook page a partial curfew and placed all workers at the al-Shahr port under a 14-day quarantine. Residents criticized the governor for not shutting down all ports in Hadramawt, which are the main lifeline for aid and commercial shipments for southern Yemen.

The adjacent governorate of al-Mahra, which also borders Oman, sealed off its entry points just hours after the announcement from Hadramawt. Yemen's Ministry of Religious Endowment said mosques will be closed to mass prayers as well as Quran teaching sessions.

Even before the war, Yemen was the Arab world's most impoverished country, the majority of its population living in rural areas, far from health facilities. With the country relying on imports for 90% of its basic needs, the Saudi-led coalition's blockade triggered price hikes. Political infighting led to suspension of salaries for government employees, including medical staff, while corruption deprived millions of access to humanitarian aid.

Increased malnutrition rates degraded immunity to infectious diseases, especially in war-torn areas. Since 2016, several cholera outbreaks, the worst in modern history, killed thousands and infected over 1.5 million.

According to WHO data, 15% of Yemen's districts have no doctors, with an average of 10 health workers and less than 5 hospital beds for every 10,000 people.

U.N. special envoy Martin Griffiths said he gave the Yemeni government and the Houthis revised proposals on Friday for agreements on a nationwide cease-fire, urgent resumption of the political process, and economic and humanitarian measures "to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people" and to support the country's "ability to respond to the crisis of COVID-19."

"I urge the parties to accept these proposed agreements without delay and begin working together through a formal political process to comprehensively end the war," Griffiths said in a statement.

Elsewhere in the Mideast, the number of coronavirus infections rose in Israel, with the Health Ministry on Friday reporting more than 10,000 cases, including 92 deaths. The government imposed strict measures to contain the pandemic early on, closing borders, grounding flights and shuttering all non-essential businesses. But the virus tore through its insular ultra-Orthodox religious community, as many ignored guidelines on social distancing.

The tightened lockdown left many alone in their homes for the Passover holiday this week, with no visitors allowed, not even immediate family. When it emerged that Israel's figurehead president, Reuven Rivlin, had nonetheless hosted his daughter for the traditional Seder dinner, outrage spread on social media. Rivlin acknowledged the criticism and apologized on Friday.

The virus causes mild to moderate symptoms in most patients, who recover within a few weeks. But it can cause severe illness or death, particularly in older patients or those with underlying health problems.

The Palestinian Authority, which governs parts of the occupied West Bank and also imposed a widespread

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lockdown early on, reported its second virus death, out of 253 confirmed cases. It says 45 people have recovered.

Also Friday, authorities in Oman ordered those living in the capital, Muscat, to remain there while banning people from traveling into the city over the virus. The country has more than 450 confirmed cases with two confirmed deaths.

There are more than 134,000 confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the Middle East, including over 5,300 fatalities. Some 4,200 of those deaths are in Iran, which has the largest outbreak in the region. Authorities there had recorded over 68,000 total cases as of Friday.

Associated Press writers Joe Krauss in Jerusalem, Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations and Isabel DeBre contributed to this report.

## US budget deficit totals \$743.6 billion over past 6 months

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government's budget deficit for the first half of this budget year totaled \$743.6 billion, up 7.6% from last year, and well on its way to topping \$1 trillion even before the impacts of the coronavirus were felt.

The Treasury Department reported Friday that the deficit from October, the start of the government's budget year, through March was \$52.5 billion higher than the same period a year ago.

The Trump administration and the Congressional Budget Office were already forecasting that this year's deficit would top \$1 trillion for the first time since 2012. But now with a \$2.2 trillion rescue package approved by Congress and government spending expected to rise sharply, private economists are estimating that this year's deficit could well exceed \$2 trillion.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, said that he expects the deficit to hit \$2.5 trillion this year and also next year. Previously, the highest deficits in dollar terms occurred in a four-year stretch from 2009 through 2012 when the government was spending billions of dollars to pull the country out of the deepest downturn since the Great Recession, a slump triggered by the 2008 financial crisis.

This year's deficit will increase because of the \$2.2 trillion in additional spending approved in the largest relief package ever passed by Congress but also because government revenues will slump as the economy slows if the country, as expected, enters a deep if short, recession.

Gregory Daco, chief economist at Oxford Economics, said that the deficit for this year will likely hit \$2.2 trillion, reflecting an economy in free fall which will depress revenues and the stimulus packages already approved.

"If additional stimulus measures are passed, the deficit will be larger," Daco said.

Through March, government receipts totaled a record \$1.60 trillion for the first six months of the budget year, up 6.4% from the same period a year ago. Outlays were also a record for the first half of the year, totaling \$1.88 trillion, up 6.9% from a year ago.

The deficit for the month of March was \$119.1 billion, down from March a year ago when the deficit was \$146.9 billion.

## The howling: Americans let it out from depths of pandemic

By DAVID ZALUBOWSKI and JAMES ANDERSON Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — It starts with a few people letting loose with some tentative yelps. Then neighbors emerge from their homes and join, forming a roiling chorus of howls and screams that pierces the twilight to end another day's monotonous forced isolation.

From California to Colorado to Georgia and upstate New York, Americans are taking a moment each night at 8 p.m. to howl in a quickly spreading ritual that has become a wrenching response of a society cut off from one another by the coronavirus pandemic.

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They howl to thank the nation's health care workers and first responders for their selfless sacrifices, much like the balcony applause and singing in Italy and Spain. Others do it to reduce their pain, isolation and frustration. Some have other reasons, such as to show support for the homeless.

In Colorado, Gov. Jared Polis has encouraged residents to participate. Children who miss their classmates and backyard dogs join in, their own yowls punctuated by the occasional fireworks, horn blowing and bell ringing.

"There's something very Western about howling that's resonating in Colorado. The call-and-response aspect of it. Most people try it and love to hear the howl in return," said Brice Maiurro, a poet, storyteller and activist who works at National Jewish Health.

The nightly howl is a primal affirmation that provides a moment's bright spot each evening by declaring, collectively: We shall prevail, said Dr. Scott Cypers, director of Stress and Anxiety programs at the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Depression Center at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. It's a way to take back some of the control that the pandemic-forced social isolation has forced everyone to give up, Cypers said.

"The virus' impact is very different for everyone, and this is a way to say, 'This sucks,' and get it out in a loud way," Cypers said. "Just being able to scream and shout and let out pent-up grief and loss is important. Little kids, on the other hand, are really enjoying this."

Maiurro and his partner, Shelsea Ochoa, a street activist and artist, formed the Facebook group Go Outside and Howl at 8 p.m. The group has nearly half a million members from all 50 U.S. states and 99 countries since they created it as Colorado's shelter-in-place order went into effect last month.

"We wanted to do this mostly because people are feeling isolated right now," said Ochoa, 33, who works at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. "I think it hit on something others needed."

Why howling?

In California, friends and family of Ochoa's would howl at sunset; in Brazil, where she lived recently, residents would cheer at sunset. Maiurro, who also works at National Jewish Health, and fellow poets would howl at the moon during back-alley poetry readings in Boulder.

"There's no wrong way to do it," said Ochoa. "People can subscribe any kind of meaning they want to it."

The couple suggest different themes for the evening howls, such as a recent "The Day of I Miss You." Health care workers are grateful for the support — and the nightly moment's relief from the stresses of their work.

Jerrod Milton, a provider and senior vice president of operations at Children's Hospital Colorado, makes it a point to step outside at 8 p.m. each evening.

"It not only inspires me with a sense of solidarity and appreciation, but it makes me laugh a little each day," Milton said. "I cannot tell the difference between the howls coming from fellow humans and those instinctively coming alongside from our canine neighborhood companions."

In downtown Los Angeles, thousands of people yell, scream, cheer, applaud and flash lights from their apartment balconies and windows, thanks in large part to Patti Berman, president of the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council, who promotes the ritual conceived by council communications director Marcus Lovingood.

"I never believed it would take off like this," said Berman, who in her 70s is staying inside her apartment in deference to the health concerns of her family.

Berman's concerns are for the homeless on LA's Skid Row, the struggling family-owned small businesses, the people she's used to meeting and helping face-to-face in her 15 years on the council.

"These people are my stakeholders and my job — and this is where the howl comes in — is to let them know that we haven't disappeared. To preserve the human contact," she said.

Organizers say restoring and keeping that contact through such extreme adversity will be an achievement to look back upon when the crisis eventually passes.

"When people look back on this and with so many sad stories, hopefully they'll also remember this as one of the good things," Ochoa said.

## After months in space, astronauts returning to changed world

By **MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Two NASA astronauts said Friday they expect it will be tough returning to such a drastically changed world next week, after more than half a year at the International Space Station.

Andrew Morgan said the crew has tried to keep atop the pandemic news. But it's hard to comprehend what's really going on and what to expect, he noted, when his nine-month mission ends next Friday.

"It is quite surreal for us to see this whole situation unfolding on the planet below," said Jessica Meir, who took part in the first all-female spacewalk last fall. "We can tell you that the Earth still looks just as stunning as always from up here, so it's difficult to believe all the changes that have taken place since both of us have been up here."

As an emergency physician in the Army, Morgan said he feels a little guilty coming back midway through the medical crisis.

"It's very hard to fathom," Morgan told reporters.

Meir said it will be difficult not being able to hug family and friends, after seven months off the planet. She anticipates feeling even more isolated on Earth than in space.

"We're so busy with so many other amazing pursuits and we have this incredible vantage point of the Earth below, that we don't really feel as much of that isolation," Meir said.

"So we'll see how it goes and how I adjust," she said. "But it will, of course, be wonderful to see some family and friends, at least virtually and from a distance for now."

Morgan flew to the space station last July, and Meir last September. They will return in a Soyuz capsule with Russian Oleg Skripochka, landing in Kazakhstan. Their departure will leave three astronauts, who arrived Thursday, on board.

The three will return exactly 50 years after the Apollo 13 astronauts splashed down in the Pacific. An oxygen tank explosion aborted the moon-landing mission.

"Once again, now there's a crisis and the crisis is on Earth," Morgan said.

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## **A conundrum for New Yorkers: Social distancing in the subway**

**By TOM HAYS and MARSHALL RITZEL Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — They let trains that look too crowded pass by. If they decide to board, they search for emptier cars to ride in. Then they size up fellow passengers before picking the safest spot they can find to sit or stand for commutes sometimes lasting an hour or more.

This quiet calculus is being performed daily by people who must keep working during the coronavirus pandemic and say the social distancing required is nearly impossible to practice in the enclosed spaces of New York City's public transit system.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that people should stay 6 feet (2 meters) apart. But even though ridership has plummeted in the city, making jam-packed trains and buses the exception rather than the rule, passengers aren't always guaranteed even 6 inches (15 centimeters).

"Everybody is very scared," Shaderra Armstead, a health care clinic receptionist who rides the subway to work, said this week. "They're trying to keep their distance from each other, but it's impossible."

"It makes me not want to go on the train at all," she said. "I'm nervous every day, but I still have to go."

Riders on some trains in Brooklyn and Queens this week sat or stood in some cars within a few feet of one another, some with their faces uncovered, while keeping their distance from homeless people camped out. At the same time, there are images showing subway platforms mostly empty at times they'd typically be crowded.

Transit officials say they're working harder than ever to protect passengers and their own workers amid a pandemic that has killed more than 7,000 New Yorkers in just a few weeks, mostly in the city and its suburbs. Several suburban counties in New Jersey and Connecticut have also registered significant numbers of deaths.

The virus has also taken the lives of 41 employees of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which runs the city's buses and subway as well as many commuter trains. For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, but, for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness and lead to death.

"We want as little social density and as much social distance as we can get," MTA Chairman Patrick Foye said in a radio interview Tuesday.

Foye, who also got the virus but is doing fine, called scenes of crowding on trains "episodic" and said safety measures are working well enough that complaints by riders about overcrowding have dried up in recent days.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said Friday on WNYC radio that he doesn't think the issue has been resolved.

"I don't understand how he can say that when I have, all through the week, heard these reports," the Democrat said.

He said he will ask Foye whether trains can run more frequently or be supplemented with buses. The mayor said he has been sending police officers to particularly crowded stations to space people out and tell them not to get on crowded trains.

Foye said in an email that the MTA "is aggressively monitoring any reported crowding issues" and has deployed police officers to assist in those efforts.



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The challenges aren't unique to New York. In Philadelphia, where at least three transit workers have died from COVID-19, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority said it will move to a "lifeline" service Thursday, closing some stations and limiting rail and bus service to core routes.

London, Paris and South Korea have also struggled to keep public transport running.

In London, where ridership is down as much as 93% from the same point last year, images posted on social media have shown some trains crowded at rush hour since fewer are running because of staff illnesses. Fourteen London transport staff have died from the virus, including eight bus drivers.

In New York, too, use of all forms of mass transit has plummeted.

Ridership on the subways Monday was down 92% compared to a normal weekday. The commuter rail lines serving Long Island had 97% fewer passengers. On Metro-North, which serves the city's northern suburbs, including those in Connecticut, ridership was down 95%. On MTA buses, it is down more than 60%.

The agency has cut back bus service by about 25%, reduced the number of trains running on weekdays on the Long Island Rail Road from around 740 to around 500 and on Metro-North from 713 to 424.

While subways and buses are all far less crowded than normal, there are still moments that are too close for comfort in the age of coronavirus.

Waiting for a Manhattan-bound train on the Queens platform, Ebrahima Sumareh said he searches for the least crowded subway car he can find before boarding.

"I'm scared for people to touch me, to get close to me," said Sumareh, a railroad quality control clerk. "I'm scared for other people too."

He's also worried some of his fellow riders might not be following the distancing protocols in their lives, not just on the trains, he said. "New Yorkers, we don't listen."

To keep trains from getting too crowded, New York's MTA says it has sought to keep up normal service on the most-used routes. There are also police directing people on subway platforms to less crowded sections of trains. Riders are urged to cover their faces and to report situations where social distancing isn't being observed.

The agency has posted signs on some trains that read: "Essential Worker, yes, ok to ride. ... No — why are you even reading this? Go home."

The MTA has sought to help protect employees by distributing 300,000 medical grade masks, 160,000 surgical masks, and 2.5 million pairs of gloves to its employees since March 1, Foye said.

Queens subway rider Bhargav Munagala said Tuesday that during his commute to his job as a project manager for a food packing and delivery service, he tries "to give respect to the very important people" like nurses.

"Most of the people I look at now are tired," while others act "crazy," he added. "That's New York."

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Associated Press writer Danica Kirka in London contributed to this report.

## Trump feels no need for crisis counsel from predecessors

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President George W. Bush turned to one of the world's most exclusive clubs for help raising money after an Indian Ocean tsunami killed more than 200,000 people in 2004.

He paired his father, George H.W. Bush, and the man who defeated him to win the presidency in 1992, Bill Clinton. It worked so well that he signed the duo up again after Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans less than a year later.

President Barack Obama followed the same playbook and sent Clinton and the younger Bush off on a fundraising effort for Haiti after a devastating earthquake in 2010.

Not President Donald Trump, who has no plans to seek his predecessors' counsel during the coronavirus pandemic, a complex crisis with profound public health and economic consequences.

"No, not really. We're doing a great job," Trump said recently when asked if he would contact any of

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the living former presidents.

Even in the face of the greatest challenge of his presidency, Trump has expressed confidence in his team, and said he didn't want to "bother" the former presidents. He added that he would reach out if he thought he could learn from them.

Instead, he has frequently criticized his predecessors, disparaging Obama's handling of the H1N1 virus pandemic of 2009-2010 that killed nearly 12,500 Americans, and George W. Bush's response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, in which more than 1,800 people were killed, mostly in New Orleans.

"Look, I respect everybody, but I feel I have an incredible team and I think we're doing an incredible job," Trump said at the White House. "So I don't want to disturb them, bother them. I don't think I'm going to learn much. I guess you could say that there's probably a natural inclination not to call."

"Now, if I felt that if I called I'd learn something and that would save one life — it would save one life, OK? — I would make the call in two minutes," he said. "But I don't see that happening."

That hasn't stopped Clinton, Bush and Obama from getting involved in their own ways.

Obama, who has been deliberate about keeping a low profile during Trump's presidency, has become more of a presence on social media during the pandemic. The Democrat has been posting health and safety tips from public officials, news reports and uplifting accounts of the ways Americans are coming together during the crisis.

His decision to share with his 115 million Twitter followers a recent Washington Post article about how viruses spread and can be slowed made it the newspaper's most-read story ever, spokeswoman Molly Gannon said in an email.

Obama on Thursday addressed leaders from more than 300 cities around the world who were discussing the pandemic at a New York event sponsored by former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg's philanthropic organization. Obama encouraged the leaders to "speak the truth" and "speak it clearly" with compassion and empathy.

His comments appeared to carry an implicit criticism of Trump, who sought early on to minimize the severity of the outbreak.

Bush, a Republican, hosted a teleconference this month with more than 500 mayors and local leaders who are working to keep their communities from being overrun by the virus. He is also using the Bush Institute to highlight how people across the country are helping each other, Bush spokesman Freddy Ford said in an email.

Bush and former first lady Laura Bush are also social distancing "to the max" at their ranch in Crawford, Texas, Ford said.

Democrats Bill and Hillary Clinton recently sent hundreds of pizzas to hospitals in Westchester County, New York, where they live.

Michael Chertoff, homeland security secretary when Hurricane Katrina slammed the Gulf Coast, said Bush leaned on the former presidents because he "understood that presidents bring to the table a unique perspective that no other official has."

Bush was widely faulted for a lackluster response to the unfolding disaster in New Orleans, which became a permanent blot on his two terms in office.

Chertoff, who commented at a recent event hosted by The Cipher Brief, an online intelligence newsletter, said presidents have to be the "ultimate decision-maker," often relying on information that is fast-moving and changing.

"So I think getting the perspective of your predecessors is very helpful," Chertoff said.

Presidents seeking help from those who came before them isn't a modern phenomenon.

In the late 1940s, Harry Truman put former President Herbert Hoover in charge of a commission charged with streamlining the executive branch of government.

John F. Kennedy sought feedback from former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had been an Army general, after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961.

Jimmy Carter led a Clinton-sanctioned mission to North Korea in 1994.

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"Former presidents are a rarity and they are a precious, valuable informed commodity," Barbara Perry, director of presidential studies at the University of Virginia's Miller Center, said in an interview. And it's not only because they know issues, "but they also have the experience of being president."

Trump was liberal in criticizing some of his predecessors, especially Obama, even before he took office. He has torn into Bush over the Iraq war, criticized Clinton's treatment of some women, and even tried to stoke the false notion that Obama was not born in the United States.

In office, Trump has routinely criticized or blamed Obama for things that go wrong, including aspects of the current pandemic.

Last year, he responded to Carter's suggestion that Russian interference in the 2016 election rendered Trump's presidency illegitimate by publicly calling Carter a "terrible president."

Jeffrey Engel, director of the Center for Presidential History at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, said President George H.W. Bush kept his living predecessors briefed on issues big and small in case a situation arose where he would need to seek their counsel.

The fact that Trump doesn't "go outside of his own info bubble" to seek advice is perhaps among the biggest problems of his presidency, Engel said.

"You don't know the information that you don't know that you don't know," he said.

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Associated Press writers Julie Pace and Deb Riechmann contributed to this report.

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Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

## Schumer: Trump administration OKs talks on virus aid bill

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer says the Trump administration has agreed to pursue bipartisan House-Senate talks on an interim bill to replenish a \$350 billion "paycheck protection" program for businesses that Treasury fears is being rapidly depleted.

The New York Democrat said he spoke with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin Friday and hopes for a deal early next week. Schumer is pressing to add funding for health care providers such as hospitals, as well as further funding for cash-poor state and local governments.

The developments come a day after Democrats stifled an attempt by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., to pass a \$250 billion infusion into the business program — just in its infancy and beset with hiccups as it starts up — by a voice vote.

Congress is in an unprecedented situation in which convening either chamber to do business that requires roll call votes is out of the question as the nation is locked down by the coronavirus pandemic. That means legislation has to advance by consensus only. Democrats say they want safeguards to ensure that funding under the program can reach all eligible businesses, including those that do not have established credit relationships with banks such as minority-owned firms.

## Bunnies to the rescue as virus hits Belgian chocolatiers

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

SINT-PIETERS BRUGGE, Belgium (AP) — Master chocolatier Dominique Persoone stood forlorn on his huge workfloor, a faint smell of cocoa lingering amid the idle machinery — in a mere memory of better times.

Easter Sunday is normally the most important date on the chocolate makers' calendar. But the coronavirus pandemic, with its lockdowns and social distancing, has struck a hard blow to the 5-billion-euro (\$5.5-billion) industry that's one of Belgium's most emblematic.

"It's going to be a disaster," Persoone told The Associated Press through a medical mask. He closed his shops as a precautionary measure weeks ago, and says "a lot" of Belgium's hundreds of chocolate-makers, from multinationals to village outlets, will face financial ruin.

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For the coronavirus to hit is one thing, but to do it at Easter — when chocolate bunnies and eggs are seemingly everywhere — doubles the damage.

Yet amid the general gloom Belgians are allowing themselves some levity for the long Easter weekend. Some producers, like Persoone's famed The Chocolate Line, offer Easter eggs or bunnies in medical masks, while the country's top virologist has jokingly granted a lockdown pass to the "essential" furry workers traditionally supposed to bring kids their Easter eggs.

For young and old here, Easter Sunday usually means egg hunts in gardens and parks, sticky brown fingers, the satisfying crack of an amputated chocolate rabbit's ear before it disappears into a rapt child's mouth.

"People love their chocolates, the Easter eggs, the filled eggs, the little figures we make," said chocolatier Marleen Van Volsem in her Praleen shop in Halle, south of Brussels. "This is really something very big for us."

The country has an annual per capita chocolate consumption of six kilograms (over 13 pounds), much of it scoffed during the peak Easter period.

"It is a really big season because if we don't have this, then we won't ... be OK for the year," Van Volsem said.

Persoone makes about 20% of his annual turnover in the single Easter week. This year, reduced to web sales and pick-ups out of his facility in western Belgium while his luxury shops in tourist cities Bruges and Antwerp are closed? "2% maybe, if we are lucky — not even."

Guy Gallet, chief of Belgium's chocolate federation, expects earnings to be greatly reduced across the board this year.

He said companies that sell mainly through supermarkets are doing relatively well but firms depending on sales in tourist locations, restaurants or airport shops "are badly hit."

Persoone has a firm local base of customers but knows how tourists affect the books of so many chocolatiers.

"Of course, we won't see Japanese people or Americans who come to Belgium for a holiday," he said. "I am afraid if we do not get tourists anymore it will be a disaster, even in the future."

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild to moderate symptoms such as fever and cough. But for some, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause pneumonia and in some cases death.

The immediate challenge is to keep the Easter spirit — and the chocolatiers' craft — alive in these trying times.

A big part is humor and the use of medical masks made of white chocolate is an obvious one. Persoone puts them on eggs.

"It is laughing with a hard thing. And on the other hand, we still have to keep fun, no? It is important to laugh in life."

Genevieve Trepant of the Cocotree chocolate shop in Lonze, southeast of Brussels, couldn't agree more. And like Persoone, who donated sanitary gel no longer needed in his factory to a local hospital, Trepant also thought of the needy.

That's how the Lapinou Solidaire and its partner the Lapinou Confine — the Caring Bunny and the Quarantined Bunny, both adorned with a white mask — were born. Customers are encouraged to gift Trepant's 12-euro (\$13) bunnies to local medical staff to show their support. Part of the proceeds go to charity.

One of the country's top coronavirus experts also knows the medical virtues of laughter. Professor Marc Van Ranst told Belgian children that their Easter treats weren't at risk.

Tongue well in cheek, he told public broadcaster VRT that the government had deeply pondered the issue of delivery rabbits' movements in these dangerous times. The rabbits bring — Santa-like — eggs to the gardens of children, roving all over Belgium at a time when it is forbidden for the public at large.

"The decision was unanimous: it is an essential profession. Even the police have been informed that they should not obstruct the Easter bunny in its work," he said.

There was a proviso, though.

"Rabbits will deliver to the homes of parents, not grandparents," who are more at risk from COVID-19,

Van Ranst said.

Follow AP news coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## **Analysis: Virus shows benefit of learning from other nations**

**By JOHN DANISZEWSKI Associated Press**

In 1910, when a contagious pneumonic plague was ravaging northeastern China, a physician there concluded that the disease traveled through the air. So he adapted something he had seen in England. He began instructing doctors, nurses, patients and members of the public to wear gauze masks.

That pioneering of masks by Dr. Wu Lien-teh, a Cambridge-educated modernizer of Chinese medicine, is credited with saving the lives of those around him. A French physician working with Wu, however, rejected putting on a mask. He perished within days.

More than a century later, now that the new coronavirus has spread across the United States and claimed more than 16,000 lives, some scholars and health system experts are shaking their heads that lessons from other countries were not learned in time to help Americans reduce the toll of the pandemic within their borders.

"No matter how long I live, I don't think I will ever get over how the U.S., with all its wealth and technological capability and academic prowess, sleepwalked into the disaster that is unfolding," says Kai Kupferschmidt, a German science writer.

His comment came as the United States was surging past 100,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, facing a critical lack of ventilators, masks and testing. Now it is more than 400,000. The Trump administration says its approach has been proactive and, thus far, effective, and has blamed others for any missteps.

South Korea, a country that had its first reported case of the illness at about the same time as the U.S., has had a much lower trajectory of the disease and deaths, numbered in the hundreds not thousands. The United States, on the other hand, has become the global epicenter.

Of course, the United States is a larger, more complex, more heterogeneous country than South Korea, Taiwan or Singapore, the three countries in Asia that seem so far to have managed the pandemic with better results. But when they were reacting quickly to the disease, the United States was acting as if the huge disruptions of life that had happened there would not happen here.

Should U.S. political leaders and the public have taken cues from other countries victimized by the disease much earlier — including China itself, which, after an initial period of secrecy and confusion, took rapid and draconian measures to slow the virus's spread?

Those countries tested aggressively to identify and quarantine the first patients and then isolate anyone they might have had contact with. They used technology to trace at-risk groups. They implemented strict social quarantines and distancing — including closing off whole regions. They engaged their entire societies in the fight from the beginning, taking temperatures in public places, isolating carriers and adopting the near-universal wearing of face masks, emulating Wu's still-relevant insight.

Having dealt with other dangerous epidemics including SARS, MERS and the H1N1 virus, the Asian nations arguably were better primed than the U.S. to respond rapidly and know what to do. In the case of China and Singapore, an autocratic system could respond with little concern for public debate and dissent.

To some experts, however, the reluctance of the United States to imitate other countries' successful behavior reveals a blind spot evidenced by a reluctance to learn from other countries, believing that whatever needs doing can be done best following America's own precepts.

"It's as if these events are happening in a vacuum and Americans think none of these events outside our borders are relevant to them," says Dr. Mical Raz, a physician and health policy expert at the University of Rochester in upstate New York. "When people were dying in China, it was hard for journalists to get anyone to pay attention. But what is happening here now is very similar to what happened in Wuhan."

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Even in an age of globalization, the slowness of nations to take on board the lessons of others could help to explain why so few in the United States started preparing for the disease outbreak after it blew up in January with lockdowns in China and several Asian countries.

Raz said she thinks such insularity can extend to attitudes inside the country. Inland states in the U.S. tended to view what was happening in New York and other coastal cities as irrelevant until the disease began arriving in their own places, she noted.

Kupferschmidt, who studied as a molecular biologist, said when German scientists developed a test to detect the virus in patients in January and gave it to the WHO, which offered it around the world, that was an opportunity for other countries to get a quick start on aggressive testing. He wonders why the United States did not follow suit.

Officials at the CDC headquarters in Atlanta decided to develop their own unique test instead, as they have in the past. That effort — delayed and, some say, bungled — cost the United States at least a month of testing. "So many missed opportunities," Kupferschmidt said.

He sees a pattern with other global problems. "A lot of my colleagues who cover climate say, 'Welcome to the club.' Unless it impacts you personally, people just don't see it."

The United States might benefit from practicing "cultural humility," says Daryl Van Tongeren, an associate professor of psychology at Michigan's Hope College. "Cultural humility is this idea that we realize that our way is only one way of seeing the world, and we demonstrate curiosity to learn from others."

In his view, "True innovation comes from being open-minded. Countries that become insular are the ones that fail to advance."

"In the past, countries have looked at the discovery of cures and vaccinations as matters of national competition," says William Johnston, a history professor at Wesleyan University who studies disease and medicine. "The competition between the French and the Germans during the late 19th century was especially marked, over any number of diseases," he noted.

Sometimes the competition is harmful, he said, but it also can lead to better outcomes by spurring discoveries, such as when France and the United States both raced to discover HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

National competition vs. cooperation in science waxes and wanes, he says, and right now he believes the world is in one of its more nationalistic periods.

But Johnston questions if American faltering in this crisis so far was actually about an unwillingness to learn from other countries, or if it flowed from another trend — a populist rejection of science and experts in general.

"My take of our failure goes to this bent of questioning science and going to the creation of doubt, starting with lung cancer, acid rain, ozone hole, and so on," he says. "Whenever there is an economic hit, it has led to the creation of doubt."

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John Daniszewski, vice president and editor-at-large for standards at The Associated Press, is a veteran foreign correspondent who has been writing about world affairs for four decades. Follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/jdaniszewski>

## Next potential shortage: Drugs needed to run ventilators

By MICHAEL REZENDES and LINDA A. JOHNSON Associated Press

New York (AP) — As hospitals scour the country for scarce ventilators to treat critically ill patients stricken by the new coronavirus, pharmacists are beginning to sound an alarm that could become just as urgent: Drugs that go hand in hand with ventilators are running low even as demand is surging.

Michael Gano, of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, said demand for the drugs at greater New York hospitals has spiked as much as 600% over the last month, even though hospitals have stopped using them for elective surgery.

"These ventilators will be rendered useless without an adequate supply of the medications," Society CEO Paul Abramowitz said in an April 1 letter to Vice President Mike Pence, who is leading President Donald

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Trump's coronavirus task force.

Nationwide, demand for the drugs surged 73% in March, according to Dan Kistner, a pharmaceuticals expert at Vizient, Inc., which negotiates drug prices for hospitals throughout the country. Supplies, according to Vizient data, have not kept pace.

"Trying to run the ventilators without these drugs will be like trying to operate a fleet of cars without gasoline," Kistner said.

To date, no hospital has reported being unable to put a patient on a ventilator due to a lack of those drugs, said Soumi Saha, a pharmaceuticals expert at Premiere, Inc., which also negotiates drug prices for hospitals.

When clinicians put critically-ill patients on ventilators, they generally rely on three categories of drugs: sedatives, pain killers and, at times, paralytics.

"You have a tube basically down your throat to help you breathe," explained Chris Fortier, the chief pharmacy officer at Massachusetts General Hospital. "We need medications to sedate you and treat your pain, and sometimes to even give you some paralysis so that you're not pulling on that ventilator and damaging your lungs."

The demand is surging because hospitals across the country are trying to stock up at the same time, said Erin Fox, director of the drug-information service at University of Utah Health, which runs five hospitals.

"I'm just terrified that we're not going to have the medicines we need," Fox said. "It keeps me up at night."

Fortier said adequate supplies of the drugs are also being stretched because COVID-19 patients typically stay on ventilators from 10 to 14 days, which is longer than typical patients.

At the moment, supplies are not critically low at Mass General, Fortier said, but the concern is so great that hospital staffers are monitoring supplies around the clock. "We have a team looking at it, hour-by-hour, seven days a week," he said.

If supplies run out, specialists said, doctors have other options — drugs that may not be their first choice, or drugs unavailable in doses they prefer. Using them could increase the risk of medication error or take more time to administer at a time when clinicians are racing to treat as many patients as possible.

"Fentanyl comes in different sizes," Kistner said, describing a situation where clinicians might have to use several smaller doses for a single patient if larger doses are not at hand. "That would be a lot of work and very inefficient."

The specific drugs running low include the opioid painkillers fentanyl, morphine, and hydromorphone; the sedatives midazolam and propofol; and the paralytics pancuronium, rocuronium, and succinylcholine, according to the letter the ASHP sent to Pence.

Already, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration has announced it is raising its 2020 ceiling for opioid production by 15% and is approving drugmaker requests for higher limits, often within a day.

Pfizer, a top maker of injectable drugs, is one of several U.S. drugmakers covered by the new quotas, and is ramping up production of fentanyl, morphine, hydromorphone and other medicines for ventilator patients, according to company spokeswoman Kimberly Bencker.

"For many of these critical medicines, we have ample supply. For some, the unprecedented surge in demand for these products is limiting our ability to fully satisfy customer orders in the short-term," Bencker said.

QuVa Pharma, a drug compounding business that makes drugs for hospitals nationwide, also received a higher ceiling for making fentanyl and hydromorphone and expects to begin shipping more of those drugs directly to hospitals starting April 20, said co-founder Peter Jenkins.

The Houston-based company aims to make two to three times its normal volume of those drugs while manufacturing extra sedatives and paralytic drugs, plus one to boost blood pressure in COVID-19 patients, said Jenkins.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, some of the drugs were already in short supply because profit margins for generics are relatively low and, consequently, some manufacturers have stopped producing them.

What's more, because the drugs are injectables, they must undergo sterility tests, a process that can take weeks. "You can't say, 'Hey, we're going to make more of these drugs' and have them here tomorrow," Kistner said.

That's why some pharmacists fear the shortages may get worse before they get better. Said Fortier: "This is going to get bigger as we move forward over the next couple of weeks."

Johnson reported from Trenton, N.J.

## **Groups used to serving desperately poor nations now help US** **By MARTHA MENDOZA and JULIET LINDERMAN Associated Press**

In Santa Barbara, forklifts chug through the warehouse of Direct Relief, hustling pallets of much-needed medical supplies into waiting FedEx trucks. Normally those gloves, masks and medicines would go to desperately poor clinics in Haiti or Sudan, but now they're racing off to Stanford Hospital in Palo Alto, California and the Robert Wood Johnson Hospitals in New Jersey.

Direct Relief is just one of several U.S. charities that traditionally operate in countries stricken by war and natural disaster that are now sending humanitarian aid to some of the wealthiest communities in America to help manage the coronavirus pandemic.

"We are responding to the greatest unmet needs," said Direct Relief CEO Thomas Tighe.

He is organizing flights of supplies directly from the group's own manufacturers in China to the Santa Barbara warehouse, and also coordinating shipments from other producers around the world. After spending two decades providing relief to disaster zones, Tighe exudes a calm in the midst of this emergency.

The medical charity Doctors Without Borders spent months fighting coronavirus around the world and is now trying to save lives just down the street from their New York offices. The group is supporting soup kitchens, setting up hand-washing stations, and training local officials how to prevent the spread of infection. Samaritan's Purse International erected a 14-tent field hospital with an ICU in Central Park.

That international aid groups are supporting the U.S. healthcare system shows how dire the need is domestically, and how inadequate the federal response has been.

"We now see nonprofits that traditionally help weak governments coming in to substitute for our national government," said Evelyn Brodtkin, political scientist and professor emerita at the University of Chicago. "We're lucky they're here. But it tells you something about the abdication of the federal role in this crisis."

U.S. blunders related to testing have hindered efforts to contain the virus' spread, and the government was late to respond to critical shortages as imports of medical supplies plummeted.

"Clearly, we have been caught flat-footed," said Dr. Ashish Jha, director of Harvard University's Global Health Institute. "The fact that resources from these organizations are coming to the U.S. is, on one hand, helpful to Americans, but pathetic in terms of what it says about American responsiveness."

President Donald Trump, by contrast, has said the administration has done a "really good job" responding to the outbreak.

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — This story is part of an ongoing investigation by The Associated Press, the PBS series FRONTLINE, and the Global Reporting Centre that examines the deadly consequences of the fragmented worldwide medical supply chain.

CARE, a 75-year-old humanitarian group, is sending relief packages to medical workers, caregivers and individuals in need.

"CARE has never delivered in the U.S. before now, but this pandemic has meant a scale up in our response internationally and here at home as well," said CEO Michelle Nunn.

Feed the Children, meantime, is distributing aid to all five of its hubs across the country.

Experts say charities can't substitute for a coordinated national response. But they're trying.

For the first time, MedShare, an Atlanta-based nonprofit that repacks surplus medical supplies and sends



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them to clinics around the world, is delivering protective gear to major U.S. hospitals including Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles and Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta.

"It's very unusual, but there's a clear need and we want to help," said spokeswoman Nancy Hunter.

Still, hospitals across the country are running short of supplies, and have to ration gear such as masks and gowns, a common practice in medical facilities in less stable countries.

Dr. Rasha Khoury, who's been on surgical missions in Sierra Leone, Lebanon, Cote d'Ivoire, Iraq and spent more than a year in Afghanistan as a member of Doctors Without Borders, is back at her regular job in a Bronx, New York, hospital. But she's using lessons learned in her overseas experiences every day.

"This is the first time I've ever felt a parallel between my work in precarious situations and my work here in the U.S.," she said.

Abroad, for example, she gets one N95 respirator mask every two weeks, so she's accustomed to rationing protective gear. In humanitarian medicine, she says, she quickly trains specialists to practice areas of medicine they're not used to. High patient volumes, blood shortages and teams in crisis are all familiar challenges.

And she worries that if New York, one of the most heavily resourced health care systems in the world, is struggling to get what it needs to care for COVID-19 patients, then infection control, triage and providing basic care are all going to be that much more of a crisis in impoverished countries.

Dr. Jean Fritz Jacques, a general surgeon in Haiti who runs Healing Arts Mission Clinic, is bracing for the worst.

His country is utterly unprepared for the pandemic, and he's watching the group's U.S.-based donors supply American institutions. In Haiti, private hospitals are closing for lack of supplies and equipment, and public hospitals aren't ready, he said.

"We are just praying that the chaos will not happen," Jacques said.

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Kate McCormick of the Global Reporting Centre contributed to this report.

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Contact AP's global investigative team at [Investigative@ap.org](mailto:Investigative@ap.org).

## As Trump rails against mail voting, some allies embrace it

By **NICHOLAS RICCARDI** Associated Press

President Donald Trump is claiming without evidence that expanding mail-in voting will increase voter fraud. But several GOP state officials are forging ahead to do just that, undermining one of Trump's arguments about how elections should be conducted amid the coronavirus outbreak.

While Trump has complained that voting by mail is "ripe for fraud," Republican state officials in Iowa, Ohio and West Virginia have all taken steps to ease access to mail-in ballots, following health officials' warnings that voting in person can risk transmission of the deadly virus. The Nebraska's Republican governor urged voters to apply for absentee ballots. Florida's GOP chairman says the party will continue to run a robust vote-by-mail program.

The disconnect between Trump and Republican state officials illustrates the abrupt, hard turn the president and his national political allies have taken on the issue. Before the coronavirus hit, many in the GOP had warmed to mail-in voting, agreeing that it can be conducted without fraud and even used to their political advantage.

But Trump's hard line appears to be driven by his personal suspicions and concerns about his own re-election prospects. Statewide mail-in voting "doesn't work out well for Republicans," he tweeted this week without explanation.

Trump's comments put his Republican allies in states in the awkward position of trying to defend their practices without criticizing the president. Some said they agreed with Trump, even as their actions seem to suggest otherwise. Others suggested Trump was out of line.

It is "disappointing when anyone in leadership" makes fraud claims, said Kim Wyman, the Republican

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secretary of state of Washington state, which has had universal mail voting since 2010. "When it happens, the public loses confidence in the foundational pillar of our system."

Wyman was part of a group of bipartisan election officials who spoke to reporters Thursday to push for money from Congress to deal with the virus.

In Iowa, Republican Secretary of State Paul Pate did not criticize Trump directly, but said that sowing "doubt about the integrity of the process is as dangerous as vote fraud."

Iowa is mailing requests for absentee ballots to all 2.1 million registered voters ahead of special elections in July. Pate described the move as a reaction to "an emergency," adding: "You need to have some flexibility."

There is no evidence of widespread mail voting fraud. The most prominent recent fraud case occurred in North Carolina's 9th Congressional District in 2018, when a consultant hired by the GOP candidate was linked to an effort to tamper with absentee ballots.

Trump himself requested a mail ballot for Florida's GOP primary last month and he has voted absentee in previous elections. Still, this week he said "mail in voting is horrible, it's corrupt," and the Republican National Committee moved to help state parties block expansion of the franchise. The effort was most notable in Wisconsin, where thousands of voters were forced to wait in long lines after the conservative majority on the state's Supreme Court prevented the Democratic governor's last-ditch attempt to delay the election.

But there's no consensus about Trump's position.

In Ohio, Gov. Mike DeWine and Secretary of State Frank LaRose, both Republicans, this week urged the state's voters to cast ballots via mail in the April 28 primary. The contest was shifted to virtually all-mail last month as the virus outbreak worsened.

Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts, a Republican, is urging all voters to request absentee ballots for next month's primary.

In West Virginia, voters are receiving applications for mail ballots for the state's upcoming primary. On Thursday, the state's Republican secretary of state, Mac Warner, told reporters he agrees with Trump that "voting by mail just opens up opportunity for fraud," but said he believed his state has necessary safeguards.

In Florida, where Republicans have dominated mail-in voting, state GOP chairman Joe Gruters also agreed with Trump that the state couldn't entirely vote by mail. But he added: "The Florida GOP will push vote-by-mail requests and returns among Republicans."

Wendy Weiser of the Brennan Center for Justice, which advocates for expanded mail voting, said there had been bipartisan agreement on the election changes needed to adjust to the coronavirus outbreak. But she said Trump's comments this week were "adding partisan fuel to decisions that should be no-brainers."

Trump has a history of making baseless claims of voter fraud. After he won the 2016 presidential election while losing the popular vote, he insisted there was widespread voter fraud. He set up a commission to investigate, but it disbanded without finding any examples.

Every state has some version of mail voting, but with widely varying rules. They range from systems like those used in Utah, Washington and Colorado, where all voters are automatically sent ballots, to Wisconsin, where a witness's signature is required for voters to return an absentee ballot. In about one-third of the states, voters need a state-sanctioned excuse to make their request.

Trump's concern about mail-in voting appears to come from a belief that the practice benefits Democrats. He tweeted that "Republicans should fight very hard when it comes to state wide mail-in voting. Democrats are clamoring for it."

In fact, Republicans in Florida and other states have used mail-in ballots to ramp up turnout among their voters, especially older and rural voters. On Wednesday, Trump tried to adjust his argument by saying that mail voting was legitimate for Republican-leaning groups such as people over age 65 or members of the military, but should not be broadly available. Trump tweeted that "100% mail-in voting" was vulnerable to abuse and should not be allowed.

In Utah, Trump's complaints baffled Justin Lee, the state's elections director. The only fraud the state finds are scattered examples of one spouse signing for another. The mail system hasn't hurt Republicans at all.

"People are turning out, 90% are using it in a very red state," Lee said. "I don't see any problems for us."

Associated Press writers Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus, Ohio and Bobby Caina Calvin in Tallahassee, Florida contributed to this report.

Catch up on the 2020 campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

## Lives Lost: At 97, World War II vet takes a final road

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — In his final months, Bill Chambers couldn't walk, but he found peace in motion.

Three times a week, his oldest daughter, Patty Cooper, would meet him at the adult family home where he lived with four other World War II veterans. The caretakers would load him into her Volvo SUV, and she would drive him through the forests, farmlands and suburbs east of Seattle.

He knew the roads well. In about 30 years working for the county, he helped build most of them.

"He'd talk about who lived here, who lived there," she said. "There's a cemetery where his parents and my mom are, and he wanted to make sure I knew, 'This is right where I want to be.' He was getting things in order."

Chambers, 97, died March 14 at the home in Kirkland. He wasn't obviously ill, but tested positive for COVID-19 after he passed.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of an ongoing series of stories remembering people around the world who have died during the new coronavirus pandemic.

Chambers grew up in Saskatchewan, where his father sold ice from a horse-drawn buggy to supplement their farm income.

Shortly before World War II, the family moved to Seattle. Chambers enlisted with the Canadian army at 18. He landed at Normandy on June 15, 1944 — nine days after D-Day — and spent the war driving an armored bulldozer, building roads as the front advanced across Europe.

For the rest of his life he would tell war stories. The rough voyage crossing the Atlantic on the Queen Mary ocean liner. How he slept under his tractor to protect himself from enemy fire. The time the shooting stopped when he prayed. How he never brushed his teeth.

He saw paratroopers shot from the sky and buried soldiers he knew. He saw Holocaust survivors treading the roads and gave them whatever food he had. He spent Christmas Eve 1944 with other troops in a barn in Holland. Grateful villagers serenaded them with carols.

After the war he put his road-building skills to work for King County, where the suburbs were growing to accommodate Boeing's burgeoning workforce. He loved machines and being outside; grading roads was a great fit.

Through friends, he met his future wife, Barbara Jean. They settled in rural Carnation. Cooper, one of five children, said they would ride their horses into the small downtown. Their vacations were road trips to Yellowstone, to Disneyland. "It was a happy time," she said.

Chambers was slight, short and quick, happy, kind and full of gratitude, but not overly affectionate — Cooper doesn't remember him telling her he loved her until about a year ago. He enjoyed playing sports. His wife wasn't a dancer, but he would venture into Seattle with friends to foxtrot and swing.

"Every day have somewhere to go, something to do and someone to see," he would say. Being active kept him going.

Barbara died in 2014. Chambers stayed in the house. He still drove; his children would visit. Cooper brought him to get his first pedicure at 95. He loved it.

They would go to her daughter Kelly Adsero's house, where Adsero's young daughter — Chambers' great-granddaughter — would make him donuts, apple crisps or other favorite soft foods. After not brushing his

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teeth during the war, he eventually lost them.

Chambers hated moving into the adult family home after a fall at his own house last summer, hated losing his independence, especially hated when the staff accidentally put his wallet, with a beloved picture of his armored bulldozer, through the wash. But there was no other choice: He was too much for Cooper to manage and in-home care too costly.

But Cooper could still take him for drives, at least until the virus closed the home to visitors in late February. They would split a sundae in the Costco parking lot, watching the customers, or drive to the old house. Along the roads he built, Cooper would blast Christian music so her partially deaf dad could hear.

Chambers wasn't very religious, but Cooper became spiritual during three decades as a 911 operator. She wanted to ensure he was prepared for what was coming.

There were emotional conversations in the car. He sought forgiveness for things he had done. He told her he was so unhappy in the home that he wanted to kill himself. She replied: "Dad, we're not going to talk about that any more, but we will ask God to take you home."

"He was keen on that," she said.

On his last day, the old soldier didn't want food or drink, but lay in bed watching longtime TV preacher Jimmy Swaggart. Whenever the staff looked in, he answered, "It's time."

Cooper, who last spoke with him two days earlier, is OK with not having said a final goodbye.

"He was having a talk with God," she said. "What a beautiful way to exit into eternity."

## Rising from sick beds, COVID medics head back to front lines

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — "Be strong, mum, we really love you," is what Dr. Aurelie Gouel's kids tell the ICU physician when she sets off for long hospital shifts trying to save critically ill coronavirus patients.

Although aged just 4 and 6, Gouel's children are acutely aware of how dangerous the disease can be not only because their mother has briefed them but also because she is among the more than 1.6 million people worldwide who have fallen sick.

Tell-tale symptoms — fever, cough, intense fatigue, difficulty breathing — floored Gouel in March.

"It was very tough for three, four days," she told The Associated Press.

But as soon as she felt well enough, she plunged straight back to work at her Paris hospital that treated Europe's first fatal case.

"It was quite frustrating being at home and seeing how badly the hospitals needed help," the 38-year-old said.

"We were trained for this," she added. "The world needs us."

In the brutal months since France reported Europe's first coronavirus cases in January and then, in February, the first death on the continent, the scourge has infected so many thousands of doctors, nurses and other health workers in Europe that some have now recovered and are going from their sick beds back to the front lines.

"It's a bit like what happened in the First World War. People were wounded and came back to the battlefield," said Dr. Philippe Montravers, head of anesthesiology and critical care at Bichat Hospital in Paris.

The hospital treated the 80-year-old Chinese tourist who in mid-February became the first person outside Asia to die from COVID-19.

"They feel ... very guilty staying at home," Montravers said. "As soon as they are feeling better, they come back to help."

As scientists race to unravel the new coronavirus' mysteries, as yet unsure of how resistant people become to re-infection after exposure, health workers hope that those among them who recovered and are returning to hospitals are now armed not only with a deeper, more personal understanding of the virus but also with some degree of immunity.

That armor against possible reinfection could make them especially useful in the drawn-out battle until a vaccine is found.

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"It helps a lot for them to return to work, and especially for them to return with immunization. That's really fantastic because it takes away the fear that we have for a second wave of infections," said Dr. Julio Mayol, medical director of the San Carlos Clinic Hospital in Madrid. Nearly 15% of its 1,400 staffers have been infected.

For most people, coronavirus symptoms clear up in two to three weeks. But for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

In Italy, those back on duty include Elena Pagliarini, a nurse who was photographed before her diagnosis slumped exhausted next to a computer keyboard, an image that came to symbolize the plight of the worst-hit country, with more than 18,000 dead.

In Paris, the returnees include Sebastien, an intensive-care medic at Bichat, the hospital where Gouel also works. Sebastien doesn't want his surname published because he fears that his already "very scared" neighbors will freak out completely if they learn that he and his wife, a surgeon who is 5 months pregnant, both fell ill.

His infection was so severe that he spent three days "nailed to my bed. I was so exhausted by the symptoms that I couldn't get up."

Yet he was back at the hospital less than two weeks later, even as his wife's symptoms worsened.

"She was really in a bad way and she was hospitalized on the day that I went back to work," he said.

"I felt useless. I had to work. I would have been completely stressed out had I stayed home," he added. "I wanted to help my colleagues."

Assuming that he may have developed some immunity, Sebastien says he now volunteers for ICU tasks that carry a higher risk of infection, such as taking viral swabs and inserting bronchoscopes into patients' diseased lungs so they can be inspected.

"I prefer to expose myself than colleagues who haven't been infected," he said.

Gouel also says the possibility of immunity reassured her when she went back to dealing with the crush of patients.

"I feel that I'm now a durable strength," she said. "If there are things that need to be done with heavily infected patients, things that are risky, I'm easier with me doing them, rather than my colleagues."

Despite being "very worried" when she was sick, Gouel's husband supported her rapid return to work, she said.

"He knows that I will be careful, that I won't take risks, that I will wear masks and gloves and that I won't put myself and our family in danger," she said.

And although her kids "know all about the coronavirus, that it is serious and people die of it," they also understand that her drive to fight it means she can't always be with them.

"They give me a kiss and say, 'Be strong, mum, we really love you,'" she said. "Even though they are small, they know that my rightful place is with the sick."

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Associated Press writers Aritz Parra in Madrid and Frances D'Emilio in Rome contributed.

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

## Scientists warn of Spain's 'premature' exit from lockdown

By ARITZ PARRA Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Spanish authorities say they trust that plans to allow the return of nonessential workers to factories and construction sites next week won't cause a significant resurgence in coronavirus infections,

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as some scientists have warned.

The move would not see a return of commercial activity in restaurants or shops other than supermarkets, pharmacies or newsstands, but has raised questions about the timing in easing some restrictions as the outbreak remains intense.

"We are not under the impression that these measures will increase in an important way the transmission (of the virus)," the spokeswoman of Spain's health emergency coordination center, María José Sierra, said Friday. "We wouldn't be adopting them otherwise."

Some experts had warned that relaxing the two-week lockdown on a broader part of the manufacturing and construction sector comes too early.

Barcelona University's Dr. Antoni Trilla, who has advised the government in the response to the pandemic, said in a radio interview Thursday that confinement measures should continue.

The doctor, who said the government had not contacted a group of advising scientists ahead of partially lifting the confinement, said: "It is logical to try to return to normalcy in all the economic activity, but this must be accompanied by a good system to detect and isolate and treat the new cases that occur."

Margarita del Val, a virologist from CSIC, Spain's main public scientific body, said that loosening the lockdown on industry is "hasty" and that any rollback needs to be accompanied by a program to isolate new coronavirus carriers. Del Val supported the idea of a Europe-wide mobile app that shows the proximity of people to those who have tested positive.

As a way to lower new possible infections, Health Ministry Salvador Illa announced that the government will distribute reusable masks at subway stations and other public transportation hubs. Shops will remain close and office workers are still encouraged to work from home as Spain essentially rolls back to the lockdown situation two weeks ago, when most people were sheltered at home.

Sierra said that the social distancing that was in place then would be enough to avoid new significant outbreaks.

With 605 new deaths recorded overnight, the lowest increase since March 24, the country continues to see both mortality and contagion rates drop.

The COVID-19 illness has claimed at least 15,843 lives and officially infected 152,446 although authorities have acknowledged that the true scale of the pandemic in the country could be much higher. For most people, the symptoms are mild or moderate.

Friday's Cabinet meeting approved a 20 billion-euro fund to help small businesses and the self-employed cope with the economic fallout of the outbreak.

Illa said it's too early to say what comes next for 47 million Spaniards who have been quarantined for four weeks.

A three-week survey of 30,000 households should help understand how many people are or have been infected and guide any further reductions in the lockdown.

The state of emergency has been extended to April 26, although Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has said he will most likely seek an extension.

## Nurses weigh their principles vs safety in virus fight

By CARLA K. JOHNSON and JULIET LINDERMAN Associated Press

Paramedics rushed another critical COVID-19 patient into the emergency room, and Chicago nurse Cynthia Riemer felt her adrenaline kick in.

"Your heart starts racing," she said. "You're thinking, 'How quickly and safely can we get them intubated?' Because if we don't, in the next five or 10 minutes, they could stop breathing. You're thinking: 'What's my next step? Do we need more help?' The more people in the room, the more exposed, so staff stand outside the glass door and you say, 'Hey, get me this! Hey, get me that!'"

Her protective gear: a hospital-supplied yellow gown, foot covers and an N95 mask — plus, from Home Depot, a welder's mask, which she says "helps conserve what we have."

Riemer is 41, a few years younger than a New Orleans ICU nurse who died last week from the virus.

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She and others became nurses to relieve suffering, to save lives. But with supply shortages, changing guidelines and evolving science, some now are asking: "Did I sign up to be a hero?"

One nurse in Baltimore, a father with young children, said he began to think about quitting his job after reading a scientific report that said the virus might spread not only in droplets, but also in tinier aerosolized particles. He worries, too, about mask shortages and poor crisis planning.

"Nobody wants to go to work and feel like they're gambling," said the nurse, who requested anonymity because he feared retaliation from his employer. "Very few of us get into this field to be heroes."

Each day brings new questions for nurses, who are deciding how much they're willing to sacrifice, said Cynda Rushton, professor of nursing and bioethics at Johns Hopkins University.

"Who am I? What do I stand for? How can I have integrity in the midst of this chaos?" she said. "How do I live with myself at the end of the day?"

One nurse posting in an online forum wrote Feb. 28: "The nightmare is real — and it has come home." The posts will be collected and published in a report after the pandemic subsides. It already has a title: "Never Again."

For weeks, hospitals and clinics across the United States have struggled to stay afloat amid a crippling shortage of personal protective equipment, including N95 masks, which filter out 95 percent of particulates in the air. The masks are typically thrown away after a single use, but nurses and doctors are now being instructed to clean and recycle their masks, with some using a single mask for a whole week.

"Absolutely I'm conflicted," said Amber Weber, 38, a labor and delivery nurse at Lutheran Medical Center in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, who has been cross-trained in anticipation of a surge of COVID-19 patients. An eight-hour shift refreshed her knowledge of central lines and feeding tubes, equipment she hasn't used since she graduated from nursing school 15 years ago.

"More than one family member has told me I should quit, that it's not worth it," said Weber, who has two young children. But her professional values won out.

"I didn't go into the nursing profession to abandon my patients when their need is greatest," she said, "or to abandon the other health care workers in the hospital when they're drowning."

In Baltimore, nurse practitioner Katharine Billipp, 38, works with patients who are poor, very sick and staying in shelters, encampments or abandoned buildings. Two weeks ago, her husband came down with a fever and a dry cough, classic symptoms of COVID-19. She stayed home while awaiting his test results, which didn't come back negative for almost two weeks, making her feel "completely useless" as she read about the worsening crisis.

Now back at work at Health Care for the Homeless, Billipp was given one surgical mask to last a week, which comes off only when she needs another cup of coffee.

"Reusing masks is a problem," she said. "It's a petri dish to collect any airborne particles throughout the day." Still, one mask for a week is better than no mask.

"The gray area of all of this, it takes a mental toll," Billipp said. "We find ourselves on the front lines, without proper equipment, being the potential vector of disease to our underserved and most at-risk patients."

The University of Illinois Hospital, where Riemer works, last week granted the hazard pay requested by the Illinois Nurses Association.

For his safety, Riemer and her husband are keeping six feet apart inside their house, but "you can't just give up because it gets tough. That's not an option," she said. In her free time, she is sewing cloth masks for co-workers.

"Do we cry? Sure, absolutely, we cry," she said of her colleagues. "We get angry, we get frustrated. But the majority of us are not willing to give up."

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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.

## Summer camps facing rocky start, uncertain future

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For 17-year-old Morgan Carney, missing her seventh summer at overnight camp in the Ozarks would be worse than what she's feeling now in isolation without her school friends and usual slate of activities.

"She says she can't even think about not going to camp this summer or she'll be depressed," said her mother, Amy Carney. "Her best friends in life are her camp friends."

So far, so good for the Phoenix teen. Her camp in Branson, Missouri, has made no plans to cancel. But other kids looking forward to new or beloved summer programs haven't been so lucky.

Some camps have already notified families they won't open due to the coronavirus crisis. Most, however, are in wait-and-see mode.

"Right now it's such a dynamic situation," said Tom Rosenberg, president and CEO of the American Camp Association. "The camps themselves are trying to be adaptable and flexible as more information becomes available."

With the start of the season approaching, many camps are monitoring the pandemic's progress, and crunching the numbers on potential mass refunds. Some parents have held off putting money down, with camps extending deadlines for enrollment.

Virginia is the only state with a stay-at-home edict that stretches into June. But regardless of whether such orders continue, are imposed anew or lifted, will parents feel comfortable that the coronavirus threat has lessened enough to make camp safe?

Thomas Bradbury in Augusta, Maine, has two girls, ages 8 and 12. He has already paid for camp but has no idea how summer will play out.

"I feel a mix of unease and irresponsibility sending them to any summer camps," he said. "Prevention is better than cure, and I want to do my bit to help prevent this virus spreading any more than it needs to."

Most camps have long dealt with disease outbreaks and critters like lice. Screening and health protocols exist. But Tracey Gaslin's phone hasn't stopped ringing in recent days. She's the executive director of the Association of Camp Nursing, which advises nurses and camp directors.

"We're encouraging camps to work on Plan A, with the hope of having camp, but you also need to be working on Plan B and Plan C," she said. "It could be virtual camping. It could be camping with limited numbers. Who knows?"

A new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report shows that fever, cough and shortness of breath were the most common symptoms of the virus in kids, but occur less often than in adults. Young people, along with others, can be silent carriers.

More than 22 camps have plans to pivot to "online camp" this summer, including some for kids with special health needs. Other camps are looking at limiting field trips and visitors' days, or pushing back start dates.

Day camps reliant on mass busing have the added worry of bans on crowded buses.

The thought of no camp is a dark one for parents already frazzled by taking on home school and keeping kids entertained during lockdown. The prospect is just as bleak for camp directors.

"It's an existential threat to not be able to operate," Rosenberg said. "What we do know is kids need camp more than ever."

According to industry estimates, the U.S. has more than 14,000 year-round and summer camps serving 20 million campers annually.

Geoff Blanck owns and operates the Forest Lake Camps in New York's Adirondacks region, serving 150 to 175 campers at a time. He's proceeding with preparations for this season, scheduled to start June 28.

His staff of 70 is hired, the water will be turned on soon and cleanup has begun. Seven weeks cost \$8,300.

"We're telling families, if we're not able to run camp because of COVID-19, you'll get a 100 percent refund. We know it will be devastating for us financially if we're not able to run, but morally it's simply the right thing to do," Blanck said. "This is our extended family."

So far, just one family has canceled, with a promise to return next year.



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One of the most difficult things has been families delaying enrollment, Blanck said. Will there be a rush come June, or will he wind up running a smaller program?

Todd Rothman, who owns Deerkill Day Camp in New York's Rockland County, is also planning as if he'll open, possibly with a delayed start. He usually opens June 29, serving about 800 campers through the summer.

If he can't run buses, he may ask families to drive their children to and from camp. Some campers travel up to 45 minutes each way.

"We'd probably lose half to three-quarters of our families if they have to drive," Rothman said.

Rothman has had only two families cancel. They were refunded their balances, and their \$500 deposits per child were rolled over to next year.

Doron Krakow, president and CEO of the JCC Association of North America, said about 150 day camps and 25 overnight camps in the U.S. and Canada are operated by Jewish community centers that fall under his nonprofit's umbrella. Between them, the camps serve about 100,000 young people every summer and are a big part of the community centers' annual income.

In the South, summer camp usually starts at the end of May. That means staff would be headed to camp in a few short weeks for orientation.

"There's genuine concern about how safe and responsible" that would be, Krakow said.

Gaslin, meanwhile, is putting her trust in public health officials and beefed-up attention to hand-washing and other preventive measures. She's been running webinars on screening protocols for when kids hop on buses and when they check in at camp. That includes temperature checks and questions about exposure.

"All we can do is mitigate risk," she said.

This story has been corrected to show Forest Lake Camp has hired 70 people, not 23, and camp director's last name is "Blanck," not "Blank."

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, April 11, the 102nd day of 2020. There are 264 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 11, 1980, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued regulations specifically prohibiting sexual harassment of workers by supervisors.

On this date:

In 1814, Napoleon Bonaparte abdicated as Emperor of the French and was banished to the island of Elba. (Napoleon later escaped from Elba and returned to power in March 1815, until his downfall in the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815.)

In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln spoke to a crowd outside the White House, saying, "We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart." (It was the last public address Lincoln would deliver.)

In 1921, Iowa became the first state to impose a cigarette tax, at 2 cents a package.

In 1945, during World War II, American soldiers liberated the Nazi concentration camp Buchenwald in Germany.

In 1951, President Harry S. Truman relieved Gen. Douglas MacArthur of his commands in the Far East.

In 1961, former SS officer Adolf Eichmann went on trial in Israel, charged with crimes against humanity for his role in the Nazi Holocaust. (Eichmann was convicted and executed.)

In 1965, dozens of tornadoes raked six Midwestern states on Palm Sunday, killing 271 people.

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which included the Fair Housing Act, a week after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

In 1970, Apollo 13, with astronauts James A. Lovell, Fred W. Haise and Jack Swigert, blasted off on its ill-fated mission to the moon.

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In 1974, Palestinian gunmen killed 16 civilians, mostly women and children, in the northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shemona.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan returned to the White House from the hospital, 12 days after he was wounded in an assassination attempt. Race-related rioting erupted in the Brixton district of south London.

In 1996, 7-year-old Jessica Dubroff, who hoped to become the youngest person to fly cross-country, was killed along with her father and flight instructor when their plane crashed after takeoff from Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Ten years ago: Thousands of people stood in the streets of Poland's cities in a silent tribute to President Lech Kaczynski (lehk kah-CHIN'-skee) and the other 95 people killed in a plane crash the day before. After a five-month hiatus, golfer Tiger Woods tied for fourth at the Masters, as Phil Mickelson earned his third green jacket.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raoul Castro sat down together on the sidelines of the Summit of the Americas in Panama City in the first formal meeting of the two countries' leaders in half a century.

One year ago: British police brought Julian Assange from the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, where he had taken refuge for nearly seven years, and the U.S. charged the WikiLeaks founder with conspiring with former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to get their hands on government secrets; the arrest came after Ecuador revoked the political asylum that had protected Assange in the embassy. (Assange continues to fight extradition to the United States.) Sudan's military overthrew President Omar al-Bashir after months of bloody protests against his repressive 30-year rule. (A military-civilian government now rules Sudan.)

Today's Birthdays: Ethel Kennedy is 92. Actor Joel Grey is 88. Actress Louise Lasser is 81. Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Ellen Goodman is 79. Movie writer-director John Milius is 76. Actor Peter Riegert is 73. Movie director Carl Franklin is 71. Actor Bill Irwin is 70. Country singer-songwriter Jim Lauderdale is 63. Songwriter-producer Daryl Simmons is 63. Rock musician Nigel Pulsford is 59. Actor Lucky Vanous is 59. Country singer Steve Azar is 56. Singer Lisa Stansfield is 54. Montana Gov. Steve Bullock is 54. Actor Johnny Messner is 51. Rock musician Dylan Keefe (Marcy Playground) is 50. Actor Vicellous (vy-SAY'-luhs) Shannon is 49. Rapper David Banner is 46. Actress Tricia Helfer is 46. Rock musician Chris Gaylor (The All-American Rejects) is 41. Actress Kelli Garner is 36. Singer Joss Stone is 33. Actress-dancer Kaitlyn Jenkins is 28.

Thought for Today: "We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be." — Kurt Vonnegut, American author (born 1922, died this date in 2007).

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