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World Wide COVID-19 Numbers



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller

We'll be brief tonight. The US is up to 633,267 cases, an overall increase of 4.4%; both this number and the raw number increase are lower than yesterday. There are 213,779 in NY, 71,030 in NJ, 29,918 in MA, 27,893 in MI, 26,490 in PA, 26,253 in CA, 24,593 in IL, 22,081 in FL, 21,951 in LA, and 15,678 in TX. NY cases are up by 5.7%, slightly higher than yesterday. NJ cases are up by 3.2%, second consecutive day of reduction in both rate of increase and raw number increase. There are 4 more states with over 10,000 cases, 6 more with over 5000, 21 more + DC with over 1000, 5 + PR and GU with over 500, and 4 more with over 100. VI and MP remain below 100 cases.

There have been 28,278 deaths in the US. Leading are the following: NY – 11,586, NJ – 3156, MI – 1919, MA – 1108, LA – 1103, IL – 955, CT – 868, CA – 813, and PA -771. 19 more states have over 100 deaths, 6 more + DC and PR are over 50, and 10 more are over 10. 6 states + GU, VI, and MP are under 10. Both the raw number and rate of increase in deaths are lower than yesterday. Better trend.

I have just a couple small pieces of news for you today, all dealing with interesting prospective treatments. I'll caution you up front that it's early days for all of these, so we don't want to get too excited. But what is exciting is how many things are going on; the more things you try, the better the odds one of them will work.

The first of these is nitric oxide. This is a therapy which is in current use in newborns with breathing disorders to relax their blood vessels, increasing blood flow to the lungs; this helps red blood cells more efficiently pick up oxygen for delivery to tissues. Since a good part of what's going on in critically ill Covid-19 patients is that they're unable to oxygenate blood sufficiently, this sounds like something that could help. The hope is that this is something that will obviate the need for ventilators and could be administered, along with oxygen therapy, at home. The company has an Emergency Use Authorization to test it in a small trial, which should get underway fairly soon.

Then, there's a cancer therapeutic called ruxitinib, which is used to tamp down an exaggerated immune response, a problem in some cancers too. It is thought this might help with cytokine storms Covid-19 patients as well. It has been approved for off-label use in Covid-19, so we'll see how it works.

There is an anti-inflammatory drug, baricitinib which is also intended to target the cytokine storms. There is some evidence it may also target the virus itself, so it might give a sort of two-for-one benefit. There is work proceeding on designing a study for this.

And last, an intriguing therapy, use of placental cell. Yes, we're talking about that placenta, the temporary organ that mediates the connection between a pregnant woman and her fetus. There are cells called natural killer cells (which I have to say is a great name for a cell) which are, themselves a nonspecific actor in immunity, that is, they target a cell infected with a virus and destroy it. This, of course, would prevent viral replication. This idea arose after studies in China indicated that more severe cases of Covid-19 occurred in people with deficient natural killer cells. The thinking goes, if deficiencies of these cells are a problem, let's top up the patient's supply, and it happens the placenta has a lot of them. The hope is that these cells can keep the viral load in the patient lower until the immune response gets underway. FDA approval has been obtained to do a small preliminary trial in infected patients to see whether this theory holds.

That's all I have for you tonight. I hope you found the article I linked last night helpful to understand how using multiple precautions together can significantly decrease your chance of being infected. Please continue with the precautions; we want the number of new cases to diminish to near zero, and that means keeping yourself out of the line of fire. I listened to a radio story today about the psychological and emotional stresses people are experiencing with job loss, economic hardship, struggling to work from home while watching children while helping them do their school work, and feelings of fear or being cooped up or loneliness and isolation. Be alert for people who are suffering in one (or more) of these ways, and extend a helping hand. Simply to connect and let people know you're thinking of them can be helpful, so reach out.

With that, I'll wish you well. Stay safe, and have a good night.

Potential COVID-19 Exposure at Two Sioux Falls Businesses

PIERRE, S.D. – State Health officials announced Wednesday, April 15, that two separate employees at two different businesses in Sioux Falls have tested positive for COVID-19. The individuals reported working while able to transmit the virus to others.

An employee at O'Reilly Auto Parts located at 2022 S. Minnesota Ave., in Sioux Falls, has tested positive for COVID-19. The employee reported working during these times while able to transmit the virus to others:

Thursday, April 9 – 11 am-7:30 pm

Friday, April 10 – 11 am-7:30 pm

A separate individual working at Tienda America at 114 S. Franklin Ave., in Sioux Falls, has tested positive for COVID-19. They were reported to working during these times while able to transmit the virus to others:

Monday, April 6 – 9 am-10 pm

Tuesday, April 7 – 9 am-10 pm

Wednesday, April 8 – 9 am-10pm

Thursday, April 9 – 9 am-10 pm

Due to the risk of exposure, customers who visited these locations during the specified 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.cdc.gov/covid19/) or [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/) or call 1-800-997-2880.

SOCIAL WORKER RETIRES AFTER 18 YEARS OF SERVICE

Virtual retirement party will be held to celebrate during Coronavirus pandemic.

Aberdeen, SD, April 15, 2020– After 18 years of service in social work, Debbie Menzel is retiring from Safe Harbor as the Kids Konnection Coordinator. Usually, this sort of milestone warrants a celebration but like many events planned during this time, we had to shift plans. We'll be having a "Virtual Surprise Party" on our Facebook page for anyone who would like to leave a comment or message of support for Debbie's retirement.

Debbie grew up in Webster, South Dakota and received degrees in Human Resources and Community Service through Northern State University. Her favorite part of her time working at Safe Harbor is seeing the children that come to use each day, who are so happy to be reunited with their parents. She is passionate about being part of a great cause and will most miss the happy moments she was able to witness between families. Upon retiring, Debbie plans to "keep her husband out of trouble" and publish books about her family history.



"I leave Safe Harbor and Kids Konnection in good hands, knowing they will continue to provide a very important service for our community in providing safe visitations and exchanges to the families that come to us."

– Debbie Menzel, Kids Konnection Coordinator

Safe Harbor is still open and serving clients. Due to CDC social distancing recommendations, we have limited staff on-site and will be providing some services remotely. If you would like more information, please contact Gina Karst at (605) 226-1212 or email at ginak@safeharborsd.org.

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About Safe Harbor – We serve northeastern South Dakota including Brown, Campbell, Day, Edmunds, Marshall, McPherson and Potter counties. Our mission is to empower individuals in abusive situations by providing advocacy and support services; to educate and motivate the community to be proactive in eliminating abuse. We are a non profit organization that is funded through grants and donations.

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South Dakota Severe Weather Preparedness Week is April 20-24th

South Dakota Severe Weather Preparedness Week is April 20-24th. The week is designed to refresh, remind and educate everyone about the seasonal threats from severe weather and how to avoid them.

The National Weather Service (NWS) offices in South Dakota will **NOT** be doing a formal tornado drill this year as part of severe weather preparedness week. Therefore, there will be no test tornado watch or warning sent. This means no tones on NOAA Weather Radio and no EAS (emergency alert system) message disseminated over TV, radio, teletype, etc.

We will however, be using social media to encourage the public to consider their severe weather safety plans and what they would do in the event of real severe weather. If possible, please help us promote weather safety during this week. Here are the daily topics as well as premade graphics that you are free to use the week of April 20-24 (and all season long!):

Monday: Weather Alerts and Warnings
Tuesday: Severe Storms Wind, Hail & Lightning
Wednesday: Tornado Safety Information
Thursday: Flash Floods
Friday: Extreme Heat
Additional safety information on all topics

Local entities may be doing additional severe weather preparedness activities. Please contact your local representatives for further information.

Department of Human Services Makes Resources and Assistance Available to South Dakota Seniors at Home During COVID-19 Pandemic

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Human Services is asking older individuals within the state who have concerns or need more information on resources during the COVID-19 pandemic to contact Dakota at Home.

Dakota at Home assists elders, those with disabilities, and caregivers by pairing them with services offered in their communities. These services are designed to help people stay in their homes as long as possible.

DHS Secretary Shawnie Rechtenbaugh said, "The department is working to ensure that South Dakotans can access a variety of long-term services and supports."

Rechtenbaugh added, "There's no need to navigate the system on your own during this pandemic."

Intake Specialists will be available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Dakota at Home is not an emergency response agency. If an emergency arises, please contact 9-1-1.

For more information, please call Dakota at Home at 1-833-663-9673 or visit <https://dakotaathome.org/>.

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Special Offer FREE Shipping!
Spring Basket Box



WOW! Handpicked fresh from the grove!
Perfect for Mother's Day! Mention Promo Code SPG20.

**Call 1-605-824-7535 to order item 836
or Visit HaleGroves.com/MB00133**

Order Item #836, mention Promo Code SPG20 for **FREE Shipping**.
Only \$29.99*, plus FREE Shipping. Satisfaction completely guaranteed.

Order by April 30th, 2020 for GUARANTEED Mother's Day delivery.



Since 1947.
Hale Groves, Vero
Beach, FL 32966

IC: HMVS-A271

Call now to receive
FREE Shipping!

Limited time offer, good while supplies last.
Not valid with any other offer or previous purchases.

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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	Apr. 11	Apr. 12	Apr. 13	Apr. 14	Apr. 15
Minnesota	1,154	1,242	1,336	1,427	1,621	1,650	1,695	1,809
Nebraska	523	577	648	704	814	871	901	952
Montana	332	354	377	---	387	394	399	404
Colorado	5,655	6202	6,510	6,893	7,303	7,691	7,941	8,280
Wyoming	230	239	253	261	270	275	282	288
North Dakota	251	269	278	293	308	331	341	365
South Dakota	393	447	536	626	730	868	988	1168
United States	431,838	466,396	501,701	530,006	557,590	582,619	609,685	639,664
US Deaths	14,768	16,703	18,781	20,608	22,109	23,529	26,059	30,985

Minnesota	+85	+88	+94	+91	+194	+29	+45	+114
Nebraska	+45	+54	+71	+56	+110	+57	+30	+51
Montana	+13	+22	+23	---	+10	+7	+5	+5
Colorado	+226	+547	+308	+383	+410	+388	+250	+339
Wyoming	+9	+9	+14	+8	+9	+5	+7	+6
North Dakota	+14	+18	+9	+15	+15	+23	+10	+24
South Dakota	+73	+54	+89	+90	+104	+138	+120	+180
United States	+31,909	+34,558	+35,305	+28,305	+27,584	+25,029	+27,066	+29,979
US Deaths	+1,857	+1,935	+2,078	1,827	+1,501	+1,420	+2,530	+4,926

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Dakotas COVID-19 Update

South Dakota

New positive cases: 180 (80 from Smithfield)
Total positive cases: 1,168 (518 from Smithfield)
New Hospitalization: +6 (51 total)
Recovered: +68 (329 total)
Negatives: +383 (8,691 total)
Deaths: 0 (6 total)

No change on community impact map

Brown: +1 positive (15 total)
Charles Mix: +1 recovered (2 of 4 recovered)
Hughes: +1 recovered (4 of 5 recovered)
Jerauld: +2 recovered (2 of 3 recovered)
Lincoln: +10 positive, +1 recovered (28 of 65 recovered)
McCook: +1 positive (3 total)
Minnehaha: +166 positive, +59 recovered (179 of 934 recovered)
Oglala Lakota: +1 recovered (1 of 1 recovered)
Pennington: +1 recovered (6 of 9 recovered)
Sanborn: +1 positive (3 total)
Walworth: +3 positive (5 total)
Yankton: +1 recovered (17 of 22 recovered)

1 person taken into custody at the Jameson section of the SD Prison has tested positive. He was in no contact with anyone else and is in isolation.

The N.D. DoH & private labs are reporting 401 total completed tests today for COVID-19, with 24 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 365.

State & private labs have conducted 11,317 total tests with 10,952 negative results.

142 ND patients are considered recovered.

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0 to 19 years	55	0
20 to 29 years	220	0
30 to 39 years	286	0
40 to 49 years	236	0
50 to 59 years	215	2
60 to 69 years	123	1
70 to 79 years	19	1
80+ years	14	2

SOUTH DAKOTA CASE COUNTS

Test Results	# of Cases
Positive*	1168
Negative**	8691
Ever Hospitalized*	51
Deaths**	6
Recovered	329

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County	Total Positive Cases	# Recovered
Aurora	1	1
Beadle	21	19
Bon Homme	4	3
Brookings	9	6
Brown	15	10
Charles Mix	4	2
Clark	1	1
Clay	5	4
Codington	13	11
Corson	1	1
Davison	3	3
Deuel	1	1
Fall River	1	1
Faulk	1	1
Hamlin	1	1
Hughes	5	4
Hutchinson	2	2
Hyde	1	0
Jerauld	3	2
Lake	2	1

Lawrence	9	9
Lincoln	65	28
Lyman	2	2
Marshall	1	1
McCook	3	1
Meade	1	1
Miner	1	0
Minnehaha	934	179
Oglala Lakota	1	1
Pennington	9	6
Roberts	4	3
Sanborn	3	0
Spink	3	2
Sully	1	0
Todd	1	1
Turner	5	1
Union	4	3
Walworth	5	0
Yankton	22	17

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Male	637	4
Female	531	2

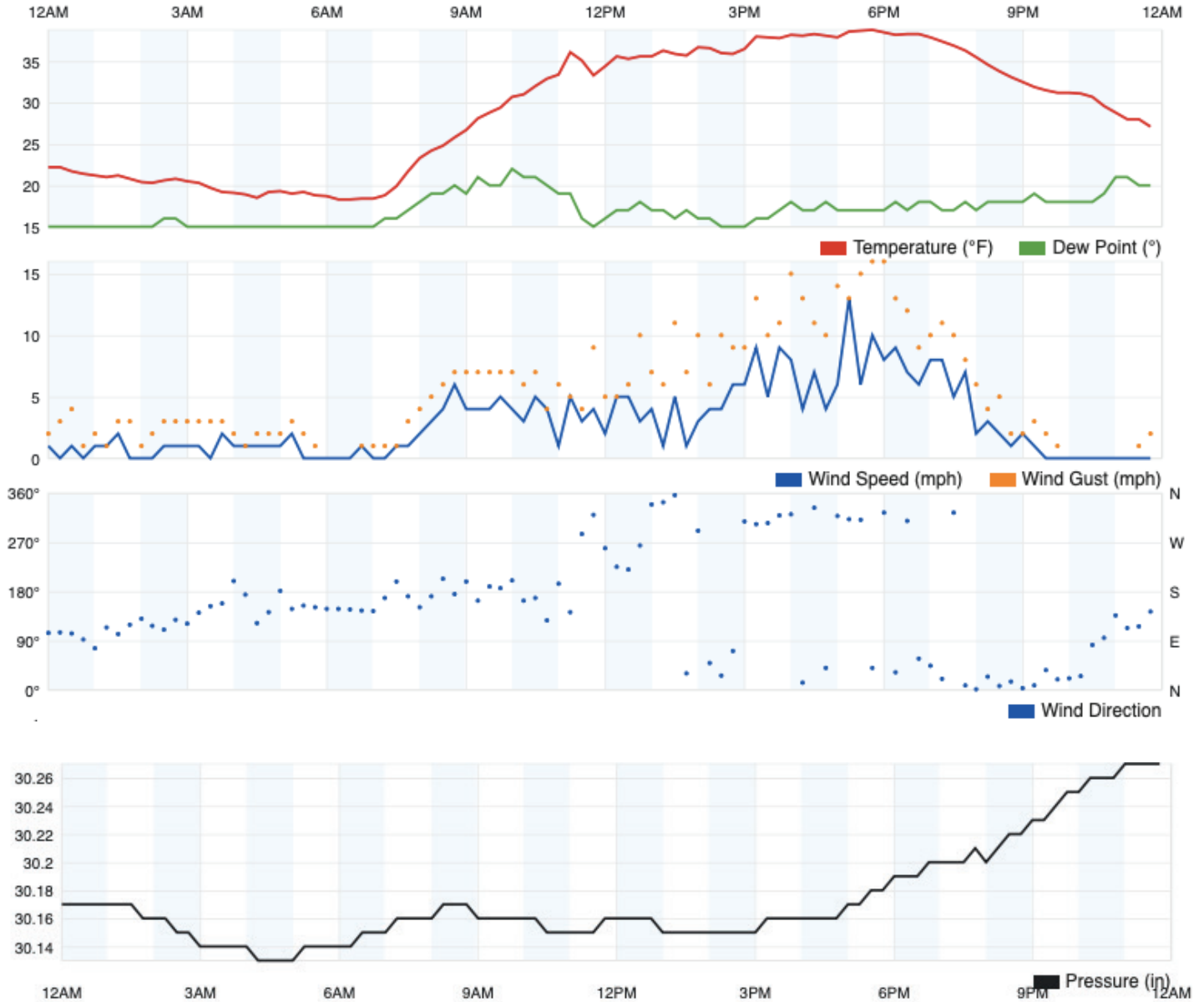
COVID-19 DEATHS IN SOUTH DAKOTA BY COUNTY

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	2
McCook	1
Minnehaha	2
Pennington	1

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Increasing
Clouds

High: 45 °F

Tonight



Decreasing
Clouds

Low: 24 °F

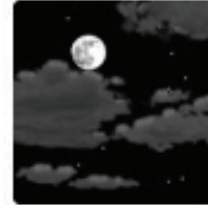
Friday



Sunny

High: 53 °F

Friday
Night



Increasing
Clouds

Low: 34 °F

Saturday



Partly Sunny

High: 58 °F

Warming Up For The Weekend

Thursday



Light Winds

Highs: 41-46

Friday



Mostly Sunny

Highs: 49-54

Saturday



Breezy

Highs: 55-60

Sunday



Breezy

Highs: 52-60



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 4/16/2020 5:07 AM Central

Currently areas of central SD are experiencing patchy dense fog that will dissipate later this morning. The slow warming trend continues as we move towards the weekend, with highs reaching back into the 50s by Friday and Saturday. Mostly dry conditions are expected.

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Today in Weather History

April 16, 1967: Severe thunderstorms moved through areas of central and eastern South Dakota, producing large hail, damaging winds, and even a few tornadoes. The event began in the mid-afternoon hours and lasted into the evening. One of the tornadoes, an F1, formed over Lake Poinsette in Hamlin County. From there it moved from southwest to northeast, toward the northern shore, then made a loop and traveled toward the southeast. Two trailer houses and a few small buildings were damaged. 11 people were injured when a trailer house was turned over to one side, and then turned over on the other side. In Brown County, the storms produced hail 1.75 inches in diameter and 61mph winds.

April 16, 1976: A deepening low-pressure system moved northward out of Nebraska and across western South Dakota. Winds of 60 to 80 mph were reported across the area with gusts over 90 mph in southwest Minnesota. Some recorded wind speeds included 62 mph at Sioux Falls, 70 mph at Brookings, and 82 mph at Watertown. Many buildings were damaged, and many roofs were blown off and at Sioux Falls, and Huron airports planes were overturned. Across southwest Minnesota, many trees were uprooted, and several trucks were blown off of the highway. Across the area, many, barns, outbuildings, sheds, and older structures were demolished.

April 16, 2000: Heavy snow of 6 to 9 inches fell across parts of central and northeast South Dakota during the morning hours. The heavy snow caused many roads to become slushy and difficult to travel. The heavy snow also downed some tree branches. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Ferney, Miller, and Webster; 7 inches at Agar, Mellette, and Twin Brooks; 8 inches at Gettysburg, and 9 inches at Faulkton.

1849: Charleston, South Carolina recorded their latest freeze ever with a temperature of 32 degrees while 6 inches of snow fell at Wilmington, North Carolina. Snow fell as far south as Milledgeville, Georgia. A damaging hard freeze occurred from Texas to Georgia devastating the cotton crop.

1851: "The Lighthouse Storm" of 1851 struck New England on this date. Heavy gales and high seas pounded the coasts of New Hampshire and eastern Massachusetts. The storm arrived at the time of a full moon, and high tide was producing unusually high storm tides. The storm was so named because it destroyed the lighthouse at Cohasset, Massachusetts. Two assistant lighthouse keepers were killed there when the structure was swept away by the storm tide.

2008: Typhoon Neoguri forms over the South China Sea on the 15th and rapidly intensifying to attain typhoon strength by the 16th, reaching its peak intensity on the 18th with maximum sustained winds near 109 mph. More than 120,000 people are evacuated from Hainan when heavy rains cause flash floods in low-lying areas. Three fatalities are attributed to the storm, though 40 fishermen are reported missing. Neoguri made landfall in China earlier than any other tropical cyclone on record, about two weeks before the previous record set by Typhoon Wanda in 1971.

1851 - The famous "Lighthouse Storm" raged near Boston Harbor. Whole gales and gigantic waves destroyed Minot Light with its two keepers still inside. The storm resulted in great shipping losses and coastal erosion. (David Ludlum)

1880 - A tornado near Marshall, MO, carried the heavy timbers of an entire home a distance of twelve miles. (The Weather Channel)

1933 - Franklin Lake, NH, was buried under 35 inches of snow. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1960 - A wind gust of 70 mph was measured at the Stapleton International Airport in Denver CO, their highest wind gust of record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A slow moving storm system produced heavy rain over North Carolina and the Middle Atlantic Coast States. More than six inches of rain drenched parts of Virginia, and flooding in Virginia claimed three lives. Floodwaters along the James River inundated parts of Richmond VA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A storm in the northeastern U.S. produced a foot of snow at Pittsburg VT. Severe thunderstorms produced baseball size hail and spawned five tornadoes in the Southern High Plains Region. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 39 °F at 4:24 PM

Low Temp: 18 °F at 6:19 AM

Wind: 16 mph at 3:49 PM

Snow

Record High: 91° in 1913

Record Low: 14° in 1953, 1899

Average High: 58°F

Average Low: 32°F

Average Precip in April.: 0.74

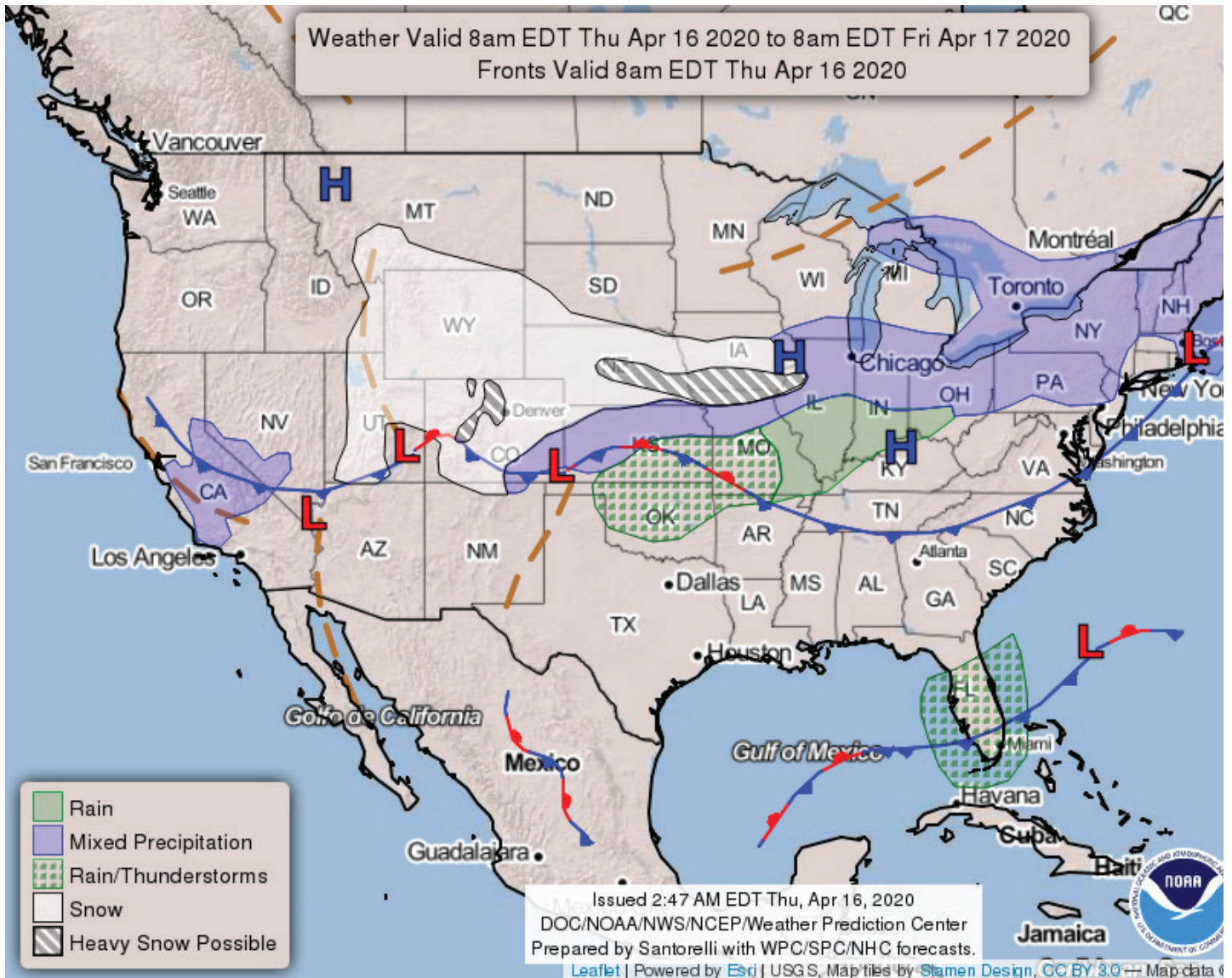
Precip to date in April.: 0.94

Average Precip to date: 2.92

Precip Year to Date: 1.29

Sunset Tonight: 8:22 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:44 a.m.



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ROOM FULL OF LONELY

It seemed as though the night would never end. Little Luke tossed and turned trying to get comfortable and fall asleep. Finally, he gave up and came wandering out of his bedroom with his favorite blanket and teddy bear.

His father heard his footsteps and went upstairs. Picking him up he asked, "What's the matter? Why can't you sleep?"

"It's my room," he replied.

"Your room? What's wrong with your room?" asked his Dad.

"It's full of lonely," said Luke.

It is a well-known fact that loneliness is one of the biggest problems in society today. Though we are surrounded by family and friends, loneliness grips the hearts and minds of countless millions. Medications and endless activities do not seem to fill the vacuum.

God has promised in His Word that "He will never leave us nor forsake us." If that's true, then why do so many feel lonely?

Could it be that we have left God and He wants us to return to Him? Has He created those feelings of loneliness to get us to realize we have abandoned Him? Have we become so involved with so many "things" that we have crowded Him out of our days? Must He use the darkness of a lonely night to get our attention to return to Him? I promise He'll do what it takes!

Prayer: We ask You, Father, to do whatever it takes to draw us so close to You that we will feel Your presence and power wherever we are, night or day. Come close, now! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Hebrews 13:6 So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?"

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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
 - **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
 - **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
 - **CANCELLED** 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

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News from the Associated Press

Smithfield Foods closes plants in Wisconsin, Missouri

CUDAHY, Wis. (AP) — Smithfield Foods will temporarily close its plants in Cudahy, Wisconsin and Martin City, Missouri because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The plant near Milwaukee will be closed for two weeks while the facility in Missouri is closed indefinitely. The Missouri plant receives raw material from the company's Sioux Falls, South Dakota facility, which is also closed.

Smithfield Foods has reported 518 infections in employees in Sioux Falls and another 126 in people connected to them.

Smithfield said a small number of employees at the Wisconsin and Missouri plants have tested positive for COVID-19.

The company is based in Smithfield, Virginia and employs over 1,000 workers at the Cudahy plant.

John Eiden, president of the United Food & Commercial Workers Union Local 1473, raised concerns that the company wasn't doing enough to protect workers in a letter to Smithfield's human resources department, the Journal Sentinel reported.

The March 26 letter said two employees have tested positive for coronavirus, but not all union members were informed of the second case.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

01-05-17-19-28

(one, five, seventeen, nineteen, twenty-eight)

Estimated jackpot: \$29,000

Lotto America

03-19-26-45-51, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 3

(three, nineteen, twenty-six, forty-five, fifty-one; Star Ball: five; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.15 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$159 million

Powerball

10-12-33-36-41, Powerball: 2, Power Play: 3

(ten, twelve, thirty-three, thirty-six, forty-one; Powerball: two; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$22 million

US judge cancels permit for Keystone XL pipeline from Canada

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A U.S. judge canceled a key permit Wednesday for the Keystone XL oil pipeline that's expected to stretch from Canada to Nebraska, another setback for the disputed project that got underway less than two weeks ago following years of delays.

Judge Brian Morris said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers failed to adequately consider effects on endangered species such as pallid sturgeon, a massive, dinosaur-like fish that lives in rivers the pipeline would cross.

The ruling, however, does not shut down work that has begun at the U.S.-Canada border crossing in Montana, according to attorneys in the case. Pipeline sponsor TC Energy will need the permit for future

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construction across hundreds of rivers and streams along Keystone's 1,200-mile (1,930-kilometer) route. "It creates another significant hurdle for the project," said Anthony Swift with the Natural Resources Defense Council, one of the groups that challenged the permit.

"Regardless of whether they have the cross border segment ... Keystone XL has basically lost all of its Clean Water Act permits for water crossings," he said.

TC Energy was reviewing the ruling but remained "committed to building this important energy infrastructure project," spokesman Terry Cunha said.

Officials with the Army Corps of Engineers did not have an immediate response to the ruling.

The Keystone authorization came under a so-called nationwide permit issued by the Corps in 2017, essentially giving blanket approval to pipeline or similar utility projects with minimal effects on waterways.

The cancellation could have broader implications because it appears to invalidate dredging work for any project authorized under the 2017 permit, said attorney Jared Margolis with the Center for Biological Diversity, another plaintiff in the case. It's unclear what projects would be included.

Morris is holding a court hearing Thursday on two other lawsuits against the \$8 billion pipeline. American Indian tribes and environmental groups want him to halt the construction at the border while a lawsuit challenging President Donald Trump's approval of the pipeline last year works its way through the courts.

The pipeline was proposed in 2008 and would carry up to 830,000 barrels (35 million gallons) of crude daily to Nebraska, where it would be transferred to another TC Energy pipeline for shipment to refineries and export terminals on the Gulf of Mexico.

It was rejected twice under the Obama administration because of concerns that it could worsen climate change, then Trump revived it.

TC Energy's surprise March 31 announcement that it intended to start construction amid a global economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic came after the provincial government in Alberta invested \$1.1 billion to jump-start the work.

Tribal leaders and some residents of rural communities along the pipeline's route worry that thousands of workers needed for the project could spread the virus.

As many as 11 construction camps, some housing up to 1,000 people, were initially planned for the project. TC Energy says those are under review amid the pandemic and won't be needed until later in the summer.

Work on two camps, in Montana and South Dakota, could start as soon as this month, according to court documents filed by the company this week.

South Dakota COVID cases top 1,100; meat plant worker dies

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The number of people testing positive for the coronavirus in South Dakota has surpassed 1,100, and more than half of those cases have some connection to the Smithfield Foods pork processing plant in Sioux Falls.

Health officials said Wednesday that 180 more people tested positive for COVID-19 in the last day, bringing the statewide total to 1,168 cases. A total of 934 cases were in Minnehaha County, the location of the Smithfield Foods plant.

The plant is one of the largest known clusters of COVID-19 cases in the country. As of Wednesday, 644 people with connections to the plant were infected. That number includes 518 employees, including one who died on Tuesday morning.

Agustin Rodriguez's pastor confirmed his death to The Associated Press. It appeared Rodriguez's death was not included in state figures released Wednesday: The state has said the number of deaths has held steady at six since April 7.

Despite the growing number of cases, Gov. Kristi Noem said Wednesday that the state's efforts to slow the spread of the coronavirus are working. Sioux Falls is expected to see its number of cases peak in mid-May, while the rest of the state is expected to see a peak in mid-June.

"We are going to continue to recommend all of our mitigation efforts," she said. "What you are doing at home by staying at home and making sure you are practicing social distancing is making a difference."

Noem said she has been talking with Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and officials from the Smithfield Foods plant to work on a plan for getting it up and running again. Officials from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control are in Sioux Falls and plan to walk through the plant Thursday. She said officials recognize the plant's importance in the nation's food supply, and getting it up and running is a "national security issue."

Meanwhile, absent a statewide stay-at-home order, the mayor of Sioux Falls is pursuing a city-wide shelter-in-place ordinance to try to curb the outbreak in his city.

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.

A total of 329 people have recovered from the coronavirus statewide.

For meat plant workers, virus makes a hard job perilous

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Kulule Amosa's husband earns \$17.70 an hour at a South Dakota pork plant doing a job so physically demanding it can only be performed in 30-minute increments. After each shift last week, he left exhausted as usual — but he didn't want to go home.

He was scared he would infect his pregnant wife with the coronavirus — so much so that when he pulled into the parking lot of their apartment building, he would call Amosa to tell her he wasn't coming inside. When he eventually did, he would sleep separately from her in their two-bedroom apartment.

"I'm really, really scared and worried," Amosa said Monday.

This was no abstract worry: At the Smithfield Foods plant, the locker rooms were so tightly packed Amosa's husband told her he sometimes had to push his way through a crowd. Coughs echoed through the bathrooms. The plant in Sioux Falls clocked so many cases that it was forced to close this week. It has reported 518 infections in employees and another 126 in people connected to them as of Wednesday, making it among the largest known clusters in the United States. A 64-year-old employee who contracted COVID-19 died Tuesday, according to his pastor.

The concentration of cases has highlighted the particular susceptibility of meat processing workers, who stand shoulder-to-shoulder on the line and congregate in crowded locker rooms and cafeterias. As many as half a dozen plants have shut because of outbreaks. Because the workers who slaughter and pack the nation's meat are vulnerable, so, too, is the supply of that meat. Smithfield CEO Kenneth Sullivan said the closure of the plant, which produces roughly 5% of the U.S. pork supply each day, was "pushing our country perilously close to the edge in terms of our meat supply."

Amosa and her husband, who are originally from Ethiopia, once saw working at the plant, where she also had a job until she became pregnant, as key to building their new life in the United States: It was well paid, union employment that gave them a community. But amid the coronavirus pandemic, the couple found themselves — like many workers whose jobs cannot be done remotely — exposed on two fronts: Both their health and their livelihoods were at risk. The couple agreed to speak to The Associated Press on the condition that Amosa's husband not be named because he feared losing his job.

The plant is vital to a burgeoning immigrant community in Sioux Falls, offering opportunities for even those without a college degree or fluent English. Smithfield offers pay starting at over \$15 an hour, health insurance and plenty of overtime.

The plant has attracted a diversifying workforce to the city, where Somali and Vietnamese restaurants have joined diners and craft breweries. But the city remains fairly divided, with many immigrants living in neighborhoods near the plant, which employs 3,700 people in a city of about 180,000.

The outbreak at the plant has also presented a significant test to a governor who has resisted issuing sweeping stay-at-home orders. As Republican Gov. Kristi Noem was pressed again this week to impose tighter restrictions on Sioux Falls, her response instead was to announce that the state would give wide access to an anti-malarial drug championed by President Donald Trump as a promising treatment for COVID-19, but that has yet to be proven effective.

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Noem has fired back, arguing that plant workers were deemed essential and would have been reporting for duty regardless.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, but, for some, especially the elderly or infirm, it can cause severe illness and lead to death.

Even before the coronavirus began sickening workers, jobs in the meatpacking industry have been considered among the most dangerous in the U.S. Workers are exposed to a long list of dangers from hazardous chemicals to sharp knives. Just last month, a maintenance worker at a Tyson Fresh Meats plant in Kansas died after investigators say he got caught up in the assembly line belt.

The work is physical, starting with butchering hogs that weigh nearly 300 pounds (135 kilograms). On the processing line, repetitive-motion injuries are common. One worker at Smithfield described often waking up with his right hand so swollen he couldn't make a fist.

Union leaders and immigrant advocates cheered the decision to close the plant indefinitely but wish more had been done sooner.

Smithfield spokeswoman Keira Lombardo said difficulty in getting masks and thermal scanners led to delays in implementing some safety measures when the plant was open. But she said last week the plant was adding extra hand-sanitizing stations, scanning employees' temperatures before they entered and installing Plexiglas barriers in some areas.

Six current employees interviewed by the AP who, like Amosa's husband, insisted on anonymity because they feared they would be fired described far more haphazard measures. They said they were given flimsy masks made of hairnet-like material, hand-washing stations were in disrepair, and there was pressure to keep working even if they felt sick.

One employee told his supervisor on March 30 that he had a fever the previous day, but he was told to report to work and not to tell anyone about the fever. He worked that day, missed the next two and returned when the fever broke, he said.

"No one asked if I went to the doctor, if I was tested," the employee said.

Lombardo said Smithfield "fully rejects any claims that employees were pressured to report to work," calling it "completely counterproductive" to do so.

Smithfield has said it plans to clean the plant and implement more protections in the hopes of reopening. The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control sent a team to the plant this week to examine how it can be safely restarted.

But that may be difficult. Workers say they cannot fathom how butchering lines could be reconfigured to accommodate social distancing.

Meanwhile, Amosa and her husband are both home now — nervously awaiting their first child. But they also have a new worry: His coronavirus test came back positive Tuesday.

Associated Press writer Amy Forliti in Minneapolis, Minnesota, contributed to this report.

'American Tacos' probes a dish's evolution across borders

By **RUSSELL CONTRERAS** Associated Press

RIO RANCHO, N.M. (AP) — You can eat one with carne asada and corn tortillas in East Los Angeles, or one with flour and pit-grilled pork known as al pastor in Dallas. Travelers can pick a few up outside of Berlin's Schönefeld Airport before boarding a flight, or grab one with albondigas and collard greens in Memphis, Tennessee.

In each place, you can taste the social and global evolution of the taco, according to José R. Ralat.

Some tacos incorporate the influence of Asian or Jewish cuisine. Others do their best to stay true to traditional taco orthodoxy — although no one can agree on what that is.

Ralat, the new Taco Editor at Texas Monthly (yes, that's his title), has written a new book exploring how this simple dish with Mexican origins has spread and been transformed, from San Antonio to Tokyo, gaining fans and sparking some outrage among purists.

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A lifelong project, "American Tacos: A History and Guide" (University of Texas Press) comes from Ralat's travels throughout the United States and examines a dish that has come to transcend borders, barriers and bullets.

"No one owns the taco," Ralat said in an interview with The Associated Press. "It's a living food, and I wanted to see how it is changing as we change."

Born in what is now Mexico, the taco is a creation of "the encounter" — the meeting of Spanish and indigenous peoples in the Americas. That meeting eventually led to the corn tortilla coming together with meats, beans and greens.

After the U.S-Mexico War of 1848, the United States grabbed nearly a third of Mexico's northern territory, turning some ethnic Mexicans into Mexican Americans and creating a new southwestern border. The taco north of the line was now on its own, evolving for generations based on the available resources of its consumers.

As Los Angeles Times writer Gustavo Arellano outlined in his 2012 book, "Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America," Mexican Americans in Texas were forced to use yellow cheese, giving birth to what we call Tex-Mex. Isolated New Mexico used red and green chiles in their tacos. California's ever-changing diverse population added its own flavors.

That history is what fascinated Nuyorican-raised Ralat when he began to explore how demographic upheaval and mass migration have changed the taco. He found Indo-Mex, or Desi-Tex, tacos in Houston, with restaurants using aloo tikki, saag paneer and curries. In Oregon and Florida, he stumbled upon K-Mex tacos, which use Asian fusion to introduce Korean fried chicken or bigeye tuna sashimi.

Ralat found kosher tacos in Los Angeles and Brooklyn made with peppery barbecue brisket pastrami charred with green salsa. "Deli-Mex" is what some called it, Ralat writes.

But of course, Ralat found the heart of Mexican Americana holding true to and defending taco orthodoxy. "San Antonio does its best to remain what it calls authentic," Ralat said. "And one could argue, that's also needed."

How could one not enjoy fajitas in a thick flour tortilla with cilantro and onions? (However, some in New Mexico might call this a burrito). Still, what's authentic to San Antonio might not be so to the people of El Centro, California, or even Tucson, Arizona.

On social media, taco fans debate. Ralat brushes that aside, however, as a sign of limited experience. "I always hear people say, 'well, that's not the way my grandmother made them,'" Ralat said. "You know what? Maybe your grandmother was a bad cook."

Steven Alvarez, an English professor at St. John's University in Queens, New York, and creator of a "Taco Literacy" course, said Ralat's book comes as more Latinos are living across the U.S., from Massachusetts to Idaho. "To understand a people, you have to understand the food," Alvarez said. "More people are coming together and so is the food."

The food is a vehicle to make sense of new encounters. "If you are searching for the most authentic taco, you will soon find out it is a fruitless search," Alvarez said. "You'll never find it."

Instead, you'll discover that the taco has moved on, Ralat said.

Today, you can enjoy an English fusion taco in London's Latino-dominated Elephant and Castle area while listening to UK soul singer Dayo Bello belt out a love ballad. You can enjoy tacos at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, where members of the Oglala Lakota Nation playfully tell visitors they are bringing the taco back to its indigenous roots. You can savor a Central American-influenced taco in East Boston with Brazilian immigrants.

"The taco is Mexico's gift to the world," Ralat said. "And the world is responding."

Russell Contreras is a member of The Associated Press' race and ethnicity team. Follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ruscontreras>

The Latest: Sioux Falls mayor offers shelter ordinance

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Latest on the coronavirus outbreak in South Dakota (all times local): 8:20 a.m.

The mayor of Sioux Falls is going ahead with a city-wide shelter-in-place ordinance, now that Gov. Kristi Noem has rejected his request to issue a county-wide order.

Mayor Paul TenHaken did not say how the ordinance would differ from his stay-at-home proclamation. The Argus Leader reports the first reading of the ordinance will come at a meeting Wednesday night with a second reading scheduled for next week.

TenHaken's request for Noem comes as Minnehaha County saw its number of cases reach 768. The state of South Dakota has reported 988 cases, and 438 of Minnehaha County's cases are workers at Smithfield Foods pork processing plant in Sioux Falls, according to the Department of Health. And 107 involve people connected to Smithfield workers, such as family members.

TenHaken said residents would still be able to travel for work and to get groceries and other essential items. The ordinance also wouldn't stop people from doing activities outside as long as they are social distancing.

The Latest: Leaked letter shows criticism of UK government

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:

- Nurses suspended for refusing COVID-19 care without N95 mask.
- Leaked letter shows leaders in social care are critical of the British government.
- Spain records sharp increase in virus infections, but officials say it's due to broader testing.
- Plans to test more people for the coronavirus are underway in Austria.

LONDON — A leaked letter to a senior UK health official shows that leaders in social care are accusing the government of offering conflicting messages, creating confusion and adding to the workload of those on the frontlines of the coronavirus pandemic.

The letter seen by the BBC from the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services also raises fears about funding, testing and personal protective equipment for nursing homes.

Leading British charities say the COVID-19 outbreak is causing "devastation" in nursing homes. Official statistics showed Tuesday that hundreds more people with the new virus have died than were recorded in the U.K. government's daily tally.

Among those raising the alarm is Robert Kilgour, who owns Renaissance Care, which runs 15 care homes across Scotland.

Kilgour told the BBC Breakfast that the sector was facing a "tsunami wave" of coronavirus cases. He appealed for more testing of social care staff, and described the government response as "too little, too late."

Health Secretary Matt Hancock acknowledged in a BBC interview that the government needs to do more for the sector.

MADRID — Spain is recording another sharp increase of over 5,183 new reported coronavirus infections and 551 new confirmed deaths, but authorities say that broader testing is surfacing previously undisclosed cases.

Health Minister Salvador Illa says that at least 1,312, or a quarter of Thursday's new infections, were identified by the new rapid antibody tests that are also able to identify those who already passed the illness or show no symptoms.

Both the contagion and fatality tallies increased around 3% from 24 hours earlier, health ministry data

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showed. Some 40% of the 182,816 total infections have already been released from treatment.

The official fatality toll rose to 19,130 but is also widely believed to fail in capturing the thousands who are reportedly dying with the virus symptoms but are not being confirmed by tests. Spain has not until this week started to extend the tests, which for weeks have been under 20,000 per day.

BERLIN — Austria plans to test all residents and staff in nursing homes for the coronavirus to help curb the spread of infections among the most vulnerable.

Care facilities worldwide have been hard hit by the virus, with elderly and disabled patients dying in disproportionately high numbers compared to the rest of the population.

Austria's health minister, Rudolf Anschober, said Thursday that nursing homes will be "a very big, central focus" of future testing in the Alpine nation, which has so far recorded 14,420 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 355 deaths. The number of new infections in Austria has slowed sharply in recent weeks and the government is slowly relaxing lockdown measures.

Separately, Austria began a second study Thursday to determine the number of undetected infections in its population. Together with the Austrian Red Cross and Vienna's University Hospital, the country's statistics office is testing 2,800 randomly selected people over 16. The results are expected toward the end of April.

GENEVA — The head of the World Health Organization's European office is hailing a show of support, including some "commitments" from around the world, for the U.N. health agency after U.S. President Donald Trump announced a halt to funding for it.

Amid an increasingly fraught financial situation for the WHO as it battles the coronavirus outbreak, Dr. Hans Kluge said: "We have been overwhelmed by the support of European countries."

In an online briefing, the WHO's regional director for Europe credited the United States for its historic support for the agency. The U.S. is WHO's top donor, contributing between \$400 million to \$500 million annually in recent years. Trump on Tuesday ordered a temporary halt to U.S. funding pending a review of its alleged missteps in managing and responding to the COVID-19 outbreak.

"We are looking at the finance situation. Some commitments have come in," Kluge said, without elaborating. "But for the time, we're in the midst of the crisis. So what we focus on is to save lives."

Kluge said some countries like France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland have shown "optimistic signs in terms of declining numbers" in recent weeks, but the "small positive signals in some countries are tempered by sustained or increased levels of incidents in other countries, including the U.K., Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus and the Russian Federation."

"The storm clouds of this pandemic still hang heavily over the European region," Kluge said, noting that case numbers are still rising — and have doubled to nearly 1 million over the last 10 days.

He said the WHO's European region is facing "about 50 percent of the global burden of COVID-19."

BERLIN — Budget airline Eurowings says more than 30,000 people have registered for special flights that will bring them from Romania to Germany to help with the harvest season.

German farms rely heavily on Eastern European laborers for sowing, planting and harvesting crops and there have been concerns that restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic might stop workers from coming.

Lufthansa's subsidiary Eurowings said Thursday that it has already flown more than 3,000 workers from Romania to seven German airports and more than 100 further flights are planned in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, German weekly Der Spiegel reported that a 57-year-old Romanian farm worker who died in southwestern Germany was tested positive for COVID-19. Authorities are trying to trace anybody the man, who reportedly arrived in Germany on March 20, had contact with.

BEIJING — China is rejecting allegations that the coronavirus pandemic may have originated in a laboratory near the city of Wuhan where contagious samples were being stored.

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Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian cited the head of the World Health Organization and other unidentified medical experts as saying there was no evidence that transmission began from the lab and there was "no scientific basis" for such claims.

"We always believe that this is a scientific issue and requires the professional assessment of scientists and medical experts," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing on Thursday.

"Only with reasonable response can the international community win this fight," Zhao said. "China will continue to work together with other countries to help and support each other."

China has also strongly denied claims it delayed reporting on the virus outbreak in Wuhan late last year and underreported case numbers, worsening the impact on the U.S. and other countries. The virus is widely believed to have originated with bats and have passed via another animal species to humans at a wildlife and seafood market in Wuhan, although a firm determination has yet to be made.

Allegations about a leak of the virus from the lab have been made in the U.S. media without direct evidence, and President Donald Trump has vowed to suspend funding for the World Health Organization, partly because of what he claims is its pro-China bias.

BELGRADE, Serbia — Police in Serbia have opened an investigation into one of their officers beating of a man who has allegedly flouted a curfew imposed to curb the coronavirus spread.

Amateur footage of a police officer repeatedly and violently slapping an unidentified person sitting at the back of a police car parked at a Belgrade street has triggered outrage on social media.

Serbia's Interior Minister Nebojsa Stefanovic said in a statement Thursday that the footage "which shows inappropriate behavior of a policeman is not the picture of the police we would like to see." He says he asked for an internal police investigation.

Serbia has introduced some of the toughest lockdown measures in Europe that include a daily 12-hour curfew and a complete ban on all those older than 65 from leaving their homes. Further tightening the restrictions, the authorities have imposed an Orthodox Easter weekend curfew starting Friday and ending next Tuesday.

Those who are caught violating those measures could face hefty fines as well as up to three years in jail.

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — Cargo traffic at the Port of Rotterdam sank by 9.3% in the first quarter to 112.4 million metric tons from the same period a year ago as the coronavirus crisis hammered economies around the world and led to tougher border checks.

The port's CEO, Allard Castelein, said Thursday: "We are facing unprecedented disruptions." And he expects the situation to get worse.

Castelein says the impact of falling demand on the port will become clearer in April numbers and a "10-20% drop in throughput volume on an annual basis would seem to be very likely."

He says the impact will depend on how long lockdown measures and other restrictions remain in place and how quickly production and trade recovers.

A fall off in container traffic was only felt in a limited way in the first quarter in the Dutch port because ships from China, where the virus originated, take four to five weeks to reach Rotterdam.

In the container segment, capacity between Asia and Europe is being cut by around 25% due to a reduction in demand. "This will also be clearly seen in the port of Rotterdam in the coming quarter," the port said in a statement.

The main falls in throughput in the first quarter were in coal, crude oil and oil products.

LONDON — The British government is set to extend a nationwide lockdown for several more weeks, as health officials say the coronavirus outbreak in the country is peaking.

Authorities are expected to announce an extension of restrictions on movement and business activity after a meeting Thursday of the government's crisis committee, COBRA.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said "it is too early to make a change" to the lockdown introduced on March 23 in an attempt to slow the spread of the virus.

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But as other European countries cautiously ease their measures, U.K. authorities face pressure to explain when and how the country will reopen.

As of Wednesday, 12,868 people had died in U.K. hospitals after testing positive for coronavirus. The figure does not include deaths in nursing homes and other settings.

Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty said the U.K. is "probably reaching the peak overall" but that officials are "not yet at the point where we can say confidently and safely this is now past the peak."

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is considering expanding an ongoing state of emergency to all of Japan from just Tokyo and other urban areas as the virus continued to spread.

He convened a meeting Thursday to get approval from experts — a step he needs to clear before issuing a declaration. An approval is expected later in the day.

In his opening remarks at the experts meeting, Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura said the ongoing partial state of emergency cannot effectively slow the infections because people move in and out of the designated areas.

Abe's April 7 state of declaration only covers Tokyo and six other prefectures deemed at highest risks of infection explosion. He initially issued a stay home request only to the people in those areas, though later expanded it to the rest of the country.

Additional measures, including nonessential business closures, are in place only in Tokyo and six other prefectures. In Japan, those measures do not carry penalties.

Abe's coronavirus measures have been criticized for being too slow and too lax. Several local leaders have asked Abe to include their prefectures as part of the emergency, others have launched their own.

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

Some leaders use pandemic to sharpen tools against critics

By GRANT PECK and PREEYAPA T. KHUNSONG Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Health concerns were on artist Danai Ussama's mind when he returned to Thailand last month from a trip to Spain. He noticed that he and his fellow passengers did not go through medical checks after arriving at Bangkok's airport, and thought it worth noting on his Facebook page.

The airport authorities denied it, lodged a complaint with police, and he was arrested at his gallery in Phuket for violating the Computer Crime Act by allegedly posting false information — an offense punishable by up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of 100,000 baht (\$3,000).

Danai told The Associated Press that his Facebook post, though public, was really meant just for a small circle of 40 to 50 people. Instead it went viral.

He believes the government is afraid its opponents would use his observation as proof it was failing the fight against the coronavirus, and acted against him as a warning to others.

As governments across the world enact emergency measures to keep people at home and stave off the pandemic, some are unhappy about having their missteps publicized. Others are taking advantage of the crisis to silence critics and tighten control.

"COVID-19 poses significant threats to government and regime security as it has the potential to expose poor governance and lack of transparency on issues that affect every citizen in a given country," said Aim Sinpeng, an assistant professor of political science at the University of Sydney.

"As the pandemic is a global issue and is constantly on the news around the world, governments have a harder time controlling messages to the public without exposing how little/how much they do in comparison to other countries around the world," she said in an email interview.

In Cambodia, where Prime Minister Hun Sen has been in power for 35 years, human rights group LICADHO has documented 24 cases of people being detained for sharing information about the coronavirus.

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They include four supporters of the dissolved opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party.

Human Rights Watch also reported the arrest and questioning of a 14-year-old who expressed fears on social media about rumors of positive COVID-19 cases at her school and in her province. The group withheld more details to safeguard the girl's privacy.

Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban may have been the most adroit at exploiting the health crisis.

His country's Parliament granted him the power to rule indefinitely by decree, unencumbered by existing laws or judicial or parliamentary restraints. One aspect of the law ostensibly passed to cope with the coronavirus calls for prison terms of up to five years for those convicted of spreading falsehoods or distorted facts during the emergency.

"The global health problems caused by COVID-19 require effective measures to protect people's health and lives," acknowledged Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatovic. "This includes combating disinformation that may cause panic and social unrest."

But she said, "regrettably some governments are using this imperative as a pretext to introduce disproportionate restrictions to press freedom. This is a counterproductive approach that must stop. Particularly in times of crisis, we need to protect our precious liberties and rights."

Lawmakers in the Philippines last month passed special legislation giving President Rodrigo Duterte emergency powers.

Duterte, already criticized for a brutal war on drugs that has left thousands dead, has been fiercely belligerent toward critics. The new law makes "spreading false information regarding the COVID-19 crisis on social media and other platforms" a criminal offense punishable by up to two months in jail and fines of up to 1 million pesos (\$19,500).

At least two reporters have been charged by police with spreading false information about the crisis.

"It is feared that Duterte will use his increased authority to quell dissent and further pounce on (his) political enemies," said Aries Arugay, associate professor of political science at the University of the Philippines.

Egypt expelled a correspondent for the British newspaper The Guardian over a report citing a study that challenged the official count of coronavirus cases. Iraq suspended the operations of the Reuters news agency for three months and imposed a fine of about \$20,800 for reporting that the actual number of infections and deaths was vastly more than the government acknowledged. Reuters stood by its story.

In Serbia, police briefly detained journalist Ana Lalic, who wrote about a lack of protective equipment and "chaotic" conditions at a large hospital complex. The clinical center said her article "disturbed the public and hurt the image of the health organization."

The government also closed its daily coronavirus news conferences for journalists, asking them to send their questions by email. It said it's meant to stop the spread of the virus but rights groups and independent media decried it as a form of censorship.

A state of emergency invoked in late March gives Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha extraordinary powers to fight COVID-19, including censoring the media.

More than a dozen people in Thailand are reported to have been arrested on charges related to spreading coronavirus misinformation.

Thailand's top public health experts deserve credit for their sincere efforts to counter misinformation, said Joel Selway, an associate professor of political science at Brigham Young University, who has published a book on politics and health policy in developing countries.

"This doesn't mean that the Prayuth-led government would not also take advantage of this to crush political opponents," he added.

Artist Danai, who said he will contest the charge against him, admits to regrets over writing his Facebook post about his airport arrival.

"If I had known that I would be in so much trouble like this, I wouldn't have written it," he said. "I have never been arrested nor gone to court before. I was handcuffed and slept overnight in a police station cell. I was devastated, actually. It affects my family and myself.

"But deep down inside, I would have wanted to write it anyway."

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Associated Press correspondents Pablo Gorondi in Budapest, Hungary; Dusan Stojanovic in Belgrade, Serbia; Sopheng Cheang in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Busaba Sivasomboon in Bangkok, and Jim Gomez in Manila, Philippines, contributed to this report.

5 things to know today - that aren't about the virus

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. ISRAELI PRESIDENT ASKS PARLIAMENT TO CHOOSE PRIME MINISTER

Israel's president asks the Knesset to choose a new prime minister, giving parliament three weeks to agree upon a leader or plunge the country into an unprecedented fourth consecutive election.

2. NORTH DEFECTOR WINS SOUTH KOREAN PARLIAMENT SEAT

A former senior North Korean diplomat wins a constituency seat in South Korea's parliamentary elections.

3. RUSSIA, EUROPEANS CLASH OVER SYRIA CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Syria's close ally Russia clashes with European nations in the U.N. Security Council over a watchdog report blaming the Syrian air force for a series of attacks using sarin and chlorine in 2017.

4. US JUDGE CANCELS PERMIT FOR KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE FROM CANADA

A U.S. judge cancels a key permit for the Keystone XL oil pipeline that's expected to stretch from Canada to Nebraska.

5. REPORT: HALLADAY ON DRUGS, DOING STUNTS WHEN PLANE CRASHED

A federal report says Baseball Hall of Famer Roy Halladay had drugs in his system and was doing extreme acrobatics in his small plane when it crashed in 2017.

Economic pain from virus spreading quickly as the pandemic

By LORI HINNANT and NICK PERRY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Economic pain from the coronavirus pandemic spread even more widely Thursday, weighing heavily on nations, businesses and ordinary people as countries struggled to restore confidence that stores, factories, airplanes and schools could reopen safely.

In France, Amazon suspended operations altogether after a court ruled it wasn't doing enough to protect its workers in the country. The online retailer, which has six warehouses in France, said it would evaluate the court decision.

Cargo traffic at Europe's massive port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands sank by 9.3% in the first quarter to 112.4 million metric tons from the same period a year ago.

"We are facing unprecedented disruptions," said Allard Castelein, the port CEO, adding that he expects the situation to get worse.

The International Monetary Fund says fallout from what it calls the "Great Lockdown" will be the most devastating since the Great Depression in the 1930s.

Still, leaders are anxious to send people back to work and school and to rebuild economies devastated by the pandemic that has infected more than 2 million people and claimed more than 137,000 lives, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

Yet in China and the handful of countries in Europe that have partially reopened their economies, even people who still have jobs are wary of spending much or going out. In nearly empty stores and streets, people eye each other from a distance, their faces covered by masks.

Some Chinese cities tried reassuring consumers by showing officials eating in restaurants. In Zhengzhou, Zhang Hu in is back at work but his income plummeted because few are buying the 20-ton trucks he sells.

"I have no idea when the situation will turn better," he said.

The U.S. began issuing one-time payments this week to tens of millions of people as part of its \$2.2 trillion coronavirus relief package. But another part of the relief package, a \$350 billion paycheck protection program aimed at small businesses, is running dry after being open for only a matter of days. Negotiations

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were accelerating in Washington over a \$250 billion emergency request to help.

Even with limited testing, the U.S. has seen nearly 640,000 infections — more than the next four countries put together — and leads the world with nearly 31,000 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University. Experts say the true toll of the pandemic is much higher due to limited testing, uneven counting of deaths and some governments' attempts to downplay their outbreaks.

Despite the relief checks, Americans have begun to protest the virus restrictions that have put at least 17 million out of work, closed factories and brought many small businesses to their knees.

In Michigan, thousands came to protest the lockdown they say has destroyed livelihoods. Some were masked and armed with rifles, but many unmasked people defied stay-at-home orders and jammed nearly shoulder-to-shoulder in front of the Capitol building. The protest was organized by the Michigan Conservative Coalition.

"This arbitrary blanket spread of shutting down businesses, about putting all of these workers out of business, is just a disaster. It's an economic disaster for Michigan," said group member Meshawn Maddock. "People are sick and tired of it."

In Michigan's northern Leelanau County, Sheriff Mike Borkovich said enforcing the coronavirus restrictions is taking a toll.

"People are frantic to get back to work. They have been very edgy," Borkovich told The Associated Press.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said having so many people close together without masks would only increase infections and prolong the lockdown.

With many factories shut down, American industrial output shriveled in March, registering its biggest decline since the nation demobilized in 1946 at the end of World War II. Retail sales fell by an unprecedented 8.7%, with April expected to be far worse.

President Donald Trump said he's prepared new guidelines for easing social distancing, even as business leaders told him more testing and personal protective equipment were essential first.

In Brussels, the pandemic was making the European Union redraw all of its budget plans to focus on tackling the coronavirus pandemic. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the 27-nation bloc's next trillion-euro budget will have to be re-imagined as "the mother-ship of our recovery."

Troubling data indicate the worst may still be to come in many parts of the world.

The British government was set Thursday to extend a nationwide lockdown for several more weeks, as health officials say the coronavirus outbreak in the country is peaking.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said "it is too early to make a change" to the lockdown introduced on March 23. Britain has recorded 12,868 deaths of COVID-19 patients. But those only count hospital deaths and British has seen limited testing. Experts say including virus deaths at homes or nursing homes could make the toll 15% higher.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is urging stepped-up efforts to prepare Africa, warning that the continent "could end up suffering the greatest impacts."

Singapore's outbreak has jumped more than 1,100 cases since Monday. It had successfully contained a first wave of infections, but the new cases are occurring among workers from poorer Asian countries who live in crowded dormitories in the tiny city-state.

In Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro's lackadaisical approach to the virus came under increased pressure.

"We're fighting against the coronavirus and against the 'Bolsonaro-virus,'" Sao Paulo state Gov. João Doria told The Associated Press in an interview, adding that he believes the president has adopted "incorrect, irresponsible positions."

Foreign leaders, meanwhile, rushed to the defense of the World Health Organization after Trump vowed to halt U.S. payments to the U.N. agency for not sounding the alarm over the virus sooner.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the WHO is needed now more than ever.

"Only by joining forces can we overcome this crisis that knows no borders," he said.

Perry reported from Wellington, New Zealand. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed.

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

Nurses suspended for refusing COVID-19 care without N95 mask

By MARTHA MENDOZA and KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

Nurse Mike Gulick was meticulous about not bringing the coronavirus home to his wife and their 2-year-old daughter. He'd stop at a hotel after work just to take a shower. He'd wash his clothes in Lysol disinfectant. They did a tremendous amount of handwashing.

But at Providence Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, California, Gulick and his colleagues worried that caring for infected patients without first being able to don an N95 respirator mask was risky. The N95 mask filters out 95% of all airborne particles, including ones too tiny to be blocked by regular masks. But administrators at his hospital said they weren't necessary and didn't provide them, he said.

His wife, also a nurse, not only wore an N95 mask but covered it with a second air-purifying respirator while she cared for COVID-19 patients at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center across town in Los Angeles.

Then, last week, a nurse on Gulick's ward tested positive for the coronavirus, which causes the disease COVID-19. The next day doctors doing rounds on their ward asked the nurses why they weren't wearing N95 masks, Gulick said, and told them they should have better protection.

For Gulick, that was it. He and a handful of nurses told their managers they wouldn't enter COVID-19 patient rooms without N95 masks. The hospital suspended them, according to the National Nurses Union, which represents them. Ten nurses are now being paid but not allowed to return to work pending an investigation from human resources, the union said.

They are among hundreds of doctors, nurses and other health care workers across the country who say they've been asked to work without adequate protection. Some have taken part in protests or lodged formal complaints. Others are buying — or even making — their own supplies.

Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention don't require N95 masks for COVID-19 caregivers, but many hospitals are opting for the added protection because the infection has proven to be extremely contagious. The CDC said Wednesday at least 9,200 health care workers have been infected.

Saint John's said in a statement that as of Tuesday it was providing N95 masks to all nurses caring for COVID-19 patients and those awaiting test results. The statement said the hospital had increased its supply and was disinfecting masks daily.

"It's no secret there is a national shortage," said the statement. The hospital would not comment on the suspended nurses.

Angela Gatlula, a Saint John's nurse who fell ill with COVID-19, said she asked hospital managers why doctors were wearing N95s but nurses weren't. She says they told her that the CDC said surgical masks were enough to keep her safe.

Then she was hit with a dry cough, severe body aches and joint pain.

"When I got the phone call that I was positive I got really scared," she said.

She's now recovering and plans to return to work next week.

"The next nurse that gets this might not be lucky. They might require hospitalization. They might die," she said.

As COVID-19 cases soared in March, the U.S. was hit with a critical shortage of medical supplies including N95s, which are mostly made in China. In response, the CDC lowered its standard for health care workers' protective gear, recommending they use bandannas if they run out of the masks.

Some exasperated health care workers have complained to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

"I ... fear retribution for being a whistleblower and plead to please keep me anonymous," wrote a Tennessee medical worker, who complained staffers were not allowed to wear their own masks if they weren't directly treating COVID-19 patients.

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In Oregon, a March 26 complaint warned that masks were not being provided to nurses working with suspected COVID-19 patients. Another Oregon complaint alleged nurses "are told that wearing a mask will result in disciplinary action."

One New Jersey nurse who asked not to be named out of fear of retribution, said she was looking for a new job after complaining to OSHA.

"Do I regret filing the complaint? No, at least not yet," she said. "I know it was the right thing to do."

Some are taking to the streets.

On Wednesday, nurse unions in New York, Massachusetts, Michigan, Illinois, California, and Pennsylvania scheduled actions at their hospitals and posted on social media using hashtag "PPEoverProfit."

Nurses at Kaiser Permanente's Fresno Medical Center in central California demanded more protective supplies at a protest during their shift change Tuesday. The hospital, like many in the U.S., requires nurses to use one N95 mask per day, which has raised concerns about carrying the infection from one patient to the next.

Ten nurses from the facility have tested positive with COVID-19, Kaiser said. Three have been admitted to the hospital and one is in critical care, protest organizers said.

Wade Nogy, a Kaiser senior vice president, denied union claims that nurses have been unnecessarily exposed.

"Kaiser Permanente has years of experience managing highly infectious diseases, and we are safely treating patients who have been infected with this virus, while protecting other patients, members and employees," Nogy said.

Amy Arlund, a critical care nurse at the facility, said that before the pandemic, following infection control protocols they're currently using would have been grounds for disciplinary action.

"And now it's like they've thrown all those standards out the window as if they never existed," Arlund said. "It's beyond me."

Ukraine and Russian-backed separatists begin prisoner swap

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian forces and Russia-backed rebels in eastern Ukraine began a prisoner exchange on Thursday, according to the Ukrainian president's office and separatists.

The exchange comes as part of an agreement brokered last year at a summit of the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France. The aim is to take confidence-building steps that could lead to an end of the six-year war in eastern Ukraine, which has killed more than 14,000 people and aggravated tensions between Russia and the West.

Ukraine hopes to take back 19 of its citizens in the swap with the two separatist entities in the rebel-controlled east, according to a statement from the office of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy. It was not immediately clear how many rebels would be released in total.

It was the third prisoner exchange since Zelenskiy was elected in a landslide last year on promises of ending the conflict, which began in 2014.

"The current exchange demonstrates the effectiveness of the president's strategy and compliance with the agreements reached at the summit," the statement read.

Separatist officials in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic said they turned over nine Ukrainians on Thursday in exchange for 10 rebels. They said one more rebel refused to return to rebel-controlled Donetsk.

Another exchange, with the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic, is scheduled for Thursday afternoon.

The last major prisoner swap between separatist rebels and Ukrainian forces took place in December 2019, with the two sides exchanging 124 rebels for 76 Ukrainians.

Trump says new guidelines aim to lift some restrictions

By **ZEKE MILLER, AAMER MADHANI and KEVIN FREKING** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said he's prepared to announce new guidelines allowing some states to quickly ease up on social distancing even as business leaders told him they need more coronavirus testing and personal protective equipment before people can safely go back to work.

The industry executives cautioned Trump that the return to normalcy will be anything but swift.

The new guidelines, expected to be announced Thursday, are aimed at clearing the way for an easing of restrictions in areas with low transmission of the coronavirus, while keeping them in place in harder-hit places. The ultimate decisions will remain with governors.

"We'll be opening some states much sooner than others," Trump said Wednesday.

But in a round of calls with business leaders earlier in the day, Trump was warned that a dramatic increase in testing and wider availability of protective equipment will be necessary for the safe restoration of their operations.

The new guidelines come as the federal government envisions a gradual recovery from the virus, in which disruptive mitigation measures may be needed in some places at least until a vaccine is available — a milestone unlikely to be reached until next year.

Trump said at his daily briefing that data indicates the U.S. is "past the peak" of the COVID-19 epidemic, clearing the way for his plans to roll out guidelines to begin to "reopen" the country.

He called the latest data "encouraging," saying the numbers have "put us in a very strong position to finalize guidelines for states on reopening the country."

Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House coronavirus task force coordinator, added that data from across the country showed the nation "improving" but that Americans had to recommit to social distancing to keep up the positive momentum.

She said nine states have fewer than 1,000 cases and just a few dozen new cases per day. She said those would likely be the first to see a lifting in social distancing restrictions at the direction of their governors under the guidelines set to be released Thursday.

Birx said the White House was particularly concerned about Rhode Island, noting it is now seeing a surge in cases from the Boston metro area after seeing a spike several weeks ago from cases from New York.

Trump consulted dozens of high-profile CEOs, union officials and other executives via conference calls Wednesday.

He received a mixed message from the industry leaders. They, too, said they want to get the economy going but had worries about how to safely do so.

In a tweet midway through Trump's round of conference calls with the executives, the president said the participants were "all-in on getting America back to work, and soon."

But participants in a morning call that included dozens of leading American companies raised concerns about the testing issue, according to one participant who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the private discussion.

Another person who participated in Wednesday's calls said it was stressed to Trump that expansion of testing and contact tracing was crucial, as well as guidelines for best practices on reopening businesses in phases or in one fell swoop.

The participant said those on the call noted to the administration that there was about to be a massive rush on personal protective equipment. Many businesses that are now shuttered will need the protective equipment to keep their employees and customers safe.

Trump was told "the economy will look very different and operations will look very different," one participant said.

Mark Cuban, the billionaire entrepreneur and owner of the Dallas Mavericks, was among several representatives from major sports leagues to speak with Trump. During a Fox News Channel interview ahead of the calls, he credited the president with gathering some of the "best of the best" to help shape his approach on reopening the economy. Still, Cuban did not embrace Trump's push to reopen parts of the

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economy May 1.

"This is such a moving target that I think the biggest mistake we can make is rush to a decision," said Cuban, who previously had been critical of Trump's response to the pandemic. "But I'm going to help him in every way I can, whatever he needs me to do."

The panel, which Trump dubbed the new Great American Economic Revival Industry Groups, also could help give Trump a measure of cover. If cases surge once restrictions are lifted, as many experts have warned, Trump will be able to tell the public he didn't act alone and the nation's top minds — from manufacturing to defense to technology — helped shape the plan.

Rich Nolan, president and CEO of the National Mining Association, who participated in one of the calls with Trump, said there was also discussion about tax relief as well as "making sure that people are optimistic about the economy and they feel safe coming back to work."

"I think you'll see steps to reopen the country at different rates in different states in the not too distant future," Nolan said.

The launch of the council was not without hiccups.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka didn't know until he heard his name announced in the Rose Garden on Tuesday that he would be part of the advisory group, according to Carolyn Bobb, a spokeswoman for the union.

"We were not asked," Bobb said in an email. It was "just announced."

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan said Trump has appointed some "smart people" to his task force who could offer state leaders helpful guidelines as they negotiate the way forward.

"There are certain roles that only the federal government can play and should play, but I think the governors are going to make their own decisions within those recommended guidelines," Hogan said.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin in Washington, Brian Witte in Annapolis, Maryland, and Cathy Bussewitz in New York contributed reporting. Madhani reported from Chicago.

China tries to revive economy but consumer engine sputters

By **JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer**

BEIJING (AP) — China, where the coronavirus pandemic started in December, is cautiously trying to get back to business, but it's not easy when many millions of workers are wary of spending much or even going out.

Factories and shops nationwide shut down starting in late January. Millions of families were told to stay home under unprecedented controls that have been copied by the United States, Europe and India.

The ruling Communist Party says the outbreak, which had killed more than 3,340 people among more than 82,341 confirmed cases as of Thursday, is under control. But the damage to Chinese lives and the economy is lingering.

Truck salesman Zhang Hu is living the dilemma holding back the recovery. The 27-year-old from the central city of Zhengzhou has gone back to work, but with few people looking to buy 20-ton trucks, his income has fallen by half. Like many millions of others, he is pinching pennies.

"I put off plans to change cars and spend almost nothing on eating out or entertainment," he said. "I have no idea when the situation will turn better."

Factories reopened in March after President Xi Jinping visited Wuhan, the city at the center of the outbreak, in a sign of confidence the virus was under control. But the consumers whose spending propels China's economic growth are still afraid of losing their jobs or catching the virus. They are holding onto their money despite official efforts to lure them back to shopping malls and auto showrooms.

Data due out Friday is expected to show the economy contracted by up to 9% in January-March, its worst performance since the late 1970s.

That is a blow to automakers and other global companies that hope China, after leading the way into a global shutdown, might power a recovery from the most painful slump since the Great Depression of

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the 1930s.

"What is not fully back, or is completely missing, is the demand," said Louis Kuijs of Oxford Economics.

In Europe, the first tentative steps at winding back economically crippling restrictions were also running into resistance, as shoppers stayed away from the few stores that were reopening and some workers feared the newly restored freedoms could put their health at risk. The streets of Rome were largely deserted despite an easing of restrictions this week that allowed some businesses to reopen.

In China, e-commerce got a boost when families stuck at home bought groceries and other items online. But forecasters expect little to no growth in this year's total spending on clothing, food and other consumer goods.

Some cities have resorted to handing out shopping vouchers and trying to reassure consumers by showing officials on state media eating in restaurants. Consumption is a smaller share of China's economy than in the United States and other high-income countries but accounted for 80% of last year's growth.

Economists earlier forecast China would bounce back as early as this month. They cut growth forecasts and pushed back recovery timelines after January-February activity was even worse than expected.

Bernstein Research says auto sales might fall by as much as 15%, deepening a 2-year-old slump in the global industry's biggest market.

With factories closed and some 800 million people told to stay home, consumer spending shrank 23.7% from a year earlier and manufacturing fell 13.5%. Auto sales plunged 82% in February. Projections of full-year Chinese growth, previously close to 6%, are now as low as zero.

That is dragging down global growth forecasts. The International Monetary Fund says the world economy might contract by up to 3%, a far bigger hit than 2009's 0.1% loss during the global financial crisis.

Other Asian economies, which are more exposed to global trade, are unlikely to see quick recoveries and will likely follow the West into a downturn, according to Morgan Stanley.

In China, manufacturing is back to 80% of usual levels, but urban traffic, power use and other indicators of daily life are at half to 65% of normal.

At the same time, public anxiety has been fed by reports of new outbreaks that have led to more controls.

A furniture manufacturer in northeastern Shenyang reopened on March 15 but is getting few visitors in its showroom, said an employee, who would give only his surname, Jin.

"No one wants to decorate a house and buy furniture because of the epidemic and loss of jobs," said Jin, 33. He said he and his wife canceled plans to buy a car and travel.

Trying to lure back shoppers, cities from Jinan in the northeast to Ningbo, south of Shanghai, are handing out vouchers. The eastern city of Nanjing gave out electronic vouchers totaling 318 million yuan (\$45 million) via smartphones to spend at restaurants, bookstores and other merchants.

Areas including Jiangxi province in the south have extended weekends to 2 1/2 days and cut admission prices for local scenic spots.

The ruling party has told companies to keep paying wages and avoid layoffs. Private companies were promised tax breaks, low-cost loans and other help, though state media say bureaucracy is slowing the flow of aid.

It isn't clear how many companies might close for good under the pressure of paying rent and wages with no revenue.

"Companies can't resume full production due to cuts in orders at home and abroad, leaving them unwilling to recruit workers," said economist Zuo Xiaolei at Galaxy Securities in Beijing. "If workers have no income, then consumption will decline."

Consumers need to be reassured their health and jobs are protected, economists say.

A strategy that worked after the 2008 crisis was Germany's "short-time work," said Kuijs of Oxford Economics. Employees worked fewer hours but companies received government subsidies to pay them full-time wages. That kept experienced workers in place and supported consumer spending.

"That was considered to be quite a successful system," Kuijs said.

Chinese exporters of consumer electronics, clothes and other goods are unlikely to get much help from abroad as the United States and Europe suffer waves of job losses and tell consumers to stay at home.

"Exports could easily fall by 10% or more in 2020," said Larry Hu of Macquarie Capital in a report. China's leaders are spending more on roads, other public works and on next-generation telecoms networks but are reluctant to pump too much money into the economy for fear of fueling inflation and adding to a mountain of debt.

"It doesn't make sense to stimulate too much at this stage," said Hu. "It will lead to more inflation instead of more output."

AP researcher Yu Bing contributed to this report.

This story's 17th graf beginning "Other Asian ..." has been updated to correct that Morgan Stanley refers to exposure to global trade, not Chinese tourism.

Coffins in the parking lot: A Spanish funeral home copes

By RENATA BRITO and FELIPE DANA Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Jordi Fernández's 16-year-career as a mortician didn't prepare him for the hundreds of bodies that are streaming into the Barcelona funeral home where he works.

Many are victims of COVID-19, and Fernandez cannot truly do his job.

As head thanatopractitioner, Fernández is usually tasked with preparing the corpses for their funerals, to disguise "the colors of death" and instead give the deceased an appearance of peace and tranquility.

But since a state of emergency was declared on March 14, funeral homes in Spain must follow strict measures to avoid further contagion, stripping Fernández of his normal duties and taking away the last chance families had of seeing their loved ones before laying them to rest.

Now, infected corpses cannot be removed from their sealed body bags and are placed straight into coffins, something Fernández and his team try to do with the utmost care.

"What I like to do is place their head on the pillow because that's going to be forever," he said as he choked up in tears. "It is a way to show some respect and give some affection, too."

Fernández stood outside an underground parking garage-turned-morgue currently housing the bodies of over 500 victims either confirmed or suspected of dying from COVID-19.

"I had never imagined a situation like the one in which we are living," he said.

The space run by the Mémora funeral home group has been equipped with air conditioning to preserve the dead as public cemeteries and crematoria struggle to keep up with the demand.

The virus has killed nearly 19,000 people in Spain, according to national health authorities who only count cases where the victims have tested positive for the virus. But funeral homes know all too well that the real number is likely much higher. Fernández says he's seeing five times more bodies come in than normal.

On Wednesday evening health authorities in Catalonia released for the first time the number of virus deaths reported by funeral homes. According to those records a total of 7,097 people had died from COVID-19 related causes in the northeastern region, nearly double the number of fatalities previously reported by Catalan officials who until now only included deaths in hospitals and nursing homes.

For most, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough but for some, especially older adults and people with health problems, it can cause more severe illness and death. Over 137,000 people with the virus have died worldwide, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University that health experts say undercounts the true toll of the pandemic.

Although authorities in Spain believe they have passed the peak of the contagion curve and began relaxing lockdown measures this week, there are still more bodies coming into the Barcelona garage morgue than are leaving.

The demand for cremations was so great in Barcelona that even with all four of the city's ovens operating 24/7, officials considered the option of placing the dead in temporary plots.

Meanwhile, in cemeteries where authorities have limited the number of people attending funerals to three, Fernández said some of his colleagues were being asked to open coffins so anxious relatives could

confirm it was indeed their loved ones inside — a request they had to refuse.

"It shatters our soul when we have to tell them, 'No, we can't,'" Fernández said. "We explain that it is to try and slow the pandemic in some way. But it is very difficult to accept. It is very unfair, too."

Fernández knows this first-hand. His wife's grandmother recently died from COVID-19 complications and even he wasn't able to see her body.

Inside the refrigerated garage, cars have been replaced by rows of coffins. Staff work around the clock, cross referencing parking spots with freshly engraved name tags.

The traffic in and out is intense. White vans come in to drop off bodies picked up in hospitals, nursing homes and residences, while black hearses come in to pick up coffins and take them to their final destination, one by one.

Fernández and his colleagues try to stay focused on their jobs, but he admits the increased workload is taking its toll.

"We face death every day and so we accept it and work with it and see it as usual," he said. "But it is true that when you stop to think and realize that inside each coffin there is a person, a family, a story. Well, that is when it hits you and you sink."

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

'Am I going now to my execution?' One doctor's very long day

By **DOMENICO STINELLIS** and **FRANCES D'EMILIO** Associated Press

PARMA, Italy (AP) — It was March 7, in the afternoon. Dr. Giovanni Passeri had just returned home from Maggiore Hospital, where he is an internist, when he was urgently called back to work. His ward at the hospital was about to admit its first COVID-19 case.

Driving back to the hospital, down the tree-lined streets of Parma, Passeri, 56, recalled thinking: "Am I going now to my execution?"

Italy's more than 21,000 coronavirus dead have included scores of doctors, including a colleague of Passeri's at Maggiore, a hospital in one of Italy's hardest-hit northern provinces.

Since that afternoon more than a month ago, Passeri has worked every day. From the evening of April 7 until the morning of April 9, Associated Press photographer Domenico Stinellis documented his night and day, from a tense, 12-hour overnight shift to his drastically altered routine at home with his wife and 10-year-old son.

In his apartment, he sleeps alone in a garret room hastily converted into a bedroom to prevent any chance of transmitting the virus to his wife. The first time his son, Francesco, leaped up to hug him when Passeri came home after tending to coronavirus patients, the physician stiffened. That's no longer safe, the physician had to say.

Now, when Passeri senses that the emotional pressure on Francesco is building too much, they play cards together. Each wears a mask.

At work, colorful drawings are affixed to the front door of his hospital pavilion to boost morale. Reads one: "To all you warriors, thanks."

Morale, though, can be a precious commodity. Passeri cannot forget the looks in his patients' eyes when they gasp for air.

COVID-19, as the world now knows, can be devastating; it causes mild to moderate symptoms in many of those infected, but pneumonia and other life-threatening complications can ensue. Over 137,000 people with the virus have died worldwide, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University that experts say is almost certainly too low.

On this day, Passeri's ward has 32 of the hospital's 450 COVID-19 patients. With a gloved hand, he touches the bare hand of a patient in his 80s. The hiss of oxygen makes it impossible for another elderly patient to hear what Passeri is saying, so the doctor writes out an update on the man's condition and

hands it to him to read.

On a desk, cardboard boxes hold envelopes that contain medical charts. Two boxes are marked "discharged." The third is marked "deceased."

Mask, goggles, several pairs of gloves, three layers of protective gown, foot covers: At the end of his shift, Passeri removes all in a deliberate, practiced ballet to ensure that nothing contaminated by the virus will touch his skin. The shower he will take at home will be welcome relief.

On this night, he stretches out in his "isolation" bedroom with a book, then gets some sleep before heading back to the hospital and joining his fellow medical warriors once more.

D'Emilio reported from Rome.

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

Coronavirus could erode global fight against other diseases

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL and VICTORIA MILKO Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Lavina D'Souza hasn't been able to collect her government-supplied anti-HIV medication since the abrupt lockdown of India's 1.3 billion people last month during the coronavirus outbreak.

Marooned in a small city away from her home in Mumbai, the medicine she needs to manage her disease has run out. The 43-year-old is afraid that her immune system will crash: "Any disease, the coronavirus or something else, I'll fall sick faster."

D'Souza said others also must be "suffering because of the coronavirus without getting infected by it."

As the world focuses on the pandemic, experts fear losing ground in the long fight against other infectious diseases like AIDS, tuberculosis and cholera that kill millions every year. Also at risk are decadeslong efforts that allowed the World Health Organization to set target dates for eradicating malaria, polio and other illnesses.

With the coronavirus overwhelming hospitals, redirecting medical staff, causing supply shortages and suspending health services, "our greatest fear" is resources for other diseases being diverted and depleted, said Dr. John Nkengasong, head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That is compounded in countries with already overburdened health care systems, like Sudan. Doctors at Al-Ribat National Hospital in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, shared a document detailing nationwide measures: fewer patients admitted to emergency rooms, elective surgeries indefinitely postponed, primary care eliminated for non-critical cases, and skilled doctors transferred to COVID-19 patients.

Similar scenes are unfolding worldwide. Even in countries with highly developed health care systems, such as South Korea, patients seeking treatment for diseases like TB had to be turned away, said Hojoon Sohn, of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, who is based in South Korea.

About 30% of global TB cases — out of 10 million each year — are never diagnosed, and the gaps in care are concentrated in 10 countries with the most infections, Sohn said.

"These are people likely not seeking care even in normal circumstances," he said. "So with the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in health systems overload, and governments issuing stay-at-home orders, it is highly likely that the number of TB patients who remain undetected will increase."

In Congo, already overwhelmed by the latest outbreak of Ebola and years of violent conflict, the coronavirus comes as a measles outbreak has killed over 6,000 people, said Anne-Marie Connor, national director for World Vision, a humanitarian aid organization.

"It's likely we'll see a lot of 'indirect' deaths from other diseases," she said.

The cascading impact of the pandemic isn't limited to treatment. Other factors, like access to transportation during a lockdown, are threatening India's progress on TB. Patients and doctors can't get to clinics, and it's difficult to send samples for testing.

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India has nearly a third of the world's TB cases, and diagnosing patients has been delayed in many areas. Dr. Yogesh Jain in Chhattisgarh — one of India's poorest states — and other doctors fear that means "TB cases would certainly increase."

Coronavirus-related lockdowns also have interrupted the flow of supplies, including critical medicine, protective gear and oxygen, said Dr. Marc Biot, director of operations for international aid group Doctors Without Borders.

"These are difficult to find now because everybody is rushing for them in the same moment," Biot said.

The fear of some diseases resurging is further aggravated by delays in immunization efforts for more than 13.5 million people, according to the vaccine alliance GAVI. The international organization said 21 countries are reporting vaccine shortages following border closures and disruptions to air travel — mostly in Africa — and 14 vaccination campaigns for diseases like polio and measles have been postponed.

The Measles & Rubella Initiative said measles immunization campaigns in 24 countries already are delayed, and it fears that more than 117 million children in 37 countries may miss out.

Dr. Jay Wenger, who heads polio eradication efforts for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, said recommending the suspension of door-to-door polio vaccinations was difficult, and while it could lead to a spurt in cases, "it is a necessary move to reduce the risk of increasing transmission of COVID-19."

Programs to prevent mosquito-borne diseases also have been hampered. In Sri Lanka, where cases of dengue nearly doubled in 2019 over the previous year, health inspectors are tasked with tracing suspected COVID-19 patients, disrupting their "routine work" of destroying mosquito breeding sites at homes, said Dr. Anura Jayasekara, director of Sri Lanka's National Dengue Control Unit.

During a pandemic, history shows that other diseases can make a major comeback. Amid the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2014-16, almost as many people died of HIV, tuberculosis and malaria because of reduced access to health care.

Rashid Ansumana, a community health expert in Sierra Leone who studied the Ebola outbreak, said the coronavirus's "impact will definitely be higher."

Health providers are trying to ease the crisis by giving months of supplies to people with hepatitis C, HIV and TB, said Biot of Doctors Without Borders.

As countries face difficult health care choices amid the pandemic, Nkengasong of the Africa CDC warns that efforts to tackle other diseases can't fall by the wayside.

"The time to advocate for those programs is not when COVID is over. The time is now," he said.

Milko reported from Jakarta. Associated Press journalists Cara Anna in Johannesburg, Bharatha Mallawarachi in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Isabel DeBre in Cairo, and Maria Cheng in London contributed to this report.

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'Dreary summer' expected in California as virus dims plans

By **BRIAN MELLEY** and **AMY TAXIN** Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In these dark times, clouded by fears of an enemy we can't see and sheltered in homes we're itching to leave, it's reassuring to know that California's sunsets over the Pacific are just as vivid. You just can't enjoy them with sand between your toes.

Most beaches and virtually every other destination in California are closed because of the coronavirus outbreak. Though the outlook has improved, Gov. Gavin Newsom has written off the possibility of a typical summer. It could be one where you travel on the internet, have your temperature checked before being seated in a half-empty restaurant and worry about tan lines from your face mask.

While it's uncertain when life as we knew it will return, it's clear this summer will be like no other.

Newsom's sobering message this week has foreshadowed warm days without large outdoor concerts, rides at amusement parks or trips to the coast.

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His so-called road map to reopen the economy won't have anyone packing their car for a trip on the open highway. It felt more like a chart of the stars that need to align before restrictions could ease.

"There is no light switch here," the Democratic governor said. "I would argue it is more like a dimmer."

California is trying to keep the virus from spreading further and stretching hospitals like it has in New York and Italy. Schools are closed, many businesses — including bars and dine-in restaurants — are shuttered, large gatherings are banned, and popular hiking trails and beaches are largely off-limits.

Hopes for a night under the stars at a Dodgers game in Los Angeles have faded. Dreams of eating funnel cake and watching pig races at the state fair in Sacramento evaporated. Visions of sunning on beaches and riding the waves vanished.

To begin gradually loosening restrictions in place for about a month, Newsom said there must be widespread COVID-19 testing, which has already proved problematic. Public health officials also would have to chase down everyone exposed to someone infected with the virus. That's no small task in the nation's most populous state, with 40 million people spread across 750 miles (1,200 kilometers).

Any broad reopening would depend on a vaccine that could be more than a year away and evidence of "herd immunity," meaning a sufficiently high percentage of people won't get infected.

For those who stayed home, observed social distancing and otherwise followed the rules, Newsom's message sounded like something Californians can't envision in summer: a rainy day. And this could last all season.

"From the sound of it, it's going to be a really dreary summer," said Molly Rood, who usually heads to Hermosa Beach with a book after work or rides her bike or skateboard. "The governor didn't outright say, 'Hey, you guys aren't going to the beach this summer.' But he said pretty explicitly no mass gatherings will be likely in June, July, August. You put that together — no mass gatherings means no beach, because the beach has hundreds of people on it at once."

The feel of summer arrives early in California — a characteristic of the climate. Yosemite Falls is roaring, but the national park is closed and no tourists are there to be drenched in its mist.

The Coachella Music Festival would have kicked off a season of big outdoor concerts last weekend in the desert near Palm Springs. But that show and Napa Valley's Memorial Day weekend festival BottleRock were postponed until October. San Francisco Pride, a massive LGBTQ gathering held each June, has been canceled.

There's also no camping at state and national parks from the redwoods to the desert for the foreseeable future.

Baseball would already be in play at five major league ballparks from San Diego to San Francisco. Now that season — and all other pro sports — are in jeopardy.

For David Brady, summertime is about being outdoors — hiking, biking, running or taking a stroll. And it means catching a baseball game at Angel Stadium in Anaheim.

"The absence of baseball right now is really palpable, because it's April and every team has hope in April," said Brady, a public policy professor at University of California, Riverside. And now, "no team has hope."

Before the pandemic came to California, the governor ordered people to stay home and face coverings were ubiquitous, Linda York had big plans for the summer.

The South San Jose resident looked forward to her son's wedding in Maui, her aunt's 100th birthday in Canada and an annual trip to see her mother-in-law in Michigan.

She isn't certain any of it will go forward after watching Newsom's news conference Tuesday and feeling "major depression and disappointment." She's not sure she wants to get on a plane the rest of 2020.

"I was thinking he was going to say something a little more positive," she said. "I almost feel like this year's going to be a wash."

Taxin reported from Orange County. Associated Press reporter Stefanie Dazio contributed from Los Angeles.

Lives Lost: Spanish father leaves behind bits of history

By RENATA BRITO Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Julián Iglesias could always connect with his loved ones through his gaze, even after dementia stole his memory.

"Maybe he didn't recognize me, but there was always something in his eyes," daughter Victoria Iglesias said.

The man who tucked newspaper clippings into his books, who earned two degrees following Spain's tough transition to a democracy, who loved walking in nature and collecting gadgets, died in a Madrid hospital March 26 of the coronavirus.

Like thousands of other Spaniards who fell ill, the 89-year-old was alone when he died. That's especially hard for Victoria Iglesias, who said she, her sister and mother regularly visited her father in his nursing home on the outskirts of Madrid and would have been at his side in his final hours if not for Spain's mandatory lockdown.

"The pain is very deep," she told The Associated Press in a video call days after his death.

The family has been separated since the pandemic plunged Spain, one of the hardest hit countries, into a lockdown last month.

Victoria Iglesias' mother does not even know she is a widow yet. Her daughters agreed they would only tell her once they could hug her.

Though her father had dementia, the inability to say goodbye is just as devastating. "Did he think we abandoned him?" she wondered.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of an ongoing series of stories remembering people around the world who have died during the coronavirus pandemic.

Born in Salamanca in 1931 to a humble family of eight children, Julián Iglesias survived the hardships of the 1936-39 civil war and the country's transition to a democracy. A dedicated student, he earned a degree in business and later one in teaching — no easy feat for his time — and moved north to Basque country with his wife.

They had two daughters, and he had a successful career as a head accountant in what was then Spain's largest company, Altos Hornos de Vizcaya.

In his free time, Iglesias enjoyed long walks in Basque country's lush, green hills. The stillness of nature and the sound of birds helped him think.

Iglesias also left notes, newspaper cutouts and stamps between the pages of the books he read. To this day, Victoria Iglesias uncovers little memories of her father. Most recently, she found loose pages from an old calendar, a union membership card and a newspaper clipping about the death of a train station worker crushed between two train cars tucked into his favorite book, the Spanish novella "The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes and of His Fortunes and Adversities."

When his daughters had problems at work or in their personal lives, they would visit their father at the nursing home in the town of Colmenar Viejo and spend hours in his room, brushing his hair or caressing his hand.

"He was the one helping me," Victoria Iglesias said, holding back tears.

A few days after the nursing home locked down in mid-March, Julián Iglesias got a fever. He was taken to a hospital on March 15, and his health deteriorated. It sometimes took days to get through to the overwhelmed hospital, and when his daughters managed to reach medical staff for the last time 11 days later, it was too late.

The day he died, Victoria Iglesias, her son and partner held an improvised memorial ceremony in their living room. They dressed up, lit a candle and went back through their fondest memories: family holidays to the beach or when he played "Mambo No. 5." They also remembered his beloved gadgets: an Olivetti typewriter, the family's first photo camera and a pair of binoculars.

"Do you know how important it was for me to have my father there, even if he wasn't there mentally? Do you know how much he helped me?" Victoria Iglesias said. "People don't realize how important the elders are."

Powerful GOP allies propel Trump effort to reopen economy

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Leading Republicans say the coronavirus shutdown cannot go on. Car-honking activists swarmed a statehouse Wednesday to protest stay-home restrictions. Capitol Hill staff are quietly drafting bills to undo the just-passed rescue aid and push Americans back to work.

Behind President Donald Trump's effort to accelerate re-opening the U.S. economy during the pandemic is a contingent of GOP allies eager to have his back.

"It's very much time to start having that conversation and start figuring that out," said Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., who has shared his views with Trump.

The push to revive the economy is being influenced and amplified by a potent alliance of big money business interests, religious freedom conservatives and small-government activists, some with direct dial to Trump. They are gaining currency as a counter-point to the health professionals who warn of potentially deadly consequences from easing coronavirus stay-home restrictions too soon.

The mobilization is reminiscent of the tea party rebellion a decade ago, when conservatives roared against federal intervention in recession recovery. It's drawing a similar band of deficit hawks alarmed by the \$2.2 trillion rescue package, religious congregants who say their right to worship is being violated and conservative lawmakers warning of a slide toward big government "socialism" with expanded safety net programs.

"How do you rein in some of the tyrannical enforcement?" said Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz., the chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, in a radio interview.

Economist Stephen Moore is leading a new coalition to fire up activists nationwide. The conservative Heritage Foundation put forward a five-point re-opening plan. Republicans discuss options almost weekly on the House GOP's private conference calls.

"It's about promoting liberty and freedom," Moore said. "It's about stopping spending that will bankrupt the country and getting the \$20 trillion engine that is the American economy started again as soon as possible — as in tomorrow."

Early on in the crisis, Trump's instinct to re-open was kept in check by two unlikely forces — the health professionals on the White House's coronavirus task force and the Trump campaign, which warned that widespread fatalities would be more damaging to the president's reelection than the economic fallout, according to a Republican granted anonymity to discuss the private assessment.

But as the national stay-home guidelines appear to have limited the virus spread, and the mounting death toll, now beyond 27,000, is less than first envisioned, those political calculations seem to be shifting toward the economic concerns, the person said.

"We have to learn to live with this," said Adam Brandon, president of FreedomWorks, which is holding weekly virtual town halls with members of Congress, igniting an activist base of thousands of supporters across the nation to back up the effort.

Advocates say they are focusing on parts of the economy and regions of the country where virus spread is low or workers can do their jobs while maintaining social distancing. They point to construction, landscaping and factory floors. They envision new rules — everyone wears face masks — and other safety precautions.

These Republicans warn that the public health emphasis has failed to take into account the broader societal toll of a prolonged shutdown and potential for a Great Depression. The government cannot keep throwing around money to prop up the economy, they say.

Toomey worries that diseases of despair, including substance abuse, will deepen with unemployment and rising poverty, and supply chain disruptions could lead to civil unrest. He said there are segments of

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the economy, particularly in rural Pennsylvania, "that could be open today."

One early shutdown opponent was the Koch-backed Americans for Prosperity, which argued businesses should be allowed to "adapt and innovate."

With one in 10 American workers suddenly unemployed and dismal corporate quarterly earning reports expected, key Republicans on Capitol Hill say it's time to shift strategies now.

"We're really trying to get this thing going quicker than a lot of people may expect," said Sen. David Perdue, R-Ga., in a radio interview. He spoke to the president over the weekend, he said, and Trump was already thinking about the transition.

"What we see right now is the free market, free-enterprise system is under threat," Perdue said. "Don't come in and tell us how to run our lives."

Democrats warn that jumping ahead of public health guidelines could have disastrous effects if Americans retreat from social distancing and spark new hot spots that overrun hospitals with more patients than available beds.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi issued a stark warning for Americans to "ignore the lies" and "listen to scientists and other respected professionals" to protect themselves and loved ones.

"All of us want to resume the precious and beautiful lives that America's unique freedoms provide," Pelosi wrote in a letter to Democratic colleagues. "But if we are not working from the truth, more lives will be lost, economic hardship and suffering will be extended unnecessarily."

Some leading Republicans are pushing health care solutions. Tennessee Sen. Lamar Alexander, the chairman of the health committee, wants a "Manhattan Project" for testing, referring to the wartime effort to develop nuclear weapons, to give Americans confidence that children can return to school in the fall.

Across the nation, though, end-the-shutdown protests are flaring up.

In Texas, conservative state legislators said in a letter to Gov. Greg Abbott it's ultimately the "individual Texan's responsibility" to keep themselves safe. Many are backed by Texas oilman Tim Dunn, who co-authored a similar letter to Trump.

On Wednesday, drivers staged "Operation Gridlock" at the Michigan state capitol after Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's decision to toughen rather than relax what already was one of the nation's strictest stay-home orders.

Among the groups promoting the effort on Facebook was one with ties to the politically connected DeVos family, even though Education Secretary Besty DeVos stopped her political spending when she joined Trump's Cabinet.

Associated Press writers David Eggert in Michigan and Paul Weber in Texas contributed to this story.

China didn't warn public of likely pandemic for 6 key days

By The Associated Press undefined

In the six days after top Chinese officials secretly determined they likely were facing a pandemic from a new coronavirus, the city of Wuhan at the epicenter of the disease hosted a mass banquet for tens of thousands of people; millions began traveling through for Lunar New Year celebrations.

President Xi Jinping warned the public on the seventh day, Jan. 20. But by that time, more than 3,000 people had been infected during almost a week of public silence, according to internal documents obtained by The Associated Press and expert estimates based on retrospective infection data.

Six days.

That delay from Jan. 14 to Jan. 20 was neither the first mistake made by Chinese officials at all levels in confronting the outbreak, nor the longest lag, as governments around the world have dragged their feet for weeks and even months in addressing the virus.

But the delay by the first country to face the new coronavirus came at a critical time — the beginning of the outbreak. China's attempt to walk a line between alerting the public and avoiding panic set the stage for a pandemic that has infected more than 2 million people and taken more than 133,000 lives.

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"This is tremendous," said Zuo-Feng Zhang, an epidemiologist at the University of California, Los Angeles. "If they took action six days earlier, there would have been much fewer patients and medical facilities would have been sufficient. We might have avoided the collapse of Wuhan's medical system."

Other experts noted that the Chinese government may have waited on warning the public to stave off hysteria, and that it did act quickly in private during that time.

But the six-day delay by China's leaders in Beijing came on top of almost two weeks during which the national Center for Disease Control did not register any cases from local officials, internal bulletins obtained by the AP confirm. Yet during that time, from Jan. 5 to Jan. 17, hundreds of patients were appearing in hospitals not just in Wuhan but across the country.

It's uncertain whether it was local officials who failed to report cases or national officials who failed to record them. It's also not clear exactly what officials knew at the time in Wuhan, which only opened back up last week with restrictions after its quarantine.

But what is clear, experts say, is that China's rigid controls on information, bureaucratic hurdles and a reluctance to send bad news up the chain of command muffled early warnings. The punishment of eight doctors for "rumor-mongering," broadcast on national television on Jan. 2, sent a chill through the city's hospitals.

"Doctors in Wuhan were afraid," said Dali Yang, a professor of Chinese politics at the University of Chicago. "It was truly intimidation of an entire profession."

Without these internal reports, it took the first case outside China, in Thailand on Jan. 13, to galvanize leaders in Beijing into recognizing the possible pandemic before them. It was only then that they launched a nationwide plan to find cases — distributing CDC-sanctioned test kits, easing the criteria for confirming cases and ordering health officials to screen patients. They also instructed officials in Hubei province, where Wuhan is located, to begin temperature checks at transportation hubs and cut down on large public gatherings. And they did it all without telling the public.

The Chinese government has repeatedly denied suppressing information in the early days, saying it immediately reported the outbreak to the World Health Organization.

"Those accusing China of lacking transparency and openness are unfair," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Wednesday when asked about the AP story.

The documents show that the head of China's National Health Commission, Ma Xiaowei, laid out a grim assessment of the situation on Jan. 14 in a confidential teleconference with provincial health officials. A memo states that the teleconference was held to convey instructions on the coronavirus from President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and Vice Premier Sun Chunlan, but does not specify what those instructions were.

"The epidemic situation is still severe and complex, the most severe challenge since SARS in 2003, and is likely to develop into a major public health event," the memo cites Ma as saying.

The National Health Commission is the top medical agency in the country. In a faxed statement, the Commission said it had organized the teleconference because of the case reported in Thailand and the possibility of the virus spreading during New Year travel. It added that China had published information on the outbreak in an "open, transparent, responsible and timely manner," in accordance with "important instructions" repeatedly issued by President Xi.

The documents come from an anonymous source in the medical field who did not want to be named for fear of retribution. The AP confirmed the contents with two other sources in public health familiar with the teleconference. Some of the memo's contents also appeared in a public notice about the teleconference, stripped of key details and published in February.

Under a section titled "sober understanding of the situation," the memo said that "clustered cases suggest that human-to-human transmission is possible." It singled out the case in Thailand, saying that the situation had "changed significantly" because of the possible spread of the virus abroad.

"With the coming of the Spring Festival, many people will be traveling, and the risk of transmission and

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spread is high," the memo continued. "All localities must prepare for and respond to a pandemic."

In the memo, Ma demanded officials unite around Xi and made clear that political considerations and social stability were key priorities during the long lead-up to China's two biggest political meetings of the year in March. While the documents do not spell out why Chinese leaders waited six days to make their concerns public, the meetings may be one reason.

"The imperatives for social stability, for not rocking the boat before these important Party congresses is pretty strong," says Daniel Mattingly, a scholar of Chinese politics at Yale. "My guess is, they wanted to let it play out a little more and see what happened."

In response to the teleconference, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Beijing initiated the highest-level emergency response internally, level one, on Jan. 15. It assigned top CDC leaders to 14 working groups tasked with getting funds, training health workers, collecting data, doing field investigations and supervising laboratories, an internal CDC notice shows.

The National Health Commission also distributed a 63-page set of instructions to provincial health officials, obtained by the AP. The instructions ordered health officials nationwide to identify suspected cases, hospitals to open fever clinics, and doctors and nurses to don protective gear. They were marked "internal" — "not to be spread on the internet," "not to be publicly disclosed."

In public, however, officials continued to downplay the threat, pointing to the 41 cases public at the time. "We have reached the latest understanding that the risk of sustained human-to-human transmission is low," Li Qun, the head of the China CDC's emergency center, told Chinese state television on Jan. 15. That was the same day Li was appointed leader of a group preparing emergency plans for the level one response, a CDC notice shows.

On Jan. 20, President Xi issued his first public comments on the virus, saying the outbreak "must be taken seriously" and every possible measure pursued. A leading Chinese epidemiologist, Zhong Nanshan, announced for the first time that the virus was transmissible from person to person on national television.

If the public had been warned a week earlier to take actions such as social distancing, mask wearing and travel restrictions, cases could have been cut by up to two-thirds, one paper later found. An earlier warning could have saved lives, said Zhang, the doctor in Los Angeles.

However, other health experts said the government took decisive action in private given the information available to them.

"They may not have said the right thing, but they were doing the right thing," said Ray Yip, the retired founding head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control's office in China. "On the 20th, they sounded the alarm for the whole country, which is not an unreasonable delay."

If health officials raise the alarm prematurely, it can damage their credibility — "like crying wolf" — and cripple their ability to mobilize the public, said Benjamin Cowling, an epidemiologist at the University of Hong Kong.

The delay may support accusations by President Donald Trump that the Chinese government's secrecy held back the world's response to the virus. However, even the public announcement on Jan. 20 left the U.S. nearly two months to prepare for the pandemic.

During those months, Trump ignored the warnings of his own staff and dismissed the disease as nothing to worry about, while the government failed to bolster medical supplies and deployed flawed testing kits. Leaders across the world turned a blind eye to the outbreak, with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson calling for a strategy of "herd immunity" — before falling ill himself. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro sneered at what he called "a little cold."

The early story of the pandemic in China shows missed opportunities at every step, the documents and AP interviews reveal. Under Xi, China's most authoritarian leader in decades, increasing political repression has made officials more hesitant to report cases without a clear green light from the top.

"It really increased the stakes for officials, which made them reluctant to step out of line," said Mattingly, the Yale professor. "It made it harder for people at the local level to report bad information."

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Doctors and nurses in Wuhan told Chinese media there were plenty of signs that the coronavirus could be transmitted between people as early as late December. Patients who had never been to the suspected source of the virus, the Huanan Seafood Market, were infected. Medical workers started falling ill.

But officials obstructed medical staff who tried to report such cases. They set tight criteria for confirming cases, where patients not only had to test positive, but samples had to be sent to Beijing and sequenced. They required staff to report to supervisors before sending information higher, Chinese media reports show. And they punished doctors for warning about the disease.

As a result, no new cases were reported for almost two weeks from Jan. 5, even as officials gathered in Wuhan for Hubei province's two biggest political meetings of the year, internal China CDC bulletins confirm.

During this period, teams of experts dispatched to Wuhan by Beijing said they failed to find clear signs of danger and human-to-human transmission.

"China has many years of disease control, there's absolutely no chance that this will spread widely because of Spring Festival travel," the head of the first expert team, Xu Jianguo, told Takungpao, a Hong Kong paper, on Jan. 6. He added there was "no evidence of human-to-human transmission" and that the threat from the virus was low.

The second expert team, dispatched on Jan. 8, similarly failed to unearth any clear signs of human-to-human transmission. Yet during their stay, more than half a dozen doctors and nurses had already fallen ill with the virus, a retrospective China CDC study published in the New England Journal of Medicine would later show.

The teams looked for patients with severe pneumonia, missing those with milder symptoms. They also narrowed the search to those who had visited the seafood market — which was in retrospect a mistake, said Cowling, the Hong Kong epidemiologist, who flew to Beijing to review the cases in late January.

In the weeks after the severity of the epidemic became clear, some experts accused Wuhan officials of intentionally hiding cases.

"I always suspected it was human-to-human transmissible," said Wang Guangfa, the leader of the second expert team, in a Mar. 15 post on Weibo, the Chinese social media platform. He fell ill with the virus soon after returning to Beijing on Jan. 16.

Wuhan's then-mayor, Zhou Xianwang, blamed national regulations for the secrecy.

"As a local government official, I could disclose information only after being authorized," Zhou told state media in late January. "A lot of people didn't understand this."

As a result, top Chinese officials appear to have been left in the dark.

"The CDC acted sluggishly, assuming all was fine," said a state health expert, who declined to be named out of fear of retribution. "If we started to do something a week or two earlier, things could have been so much different."

It wasn't just Wuhan. In Shenzhen in southern China, hundreds of miles away, a team led by microbiologist Yuen Kwok-yung used their own test kits to confirm that six members of a family of seven had the virus on Jan. 12. In an interview with Caixin, a respected Chinese finance magazine, Yuen said he informed CDC branches "of all levels," including Beijing. But internal CDC numbers did not reflect Yuen's report, the bulletins show.

When the Thai case was reported, health authorities finally drew up an internal plan to systematically identify, isolate, test, and treat all cases of the new coronavirus nationwide.

Wuhan's case count began to climb immediately — four on Jan. 17, then 17 the next day and 136 the day after. Across the country, dozens of cases began to surface, in some cases among patients who were infected earlier but had not yet been tested. In Zhejiang, for example, a man hospitalized on Jan. 4 was only isolated on Jan. 17 and confirmed positive on Jan. 21. Shenzhen, where Yuen had earlier found six people who tested positive, finally recorded its first confirmed case on Jan. 19.

The Wuhan Union Hospital, one of the city's best, held an emergency meeting on Jan. 18, instructing staff to adopt stringent isolation — still before Xi's public warning. A health expert told AP that on Jan. 19, she toured a hospital built after the SARS outbreak, where medical workers had furiously prepared an

entire building with hundreds of beds for pneumonia patients.

"Everybody in the country in the infectious disease field knew something was going on," she said, declining to be named to avoid disrupting sensitive government consultations. "They were anticipating it."

Contact AP's global investigative team at Investigative@ap.org

Medical intelligence sleuths tracked, warned of new virus

By DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In late February when President Donald Trump was urging Americans not to panic over the novel coronavirus, alarms were sounding at a little-known intelligence unit situated on a U.S. Army base an hour's drive north of Washington.

Intelligence, science and medical professionals at the National Center for Medical Intelligence were quietly doing what they have done for decades — monitoring and tracking global health threats that could endanger U.S. troops abroad and Americans at home.

On Feb. 25, the medical intelligence unit raised its warning that the coronavirus would become a pandemic within 30 days from WATCHCON 2 — a probable crisis — to WATCHCON 1 — an imminent one, according to a U.S. official. That was 15 days before the World Health Organization declared the rapidly spreading coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic.

At the time of the warning, few coronavirus infections had been reported in the United States. That same day, Trump, who was in New Delhi, India, tweeted: "The Coronavirus is very much under control in the USA." Soon, however, the coronavirus spread across the world, sickening more than 2 million people with the disease COVID-19 and killing more than 26,000 people in the United States.

The center's work typically is shared with defense and health officials, including the secretary of health and human services. Its Feb. 25 warning, first reported last month by Newsweek, was included in an intelligence briefing provided to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but it's unknown whether Trump or other White House officials saw it. Various intelligence agencies had been including information about the coronavirus in briefing materials since early January, according to the official, who spoke only on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to confirm details about the alert.

At least 100 epidemiologists, virologists, chemical engineers, toxicologists, biologists and military medical expert — all schooled in intelligence trade craft — work at the medical intelligence unit, located at Fort Detrick in Frederick, Maryland. Requests to interview current workers were denied, but former employees described how they go through massive amounts of information, looking for clues about global health events.

"You feel like you're looking for needles in a stack of needles," said Denis Kaufman, who worked in the medical intelligence unit from 1990 to 2005 and again later before retiring.

Most of the information they study is public, called "open source" material. A local newspaper in Africa might publish a story about an increasing number of people getting sick, and that raises a flag because there's no mention of any such illness on the other side of the country. A doctor in the Middle East might post concerns about a virus on social media. But unlike organizations such as the WHO, the medical intelligence team, part of the Defense Intelligence Agency, also has access to classified intelligence collected by the 17 U.S. spy agencies.

The medical unit can dig into signals intelligence and intercepts of communications collected by the National Security Agency. It can read information that CIA officers pick up in the field overseas. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency can share satellite imagery and terrain maps to help assess how a disease, like Ebola or avian flu, might spread through a population.

"Every day, all of us would come into work and read and research our area for anything that's different — anything that doesn't make sense, whether it's about disease, health care, earthquakes, national disaster — anything that would affect the health of a nation," said Martha "Rainie" Dasche, a specialist on Africa who retired from the DIA in 2018. "We start wondering. We look at things with a jaundice eye."

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They don't collect intelligence. They analyze it and produce medical intelligence assessments, forecasts and databases on infectious disease and health risks from natural disasters, toxic materials, bioterrorism as well as certain countries' capacity to handle them. Their reports are written for military commanders, defense health officials and researchers as well as policymakers at the Defense Department, White House and federal agencies, especially the Department of Health and Human Services.

The center was originally in the U.S. Army Surgeon General's office during World War II, but military leaders throughout history have learned the hard way about the danger that disease poses to troops.

"In the Spanish-American War, there were major epidemics of typhoid fever and dysentery," according to a report written in 1951 at Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston in Texas. "World War I saw widespread outbreaks of influenza and malaria. In World War II, there was a high incidence of malaria and infectious hepatitis. ... In all wars prior to World War II, losses from disease exceeded losses from battle injury."

Today, the team's success comes in providing early warnings that prevent illness. That can be difficult if a country doesn't report or share information out of fear that the news will affect its economy or tourism. Some undeveloped countries with poor health systems might not compile good data. Information from countries trying to play down the seriousness of an epidemic can't be trusted.

Kaufman said massive amounts of information come out of China, where the first reports of the new coronavirus surfaced in the city of Wuhan. But because the country is run by an authoritarian government, the medical intelligence researchers glean information from the local level, not Beijing.

"Researchers, in some cases, have more success in learning information from the bottom up — not from the central communist government, but from localities," he said. "That's where some guy in Wuhan might be saying 'I can't report this because I don't want to look bad to my boss' or there's a guy who says he can't talk about avian flu because his cousin runs the bird market and doesn't want to hurt his business."

AP Interview: Governor says Brazil has 'Bolsonaro-virus'

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and DAVID BILLER Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — After a heated confrontation with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro last month over his lackadaisical approach to the coronavirus, governors in the South American country have since pulled back, wary of losing vital federal aid in the efforts to control COVID-19.

That strategy is no longer working for the leader of Sao Paulo, Brazil's most populous state, the country's economic engine and the epicenter of the nation's virus outbreak. Gov. João Doria has made it clear he's done biting his tongue.

"We're fighting against the coronavirus and against the 'Bolsonaro-virus,'" Doria said in an interview with The Associated Press on Wednesday, adding that he believes the president has adopted "incorrect, irresponsible positions."

Sao Paulo has reported 11,000 confirmed cases of the coronavirus and almost 800 deaths, the highest in the country. As governor, Doria has become one of the nation's foremost advocates of strong restrictions on daily life to contain the virus.

That has put him squarely in Bolsonaro's line of fire. The president has argued that broad shutdown measures would wreck the economy. He is one of very few heads of state still scoffing at the virus, which he has repeatedly called "a little flu," and he touts the yet-unproven benefits of an anti-malarial drug for treatment — echoes of his ally U.S. President Donald Trump.

While Trump's skepticism has softened in recent weeks, even as he continues to clash with U.S. governors, Bolsonaro has doubled down.

The president has suggested a minimalist strategy of asking only those individuals who are most at risk for contracting the virus to be quarantined, not easily done in a country of extended families.

Nearly all of Brazil's 27 governors have urged the public to self-quarantine while shutting down schools and businesses and suspending all but the most essential activities — more drastic measures in line with those taken by governments around the globe.

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"Despite the negative instructions that people receive from the president, half the population (of Sao Paulo) has respected quarantine," Doria said in a video call. "The population's response has been good. It could have been better if we didn't have to use science and medicine almost every day to confront guesswork."

A survey by pollster Datafolha earlier this month showed three-quarters of Brazilians supported governors' quarantine measures, regardless of the economic cost. Only one-third supported Bolsonaro's handling of the crisis.

Doria is one of the strongest opponents to Bolsonaro's handling of the virus, along with Health Minister Luiz Henrique Mandetta. But Mandetta's job appears to be hanging by a thread.

"We have to confront the president and protect the population," said the governor, who looked visibly fraught, despite his crisp suit and tie.

Doria was once an ally of the president. A businessman who entered politics in 2016 and secured a shocking victory in Sao Paulo's mayoral race, he campaigned for Bolsonaro in the second round of the 2018 presidential election. In the same general election, Doria earned Bolsonaro's endorsement, and it helped him narrowly win the governorship.

Bolsonaro, a former Army captain, was a fringe lawmaker during his seven congressional terms, but popular support coalesced around his call for aggressive policing to combat high crime rates, his plans to impose conservative cultural values, and his promises to rejuvenate the economy.

The relationship between the two men soured, even before the pandemic, and Bolsonaro's unscientific approach to the outbreak has deepened the rift even further. Doria is widely considered a potential challenger to Bolsonaro in the 2022 election.

In a March 25 conference call between the president and four governors, Doria told Bolsonaro that he had to set the example and lead the country rather than divide it, according to video leaked to the news media.

"If you don't get in the way, Brazil will take off and emerge from the crisis," Bolsonaro retorted. "Stop campaigning."

Since that showdown, Doria had stayed tight-lipped about Bolsonaro, refraining from mentioning him directly. Bolsonaro, for his part, has said he disagrees with "certain governors" who he claims are using COVID-19 as an electoral launchpad.

Some of the president's supporters are exercising less restraint. Doria said he is receiving daily threats and has had to increase security for his wife and send his children to live elsewhere.

Last weekend at a protest in downtown Sao Paulo, a Bolsonaro backer yelled over loudspeakers that he and others would go into Doria's home, break everything, and that Doria himself was "going to die."

Meanwhile, Bolsonaro's recent calls for Brazilians to resume their normal lives have coincided with a dip in voluntary compliance with self-quarantine measures in Sao Paulo, according to cellphone data phone carriers have provided to the state.

Almost none of Sao Paulo's cities have reached 70% isolation, which officials consider ideal to avoid a surge of cases that could overwhelm the health care system. The average rate of isolation for 104 municipalities was 52% on Tuesday.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness that requires hospitalization, sometimes for more than a week, and lead to death.

While pledging to speak out for the right course of action, Doria said he was dismayed that support for Bolsonaro's approach extends beyond a radical base.

"Hearing and seeing people who are educated, who studied outside Brazil, defending what's wrong and what's extreme, that saddens me," Doria said. "The confrontation isn't with me. ... It's a confrontation with science and medicine of the entire world."

Billier reported from Rio de Janeiro.

US relief checks begin arriving as economic damage piles up

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, PAUL WISEMAN and KELLI KENNEDY** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Government relief checks began arriving in Americans' bank accounts as the economic damage to the U.S. from the coronavirus piled up Wednesday and sluggish sales at reopened stores in Europe and China made it clear that business won't necessarily bounce right back when the crisis eases.

With many factories shut down, American industrial output shriveled in March, registering its biggest decline since the U.S. demobilized in 1946 at the end of World War II. Retail sales fell by an unprecedented 8.7%, with April expected to be far worse.

The world's biggest economy began issuing one-time payments this week to tens of millions of people as part of its \$2.2 trillion coronavirus relief package, with adults receiving up to \$1,200 each and \$500 per child to help them pay the rent or cover other bills. The checks will be directly deposited into accounts or mailed to households in the coming weeks, depending on how people filed their tax returns.

Among those receiving a check was Jacqueline Gonzalez, a 32-year-old single mother who was laid off from her job as a bartender and lives with her mother, a teacher, in Miami Lakes, Florida. Gonzalez paid her car insurance and gave her mother \$500 for rent. She has signed up for food stamps.

"There is no other form of income for us right now. We have no other choice. We can't work from home," she said. "We're just sitting here. Bills are racking up."

In an unprecedented move, President Donald Trump's name will be printed on the paper checks. Still, in some places under stay-at-home orders, frustrations began to boil over among those worried the economic toll is more crushing than the virus itself.

And elsewhere around the world, the first steps in lifting economically crippling restrictions are running into resistance, with customers staying away from the reopened businesses and workers afraid of risking their health.

In China, millions are still wary of spending much or even going out. Some cities have resorted to handing out vouchers and trying to reassure consumers by showing officials in state media eating in restaurants.

"I put off plans to change cars and spend almost nothing on eating out or entertainment," said Zhang Hu, a truck salesman in Zhengzhou who has gone back to work but has seen his income plummet because few people are buying 20-ton rigs. "I have no idea when the situation will turn better."

In Austria, Marie Froehlich, who owns a clothing store in Vienna, said her staff was happy to be back after weeks cooped up at home. But dependent largely on tourism, which has dried up amid the travel restrictions, she expects the business will take months to return to normal.

"Until then, we are in crisis mode," she said.

Rome's streets were also largely deserted despite the reopening of some stores.

Worldwide, deaths have topped 130,000 and confirmed infections 2 million, according to the tally kept by Johns Hopkins University. The figures understate the true size of the crisis, in part because of limited testing, different ways of counting the dead, and concealment by some governments

The U.S. has recorded approximately 28,000 deaths — highest in the world — and over 600,000 confirmed infections, by Johns Hopkins' count. Still, the nightmare scenarios projecting a far greater number of deaths and hospitalizations have not come to pass, raising hopes from coast to coast.

In other developments:

— An investigation by The Associated Press found that six days of delays by China in alerting the public to the growing danger in mid-January set the stage for the global disaster.

— Millions of South Koreans wore masks and maintained social distancing as they voted in parliamentary elections, with turnout surprisingly high. The government resisted calls to postpone the balloting, seen as a midterm referendum on President Moon Jae-in.

— The death toll in Iran is probably almost twice the official figure of about 4,800 as a result of undercounting and because some patients were not tested, a parliamentary report said. The explosive allegation was buried in a footnote in the 46-page document.

— With deaths and hospitalizations stabilizing or dropping in Europe, Germany announced plans to let

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smaller shops reopen next week and for school to resume in early May. France reported a decrease in hospitalized COVID-19 patients for the time since the outbreak began there.

— New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said people must wear face coverings when they are near others, such as on the street or subway platforms.

The economic damage from the effort to “flatten the curve” of infections has mounted alarmingly.

While grocery store sales in the U.S. jumped nearly 26% in March as Americans stocked up on food and other goods, auto sales plummeted by one-quarter and clothing store sales slid by more than half, the government reported. The category that mostly includes online shopping rose more than 3%.

“Clear signs of panic buying of necessities and the fact that lockdowns were introduced only around the middle of the month means that far worse is to come in April and the second quarter more generally,” said Michael Pearce, an economist at the consulting firm Capital Economics.

U.S. manufacturing output dropped 6.3% last month, led by plunging production at auto factories, which have shut down entirely.

As of last week, some 17 million Americans had been thrown onto the unemployment rolls.

At least one state, California, is providing its own stimulus to residents: Gov. Gavin Newsom announced \$500 payments for individuals, including people among the state’s estimated 2 million immigrants who are in the country illegally and ineligible for the federal payouts.

A day after Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak said his state’s idled economy was nowhere near a restart, Las Vegas Mayor Carolyn Goodman made an impassioned plea for reopening her city, saying it is withering with tourists staying home and conventions and businesses closed.

“The longer we wait to do this, the more impossible it will become to recover,” Goodman said.

In Lansing, Michigan, hundreds of honking, flag-waving protesters drove past the Capitol in a snowstorm, bringing traffic to a near-standstill. “Gov. Whitmer We Are Not Prisoners,” one sign read, while another declared, “Michigander Against Gretchen’s Abuses.”

“This arbitrary blanket spread of shutting down businesses, about putting all of these workers out of business, is just a disaster,” said Meshawn Maddock, a member of the Michigan Conservative Coalition, which organized the rally. “And people are sick and tired of it.”

Whitmer said she was “really disappointed” to see protesters close together without masks.

“I saw someone handing out candy to little kids barehanded. ... We know that this rally endangered people,” Whitmer said. “This kind of activity will put more people at risk and, sadly, it could prolong the amount of time we have to be in this posture.”

Where pushback is mounting, it’s happening regardless of political affiliation. Sisolak and Whitmer are Democrats; in Ohio, it’s Republican Mike DeWine who faces growing pressure to reopen the state and allow even nonessential businesses to resume.

Foreign leaders, meanwhile, rushed to the defense of the World Health Organization after Trump vowed to halt U.S. payments to the U.N. agency for not sounding the alarm over the virus sooner.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the WHO is needed now more than ever: “Only by joining forces can we overcome this crisis that knows no borders.”

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Kennedy reported from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed to this report.

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

Report: Halladay on drugs, doing stunts when plane crashed

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Baseball Hall of Famer Roy Halladay had high levels of amphetamines in his system and was doing extreme acrobatics when he lost control of his small plane and nosedived into the

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Gulf of Mexico in 2017, killing him, a National Transportation Safety Board report issued Wednesday said.

Halladay had amphetamine levels about 10 times therapeutic levels in his blood along with a high level of morphine and an anti-depressant that can impair judgement as he performed high-pitch climbs and steep turns, sometimes within 5 feet (1.5 meters) of the water, the report says about the Nov. 7, 2017, crash off the coast of Florida.

The maneuvers put loads of nearly two-times gravity on the plane, an Icon A5 Halladay had purchased a month earlier. On the last maneuver, Halladay entered a steep climb and his speed fell to about 85 miles per hour (135 kph). The propeller-driven plane went into a nosedive and smashed into the water. The report says Halladay, 40, died of blunt force trauma and drowning.

The report does not give a final reason for the crash. That is expected to be issued soon.

About a week before the crash, the former Toronto Blue Jays and Philadelphia Phillies star had flown the plane under Tampa Bay's iconic Skyway Bridge, posting on social media, "flying the Icon A5 over the water is like flying a fighter jet!"

Halladay, an eight-time All-Star and two-time Cy Young Award winner, pitched a perfect game and a playoff no-hitter in 2010. He played for the Blue Jays from 1998 to 2009 and for the Phillies from 2010-13, going 203-105 with a 3.38 ERA. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame posthumously last year.

Halladay had taken off from a lake near his home about 15 minutes before the crash and a previous report says he was flying at about 105 mph (170 kph) just 11 feet (3.3 meters) above the water before he started doing his maneuvers. He had about 700 hours of flight time after getting his pilot's license in 2013, the previous report said, including 51 hours in Icon A5s with 14 in the plane that crashed. The report says Halladay was treated for substance abuse twice between 2013 and 2015.

Rolled out in 2014, the A5 is an amphibious aircraft meant to be treated like an ATV, a piece of weekend recreational gear with folding wings that can easily be towed on a trailer to a lake where it can take off from the water.

The man who led the plane's design, 55-year-old John Murray Karkow, died while flying an A5 over California's Lake Berryessa on May 8, 2017, a crash the NTSB attributed to pilot error.

Because of that crash, Icon issued guidance to its owners two weeks before Halladay's accident saying that while low-altitude flying "can be one of the most rewarding and exciting types of flying," it "comes with an inherent set of additional risks that require additional considerations."

It added that traditional pilot training focused on high-altitude flying "does little to prepare pilots for the unique challenges of low altitude flying." Icon told the NTSB that Halladay had received and reviewed the guidance.

There is no indication in the report Halladay received low-altitude training.

This version corrects that Halladay crashed into the Gulf of Mexico, not Tampa Bay.

California to give cash payments to immigrants hurt by virus

By ADAM BEAM Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California will be the first state to give cash to immigrants living in the country illegally who are hurt by the coronavirus, offering \$500 apiece to 150,000 adults who were left out of the \$2.2 trillion stimulus package approved by Congress.

Many Americans began receiving \$1,200 checks from the federal government this week, and others who are unemployed are getting an additional \$600 a week from the government that has ordered them to stay home and disrupted what had been a roaring economy.

But people living in the country illegally are not eligible for any of that money, and advocates have been pushing for states to fill in the gap. Wednesday, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced he would spend \$75 million of taxpayer money to create a Disaster Relief Fund for immigrants living in the country illegally.

"We feel a deep sense of gratitude for people that are in fear of deportations that are still addressing essential needs of tens of millions of Californians," said Newsom, who noted 10% of the state's workforce are

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immigrants living in the country illegally who paid more than \$2.5 billion in state and local taxes last year.

Senate Republican Leader Shannon Grove said Newsom should spend the money instead on food banks, equipment for students to continue their education online and local governments struggling with revenue losses.

"Instead of meeting these urgent needs, Governor Newsom has chosen to irresponsibly pursue a left-wing path and unilaterally secured \$125 million for undocumented immigrants," said Grove, who represents Bakersfield.

California has an estimated 2.2 million immigrants living in the country illegally, the most of any state, according to the Pew Research Center. State officials won't decide who gets the money. Instead, the state will give the money to a network of regional nonprofits to find and vet potential recipients. Advocates say that's key to making the plan work because immigrants are unlikely to contact the government for fear of deportation.

"You need to use organizations that have trusted relationships with these families," said Jacqueline Martinez, CEO of the Latino Community Foundation.

A group of charities has committed to raising another \$50 million for the fund from private donors, potentially offering benefits to another 100,000 people. But that money will have fewer limitations, meaning grants could be more than \$500 or less, depending on the cost-of-living where a person lives.

Organizers began raising money on Friday and have raised more than \$6 million so far, with contributions from the Emerson Collective, Blue Shield of California Foundation, the California Endowment, the James Irvine Foundation, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and an anonymous donor.

"We want this to be as equitable as possible and benefit as many people as possible," said Daranee Petsod, president of Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees.

California has been the most aggressive state in the nation when it comes to giving benefits to immigrants living in the country illegally. Last year, California became the first state to give taxpayer-funded health benefits to low-income adults 25 and younger living in the country illegally. This year, Newsom had proposed expanding those benefits to seniors 65 and older.

The spending announced Wednesday means Newsom has committed to spending more than \$2 billion responding to the coronavirus, an extraordinary amount in just over one month. Thursday, state lawmakers are scheduled to have their first oversight hearing of Newsom's spending.

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.

California has more than 26,600 confirmed coronavirus cases and more than 850 deaths, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. Those numbers are far behind other virus hot spots like U.S. like New York and New Jersey, which public health officials attribute to the state's aggressive implementation of physical distancing and stay-at-home orders.

Since mid-March, 2.7 million Californians have filed for unemployment benefits — more than all of the claims California processed in 2019 combined. The state's Employment Development Department has been overwhelmed, causing delays for many people seeking assistance.

Wednesday, Newsom announced the state's call center will expand its hours to 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week. More than 1,300 state employees have been reassigned to help process the claims. And Newsom said the state will begin distributing federal unemployment benefits by the end of the month to people who usually aren't eligible for them, including the gig workers and the self-employed.

At least five other states are already issuing those benefits, prompting criticism from some state lawmakers.

"The people in Sacramento are making promises, and the bureaucracies and the technology are failing the people," Republican state Assemblyman Jim Patterson said.

American schools may look radically different as they reopen

By JOCELYN GECKER and CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — School administrators across America are trying to re-imagine classrooms — and the prospect of reopening schools — in the era of social distancing.

Will there be staggered start times? Will students be asked to wear face coverings? Will class sizes be cut in half? What about school assemblies and sports and school buses and lunchtime?

With the majority of schools nationwide shut down, educators are scrambling to plan for the future after a chaotic few weeks that, for many districts, included closing all schools, deciding whether to waive assessment tests and whether and how to do distance learning. Next comes the important question of when schools can safely re-open.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom laid out a few possible scenarios this week for reopening the state's public schools to 6 million students, saying the timeline was still unclear but when students do eventually return things will look radically different.

"We need to get our kids back to school," Newsom said. "And we need to do it in a safe way."

The biggest challenge for schools is how to continue physical distancing among children and adults to ensure that "kids aren't going to school, getting infected and then infecting grandma and grandpa," Newsom said.

That could mean requiring schools to stagger schedules, with some students arriving in the morning and the rest in the afternoon. Officials will be rethinking gym class, recess, school assemblies and all scenarios where students gather in large groups, he said. State officials, educators and unions will discuss those ideas and other possibilities for safe schooling in the coming weeks and months.

Robert Hull, president and chief executive of the National Association of State Boards of Education, said administrators across the country are asking not how, but if, schools will reopen in the fall, and planning for any number of scenarios.

Everything is being considered, he said, from masks and gloves to cutting class sizes and adding portable classrooms. Officials also are weighing the virus's impact on how school buildings and buses are cleaned, how to protect custodial staff, how food is prepared and how health care is delivered.

"Everybody says we hope we return to normal," Hull said. "It's not going to return to normal anytime soon because the new normal is going to be different."

For the moment, many districts are focused on trying to get through the school year while keeping an eye on what might happen in the fall.

"You're making battle plans," Hull said. Schools need to plan for a variety of possibilities: What if the virus is contained? What if the curve is flattened but there are still infections in the community? What if a new wave is starting? Schools need "not just Plan A and Plan B, but it maybe Plan C and Plan D."

Newsom said he won't loosen California's mandatory, stay-at-home order until hospitalizations, particularly those in intensive care units, "flatten and start to decline." And he said the state needs more testing, treatment and the ability for businesses, schools and childcare facilities to continue the physical distancing that has come to dominate public life. He said he would revisit the question of easing restrictions in two weeks.

Similar conversations are taking place at state school boards across the country. The issue is on Idaho's agenda Thursday, and several other states, including Arkansas and Mississippi, are starting to have the discussion, Hull said.

Issues of equity loom, including how to measure what students are learning and how to help those who have fallen behind. Many of the association's members are discussing what to do this summer and contemplating whether to extend the school year to offer summer learning, Hull said.

When students do return to school in California's rural Mariposa County, they will likely have to follow the same check-in procedure that local government employees do now, county Health Officer Eric Sergienko said. Before coming in each day, government employees answer a series of screening questions in a smart phone app with a checklist of symptoms. If they answer "yes" to any questions they have to stay home, and then get a follow-up call from a health officer.

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"We would do the same thing for school," Sergienko said. "If any (students) had symptoms, then we would exclude them from school."

Education funding cutbacks have already led to teacher shortages in California and made campus nurses rare, raising questions about how officials might cope with extended days and ensure kids are healthy, said Tony Wold, associate superintendent of the West Contra Costa Unified School District, which includes 55 schools.

"We can't just build new schools overnight. Even if the state gives us more money, where will the teachers come from?" said Wold, listing the ways schools are not built for social distancing. In his district near San Francisco, schools already stagger lunchtimes and put 8 to 10 kids at each table. Gym classes can have upwards of 50 students, and there are no empty, unused classrooms.

He said some schools will likely extend virtual learning into the fall or possibly figure out a rotation mixing online learning and classroom education.

"We're trying to reinvent how to do our business in a way we never did it before," Wold said. "This is probably the most Herculean challenge I have ever seen in public education."

Thompson contributed to this report from Buffalo, New York. Associated Press writer Don Thompson in Sacramento, California, also contributed.

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

Nations around the world reacted with alarm to news that President Donald Trump put a halt to American payments to the World Health Organization, pending a review of its warnings about the coronavirus and China. Health experts warned the move could jeopardize global efforts to stop the coronavirus pandemic.

In explaining the decision, Trump blamed the WHO for not doing enough to stop the virus and for being too lenient on China.

Here are some of AP's top stories Wednesday on the world's coronavirus pandemic. Follow APNews.com/VirusOutbreak for updates through the day and APNews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak for stories explaining some of its complexities.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— An investigation by The Associated Press has found that six days of delays by China — from Jan. 14 to Jan. 20 — in alerting the public to the growing dangers of the virus set the stage for a pandemic that has upended the lives of millions, sideswiped the global economy and cost nearly 127,000 lives.

— The European Union moved Wednesday to head off a chaotic and potentially disastrous easing of restrictions that are limiting the spread of the coronavirus, warning its 27 nations to move cautiously as they return to normal life and base their actions on scientific advice. In the U.S., Trump said he's enlisting advisers from nearly all sectors of American commerce, the medical field and elected office to help shape his plans to reopen the economy.

— As countries around the world edge toward ending lockdowns and restarting their economies and societies, citizens are being more closely monitored. The challenge is achieving the tricky balance between limiting the spread of disease and allowing people freedom to move outside their homes.

— A leap in U.S. unemployment has thrown a spotlight on one type of work in high demand during the coronavirus pandemic: Gig work delivering groceries, meals and packages. But those jobs also come with the risk of exposure to the virus, which has killed more than 22,000 in the U.S. And most such jobs come with little to no access to benefits like health insurance and paid sick leave.

— The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is pledging an additional \$150 million in grant funding to help fight the coronavirus outbreak with diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.

— Efforts to slow the spread of the coronavirus may be choking Africa's already vulnerable food supply. Lockdowns in at least 33 of Africa's 54 countries have blocked farmers from getting food to markets and threatened deliveries of food assistance to rural populations. Many informal markets where millions buy their food are shut.

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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:

— 8.7%: U.S. retail sales plummeted 8.7% in March, an unprecedented decline, as the viral outbreak forced an almost complete lockdown of commerce nationwide.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— **HOME BAKERS:** With millions of people across the globe stuck at home due to lockdown measures imposed during the coronavirus pandemic, many people are choosing to make their own bread, rather than venturing to the local store to buy their weekly fix.

— **ALOHA MASKS:** Face masks made with the same colorful prints used for aloha shirts — known as "Hawaiian shirts" elsewhere in the United States — are the latest fashion trend in Hawaii as islanders try to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

— **POST-PANDEMIC PTSD?:** A Boston Marathon bombing survivor talks about his own journey back to mental health, the importance of self-care, and the anxiety, depression and trauma some may be struggling with as the pandemic wears people down.

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

Feds under pressure to publicly track nursing home outbreaks

By **CANDICE CHOI** and **JIM MUSTIAN** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal health officials are coming under increasing pressure to start publicly tracking coronavirus infections and deaths in nursing homes amid criticism they have not been transparent about the scope of outbreaks across the country that have already claimed thousands of lives.

Experts say the lack of tracking and transparency has been a major blind spot, and that publicizing outbreaks as they happen could not only alert nearby communities and anguished relatives but also help officials see where to focus testing and other safety measures.

"This is basic public health — you track this, you study it, and you learn from it," said David Grabowski, who specializes in health care policy at Harvard Medical School. He said it's difficult to have confidence in officials' ability to contain the virus if they aren't tracking where it has struck and why.

Such an action by the agencies that oversee the nation's 15,000 nursing homes is seen as long overdue, coming more than a month after a nursing home in Washington state became the first COVID-19 hot spot in the U.S. with an outbreak that ultimately killed 43 people and a near-daily drumbeat of new cases that in some cases has forced entire homes to be evacuated.

Because the federal government has not been releasing a count, The Associated Press has been keeping its own running tally of nursing home outbreak deaths based on media reports and state health depart-

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ments. The AP's latest count of at least 4,817 deaths is up from about 450 just two weeks ago.

"We recognize there should be more reporting," said Seema Verma, head of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, during a call with reporters on Wednesday.

Verma said her agency is working with the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention to increase reporting on outbreaks. But she did not provide details on how that would work or what information would be made public, other than to say her agency was considering requiring homes to disclose information to residents and their family members.

Many individual states have added to the lack of transparency by releasing only totals of infections and deaths and not details about specific outbreaks. Foremost among them is the nation's leader, New York, which accounts for more than 2,477 nursing home deaths — about 20% of the state's entire death total — but has so far refused to detail specific outbreaks, citing privacy concerns.

New York Health Commissioner Howard Zucker said this week that even releasing total numbers by nursing homes could violate the privacy of individuals, which is protected under federal health privacy law. "The issue is here as I've mentioned previously, this is their home. The nursing homes are their home," he said.

Nevada, on the other hand, unveiled an online tool this week that allows people to track cases in specific nursing homes and other assisted living facilities.

"It's just scandalous not to tell the public which facilities have the virus," said Charlene Harrington, a professor emerita at the University of California San Francisco and former state health official. "Even some staff members don't know. They're hiding it because it's bad for business and it's just horrible."

Mark Parkinson, the head of the American Health Care Association, which represents nursing homes and assisted-living facilities, said a national reporting system for homes could at least help prioritize the potential hot spots most in need of testing and personal protective equipment such as masks and gowns.

That lack of PPE and mandatory testing for residents and staff are among the gaps experts say have allowed deaths to continue mounting at nursing homes, despite federal officials ordering them in mid-March to ban visitors, stop group activities and screen workers for respiratory symptoms on every shift.

Chris Laxton, executive director of the The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine, said a national database would help to create a picture "of how completely dire the situation is in nursing homes. Not only is it underreported, but we're nowhere near the peak and it's continuing to surge."

Outbreaks include one in suburban Richmond, Virginia that has killed 45, one at a veteran's home in Holyoke, Mass., that has killed 40 and another at a home in central Indiana that has claimed 22 lives. Staff at others homes are overwhelmed and the death toll is climbing so fast that governors in several states, including Florida, Maryland and Wisconsin, have deployed the National Guard to run tests, tend to the sick, even evacuate residents.

"You're not going to slow down the spread if you don't know you have it," said Julie Moore, a certified nursing assistant at a home in Philadelphia, where an outbreak has claimed multiple lives and sickened workers. To screen for infections, she said her home asks workers to fill out questionnaires about their symptoms and exposure. But she said "you could be asymptomatic and you could transfer the virus to the residents."

An AP report earlier this month found that infections were continuing to find their way into nursing homes because such screenings didn't catch people who were infected but asymptomatic. Several large outbreaks were blamed on such spreaders, including infected health workers who worked at several different nursing home facilities.

Some family members of nursing home residents have been baffled by the response.

"After the first cases, I would have thought they would have just tested everybody," said Mark Paterostro, whose 86-year-old mother has respiratory issues and is a resident at Sundale nursing home in Morgantown, West Virginia, where at least three have died in an outbreak. He said the lack of testing underscores the larger problem.

"It's just a whole black box of not knowing what's going on, and that's a big problem."

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AP investigative researcher Randy Herschaft, reporters Bernard Condon in New York, Marina Villanueva in Albany, New York, Michelle Price in Las Vegas and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar in Washington contributed to this report.

Read AP's ongoing coverage of how COVID-19 is impacting nursing homes and the elderly:

- Nursing home outbreaks lay bare chronic industry problems
- Nursing home infections, deaths surge amid lockdown measures
- Nursing home deaths soar past 3,600 in alarming surge
- Deaths hit 45 at Virginia care home called 'virus's dream'

Evidence of virus' effect on US economy grows more ominous

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER** and **ANNE D'INNOCENZIO** AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Evidence of the coronavirus' devastating impact on the U.S. economy has been steadily emerging, and the signs have grown ominous.

Sales at stores and restaurants plunged in March by the largest amount on records dating back to 1992. The nation's industrial output fell by the largest amount since the end of World War II. And the outbreak keeps ravaging the global oil market.

That was just Wednesday's news.

"I've never seen anything like this," said Jennifer Lee, senior economist at BMO Capital Markets. "You don't want to look, but you know you have to."

The picture will likely worsen in the coming weeks and months. Retail sales — a primary driver of the U.S. economy — are almost surely suffering further during April because business shutdowns will have been in effect for the entire month, compared with just half of March.

Sales of homes and cars will also keep declining. And economists have forecast that Thursday's weekly report on applications for unemployment benefits will show that millions of Americans sought jobless aid last week, on top of the record-high of nearly 17 million who filed in the previous three weeks.

Economists now project a record-shattering 40% annual decline in U.S. economic output for the April-June quarter. While growth is expected to rebound in the second half of the year, economists at JPMorgan Chase have forecast that the U.S. economy will still shrink 7% for 2020 as a whole.

The slowdown will be global. The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday predicted that the world economy would shrink 3% this year, the worst outcome since the Great Depression.

That is hammering oil prices, threatening the solvency of many oil drillers and putting many of their employees out of work. Global demand for oil will fall this year by the most ever due to economic lockdowns around the world, the International Energy Agency said Wednesday. Demand will drop an estimated 9.3 million barrels a day, which is equivalent to a decade's worth of growth.

In the U.S., consumer spending drives more than two-thirds of the economy and was one of the main pillars of support before the virus. Business investment in new plants and equipment had already pulled back in the face of the U.S.-China trade war and falling oil prices.

On Wednesday, the government said U.S. retail sales plummeted 8.7% in March, an unprecedented decline, as the outbreak brought most commerce to a halt.

The deterioration of sales far outpaced the previous record decline of 3.9% that took place during the depths of the Great Recession in November 2008. Auto sales dropped 25.6%, while clothing store sales collapsed, sliding 50.5%. Restaurants and bars reported a nearly 27% fall in revenue.

Spending may be falling at an even faster pace than the retail sales figures suggest. Wednesday's report did not include spending on services such as hotel stays, airline tickets or movie theaters.

Also Wednesday, the U.S. reported that industrial production, which includes manufacturing, mines and utilities, posted the biggest drop in March since 1946.

Manufacturing output dropped 6.3% last month, led by plunging production at auto factories that have shut down. Output dropped 3.9% at utilities and 2% at mines as oil and gas drilling plunged.

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And builder confidence in the market for new single-family homes has fallen off a cliff, according to an index released Wednesday by the National Association of Home Builders and Wells Fargo. Their monthly housing market index plunged 42 points in April to a reading of 30, the largest single monthly change in the history of the index.

Retail sales represent about one-third of consumer spending, with the rest consisting of services. But the damage to the sector has broader ramifications for the economy.

The retail industry supports 1 out of 4 jobs in the U.S., according to some estimates. That includes millions of jobs like delivery workers, tailors, vendors who supply hangers to store fixtures, and construction workers charged with renovating or building new stores.

"A lot of the economy is driven by the consumer," said Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail, a research firm. "The consumer is the linchpin. If the consumer takes a tumble, the rest of the economy falls down."

Stockpiling of essentials is starting to wane, Saunders said, which will also lower retail sales in April, and more grocery stores are limiting the number of shoppers in their locations. Walmart, the nation's largest retailer, is now allowing no more than five customers for each 1,000 square feet at a given time. That will reduce their stores' capacity by about 80%.

The pullback in spending intensifies the problems facing brick-and-mortar retailers, which were already struggling with online competition.

With a nationwide shutdown of malls and most stores, the pandemic is putting many clothing retailers in peril, while increasing the dominance of big box stores that have remained open during the pandemic because they sell essentials like food and household goods.

More than 250,000 stores, including Macy's, Nordstrom and Nike, which sell nonessential merchandise, have been shuttered since mid-March. That's 60% of overall U.S. retail square footage, Saunders said.

Major retailers including J.C. Penney, Macy's and Nordstrom have furloughed hundreds of thousands of workers, while Walmart and Amazon are on hiring sprees to try to meet the surging demand of shoppers buying online or for curbside drop-off or delivery.

Department stores and mall-based chains have cut executive pay and suspended cash dividends and stock buybacks or repurchases to preserve cash. They're also drawing down their credit lines to make sure they have a bigger pile of cash on hand.

Nordstrom warned last week that it doesn't know when it will be able to reopen its physical stores and that prolonged closures could cause it to become financially distressed. Ralph Lauren and Gap Inc. have announced that, for now, they've stopped ordering products for the fall. Other retailers will likely follow.

^DInnocenzio reported from New York City.

For meat plant workers, virus makes a hard job perilous

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Kulule Amosa's husband earns \$17.70 an hour at a South Dakota pork plant doing a job so physically demanding it can only be performed in 30-minute increments. After each shift last week, he left exhausted as usual — but he didn't want to go home.

He was scared he would infect his pregnant wife with the coronavirus — so much so that when he pulled into the parking lot of their apartment building, he would call Amosa to tell her he wasn't coming inside. When he eventually did, he would sleep separately from her in their two-bedroom apartment.

"I'm really, really scared and worried," Amosa said Monday.

This was no abstract worry: At the Smithfield Foods plant, the locker rooms were so tightly packed Amosa's husband told her he sometimes had to push his way through a crowd. Coughs echoed through the bathrooms. The plant in Sioux Falls clocked so many cases that it was forced to close this week. It has reported 518 infections in employees and another 126 in people connected to them as of Wednesday, making it among the largest known clusters in the United States. A 64-year-old employee who contracted

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COVID-19 died Tuesday, according to his pastor.

The concentration of cases has highlighted the particular susceptibility of meat processing workers, who stand shoulder-to-shoulder on the line and congregate in crowded locker rooms and cafeterias. As many as half a dozen plants have shut because of outbreaks. Because the workers who slaughter and pack the nation's meat are vulnerable, so, too, is the supply of that meat. Smithfield CEO Kenneth Sullivan said the closure of the plant, which produces roughly 5% of the U.S. pork supply each day, was "pushing our country perilously close to the edge in terms of our meat supply."

Amosa and her husband, who are originally from Ethiopia, once saw working at the plant, where she also had a job until she became pregnant, as key to building their new life in the United States: It was well paid, union employment that gave them a community. But amid the coronavirus pandemic, the couple found themselves — like many workers whose jobs cannot be done remotely — exposed on two fronts: Both their health and their livelihoods were at risk. The couple agreed to speak to The Associated Press on the condition that Amosa's husband not be named because he feared losing his job.

The plant is vital to a burgeoning immigrant community in Sioux Falls, offering opportunities for even those without a college degree or fluent English. Smithfield offers pay starting at over \$15 an hour, health insurance and plenty of overtime.

The plant has attracted a diversifying workforce to the city, where Somali and Vietnamese restaurants have joined diners and craft breweries. But the city remains fairly divided, with many immigrants living in neighborhoods near the plant, which employs 3,700 people in a city of about 180,000.

The outbreak at the plant has also presented a significant test to a governor who has resisted issuing sweeping stay-at-home orders. As Republican Gov. Kristi Noem was pressed again this week to impose tighter restrictions on Sioux Falls, her response instead was to announce that the state would give wide access to an anti-malarial drug championed by President Donald Trump as a promising treatment for COVID-19, but that has yet to be proven effective.

Noem has fired back, arguing that plant workers were deemed essential and would have been reporting for duty regardless.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, but, for some, especially the elderly or infirm, it can cause severe illness and lead to death.

Even before the coronavirus began sickening workers, jobs in the meatpacking industry have been considered among the most dangerous in the U.S. Workers are exposed to a long list of dangers from hazardous chemicals to sharp knives. Just last month, a maintenance worker at a Tyson Fresh Meats plant in Kansas died after investigators say he got caught up in the assembly line belt.

The work is physical, starting with butchering hogs that weigh nearly 300 pounds (135 kilograms). On the processing line, repetitive-motion injuries are common. One worker at Smithfield described often waking up with his right hand so swollen he couldn't make a fist.

Union leaders and immigrant advocates cheered the decision to close the plant indefinitely but wish more had been done sooner.

Smithfield spokeswoman Keira Lombardo said difficulty in getting masks and thermal scanners led to delays in implementing some safety measures when the plant was open. But she said last week the plant was adding extra hand-sanitizing stations, scanning employees' temperatures before they entered and installing Plexiglas barriers in some areas.

Six current employees interviewed by the AP who, like Amosa's husband, insisted on anonymity because they feared they would be fired described far more haphazard measures. They said they were given flimsy masks made of hairnet-like material, hand-washing stations were in disrepair, and there was pressure to keep working even if they felt sick.

One employee told his supervisor on March 30 that he had a fever the previous day, but he was told to report to work and not to tell anyone about the fever. He worked that day, missed the next two and returned when the fever broke, he said.

"No one asked if I went to the doctor, if I was tested," the employee said.

Lombardo said Smithfield "fully rejects any claims that employees were pressured to report to work,"

calling it “completely counterproductive” to do so.

Smithfield has said it plans to clean the plant and implement more protections in the hopes of reopening. The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control sent a team to the plant this week to examine how it can be safely restarted.

But that may be difficult. Workers say they cannot fathom how butchering lines could be reconfigured to accommodate social distancing.

Meanwhile, Amosa and her husband are both home now — nervously awaiting their first child. But they also have a new worry: His coronavirus test came back positive Tuesday.

Associated Press writer Amy Forliti in Minneapolis, Minnesota, contributed to this report.

Hall of Fame defensive end Willie Davis dead at age 85

By STEVE MEGARGEE AP Sports Writer

Willie Davis, a Pro Football Hall of Fame defensive lineman who helped the Green Bay Packers win each of the first two Super Bowls, has died. He was 85.

The Packers confirmed Davis' death to the Pro Football Hall of Fame on Wednesday, as did his former teammate and fellow hall member, Dave Robinson.

Davis died in a Santa Monica, California hospital. His wife, Carol, told the Packers her husband had been hospitalized for about a month with kidney failure and passed away peacefully.

“The Green Bay Packers family was saddened today to learn about the passing of Willie Davis,” said Packers President/CEO Mark Murphy. “One of the great defensive players of his era, Willie was a significant contributor to the Packers’ five NFL championship teams during the 1960s.

“I enjoyed getting to know Willie and his wife, Carol, especially when he served as our honorary captain for the 2010 NFC championship game and Super Bowl 45, and again for the 2014 NFC championship game. He also was a great role model for our players, having gone on to a very successful career after football and serving on the Packers Board of Directors.”

A 15th-round draft pick from Grambling, Davis began his NFL career by playing both offense and defense for the Cleveland Browns in 1958 and '59. He had his greatest success after getting traded to the Packers.

He remained with the Packers until finishing his NFL career in 1969 as a five-time All-Pro. Although tackles and sacks weren't measured at the time Davis played, his 22 career fumble recoveries showcased his dominance and big-play ability.

He was voted to the NFL's all-decade team for the 1960s and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1981.

“There were few players in the league who were as tough as Willie,” Packers Hall of Fame quarterback Bart Starr said in the foreword to Davis' book, “Closing The Gap: Lombardi, the Packers Dynasty and the Pursuit of Excellence. “He was at his best in games in which we struggled. When it was tough, he rose to the top and took our defensive people right along with him.”

Davis helped the Packers win the NFL championship in 1965 before capping the 1966 and 1967 seasons with titles in the first two Super Bowls.

But he didn't initially embrace the move to Green Bay.

Davis noted in his book that he had just signed a contract with the Browns and believed he was being groomed as Cleveland's future starting left tackle on offense when he learned about the trade on the radio. Green Bay acquired Davis in a July 1960 trade that sent wide receiver A.D. Williams to Cleveland.

“At the time, I felt slightly betrayed,” Davis wrote in his book. “I felt the organization didn't care much about me, like I was being thrown away. I also panicked, wondering what this would mean for my future. I absolutely did not want to play in Green Bay. In fact, I was so turned off by the idea that my first thought was about retiring.”

He instead stuck it out and developed into one of the top defensive linemen of his era.

“Willie's extraordinary athleticism was an undeniable factor in Green Bay's winning tradition of the 1960s under coach Vince Lombardi,” Hall of Fame President David Baker said. “He helped the Packers through

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an unprecedented championship run and to two Super Bowl victories. Willie was a man of true character on and off the field. The Hall of Fame will forever keep his legacy alive to serve as inspiration to future generations."

In an NFL Films tribute to Davis, former Packers center Bill Curry called him "the finest combination of leader and player that I ever saw." In that same tribute, former Packers offensive lineman and Hall of Fame member Forrest Gregg said that "I can't ever remember a football game that he played in where I didn't think Willie Davis played absolutely the best he could possibly play that day."

Davis forced a Johnny Unitas fumble to help seal the Packers' 1966 Western Conference championship, and he tormented Chiefs quarterback Len Dawson and Raiders quarterback Daryle Lamonica in the first two Super Bowls.

"He put as much fear in me, because of what he could do and his abilities, as any defensive end that I had to face," Dawson told NFL Films.

Davis earned a master's degree in business administration from the University of Chicago late in his NFL career, which helped him make a successful transition to the business world after he stopped playing.

"We all knew football wasn't going to last forever," Davis wrote in his book. "The longevity of the average football player was less than 10 years, and that meant there were many men who were jobless with little financial security by the time they were in their early 30s. That was a scary prospect. I wanted to make sure I didn't fall into that category."

Davis served on the boards of directors for several companies, including Dow Chemical Co., Sara Lee Corp., Schlitz Brewing and Mattel Toys. He was on the Packers' board of directors from 1994-2005.

He also worked as an NBC television analyst for NFL games, purchased several radio stations and was inducted into the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association's hall of fame.

Davis' debut in the NFL was delayed by military service.

"I got drafted immediately after my first preseason camp and had to serve in the military for two years," he wrote in his book. "After bouncing around from base to base and playing football for the army, I left the military a stronger, more focused and mature man."

"Along the way, there were key moments at each stage, key opportunities that, when I took full advantage of them, propelled me to the next level," Davis also wrote. "I had some slip-ups along the way, but when it mattered, when it was important, I stepped up, practiced what I believed, took the advice of those I respected and went for it with everything I could give. That's how I succeeded in football, business and beyond."

Survivors include Davis' wife, his children Duane and Lori, plus grandchildren David, Wyatt, Harley and Hayden.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

To love and to cherish: Nurse couple unites to fight virus

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

Between surgeries one stressful morning, Ben Cayer and Mindy Brock — husband and wife, and fellow nurse anesthetists — peered through layers of protective gear, and locked eyes.

It was a lovers' gaze in the most unlikely situation. A co-worker was there to snap a picture.

Now the image, shared on social media, is inspiring people around the globe.

"Everybody's talking about the photo," says Cayer, 46. It strikes a chord "because we're all going through the same thing right now and it's a symbol of hope and love."

Brock, 38, adds: "What's important is that we stick together, we work together, and we always support each other. And not just Ben and I, but the human race right now."

The Florida pair share a home, a profession and, now, a mission — shouldering the high-risk duty of placing breathing tubes in surgery patients, any of whom may have COVID-19.

They didn't think twice about volunteering for Tampa General Hospital's new "airway team," Cayer says.

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Placing a tube into a patient's mouth and down into their airway requires close contact — and because the virus spreads in droplets, the highest level of protective gear. To conserve gear and expose fewer health care workers, the hospital pared down staff to a minimum for intubations before surgery.

Their patients have been in car crashes, or needed brain surgery because of a ruptured blood vessel. As is the case at many U.S. hospitals, only emergency surgeries continue at the Tampa hospital, to make room as the pandemic continues to crest.

They met in nurse anesthesia school in 2007. In classes, they sat in alphabetical order. Brock next to Cayer, she says, "and it just took off from there."

They married five years ago and now work for TeamHealth, a medical staffing firm. But on the morning of the photo, they bickered during the drive to work. They disagreed about what to play on the car radio, and who was doing the dishes at home.

The new COVID-19 procedures — it was Brock's first day on the new team — were making them both tense.

"We were arguing," she says. Later, they found each other between surgeries. The tension melted. "All those trivial things that we were arguing about that morning, in the grand scheme of things, aren't that important." The photo captures that moment.

He says they don't worry much about getting sick, although the virus has come close. Brock's mother has recovered from it. Co-workers fear catching it. Patients feel alone because visitors have been strictly limited.

"We have grown men bawling because none of their family can be there with them," Brock says.

It helps to be married to another nurse, because "unless you're here doing this, there's no way to describe it," she says. "He gets it."

While nonstop global news about the effects of the coronavirus have 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 continuing series reflecting these acts of kindness.

'Hold your nose and vote': Progressives weigh backing Biden

By SARA BURNETT and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — When Bernie Sanders didn't win the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016, Silvia Machado and Patrick Gibbons voted for Green Party candidate Jill Stein in protest.

Four years later, the couple is still passionate about the Vermont senator's progressive agenda. But they're open to voting for the relatively centrist Joe Biden if that's what it takes to defeat President Donald Trump.

"It's like hold your nose and vote," said Gibbons, 59.

A week after Sanders' exit left Biden as the presumptive Democratic nominee, the former vice president is working to win over voters such as Machado and Gibbons. The party is desperate to avoid a repeat of 2016, when ideological divides helped Trump win the White House.

Biden has made a series of proposals intended to appeal to progressives and won endorsements this week from Sanders and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, another liberal rival during the Democratic primary.

But the tensions that have weighed on Democrats for years aren't suddenly evaporating. While some voters are making a practical calculation to beat Trump by supporting Biden, other leaders of the movement are urging caution until Biden embraces priorities such as the universal health care plan known as "Medicare for All."

"The Biden that exists now will not get a lot of votes from progressives currently inclined to not vote at all or to vote third party," said Norman Solomon, co-founder of the activist organization Roots Action. "The only tool now to defeat Trump is Joe Biden, and the only way to sharpen that tool is to move him in a more progressive direction."

AP VoteCast surveys of the electorate conducted before Sanders dropped out of the race show skepticism

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among his supporters about Biden. Across 17 states where the survey was conducted, 54% of Sanders backers said they would be dissatisfied if Biden were the nominee. Just 28% of all Democratic primary voters said the same.

In the three states that voted on March 17 — Florida, Arizona and Illinois — some Sanders supporters went further, vowing not to support Biden. Thirteen percent said they would definitely not vote for Biden, and an additional 10% said they probably would not.

A slim majority, 54%, indicated that they definitely would support the Democrat against Trump, while 23% said they probably would.

In Arizona, a state that Democrats are hoping to flip in November, 8% of Democratic primary voters overall said they would not vote for Biden in November. But among Sanders supporters, that figure increased to 17%. In Michigan, which flipped to support Trump in 2016 and is now a key 2020 battleground, 19% of Democratic primary voters said their vote in November depended on which candidate the party nominated. That figure climbed to 26% among Sanders voters.

There are factors working in Biden's favor. For one, he's consolidating support in the party much earlier than nominee Hillary Clinton did in 2016. That year, Sanders waited until just before the party's July convention to endorse Clinton. Warren also waited until the primary was over to back Clinton.

In 2020, they are backing Biden sooner, and more aggressively.

Sanders told The Associated Press on Tuesday that it would be "irresponsible" for his supporters to sit back and see "the most dangerous president in modern American history" reelected.

"My job now is to not only rally my supporters, but to do everything I can to bring the party together to see that (Trump) is not elected president," Sanders said.

The future of the progressive movement may rest with leaders such as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. The New York Democrat has long said she would back the ultimate Democratic nominee. She told Politico on Wednesday that she supports Biden "in solidarity with the families I represent."

In an earlier interview with the AP, she urged Biden to take seriously both young voters and Latinos, two groups with whom he has struggled.

"I just want to make sure that we have a winning electoral strategy," she said. "And if that strategy is 100% more affluent suburban voters, then fine. Perhaps districts and communities like mine aren't as important, but I would like them to be, and I think that they should be, and I think young voters matter."

Prospects for reconciliation between Biden and progressives may not all be bleak, however, especially with the election still more than six months away.

Jorge Trejo-Ibarra, a Las Vegas high school senior who will turn 18 in July, said he flirted with the idea of not backing Biden. But with the economy largely shuttered amid the coronavirus outbreak, he said he doesn't think the U.S. can survive another four years of Trump.

"We can't come back from this unless we have some very strong leadership in the next four years," Trejo-Ibarra said, adding that he's not excited about Biden, but is a realist.

"In democracies, you never have wins, you have compromises," he said. "I guess I must compromise."

Jack Wilsbach, a 21-year-old junior at Ohio State University, said he knows many Sanders supporters who will not support Biden. But he is convinced by his mother, sister and friends who are gay who he thinks will be hurt by a Trump victory.

"I would feel bad if I didn't vote for (Biden) and that affected the outcome," Wilsbach said. "I mean, I'm a white guy. I can kind of make the sacrifice to maybe live and be OK under Trump, but other people don't have that luxury."

Weissert reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Hannah Fingerhut and Laurie Kellman in Washington, Steve Peoples in Montclair, N.J., Nicholas Riccardi in Las Vegas and Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report.

Tired of 'Frozen?' Stream these less obvious kids movies

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Weeks of quarantine with kids have a way of burning through a movie collection.

Even with the libraries of streaming services like Netflix, Amazon, Disney Plus and others, there are plenty of households that have already had their fill of "Frozen" and overdosed on "Onward." In the best of times, the canon for kids movies can feel limiting. Disney overwhelms.

But there's a wider world of movies out there for young ones. We'll assume they've already accrued a solid foundation of some of the essentials: "Fantastic Mr. Fox," "The Iron Giant," Pixar, the Muppets, et cetera. So here's a few slightly further afield options — all available to stream, rent or are free — that your kids might not have seen.

— "Fly Away Home": The outlines of this 1996 film, with Anna Paquin and Jeff Daniels, suggest a familiar and schmaltzy kind of family movie, but it's handled with such grace that it rises above the ordinary. Also, the geese are really great. A 13-year-old (Paquin) moves in with her estranged father (Daniels) in rural Canada after the death of her mother. She adopts an abandoned nest of goose eggs, raises them and teaches them to fly South for the winter. Available to stream on the Criterion Channel. The director, Carroll Ballard, and the cinematographer, Caleb Deschanel, also crafted a movie of pastoral beauty and sweet child-animal camaraderie in 1979's "Black Stallion," which is streaming on Amazon Prime.

-- "Lupin the Third: The Castle of Cagliostro": For streaming Studio Ghibli films, we'll have to wait until they collectively hit HBO Max when it launches in May. (They are available outside the U.S. on Netflix.) They are so good — among the most wondrous in cinema — you might just go ahead and buy copies of "My Neighbor Totoro," "Spirited Away" and "Princess Mononoke." But for now, you can stream the feature-film directing debut of Hayao Miyazaki, the animation master and co-founder of Ghibli. "The Castle of Cagliostro," on Netflix, isn't as well-known as Miyazaki's best. But the director's verve and imagination is already on display in this, a caper that continues the exploits of the debonair thief Arsène Lupin. Here Lupin discovers the loot from a casino heist is counterfeit.

--Buster Keaton: No child raised on Buster Keaton can turn out bad. It's just a fact. Most even young children recognize, and laugh their heads off at, his genius. Keaton's features are widely available, but many of his equally brilliant shorts can be streamed for free. Among them, "One Week," in which he tries to assemble a house; "The Goat," wherein Keaton is mistaken for a murderer; and "Cops," in which he angers the entire Los Angeles police force.

— "Stop Making Sense": Concert films are an underutilized source of entertainment for kids. Jonathan Demme's glorious Talking Heads documentary, available for digital rental and to stream for free via Vudu, is a good place to start. And since David Byrne slowly assembles his band — beginning with just himself, an acoustic guitar and a tape deck, on "Psycho Killer" — "Stop Making Sense" offers a good step-by-step education on how to build a post-modern funk extravaganza. Plus tips on wearing big suits and dancing with floor lamps. (See also: "A Hard Day's Night," on Criterion Channel and "The Last Waltz" on Amazon Prime.)

— "The Three Caballeros": There are forgotten Disney treasures, too, including this trippy 1944 gem streaming on Disney Plus. On his birthday, Donald Duck receives package from his friends in Central and South America. Inside are film reels that bring a handful of individual tales and travelogues that Donald leaps into, too. It's a loving if overly exotic celebration of South America with some fabulous and surreal moments that blend animation and live action. The movie was produced as part of the wartime "Good Neighbor" policy to bring the Americas together and ward off any appeals from Axis powers. All of which is to say: "The Three Caballeros" isn't your average Disney movie.

-- "Apollo 11": This hit 2019 documentary, on Hulu, simply follows the moon mission from launch to rescue, without talking heads and with large amounts of previously unseen IMAX footage. It's a propulsive time-capsule, one that the intervening 50 years has made only more stupendous. "Apollo 11," like the archival "For All Mankind," captures the all-ages thrill and glory of the moon landing.

— "Pirates! Band of Misfits": Aardman Animations has been reliably churning out delights, from "Wallace and Gromit" to "Shaun the Sheep," for decades. "Pirates! Band of Misfits" (2012) came and went

somewhat quietly and didn't spawn a franchise. But the Aardman charm is there on the high seas, too. Streaming on Hulu.

— "Boy": Taika Waititi does kids better than any working filmmaker today. Well before his Oscar-nominated "Jo Jo Rabbit," Waititi was making comic and big-hearted films about childhood, including his Oscar-nominated short, "Two Cars, One Night," and this semi-autobiographical sophomore feature, inspired by that short. James Rolleston stars as an 11-year-old Maori boy and Michael Jackson fan whose dimwitted ex-convict father (a mulleted Waititi) returns home. Available on the free, public library streaming service Kanopy.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

This story has been updated to correct the spelling of Carroll Ballard's first name.

Tech companies step up fight against bad coronavirus info

By **AMANDA SEITZ** and **BARBARA ORTUTAY** The Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Potentially dangerous coronavirus misinformation has spread from continent to continent like the pandemic itself, forcing the world's largest tech companies to take unprecedented action to protect public health.

Facebook, Google and others have begun using algorithms, new rules and factual warnings to knock down harmful coronavirus conspiracy theories, questionable ads and unproven remedies that regularly crop up on their services — and which could jeopardize lives.

Health officials, critics and others who have long implored the tech companies to step up their response to viral falsehoods have welcomed the new effort, saying the platforms are now working faster than ever to scrub their sites of coronavirus misinformation.

"It was definitely, within the companies, a shift," said Andy Pattison, manager of digital solutions for the World Health Organization, who for nearly two years has urged companies like Facebook to take more aggressive action against anti-vaccination misinformation.

Pattison said he and his team now directly flag misleading coronavirus information and, at times, lobby for it to be removed from Facebook, Google and Google's YouTube service.

Last month, Iranian media reported more than 300 people had died and 1,000 were sickened in the country after ingesting methanol, a toxic alcohol rumored to be a remedy on social media. An Arizona man also died after taking chloroquine phosphate — a product that some mistake for the anti-malaria drug chloroquine, which President Donald Trump and conservative pundits have touted as a treatment for COVID-19. Health officials have warned the drug hasn't been proven safe or effective as a virus therapy.

Days later, Twitter and Facebook began cracking down in unprecedented ways on posts promoting unverified treatments.

Twitter deleted a post by Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani that described hydroxychloroquine, a cousin to chloroquine, as "100 percent effective" against coronavirus. The company also removed a tweet from Fox News personality Laura Ingraham touting what she called the drug's "promising results."

Other widely shared claims that hydroxychloroquine cures COVID-19 live on. A conservative radio host's tweet claiming that "ALL hospitals and health care workers are using it with total success" has been shared more than 12,000 times.

In what may be a first, Facebook removed a post from Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who promoted hydroxychloroquine as "working in every place" to treat coronavirus. Twitter also removed an associated video.

Facebook has long resisted calls to fact check or remove false claims directly made by politicians, arguing the public should be able to see what their elected officials say. In this pandemic, however, the platforms have no choice but to rethink their rules around misinformation, said Dipayan Ghosh, co-director of the Platform Accountability Project at Harvard Kennedy School.

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"The damage to society is clear cut: it's death," Ghosh said. "They don't want to be held responsible in any way for perpetuating rumors that could lead directly to death."

Other sites have also tightened their policies.

YouTube began removing videos that claimed coronavirus was caused by 5G wireless networks last week. Some of the videos had racked up hundreds of thousands of views. Google searches for "5G" and "coronavirus" now redirect users news videos debunking the theory.

Facebook-owned private messaging service WhatsApp has limited how many chats users can forward messages to in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19 misinformation. Since WhatsApp encrypts all messages, it can't read them to determine if they contain misinformation.

The pandemic has thrown up new challenges to content moderation. Early on, health considerations forced the contractors that employ human moderators to send most of them home, where for privacy reasons they couldn't do their jobs. Facebook eventually shifted some of that work to in-house employees and leaned more heavily on artificial-intelligence programs. More recently, it has made new arrangements for contract moderators to do their jobs remotely.

Meanwhile, bogus ads for masks, hand sanitizer and unregulated blood tests for COVID-19 still appear on Facebook and Google. And one North Carolina man with 44,000 YouTube subscribers who complained that his videos promoting the 5G and coronavirus theory were removed is now using the platform to hawk \$99 subscriptions to view his videos.

The tech platforms point out they are putting facts about the virus from news outlets, fact checkers, and health officials in front of their users when their safeguards fail.

Google "coronavirus" and you'll be directed to your local health department. Search on Twitter for "coronavirus hoax" and you'll get a link to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Watch a coronavirus conspiracy theory video on YouTube and you'll see a label promoting legitimate news outlets and COVID-19 information from the CDC hovering over it.

"There's a lot of misinformation when there is a lack of good information," said Pattison. "People will fill the void out of fear."

Ortutay reported from Oakland, Calif.

Soft-serve defiance: Ice cream trucks ply Brooklyn streets

By JAKE SEINER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Usually a welcome harbinger of spring and summer, Mister Softee's signature jingle has made a startling juxtaposition to the piercing wails of ambulances on Brooklyn's otherwise quiet streets.

Not the image the soft-serve ice cream truck company's management wants at the moment, but a few desperate franchise owners are out selling swirls anyway.

About 10 Mister Softee truck franchisees have gone rogue, disregarding requests from headquarters by peddling popsicles even as officials restrict business operations and tell people to stay home because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"We can say, 'Don't go out,' but we don't have the keys to every single truck," said Mike Conway, vice president at Mister Softee.

Legally, those drivers are within their rights. Food truck workers have been deemed essential by New York state, and while truck owners elsewhere in the city voted unanimously to temporarily stop selling swirls, about 10 of the roughly 80 Brooklyn-based franchisees are still operating on the near-empty streets.

Mister Softee initially moved to lock down its 350 New York City-based trucks before realizing the company legally couldn't stop its drivers, Conway said.

"I don't know if I would call this essential," said Adam Quiles, who hopped off his bike to buy water from a Mister Softee truck parked by Canarsie Pier on Saturday. "But everybody has to make a buck, I guess."

A handful of Mister Softee drivers fanned out Saturday with temperatures approaching 60 degrees and the sun shining.

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One parked in central Brooklyn played the company's bouncy jingle on loop but didn't appear to draw much traffic.

Mutlu Gani also took out his truck Saturday, parking near Canarsie Pier, which offers a good view of Kennedy Airport traffic, around 12:30 p.m. and setting up shop at one of his usual spots for the past 17 years.

Gani is not concerned about endangering himself or his customers because he hasn't had enough visitors to threaten social distancing measures, he said. He wears gloves and a facemask — gloves are standard in normal times — and hasn't sensed that the risk is worth giving up his only opportunity to make money, even if it barely covers his overhead.

"This year, I don't know how I'm going to pay rent, support my family," he said. "I don't know."

Gani had four customers in his first hour Saturday, including Jared Bridges and his 5-year-old son, Jacob, who pulled down his face mask to snack on a SpongeBob SquarePants pop.

"It's a nice day; it shouldn't stop us from enjoying our lives and enjoying our kids," Bridges said. "(Gani) had his mask, his gloves, wasn't in close contact for very long. My son obviously has his mask and we hand sanitize, so I'm not worried."

Gani said business has been terribly slow. On a bright April day like Saturday, he would normally sell \$200-\$300 worth of ice cream. This week, he has made as little as \$30 on some shifts.

With students stuck at home, he can't count on the after-school rush, and he is stressed about what happens if the virus restrictions stretch through most of his prime selling season.

"If it's September, I don't know what I'm going to be doing," he said.

Although Mister Softee's preference is that drivers stay home, the company is passing along federal safety recommendations to those who don't.

"About 90-95% of our trucks up there realized, 'Hey, this isn't a good idea. Let's wait it out,'" Conway said. "I don't want to lose their customers."

"That's our thing right now. It's a short-term gain. You might make some money in these couple weeks, but there's a long-term loss to your customers looking at you like, 'What are you doing out here?'"

The company is also advising franchisees on payroll programs and other financial aid options that might help make ends meet, but Conway acknowledged there's nothing that will fully replace the sales those drivers depend on at this time of year.

"I think every business has to ask themselves right now, you know, 'Are we essential?'" Conway said. "If we were maybe selling lunch and dinner and things like that, that's going to help sustain people. But I think getting ice cream is not going to be essential at this time."

Follow Jake Seiner: https://twitter.com/Jake_Seiner

More states finally paying \$600 extra in unemployment aid

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and SUSAN HAIGH Associated Press Writers

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — The bills are mounting for Justin Conrad, who lost his warehouse job three weeks ago and is anxiously awaiting his first state-provided unemployment check. Compounding his stress, his state, Connecticut, can't say when Conrad will get the additional \$600 a week in benefits that the federal government is providing in an economic relief package.

"I have no money coming in," says the 39-year old in Norwich, Connecticut. "And this week I have to pay my utility bill," he added with a nervous laugh. "With nothing coming in and very little anyone can say, it's hard."

Connecticut's labor officials are scrambling to reprogram their computers to handle the additional unemployment payouts. Its decades-old system can process weekly payments only in the hundreds of dollars, or three digits. Problem is, the additional \$600 from the federal government extends the payments into four digits.

Most other states have started to provide the extra federal jobless aid, though many did so only this

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week, nearly a month after businesses began shutting down across the country because of the coronavirus outbreak. At least 32 states will provide the extra federal benefits by the end of this week. California, the most populous state, provided its first extra payment on Sunday.

But several large states — among them Washington, Colorado and Wisconsin — were still struggling to process those payouts as of late Tuesday.

The disparity reflects the patchwork nature of America's unemployment benefits system: Benefits and eligibility rules vary sharply from state to state. And the slow and fitful distribution of payments points to the antiquated information technology that many states still rely upon for unemployment payments. Roughly two-thirds use a near-obsolete programming language, COBOL, that dates to the 1970s.

The situation has been frustrating and worrisome for the laid-off. Conrad is also a plumber and is looking for side jobs. "But even that's very limited, because nobody wants you anywhere near their house," he said.

As a single father with custody of a 16-year old son, "I can only do so much, which he understands," Conrad said. "It's like, 'Eat what you can, but not too much.'"

Across the country, state officials say they're working as fast as they can to process and distribute benefits. "Once programming is complete, we must test to ensure accurate integrity and accounting measures," said Nancy Steffens, a spokeswoman for Connecticut's Department of Labor, who came out of retirement to help the agency amid a crush of jobless claims. She acknowledged that the aging COBOL system has made it "challenging" to handle the federally provided aid.

Michele Evermore, an analyst at the National Employment Law Project, noted that the additional federal benefits provide crucial support for millions. For a typical laid-off U.S. worker, state unemployment aid alone equals only about half the income the worker received from the job that was lost.

In normal times, the lower payments are meant to encourage people to quickly look for a new job. But in this case, the viral outbreak has shut down businesses, and Americans are being urged to stay home to avoid infections. The additional federal unemployment aid enables more people to follow those guidelines and not go out seeking jobs that don't exist in many cases.

"I actually view the \$600 as an important public health measure, almost more than a financial payment in a way," Evermore said.

Like other states, Connecticut has been trying simultaneously to overhaul its computer systems and process a record-high surge in jobless claims. Nearly 17 million people have filed for such aid in the just the past three weeks, representing more than one in 10 American workers. The government is set to report Thursday that millions more applied for benefits last week.

Florida's unemployment benefit system has struggled mightily to keep up with the crush, even resorting to the use of paper applications. The state began distributing the additional \$600 on Tuesday.

Hundreds of thousands of Floridians who sought jobless aid encountered an online portal that crashed and phone systems that kept them on hold for hours. Now, the belated distribution of the federal benefits will be a huge relief for people like Desi Marinov, 42, a former flight attendant in Fort Lauderdale. She's been cutting back on her prescription medications and reducing her cellphone use. And she's asked her landlord to defer her rent.

"Any penny counts, especially when getting my job back is uncertain," Marinov said.

Just six weeks ago, the unemployment rate was at a 50-year low, and few worried about filing for unemployment. Analysts say that lack of concern extended to many state officials. Some sought to reduce jobless-aid expenses. Florida and North Carolina, for example, reduced the number of weeks that recipients were eligible from what had been a standard 26 weeks across all states.

Many states also neglected to upgrade their systems, even though money to do so was included in a 2009 federal stimulus package. Evermore said such upgrades are complicated by the fact that states have varying eligibility standards and benefits amounts, making off-the-shelf software solutions difficult.

Some states banded together to buy the same software and then customize it. But those efforts were hampered when newly elected governors occasionally didn't want to collaborate with other states, Evermore said. That's resulted in technology problems that are rare in the private sector. In some states,

for instance, if applicants forget their password to their state's online system, it must be mailed to them, Evermore said, prolonging the difficulty of completing a filing.

Still, for those out of work who have already received the \$600, it's been a lifeline. They include Mirian Carpio Carpio, 34, who was laid off a week ago from her housekeeping job at The Marquette Hotel in downtown Minneapolis. She received her \$600 federally provided benefits by direct deposit last Thursday and separately received \$300 in regular state unemployment aid.

Her husband still has his job cleaning offices. Carpio Carpio is hoping to return to her old job when the virus outbreak eases. But many economists say the hotel business may never fully recover as companies hold more video conferences and cut back on travel.

Rugaber reported from Washington. AP Writers Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Bobby Calvan in Tallahassee, Florida, and Jeff Baenen in Minneapolis contributed to this report.

WHO, allies lament Trump cut to US funding as virus rages

By JAMEY KEATEN and MARIA CHENG undefined

GENEVA (AP) — The head of the World Health Organization on Wednesday lamented the U.S. decision to halt funding for the U.N. agency, promising a review of its decisions while sidestepping President Donald Trump's complaints about its alleged mismanagement, cover-up and missteps.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was on the defensive after Trump announced a halt to U.S. funding that has totaled nearly a half-billion dollars annually in recent years. Trump claimed the WHO had parroted Chinese assurances about how the virus is spread, failed to obtain virus samples from China, and made a "disastrous decision" to oppose travel restrictions as the outbreak spread.

Countries and health experts around the world expressed alarm at Trump's move and warned it could jeopardize efforts to fight the coronavirus pandemic. Philanthropists like Bill Gates and Michael Bloomberg joined European and African leaders and health experts who lined up behind the WHO or insisted the U.S. shouldn't cut off funding at such a critical time.

While Trump pointed to a U.S. investigation of the U.N. agency, Tedros stopped short of addressing his complaints directly and said the WHO's performance in handling the outbreak would be reviewed as part of a "usual process" to ensure transparency and accountability.

"We regret the decision of the president of the United States to order a halt in funding to the World Health Organization," Tedros said. "WHO is reviewing the impact on our work of any withdrawal of U.S. funding and will work with our partners to fill any financial gaps we face."

"No doubt, areas for improvement will be identified and there will be lessons for all of us to learn," he added. "But for now, our focus – my focus – is on stopping this virus and saving lives."

The exact fallout from a halt in U.S. funding was far from clear.

The WHO runs on biennial budgets, and U.S. funding comes in two main forms — about three-fourths of it through "voluntary" contributions and one-fourth through "assessed" contributions, which are a bit like regular dues. The U.S. already contributed at least \$15 million to a \$675 million emergency fund set up by the WHO to help pay for the initial coronavirus response through April.

"Trump has a mercurial reputation. So he sort of promises death and destruction and then it doesn't necessarily happen," said Gian Luca Burci, a former legal counsel for WHO who now teaches at Geneva's Graduate Institute. "I think it will become more clear in the next few weeks."

He noted WHO's tricky task of uniting opposing constituencies: China and the U.S. have been at odds on a number of issues.

"Maybe Tedros went too far," he said. "But you can see also some of the reasons why he wanted to secure China's cooperation."

Trump has repeatedly labelled COVID-19 the "Chinese virus" and criticized the agency for being too lenient on China, where the novel coronavirus first emerged late last year.

Outside experts have questioned China's reported infections and deaths from the virus, calling them way

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too low and unreliable. An investigation by The Associated Press has found that a six-day delay between when Chinese officials learnt about the virus and when they warned the public allowed the outbreak to blossom into an enormous public health disaster.

The WHO has been particularly effusive in its praise for China, calling on other countries to emulate its approach and repeatedly praising its transparency.

Tedros has also heaped compliments on Trump, praising his "great job" in responding to the outbreak last month.

The European Union on Wednesday said Trump has "no reason" to freeze WHO funding at this critical stage and called for measures to promote unity instead of division.

In Beijing, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said the country is "seriously concerned" about the U.S. decision.

A spokesman for British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who this week emerged from intensive care after contracting the virus, declined to criticize either China or Trump.

"The U.K. has no plans to stop funding the WHO, which has an important role to play in leading the global health response," James Slack said.

Political fault lines emerged in the U.S., with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat, saying the "dangerous, illegal" decision to halt funding "will be swiftly challenged." Sen. Lindsay Graham, a Republican ally of Trump, insisted that "we cannot afford China apologists running the WHO."

Aid workers in developing countries worried they might be hit hardest.

"Trump's decision ... is pulling the rug out from under our feet at a pivotal moment. It will impact the humanitarian community as a whole," said Tom Peyre-Costa, regional media adviser for Central and West Africa for the Norwegian Refugee Council. "It defies logic at the height of a global pandemic and will lead to many more deaths."

On Twitter, Bill Gates — whose foundation was the agency's second-largest donor for its latest two-year budget, contributing over \$530 million — wrote that stopping funding for the WHO during a world health crisis "is as dangerous as it sounds."

Worldwide, the pandemic has infected over 2 million people and killed over 128,000, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

Some global health academics said Trump's attacks might actually strengthen WHO credibility.

"If Trump was making a great success of the pandemic response in the U.S., if there were minimal cases and deaths there, that might be different," said Sophie Harman, a professor of international politics at Queen Mary University of London. "But things are getting worse and that reinforces the need for WHO."

Cheng reported from London. Associated Press Writers Jill Lawless in London, Frank Jordans in Berlin, Daria Litvinova in Moscow, Darlene Superville in Washington, Andrew Meldrum in Johannesburg and Sam Mednick in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, contributed to this report.

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

WWII veteran, age 99, raises millions for UK health service

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A 99-year-old British army veteran who started walking laps in his garden as part of a humble fundraiser for the National Health Service has surprised himself by generating millions of pounds within days.

Tom Moore's family used social media to help him get donations to support health care workers during the coronavirus pandemic as a way to thank the doctors and nurses who took care of him when he broke his hip.

Moore, who uses a walker while putting in his paces, is well on his way to completing 100 laps of his

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25-meter garden before he turns 100 on April 30.

His family thought it would be a stretch to reach the 1,000-pound fundraising goal initially set for Moore's campaign last week. But the drive clearly captured the public mood at a time of national crisis. By Wednesday, the cause had attracted more than 250,000 supporters pledging close to 8 million pounds (\$10 million.)

Celebrities, fellow veterans, health workers and many other Britons have rallied behind Moore after the World War II veteran and his family appeared on national television.

Moore said the response was "completely out of this world."

"Thank you so much to all you people who subscribe to the National Health Service, because for every penny that we get, they deserve every one of it," he told the BBC.

Moore trained as a civil engineer before enlisting in the army during WWII. He rose to the rank of captain and served in India and Burma.

His daughter described the flood of donations as "beyond our wildest expectations" and a gift for her father.

"Whilst he's had a life full of purpose, he did fall and break his hip and became much less independent than he had been for the preceding 98 years," Hannah Ingram-Moore told the BBC on Wednesday. "What you have done, the British public and everyone who's supported him, is giving him his next purpose."

England's chief nursing officer, Ruth May, said Moore's campaign showed that "everyone has something they can do to support the COVID-19 response."

U.K. Health Secretary Matt Hancock, who spent a week in self-isolation after both he and Prime Minister Boris Johnson tested positive for the virus, gave Moore a shout-out during the government's daily public health briefing Wednesday.

"Captain Tom, you're an inspiration to us all," Hancock said.

Trade guru Navarro throws elbows for Trump on virus supplies

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Peter Navarro's eagerness to confront, attack and be, as one former associate put it, "a real jerk to people" didn't serve him well as a political candidate in the 1990s. But it fits what President Donald Trump was looking for to muscle companies to make critical supplies needed to fight the coronavirus.

And it fits much of what Navarro has long wanted as well. As the president's trade adviser, he hasn't been afraid to raise his voice inside the White House and out. The self-styled China hawk has seized on the coronavirus pandemic as the opportune moment to push nationalist trade views that line up with Trump's.

Reliance on foreign-made medical supplies, he says, is the "original sin" that underpins current shortages. China's "non-transparency" on the virus outbreak, he says, cost the U.S. five weeks in preparing for the coming pandemic.

Navarro, who holds a doctorate in economics but has no formal medical training, got into a recent blowup with the nation's top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, in the Situation Room when he challenged the doctor's resistance to pushing use of a malaria drug to fight the virus based only on anecdotal evidence.

That same week, word leaked that Navarro had warned in a late January memo about the high potential toll — both in lives and economic damage — from a potential pandemic. Navarro explained that he "felt the need to write that memo" because others in the West Wing weren't taking the threat seriously enough.

His concerns didn't get much traction among others who saw them as more alarmist talk from Navarro. And Trump, for his part, said last week he hadn't read the memo, adding, "Peter writes a lot of memos."

But the president and Navarro, a former Peace Corps volunteer, have long connected over their shared hard-line views on trade and their willingness to blame China for many of America's ills.

Navarro, 70, has used his time in the spotlight to offer a combative defense of the administration's efforts to slow the spread of the virus. "Who coulda done better on this?" he asked during a recent appearance on "60 Minutes" on CBS. "I mean, really, think about this."

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Perhaps nobody in the administration better fits Trump's nationalist tendencies. The president looks to place blame on China and the World Health Organization for the damage the virus has brought to the United States. Navarro doesn't miss a chance to do the same, telling Fox News on Tuesday that the WHO has "blood on their hands."

WHO declared a global health emergency on Jan. 30. The next day, Trump banned foreigners who had traveled to China in the past 14 days from entering the U.S. In public comments, however, he continued to downplay the threat. On March 10, for example, he said: "Be calm. It's really working out. And a lot of good things are going to happen."

Navarro came to Trump's attention with his searing reviews of policies that left American manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage with China. Now, Navarro's job is prodding American companies to make the ventilators, N-95 masks and other equipment that states and health care workers have been calling for as the virus spreads.

"What we're learning from that is that no matter how many treaties you have, no matter how many alliances, no matter how many phone calls, when push comes to shove you run the risk, as a nation, of not having what you need," Navarro said during a White House briefing earlier this month. He declined to be interviewed for this report.

Trump placed Navarro in charge of overseeing compliance with the Defense Production Act, which allows the president to direct private companies to prioritize orders from the federal government. At Trump's direction, Navarro has used that authority against General Motors and the 3M Company, though some Democrats have called for much more aggressive use of the law.

It's not the first time Navarro has tangled with the corporate world. His support for tariffs to force other nations into concessions on economic and immigration policy is adamantly opposed by business groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, but matches the president's vision.

"He's done an incredible job for me in terms of negotiation, in terms of understanding where the world is going, economically," Trump said upon picking Navarro for his latest role.

After winning election in 2016, Trump picked the University of California, Irvine professor to lead a new White House council on trade. Navarro's advancement as a political adviser follows several failed attempts at winning political office.

In 1992, Navarro ran an independent campaign for mayor in San Diego, losing with 48% of the vote to the Republican candidate. His campaign's emphasis was on restricting development and stemmed from his work as leader of a group called Prevent Los Angelization Now!

His campaign chairman was a fellow professor, Peter Andersen, who says Navarro was an economic conservative but to the left of the Democratic Party on environmental issues.

"I liked his indomitable spirit in terms of taking on the establishment, taking on developers," Andersen said. "He never shrunk at all from that path."

It was Andersen who said that Navarro could be "a real jerk to people."

"Never flinches, smart, egotistical, self-centered, he goes forward unfettered when he's right. Narcissistic. All of those things I would say about Peter," Andersen said. "I loved him, but I didn't like him."

In ensuing years, Navarro narrowly lost races for San Diego City Council and county supervisor. In 1996, he ran as a Democratic candidate for a San Diego-based congressional seat and even landed a small speaking role at the Democratic National Convention.

Navarro ended up losing by double-digit percentage points. Lisa Ross, who worked for Navarro as the communications director in the congressional race, said: "the more exposure people had to Peter, the more they got to dislike him."

But being liked is not a prerequisite for being an adviser to Trump.

"The thing is with Peter, he can bully his way around," Ross said. "I think that may be the reason Trump appointed him to this thing."

Detroit facing fresh fiscal woes with coronavirus closures

By COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Barely surviving the 2008 economic meltdown and humbled by its 2013 bankruptcy, Detroit's fiscal future now faces another daunting foe in the coronavirus.

The state-forced shutdown of its three casinos, auto plants and other businesses to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus is projected to cost Detroit \$348 million over the next year and a half.

Mayor Mike Duggan warned that Detroit could see a return to state oversight if action is not taken quickly, as he announced some layoffs, pay cuts and a reduction in services.

"We don't get to just solve one problem at a time," Duggan said Tuesday in a televised address. "Because while we have a health crisis, we have the biggest budget crisis this city's seen in seven years and we have to solve it at the same time."

Michigan has at least 27,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 1,768 deaths — third-most in the U.S. — and its largest city has been especially hard hit. While the state remains under a stay-at-home order from the governor, the virus has sickened at least 7,020 people in Detroit and killed at least 424. For most people, the virus causes mild or moderate symptoms, but it can cause more severe illness and death in some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems.

With people out of work and non-essential businesses shuttered, the city faces financial losses from income and sales taxes and fees. Detroit also expects to lose about \$184 million in casino wagering taxes.

The city will make up 80% of the shortfall through budget surpluses, money in a rainy-day fund, blight removal funds and cutbacks to capital projects. That would leave a \$44 million deficit to be made up mostly through layoffs and pay cuts.

A budget deficit could mean the city again finds itself under control of a state-appointed review commission that oversaw its finances from 2014 until 2018 as part of its exit from bankruptcy. Detroit was released from that oversight only after delivering three years of balanced budgets.

"If the review commission is put in place, they run the city of Detroit's life," Duggan said. "They approve our budgets, our contracts ... none of us ever want to lose self-determination again."

Detroit is among dozens, if not hundreds, of cities across the U.S. that are facing financial problems, according to Doug Bernstein, director of business law at the Bloomfield Hills-based Plunkett Cooney law firm.

"I don't necessarily single Detroit out as unique, other than the fact it's been through it before," Bernstein said. "Maybe it works — in a perverse kind of way — to the city's advantage because they've lived through it."

The city's 2013 bankruptcy happened after the state installed an emergency manager. At the time, Detroit had \$14 billion in long-term debt, a \$327 million budget deficit and bills piling up.

The bankruptcy allowed the city to wipe out or restructure about \$7 billion in debt. Millions of dollars in annual pension contributions also were pushed back for about a decade. Those are to resume in fiscal year 2024.

In recent years, the city has been able to sock away funds. It hoped to have at least \$335 million in assets available before the pension payments began to kick in.

"We expected a downturn and we prepared for it," Duggan said. "I can't tell you I expected it to be this sudden and this dire, but we are far more prepared than this city was before."

The creation of a rainy-day fund prompted the credit rating agency Moody's in February to upgrade Detroit's debt from "stable" to "positive." That rating applies to \$135 million of general obligation debt and still is three notches below investment grade.

But the severity and duration of the coronavirus pandemic could have a longer-term impact on the city's credit.

"Detroit's revenue structure is significantly exposed to economic downturns because gambling and income taxes comprise two of the two largest revenue sources," David Levett, Moody's lead analyst for Detroit, said last week. "That said, the city's fiscal 2019 audit, which was released in December 2019, showed that the city has an improved capacity to respond to stresses."

Federal lawsuit challenges Idaho's transgender sports ban

By KEITH RIDLER Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Two civil rights groups filed a federal lawsuit Wednesday challenging a new Idaho law banning transgender women from competing in women's sports, the first such law in the nation.

The American Civil Liberties Union and Legal Voice filed the lawsuit contending the law violates the U.S. Constitution because it is discriminatory and an invasion of privacy.

The groups also said the law scheduled to take effect July 1 is a violation of Title IX, the 1972 law that bars sex discrimination in education.

The groups in the 60-page lawsuit ask the court to permanently prevent Idaho from enforcing the law. Republican Gov. Brad Little late last month signed into law the measure that received overwhelming support in the Republican-dominated House and Senate, but no support from Democrats.

The ban applies to all sports teams sponsored by public schools, colleges and universities. A girls' or women's team will not be open to transgender students who identify as female.

Backers said the law, called the Fairness in Women's Sports Act, is needed because transgender female athletes have physical advantages.

Specifically, the lawsuit contends the law violates the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause because it is discriminatory and the 4th Amendment's protections against invasion of privacy because of tests required should an athlete's gender be challenged.

Two plaintiffs are bringing the lawsuit. One is an unnamed Boise area high school student who is cisgender. Cisgender refers to someone whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person was identified as having at birth.

The other is Lindsay Hecox, 19, who will be a sophomore this fall at Boise State University and hopes to qualify for the women's cross-country team. She competed on the boys' team at a Moorpark, California, high school before transitioning after graduating.

"I would like to compete as a female," she said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We shouldn't have our privacy invaded. If people started questioning me, I wouldn't want to be subjected to multiple tests."

The NCAA has a policy allowing transgender athletes to compete. But the sponsor of the Idaho law, Republican Barbara Ehardt, has called the NCAA policy "permissive."

Ehardt has said that allowing transgender athletes on girls' and women's teams would negate nearly 50 years of progress women have made since the 1972 Title IX legislation that's credited with opening up sports to female athletes, and along with it scholarships and other opportunities.

Earlier this year in Connecticut, the families of three female high school runners filed a federal lawsuit seeking to block transgender athletes from participating in girls sports. The families contend that allowing athletes with male anatomy to compete has deprived their daughters of track titles and scholarship opportunities.

Opponents of the Idaho law said it codified in state statute a government-mandated gynecological exam, likely causing some potential athletes to avoid sports. They argued that anyone from a parent to an opposing player or someone with a grudge could require a student to take a humiliating test.

The law "illegally targets women and girls who are transgender and intersex and subjects all female athletes to the possibility of invasive genital and genetic screenings," said Gabriel Arkles, senior staff attorney with the ACLU.

"Alongside Idahoans throughout the state, we have been fighting this hateful, unconstitutional legislation since it was introduced," said ACLU of Idaho Legal Director Ritchie Eppink.

The Idaho law is one of two anti-transgender bills signed into law by Little in March, making Idaho the first among states that introduced some 40 such bills this year to enact them.

The other Idaho law taking effect this summer prohibits transgender people from changing the sex listed on their birth certificates, and is almost certain to be challenged in court.

The birth certificate law ignores a 2018 federal court ruling that a past law barring transgender people

from making the birth certificate changes violated the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

The judge scrapped the ban and warned against new rules. The Idaho attorney general's office, which didn't appeal the ruling, said it could cost \$1 million if the state had to defend the ban again and lost.

Peter Renn of Lambda Legal, the law firm that represented two transgender women whose lawsuit led to the court ruling, said Idaho can't enforce that new law without violating a court order.

A third proposed Idaho law that would have criminalized treating transgender youth for dysphoria died in a House committee after the chairman decided to not have a vote on the measure.

10 pioneer-era apple types thought extinct found in US West

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A team of retirees that scours the remote ravines and windswept plains of the Pacific Northwest for long-forgotten pioneer orchards has rediscovered 10 apple varieties that were believed to be extinct — the largest number ever unearthed in a single season by the nonprofit Lost Apple Project.

The Vietnam veteran and former FBI agent who make up the nonprofit recently learned of their tally from last fall's apple sleuthing from expert botanists at the Temperate Orchard Conservancy in Oregon, where all the apples are sent for study and identification. The apples positively identified as previously "lost" were among hundreds of fruits collected in October and November from 140-year-old orchards tucked into small canyons or hidden in forests that have since grown up around them in rural Idaho and Washington state.

"It was just one heck of a season. It was almost unbelievable. If we had found one apple or two apples a year in the past, we thought we were doing good. But we were getting one after another after another," said EJ Brandt, who hunts for the apples along with fellow amateur botanist David Benscoter. "I don't know how we're going to keep up with that."

Each fall, Brandt and Benscoter spend countless hours and log hundreds of miles searching for ancient — and often dying — apple trees across the Pacific Northwest by truck, all-terrain vehicle and on foot. They collect hundreds of apples from long-abandoned orchards that they find using old maps, county fair records, newspaper clippings and nursery sales ledgers that can tell them which homesteader bought what apple tree and when the purchase happened.

By matching names from those records with property maps, they can pinpoint where an orchard might have been — and they often find a few specimens still growing there. The pair carefully note the location of each tree using GPS and tag the tree with a plastic band before bagging the apples in zip-close bags and shipping them to the Oregon experts for identification.

"When I find an apple that's lost, I want to know who homesteaded it, when they were there, who their children were, when they took their last drink of water," Brandt said. "We cannot afford to lose the name of even one of these landowners."

In the winter, they return to the trees — often on foot or on snowshoes in freezing temperatures and blinding snow — to take wood cuttings that can be grafted onto root stock to propagate new trees of the varieties that come back as "lost" specimens.

The task is huge. North America once had 17,000 named varieties of domesticated apples, but only about 4,500 are known to exist today. The Lost Apple Project believes settlers planted a few hundred varieties in their corner of the Pacific Northwest alone as they moved across the U. S. West to try their hands at the pioneer life.

These newcomers planted orchards with enough variety to get them through the long winter, with apples that ripened from early spring until the first frosts. Many were brought with the settlers in buckets from their homes on the East Coast and in the Midwest. Then, as now, trees planted for eating apples were not raised from seeds; cuttings taken from existing trees were grafted onto a generic root stock and raised to maturity. These cloned trees remove the genetic variation that often makes "wild" apples inedible.

With the 10 latest varieties identified, Brandt and Benscoter have rediscovered a total of 23 varieties. The latest finds include the Sary Sinap, an ancient apple from Turkey; the Streaked Pippin, which may have originated as early as 1744 in New York; and the Butter Sweet of Pennsylvania, a variety that was

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first noted in a trial orchard in Illinois in 1901.

Botanists from the Temperate Orchard Society identified them by comparing the collected apples to watercolor illustrations created by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the 1800s and early 1900s and by poring over written descriptions in old botany textbooks and reference guides, some of them more than 150 years old.

One apple, the Gold Ridge, was particularly hard to identify because the experts couldn't find any illustrations or descriptions of it anywhere. Finally, botanist Joanie Cooper went page by page through a reference book written by a botanist who died in 1912 until she found it.

"It's the luck of the draw," said Shaun Shepherd, another Temperate Orchard Conservancy botanist. "And we learn more as we go along."

With spring underway, the Lost Apple Project will soon enter its busy season as apple trees everywhere blossom and prepare to fruit. As they wait, Brandt and Benscoter are busy grafting wood cuttings from the newly discovered "lost" apple trees onto root stocks and updating their records from the last season.

Their nonprofit took a major hit when they had to cancel both an annual fair where they sell newly grafted "lost" apple trees and a class on how to graft wood to grow a new apple tree because of the new coronavirus. The two events fund much of their \$10,000 annual budget that goes toward travel costs, apple shipping and apple identification.

"Two months ago, I was thinking: 'This is going to be great. We've got 10 varieties that have been re-discovered,' but right now, we couldn't pay our bills," Benscoter said.

Still, the self-described apple detectives take comfort in their work as they navigate today's unprecedented times and find inspiration in imagining the lives of the pioneers who planted these trees. About 25% of homesteads didn't make it, Brandt said, and many settlers died or simply walked away to avoid starvation.

"It was a hard life. I can't even imagine what they went through, but they survived and they went on with their lives," he said. "It's hard now, too, but it's going to be OK. It's all a part of life."

Find the Lost Apple Project on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lostappleproject/

Banks brace for big loan defaults by US, global customers

By KEN SWEET AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The major banks in the U.S. are anticipating a flood of loan defaults as households and business customers take a big financial hit from the coronavirus pandemic.

JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Citigroup and Goldman Sachs raised the funds set aside for bad loans by nearly \$20 billion combined in the first quarter, earnings reports released over the past two days show. And Wall Street expects that figure may go even higher next quarter, a possibility bank executives acknowledged on earnings conference calls.

Bank of America and Citigroup said Wednesday that their profits sank more than 40% in the first quarter as both set aside billions for potentially bad loans. A day earlier, JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo reported even steeper drops in profit as those banks also set aside large sums to cover loan losses.

Even the investment banks were not immune to the pandemic. Goldman Sachs' first-quarter profit dropped by 46% from a year earlier, due to significant losses on its own investments as well as a buildup in reserves for potential loan defaults.

The coronavirus outbreak has bought the U.S. economy to a virtual standstill in just weeks. Most economists — and bank CEOs — expect the U.S. to go through a depression. The only question is how severe: Second-quarter gross domestic product is expected to drop from 30% to 40% and the unemployment rate is seen rising as high as 25%.

On Tuesday, JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon said the bank was preparing for a "severe recession." Wells Fargo CEO Charlie Scharf said, "We all know we haven't seen anything like this before."

One signal on how quickly consumers are pulling back came in the latest retail sales data from the government. Retail sales fell by 8.7% in March, the worst monthly drop in that datapoint on record. Consumers

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spending accounts for roughly 70% of U.S. gross domestic product, so that drop is particularly troublesome.

Bank of America's own data showed the consumer pulling back dramatically. Until the beginning of March, spending on BofA's credit and debit cards was running at a steady 7.5% growth rate. That's a fairly standard figure for the industry. By early April, that figure had dropped to roughly 2%.

Many of the loans now at risk were fine only weeks ago, but the pandemic has caused companies to shutter and millions to be put out of work.

Banks have scrambled to come up with payment options for their now-distressed customers, from cutting fees, making monthly payments smaller or allowing borrowers to skip a month's payments altogether. Roughly one in six small businesses that have loans with Bank of America are now in some sort of payment deferral program, the bank said Wednesday.

On Wednesday, BofA said it nearly quintupled its loan loss provisions to \$4.76 billion, while Citi set aside \$7.03 billion, up from \$1.98 billion in the first quarter a year earlier. Both have large credit card operations, and BofA also has a large consumer banking business while Citi has a large international banking franchise and lends to companies around the globe.

BofA and Citi fared better than rivals JPMorgan and Wells, which both saw steeper profit declines and proportionately set aside more money to cover loan losses. But Wall Street expects the industry will have to boost its bad loan cushion even further.

"These are all guesses at this stage," said Octavio Marenzi with the consultancy firm Opimas, in an email to investors. "The credit risk models created by banks have never seen anything like this crisis and are not likely to be able to make accurate forecasts. If anything, it looks like BofA's loss provisions are on the light side and we expect to see greater provisions for loan losses in Q2."

In a conference call with investors, BofA CEO Brian Moynihan said the figures out Wednesday were preliminary and added the bank would set aside more money next quarter if needed.

Charlotte, N.C.-based BofA earned a profit of \$4.01 billion, or 40 cents a share, down from \$7.31 billion or 70 cents a share, a year earlier. Citi's profit fell to \$2.5 billion, or \$1.05 per share, from \$4.7 billion, or \$1.87 per share, a year earlier.

Goldman Sachs had to set aside \$937 million to cover potentially bad loans, up from \$224 million a year earlier. But Goldman took the biggest hit in own portfolio. The investment bank owns stakes in several large public companies as well as its own private equity portfolio. Many of those companies saw their stocks plummet last quarter as the stock market ended its 11-year bull run, so Goldman had to mark those losses on its balance sheet.

A virus that hits all faiths tests religion's tie to science

By ELANA SCHOR and MARIAM FAM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Tanzania's president claimed the coronavirus "cannot sit in the body of Christ." Israel's health minister dismissed a potential curfew by saying that "the Messiah will come and save us." A global Muslim missionary movement held mass gatherings — and took blame for spreading the disease.

While most leaders of major religions have supported governments' efforts to fight the pandemic by limiting gatherings, a minority of the faithful — in both religious and secular institutions — have not.

Some have insisted that in-person worship should continue because of the relief it can provide. Others have suggested that faith is an authority higher than science, and belief can turn back contagion.

The struggle to adapt religious behaviors to a pandemic that doesn't distinguish between denominations or national boundaries was especially urgent in its earliest weeks, before many countries fully locked down. But as more officials trace virus hot spots back to faith gatherings, calls have grown louder for the devout to protect each other's physical well-being first.

"One of the things that most religious faiths stress in the first instance is to care for the most vulnerable in a community, to save others' lives as a primary focus," said L. Gregory Jones, dean of Duke University's divinity school.

But for some people of faith -- particularly those whose churches, synagogues and mosques are impor-

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tant community centers — that focus appears to conflict with the very fabric of their lives.

In majority-Christian Tanzania, President John Magufuli told a church congregation last month that he was “not afraid of coming here” because the virus could be combatted with belief.

Israeli Health Minister Yaakov Litzman had insisted on exempting synagogues and other religious institutions from limits on public gatherings, according to Israeli media reports, only to come down with the virus himself this month -- apparently after failing to heed the social distancing precautions he had publicly preached.

Litzman is now widely seen as a symbol of lax attitudes that led to a disproportionate number of cases in the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community that he belongs to, which makes up just over 10% of the population. Though he dismissed a possible Passover curfew last month, Israel ultimately imposed a national lockdown on the holiday’s first night.

In India, the Muslim missionary movement Tablighi Jamaat came under fire with the online circulation of an audio clip said to be of its chief Maulana Saad, urging the faithful to continue to congregate at mosques.

“They say that the infection will spread if you gather at a mosque, this is false,” Saad told worshippers. “If you die by coming to the mosque, then this is the best place to die.”

A spokesman for Jamaat, Mujeeb ur Rehman, said the recording was taken out of context.

“There was no malice in it,” he said. “During the same sermon, he also went on to ask his followers to follow the government guidelines to battle the spread of the virus.”

Indeed, many Muslim clerics and religious authorities across the world have worked to promote mosque closures or other restrictions.

But the Pakistani government -- accused of moving too slowly to curb gatherings -- refused to order mosques closed. Instead, it limited congregants to five or less. Still, some hardliners remained defiant despite advice to stay at home from the country’s Islamic Ideology Council. Maulana Abdul Aziz, a cleric at the Red Mosque in Islamabad, urged the faithful to challenge restrictions, arguing it was a sin to keep mosques empty.

In India, authorities said they linked hundreds of infections to Tablighi Jamaat’s activities and accused the movement’s leadership of negligence. The news inflamed religious tensions and sparked hateful comments against the nation’s Muslim minority.

Rehman acknowledged that “Jamaat was careless on its part, but the government is guilty too. First they failed to stem the outbreak and now they are turning the pandemic into a communal issue.”

Most U.S. religious services have paused or shifted online as the federal government discourages group gatherings to help contain the virus. But a few faith leaders and congregants in America, where religious freedom was already a political minefield, have rebelled against those limits and claimed an incursion on their rights.

Others have taken less aggressive steps to assert the power of communal worship, pointing to what they see as the ability of belief to heal the pandemic’s spiritual pain. Retired Catholic moral theologian Janet Smith is among those in her faith urging bishops to support the restoration of the holy sacraments, delivered in person using tactics that wouldn’t flout governmental orders.

“We believe that Jesus is really there and is bringing graces in the world that will help stop this coronavirus,” said Smith, who recently retired from Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. She suggested outdoor and drive-up meetings with priests as options for receiving sacraments.

Susannah Heschel, professor of Jewish studies at Dartmouth College, pointed to an assumption among some that “we control God, and we don’t — as if somehow, if we pray in a large number in a church or a mosque or synagogue, somehow this virus will come to an end.”

Seeking solace in spirituality or relying on religious rituals for relief and protection, some believers across faiths have continued to shrug off coronavirus risks as they worship.

Last month in Iraq, some defied a curfew to observe the anniversary of the death of revered Shiite Imam Moussa al-Kadhim. One of the visitors who have trekked to the imam’s gold-domed shrine complex, Ayoub al-Moussawi, said he has over the years braved threats to perform religious visits.

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"We have always been subjected to all sort of things from bombs to explosive devices, but protection comes from God," said al-Moussawi. "This time it's the corona pandemic."

He said he took precautions such as donning a mask in crowded areas and sanitizing his hands. There were fewer pilgrims this year and many marked the occasion remotely from their rooftops, he said.

Al-Moussawi is a supporter of the Iraqi Muslim cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who blamed the spread of the coronavirus in part on the legalization of same-sex marriage in a tweet to his 1 million followers.

Some Iraqis have criticized al-Sadr, a Shiite Muslim, arguing he hasn't discouraged believers from visiting holy shrines.

Instead, al-Sadr urged visitors of one Shiite shrine to "hurry up in completing the visit and to follow order and medical and health rules so as not to be a source of contagion for others." Al-Sadr rejected claims that he had undercut efforts to fight the virus.

Fam reported from Winter Park, Fla. Associated Press writers Sheikh Saaliq in New Delhi, India; Kathy Gannon in Islamabad, Pakistan; Josef Federman in Jerusalem and Tom Odula in Nairobi contributed to this report.

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Factory shutdowns near WWII demobilization levels in US

PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — American industry collapsed in March as the pandemic wreaked havoc on the U.S. economy. Manufacturing and overall industrial production posted the biggest declines since the United States demobilized after World War II.

The Federal Reserve reported Wednesday that manufacturing output dropped 6.3% last month, led by plunging production at auto factories that have entirely shut down. Overall, industrial production, which includes factories, utilities and mines, plummeted 5.4%. The declines were the biggest since 1946 and far worse than what economists had expected.

Production of autos and auto parts went into freefall, dropping 28%.

The lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed to combat COVID-19 have brought economic activity to a near-standstill. Output dropped 3.9% at utilities and 2% at mines as oil and gas drilling plunged, the Fed said.

Factories were running at 70.2% of capacity last month, down from 75.1% in February and lowest since 2010 when the U.S. economy was still recovering from the 2007-2009 Great Recession.

"The outlook is bleak for the industrial sectors," James Watson and Gregory Daco at Oxford Economics wrote in a research note. "With the global coronavirus recession leading to a sudden stop in activity at home and around the world, factory output is likely to fall even further in April. Major supply chain disruptions, reduced energy activity and tighter financial conditions will continue to represent major headwinds in the coming months." They say industrial production could drop 15% overall.

In another sign that industry is in a full-scale retreat, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York's index for manufacturing in New York state plummeted an unprecedented 57 points this month to -78.2, lowest low-level in records dating back to 2001.

A year after blaze, Notre Dame restoration halted by virus

By ELAINE GANLEY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Notre Dame Cathedral stands crippled and alone, locked in a dangerous web of warped scaffolding one year after a cataclysmic fire gutted its interior, toppled its famous spire and horrified the world.

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Some of the 40,000 metal bars — erected for an earlier renovation project — melted in the intense blaze on April 15, 2019. The unstable scaffolding now endangers the Gothic jewel that for many embodies the soul of France.

The restoration of the landmark from the 12th and 13th centuries has been halted and the workers sent home because of France's coronavirus lockdown that began March 17, thwarting plans to start removing the 250 tons of scaffolding.

So even Notre Dame has been left in isolation by the pandemic that has affected so many people across France.

The 13-ton bell in the south tower, named Emmanuel, that traditionally rings on solemn occasions will sound at 8 p.m. Wednesday, joining the nightly rounds of applause for overstretched health workers.

On Good Friday, Paris Archbishop Michel Aupetit led an exceptional but tiny gathering inside the church, at the foot of the huge golden cross that remains intact.

"Today, we stand in this half-fallen cathedral to say that life is still here," Aupetit said in the televised ceremony.

The gathering in the fragile church was meant to raise the spirits of a nation in distress.

"The message of hope is especially important for our compatriots at a time when we are particularly affected by the coronavirus, which is sowing anguish and death," the archbishop told reporters.

There was no Easter service and no formal plans to mark the anniversary of the fire. But the musicians of Notre Dame have created a virtual homage to their beloved cathedral with a performance from their homes of an extract of J.S. Bach's "St. John Passion."

"As long as we have this scaffolding around, there's still sort of a 50% chance that more damage can be (caused) to the cathedral," said Notre Dame chaplain Brice de Malherbe, who last year was evacuated from his home next door as flames engulfed the roof.

He recalled his worst moment that night: "When one had the impression that the fire was (subsiding) and suddenly it resumed in one of the towers."

Yet, Notre Dame remained standing, still surveying the French capital from the island in the Seine, its two familiar bell towers partially eaten from within by flames but their heavy stones apparently only blackened on the outside.

French President Emmanuel Macron reiterated Wednesday his desire to see the cathedral reopen its giant doors in time for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.

"We will do everything to keep this deadline," he said in a tweeted video, thanking firefighters and rescue workers for extinguishing the blaze and saving lives.

Notre Dame "is a symbol of our resilience, our capacity to overcome challenges and stand aright," Macron said.

But progress has been delayed by setbacks, from the discovery of toxic dust from the melted lead roof and spire to the health and safety demands of the pandemic.

Officials hope the scaffolding can be removed by the fall. Then, stones must be analyzed to see which need to be replaced. Debris and huge ancient beams that burned like kindling must be cleared from the soaring vaults, Malherbe said. An umbrella structure will then be built to protect the site, which is now surrounded by high barricades.

For one fervent devotee of Notre Dame, the barricades, which replaced a smaller barrier, symbolize her loss, and the virus spreading across France and the world.

"Notre Dame is confined. I couldn't throw a bouquet of flowers over to her," said Cecile Deleville, who had tossed one over the lower fencing in December. "It's as though they took that away, too."

The 67-year-old retiree dared to take her first look at the cathedral a day after the fire, along with reporters from The Associated Press. She said at the time that she felt like an orphan.

Now, she fears she won't see Notre Dame reborn in her lifetime. Deleville worries that the reconstruction will fall by the wayside as France tries to rebuild its economy once the virus crisis has been overcome.

Those in charge of returning Notre Dame to its original splendor are still at work, despite being locked

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down.

The cathedral "has been gravely injured, undeniably so," Jean-Louis Georgelin, a retired army general appointed by Macron to head the restoration project, said in an interview with the Catholic publication *Le Pelerin*.

But it has resisted thermal shock from the fire, water from hoses that drenched it for days, the summer heat and high winds, he said, adding that sensors installed to read any movement of the structure have picked up nothing notable.

Donations large and small are helping to pay for the restoration, with 188 million euros received, Georgelin told the daily *Le Parisien*. Some 400 million euros (\$437 million) have been promised by the Total oil company and French tycoons Francois Pinault and Bernard Arnault of the luxury giant LVMH. But it was the modest donations, mainly from people in France and the United States, that covered the initial costs.

On Wednesday, Germany offered to help rebuild some of the large clerestory windows located far above eye level. The German government said three glass-makers that conduct restoration work for cathedrals in Germany could offer "great expertise" to their French colleagues.

A timeline for the reconstruction may need to be redrawn to account for the virus lockdown. What also is unclear is what the new spire will look like. Will it be a copy of architect Eugene-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc's 19th century creation in lead that soared 96 meters (315 feet) high, or be a contemporary version?

With Notre Dame still severely damaged, Deleville, the believer who lost her church, cannot muster a vision of the future.

"It makes my heart cry," she said. "I return but she isn't there."

Oleg Cetinic in Paris contributed.

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

Commerce locks up and retail sales plunge unprecedented 8.7%

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. retail sales plummeted 8.7% in March, an unprecedented decline, as the viral outbreak forced an almost complete lockdown of commerce nationwide.

The deterioration of sales far outpaced the previous record decline of 3.9% that took place during the depths of the Great Recession in November 2008.

Auto sales dropped 25.6%, while clothing store sales collapsed, sliding 50.5%, the Commerce Department said Wednesday. Restaurants and bars reported a nearly 27% fall in revenue.

U.S. consumer confidence has plunged and the vast majority of Americans are hunkered down at home under shelter-in-place orders. Consumer spending drives two-thirds of the U.S. economy, and the record drop in retail sales is a symptom of the sharp recession that most economists believe the U.S. has already entered. Economists at JPMorgan Chase now forecast the U.S. economy will shrink by a record-shattering 40% in the April-June quarter.

"With clear signs of panic buying of necessities and the fact that lock downs were introduced only around the middle of the month means that far worse is to come in April and the second quarter more generally," said Michael Pearce, an economist at Capital Economics, a consulting firm.

Signifying the titanic shift in consumer behavior, grocery store sales jumped by nearly 26% as Americans stocked up on food and consumer goods to ride out the pandemic. And a category that mostly includes online shopping rose 3.1%.

Spending may be falling at an even faster pace than the retail sales figures suggest. Wednesday's report doesn't include spending on services such as hotel stays, airline tickets, or movie theaters, all of them suffering some of the most severe financial duress during the outbreak.

The toll of the devastation is being unearthed as the U.S. releases more data from different sectors of

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the economy. On Wednesday, the U.S. reported that industrial production, which includes manufacturing, mines and utilities, posted the biggest drop in March since 1946.

The pullback in spending is intensifying the problems facing brick and mortar retailers which were already struggling with online competition.

With a nationwide shutdown of malls and most stores, the pandemic is putting many clothing retailers in peril, while increasing the dominance of big box stores that have remained open during the pandemic because they sell essentials like food and household goods.

More than 250,000 stores, including Macy's, Nordstrom and Nike, which sell non-essential merchandise have been shuttered since mid-March. That's 60% of overall U.S. retail square footage, according to Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalRetail Research

Major retailers including J.C. Penney, Macy's and Nordstrom have furloughed hundreds of thousands of workers, while Walmart and Amazon are on hiring sprees to try to meet the surging demand of shoppers buying online or for curbside drop-off or delivery.

Department stores and mall-based chains have cut executive pay, suspended cash dividends and stock buybacks or repurchases to preserve cash. They're also drawing down their credit lines to make sure they have a bigger pile of cash on hand.

Nordstrom warned last week that it doesn't know when it will be able to reopen its physical stores and that prolonged closures could cause it to become financially distressed. Ralph Lauren and Gap Inc. have announced that, for now, they've stopped ordering products for the fall. Other retailers will likely follow.

Discretionary spending by shoppers is expected to collapse 40%-50% in the first-half 2020, according to Fitch Ratings. And department stores lead a group of consumer companies that have seen their odds of default spike over the past month, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence.

VIRUS DIARY: For the smallest ballplayers, an unsure spring

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

MONROEVILLE, Pa. (AP) — The question comes frequently. Usually in the morning, when the day is still brimming with confidence.

"Are we going to have a season this year?" my 10-year-old asks, sometimes with a glove on his left hand and a baseball in his right.

My answer for the last month has always been the same: Maybe. I'm not exactly lying (though it is starting to feel like it) as the weeks pass and my confidence wanes that our suburb east of Pittsburgh will somehow emerge from the coronavirus quarantine in time to get one in.

The fridge calendar is the center of my family's life. This time of year, it's typically a sea of scribbles and the occasional color-coded marker highlighting work schedules and the seemingly never-ending stream of practices, games, church and school functions and Girl Scout meetings.

The page for April 2020 is largely empty. That doesn't stop me from glancing at it a dozen of times a day.

During the first couple weeks of the quarantine, I checked it mostly out of habit. Now, each time I slash out a date, it doubles as a milepost on an interminable countdown. I wonder how much longer the local youth baseball and softball leagues our kids play in can hold out before raising the white flag to the pandemic.

In the big picture, sacrificing a few months of activity to help slow the spread is not asking for much. The smaller picture — the one my wife and I navigate daily — is trickier.

In southwestern Pennsylvania, the start of baseball and softball practice offers concrete proof that spring is finally here. The familiar rhythms of long nights at the fields — from our daughter smearing her face with pink eye-black from chin to cheek to our introverted son briefly emerging from his shell in the dug-out — are comforting and all too fleeting. The fragility of this moment in their lives is impossible to shake.

How many times are they going to be 10 and 8? Just once. How many spring and summers before their interests diverge? Not many. How many games of catch left with Mom and Dad? Fewer by the day. Selfishly, how much longer do I have to teach my son and his buddies pitching mechanics before I'm relegated to watching from the stands? I try not to think about it.

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Though my son spent 20 minutes the other day breaking down every baseball team he's ever played on, I'm acutely aware these years will end up as mostly hazy memories for him and his sister. But for my wife and I, they are vivid. They are joyful. The fear of missing out on an entire season is palpable.

Our kids — thankfully — get along. Being stuck at home has forced them to play together in ways they haven't before. That includes an impromptu backyard game the other day, one that ended with little sister getting big brother to swing and miss at a little high cheese.

Her glee was infectious, the grin on his face unmistakable. And for a minute I forgot that on a normal Wednesday in April, our time together would be relegated to the groggy morning routines and the nightly homework-practice-dinner-bedtime sprint.

That doesn't mean I can't wait for the day when my son bounds into the dining room to ask me if there's going to be a season and my response is an emphatic "yes." Maybe it will happen sometime this month. Maybe not. The reality is, it's out of our hands.

Until then, I keep reminding myself that the timeline doesn't matter. The beauty of the game is that when we are ready, it will be there. It always is.

"Virus Diary," an occasional feature, will showcase the coronavirus saga through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world. See previous entries here. Will Graves covers Pittsburgh sports for The Associated Press. Follow him on Twitter here.

5 things to know today - that aren't about the virus

By The Associated Press undefined

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. WARREN BACKS BIDEN: Elizabeth Warren endorsed Joe Biden, becoming the last of the former vice president's major Democratic presidential rivals to formally back him.
2. CHICAGO EXPRESSWAY PILEUP: Authorities say portions of a Chicago expressway left icy by a wintry blast led to a pileup involving dozens of vehicles and sent 14 people to hospitals
3. LOST AND FOUND: Apple detectives rediscover 10 apple varieties in the Pacific Northwest that were planted by long-ago pioneers.
4. 'LOVE TRIANGLE GONE WRONG': Authorities say an Alabama police detective fatally shot a woman as part of a "love triangle" dispute with a colleague.
5. SUMMER ROLLOUT FOR STREAMING SERVICE: NBCUniversal says its video-streaming service Peacock will launch nationally in July, as planned, even though just a handful of its original series will be ready.

Would you give up health or location data to return to work?

By CHRISTINA LARSON and MATT O'BRIEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cameron Karosis usually strives to protect his personal information. But a scary bout of COVID-19 that began last month with headaches and fevers, progressed to breathing problems and led to a hospital visit has now left him eager to disclose as much as possible to help halt the virus' spread.

Karosis has already shared personal details with Massachusetts health investigators. And if he was asked to comply with a disease-tracking phone app that monitored his whereabouts but didn't publicly reveal his name and Cambridge street address, he said he'd do that, too.

"I'm sick and I'm under a quarantine -- hold me accountable for it," the 27-year-old software salesman said. "You have the potential to kill other people."

As countries around the world edge toward ending lockdowns and restarting their economies and societies, citizens are being more closely monitored, in nations rich and poor, authoritarian and free.

New systems to track who is infected and who isn't, and where they've been, have been created or extended in China, South Korea and Singapore. And a range of other surveillance systems – some utilizing GPS location data, some gathering medical data – have been debated or piloted in Israel, Germany,

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the U.K., Italy and elsewhere.

The challenge: achieving the tricky balance between limiting the spread of disease and allowing people freedom to move outside their homes.

Whether the prospect on the table is "immunity passports" or cellphone-based tracking apps, the aim is to protect public health. But experts say it's also important to avoid a slippery-slope scenario where data collected to minimize the spread of disease is stored indefinitely, available without limits to law enforcement or susceptible to hackers.

"We need to build necessary guardrails for civil liberties," said Jake Laperruque, a lawyer at the nonprofit Project on Government Oversight in Washington. "If new data is being collected for public health purposes, it should only be used for public health purposes."

Right now, there is no single official plan for reopening the United States, where the constitutional system gives states responsibility for maintaining public safety and where deaths from COVID-19 continue to rise steeply.

Scientists believe that the hundreds of thousands of people who already have recovered from the virus worldwide are likely to have some immunity to future infection, but they aren't sure for how long. To ensure new cases don't overwhelm hospital capacity, any plans to relax lockdowns will include provisions to track infections.

"The virus is not going away – if we all just come out on a certain date, it will spread widely again," said Dr. Tom Frieden, an infectious disease expert and former director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "That means we need to think carefully about how and when we come out."

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the White House's top disease expert, said the administration has looked at the idea of issuing certificates of immunity to people whose blood tests reveal they have developed antibodies to fight the virus, among other possible plans. Yet they haven't concluded that approach would be effective, he told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

"I know people are anxious to say, 'Well, we'll give you a passport that says you're antibody-positive, you can go to work and you're protected.' The worst possibility that would happen is if we're actually wrong about that" and those people get infected.

Meanwhile, public health agencies from Massachusetts to the city of San Francisco have hired a surge of people to run "contact tracing" teams. Their mission is to identify anyone who has recently been in contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, then encourage those people to get tested and perhaps isolate themselves. These meetings can be sensitive and require training, and support, to pull off effectively.

Aiming to take the tracing approach to a new scale are tech giants Apple and Google, which are jointly working to build smartphone technology that alerts users if they shared a park bench or grocery store aisle with a stranger later found to be infected with the virus.

Unlike the more invasive location-tracking methods attempted by some governments, the Apple-Google approach uses Bluetooth beacons to detect physical proximity and encrypted keys to maintain people's anonymity. The companies say they're building the software for public health departments only, on the condition that they won't make use of them mandatory.

In addition to developing the technology, experts warn that the implications of deploying such devices need to be carefully considered. Who will collect and verify the data? How long will it be held? Will enough people use a voluntary app for it to be helpful?

"We know from history that 'emergency measures' too often last long beyond their initial expiry date," said Deborah Brown, a senior researcher at Human Rights Watch.

She also noted that systems that monitor cellphone location or GPS data reveal more than just where someone has recently been. "Your contacts and associations can be gleaned, potentially your religious or political beliefs," she said -- for instance, if you've visited a church or mosque.

Susan Landau, a cybersecurity professor at Tufts University, said she has doubts about the effectiveness of relying on smartphone-based approaches, even if the apps are carefully designed to protect individual

privacy.

"My real concern about the whole thing is I think it's being oversold," she said. "Does it reduce spread? I don't doubt that. Does it enable us to eliminate social distancing? No, not as long as there's a high portion of people who are asymptomatic."

Collecting data should complement, but not substitute for, well-managed public health interventions, said Deborah Seligsohn, a political scientist at Villanova University.

It's one thing to merely send a phone alert that someone exposed to a COVID-19 case should self-isolate for 14 days. It's another to have government workers bring them groceries or other essentials to make that quarantine period possible if someone would otherwise have trouble complying, she said.

After the various lockdowns lift, it's not clear how readily Americans will submit to tracking efforts.

Cameron Karosis had his mind changed by contracting the virus, but many others are still wrestling with the prospect of how far they'd be willing to go.

"Personally, I would not be thrilled to be forced into downloading an app, mostly because I don't love the idea of Silicon Valley knowing even more about me than they already do," said Maura Cunningham, a writer in Ann Arbor, Michigan. "But I'd probably give in on that pretty quickly if it were made a widespread prerequisite for getting back to normal activity at some point in the future. I'd definitely resist a blood test — that just feels too intrusive."

O'Brien reported from Providence, Rhode Island. Associated Press health reporters Mike Stobbe and Lauran Neergaard contributed to this story.

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Virus choking off supply of what Africa needs most: Food

By FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — In a pre-dawn raid in food-starved Zimbabwe, police enforcing a coronavirus lockdown confiscated and destroyed 3 tons of fresh fruit and vegetables by setting fire to it. Wielding batons, they scattered a group of rural farmers who had traveled overnight, breaking restrictions on movement to bring the precious produce to one of the country's busiest markets.

The food burned as the farmers went home empty-handed, a stupefying moment for a country and a continent where food is in critically short supply.

It was an extreme example of how lockdowns to slow the spread of the coronavirus may be choking Africa's already-vulnerable food supply.

Lockdowns in at least 33 of Africa's 54 countries have blocked farmers from getting food to markets and threatened deliveries of food assistance to rural populations. Many informal markets where millions buy their food are shut.

About one in every five people in Africa, nearly 250 million, already didn't have enough food before the virus outbreak, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization. A quarter of the population in sub-Saharan Africa is undernourished.

"This is double any other region," said Sean Granville-Ross, director for Africa at the aid agency Mercy Corps. "With lockdowns, border closures and the ability to access food curtailed, the impact of COVID-19 on Africa could be like nothing we have seen before."

Lockdowns without provisions to help the poor "may affect us very, very much," said Lola Castro, regional director in southern Africa for the U.N. World Food Program.

The Kibera slum in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, is at a breaking point already. Last week, thousands of desperate people scrambled for food aid at a distribution point, causing a stampede.

The World Food Program was already feeding millions in Africa, mainly rural people, due to a myriad of

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disasters: Floods, drought, armed conflict, government failures, even plagues of locusts. The pandemic has added another layer of hardship.

Take Sudan, where restrictions to combat the virus are hampering aid workers from reaching some of the 9.2 million people in need, according to the U.N.

The most severe drought in decades is already threatening about 45 million people with hunger across southern Africa, where farmers are still recovering from two devastating cyclones that battered Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi last year.

Somalia, one of the world's most fragile countries, is struggling to get food to people living in extremist-controlled areas. Two months ago it declared a national emergency over an outbreak of desert locusts that devoured tens of thousands of hectares of crops and pastures. That left 20 million people with dire food shortages in East Africa. Now the locusts are back, more of them this time.

In West Africa's Sahel region, nearly 30 million are struggling to find food, said Granville-Ross of Mercy Corps.

On top of these problems, the World Bank said the virus could create "a severe food security crisis in Africa."

Among those at risk are millions of children normally fed through WFP's school meals program. A few weeks after the virus crept into Africa, so many schools have been closed that 65 million children are now missing out on meals, WFP told The Associated Press.

For many Africans, the immediate concern is not the virus — it's surviving the lockdowns.

"Most Africans work in the informal sector and need to go out every day," World Health Organization Africa regional chief Matshidiso Moeti said. "I think above all of access to food."

The virus has been slow to spread in Africa, which has not yet experienced the drastic number of cases and deaths witnessed in parts of Europe, Asia and the United States. The continent of nearly 1.3 billion people has reported just over 15,000 cases and 815 deaths, although those figures may be vastly under-reported.

But while direct casualties are still relatively low, the "large majority" of economies at risk from the pandemic are in Africa, according to WFP.

"For many poor countries, the economic consequences will be more devastating than the disease itself," said WFP. British charity Oxfam warned that if Africa doesn't get help, the fight against poverty could be set back "by as much as 30 years."

Ordinary Africans can't expect much help from their governments, many of which are already laboring with huge debts and low foreign currency reserves. Falling global oil and mineral prices mean that Africa's exports are worth less now.

Some are making drastic decisions.

In a street in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, Eugene Wadema trudges along, searching for transport to get back to her rural home 300 kilometers (186 miles) away.

In the days before the lockdown, food prices shot up at a rate many Zimbabweans, already hammered by a ruined economy and the world's second-highest inflation rate, just couldn't handle.

"Here, the price of a pack of potatoes is now \$40. It was \$15 yesterday," the 23-year-old Wadema said. She said her rural homeland is one of the lucky ones still receiving food aid but she doesn't know how long it will last.

Behind her, her husband holds a small child. Two other young children — 5-year-old twins — try to keep up as they carry bags with clothes and blankets. But there's no food for the journey.

"If we had food we wouldn't be going," Wadema said.

Associated Press writer Tom Odula in Nairobi, Kenya contributed to this report.

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

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, April 16, the 107th day of 2020. There are 259 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 16, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in which the civil rights activist responded to a group of local clergymen who had criticized him for leading street protests; King defended his tactics, writing, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

On this date:

In 1789, President-elect George Washington left Mount Vernon, Virginia, for his inauguration in New York.

In 1889, comedian and movie director Charles Chaplin was born in London.

In 1917, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin returned to Russia after years of exile.

In 1945, during World War II, U.S. troops reached Nuremberg. U.S. forces invaded the Japanese island of Ie Shima (ee-eh shee-mah).

In 1947, the cargo ship Grandcamp, carrying ammonium nitrate, blew up in the harbor in Texas City, Texas; a nearby ship, the High Flyer, which was carrying ammonium nitrate and sulfur, caught fire and exploded the following day; the blasts and fires killed nearly 600 people. At the South Carolina statehouse, financier Bernard M. Baruch declared: "Let us not be deceived — we are today in the midst of a cold war."

In 1960, shortly before midnight, rock-and-roll performer Eddie Cochran, 21, was fatally injured in a taxi crash in Chippenham, Wiltshire, England (he died the next day).

In 1962, New Orleans Archbishop Joseph Rummel excommunicated three local Roman Catholics for fighting racial integration of parochial schools. Bob Dylan debuted his song "Blowin' in the Wind" at Gerde's Folk City in New York.

In 1972, Apollo 16 blasted off on a voyage to the moon with astronauts John W. Young, Charles M. Duke Jr. and Ken Mattingly on board.

In 1977, Alex Haley, author of the best-seller "Roots," visited the Gambian village of Juffure, where, he believed, his ancestor Kunte Kinte was captured as a slave in 1767.

In 1986, dispelling rumors he was dead, Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi (MOO'-ah-mar gah-DAH'-fee) appeared on television to condemn the U.S. raid on his country and to say that Libyans were "ready to die" defending their nation.

In 2003, the Bush administration lowered the terror alert level from orange to yellow, saying the end of heavy fighting in Iraq had diminished the threat of terrorism in the United States.

In 2007, in one of America's worst school attacks, a college senior killed 32 people on the campus of Virginia Tech before taking his own life.

Ten years ago: The U.S. government accused Wall Street's most powerful firm of fraud, saying Goldman Sachs & Co. had sold mortgage investments without telling buyers the securities were crafted with input from a client who was betting on them to fail. (In July 2010, Goldman agreed to pay \$550 million in a settlement with the Securities and Exchange Commission, but did not admit wrongdoing.)

Five years ago: U.N. Security Council members were moved to tears as a Syrian doctor, Mohamed Tenari, an eyewitness to suspected chlorine attacks on civilians in Syria, gave a graphic eyewitness account of dying children during a closed-door briefing. The NFL reinstated Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson, clearing the way for him to return after missing most of the previous season while facing child abuse charges in Texas for disciplining his son with a wooden switch.

One year ago: French President Emmanuel Macron pledged to rebuild Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral "even more beautifully," a day after a raging fire destroyed the cathedral's spire and roof; he said he wanted to see the renovation of the landmark completed within five years. France's richest businessman, Bernard Arnault, and his luxury goods group LVMH pledged more than \$220 million for the reconstruction of Notre Dame; other French companies pledged aid totaling in the hundreds of millions of dollars. U.S. health regulators halted sales of a type of surgical mesh used to repair pelvic conditions in women, after years of patients'

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reports of injuries and complications. The Seattle Seahawks and quarterback Russell Wilson announced agreement on a \$140 million, four-year extension that made him the highest-paid player in the NFL.

Today's Birthdays: Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI is 93. Actor Peter Mark Richman is 93. Singer Bobby Vinton is 85. Denmark's Queen Margrethe II is 80. Basketball Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is 73. Former Massachusetts first lady Ann Romney is 71. NFL coach Bill Belichick is 68. Rock singer and former politician Peter Garrett is 67. Actress Ellen Barkin is 66. Actor Michel Gill is 60. Rock musician Jason Scheff (Chicago) is 58. Singer Jimmy Osmond is 57. Rock singer David Pirner (Soul Asylum) is 56. Actor-comedian Martin Lawrence is 55. Actor Jon Cryer is 55. Rock musician Dan Rieser is 54. Actor Peter Billingsley is 49. Actor Lukas Haas is 44. Actress-singer Kelli O'Hara is 44. Actress Claire Foy (TV: "The Crown") is 36. Figure skater Mirai Nagasu is 27. Actress Sadie Sink is 18.

Thought for Today: "We think too much and feel too little." — Charles Chaplin, English actor-comedian-director (born this date in 1889, died in 1977).