

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Governor Noem Announces 'Back to Normal' Plan

PIERRE, S.D. - Yesterday, Governor Kristi Noem announced her plan to help South Dakotans get "Back to Normal" following the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly changed the path so many South Dakotans were on. Some of us lost friends and loved-ones," Noem said. "This disease also stole our most precious commodity—time. In addition to the health costs, the social costs of this virus are historic in the worst way. I have let science, facts, and data drive our decision-making, and we will continue to do so.

"South Dakotans have taken personal responsibility for their health and safety seriously. They have done a tremendous job practicing good public hygiene and social distancing. Together, we've cut our projected peak infection rate by more than 75 percent. South Dakotans have lived up to our state's motto: 'Under God, the people rule.'

"The plan I am unveiling today continues to put the power of decision-making into the hands of the people – where it belongs. Today's plan relies on South Dakotans continuing to exercise common sense, reasonableness, innovation, and a commitment to themselves, their families, and – in turn – their communities."

The "Back to Normal" plan outlines guidance for individuals, employers, schools, health care providers and local governments. Specific information is available [here](#).

Today, Governor Noem signed Executive Order 2020-20 to put the plan into effect.

The plan is based on increased testing capacity and continued improvement in South Dakota's projected peak hospitalization. To learn more about the "Back to Normal" plan and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit [COVID.sd.gov](https://COVID.sd.gov).

## **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've had a pretty decent day, despite our case count in the US topping a million cases today. Hard to believe that, less than two months ago on March 1, we had 70 reported cases in the country. It feels like longer than that.

We're at 1,013,067 cases in the US. The increase, both in raw number and percentage ticked slightly upward today, with luck only a momentary pause in an overall continuing decline; but there are worrying spots here and there across the country. NY leads with 295,137 cases, a substantial decline in both number and percentage increase for the third consecutive day. NJ, with 113,856 cases, shows a slight uptick in its rate of growth. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: MA – 58,302, IL – 48,102, CA – 47,093, PA – 45,323, MI – 39,234, FL – 32,838, LA – 27,266, and TX – 26,837. These ten states still account for 72% of US cases. 3 more states have over 20,000 cases, 6 more have over 10,000, 9 more over 5000, 16 more + DC, PR, and GU over 1000, 6 more over 100, and VI + MP under 100.

I have some new analysis of what states are showing movement in new case reports. Those with substantial numbers of cases which are not showing much change include NJ, CT, PA, GA, MI, WA, TX, and MO. States where new case reports are increasing include MA, IN, IL, VA, CA, CO, MD, and TN. I will add that the CA increase appears to center on the Los Angeles area where the rate of testing has spiked in the last few days, driving up new case reports; it appears the reproduction rate of the virus overall in CA is still headed for (or maybe already below) that magic number of 1. States where new case reports are decreasing include NY, SD, FL, ID, LA, PR, OH, and WV. While there still are trouble spots, things continue to look better. As more states begin to ease restrictions on their populations, let's all hold our collective breath that this holds.

There have been 53,026 deaths in the US. The growth in percentage and raw number was slightly increased from yesterday, the second consecutive such day. NY has 17,638, NJ has 6442, MI has 3566, MA has 3153, IL has 2132, PA has 2092, CT has 2089, CA has 1881, and LA has 1758. There are 2 more states over 1000 deaths, 6 more over 500, 18 more + DC over 100, 6 more + PR over 50, and 9 more + GU, VI, and MP under 50. We will do well to remember that deaths lag new cases by a couple of weeks or more, so these numbers are more reflective of new case reports from a while back.

There's this old joke about the man whose roof suffered damage in a wind storm. A friend happened by, looked at the missing shingles, and asked him, "Say, Hank, why don't you fix your roof?" to which Hank replied, "Why should I? It's not giving me any problems." The same friend came visiting a couple of weeks later during a rainy spell to find Hank sitting in his living room surrounded by buckets, each one catching drips from his leaky roof. Once again, the friend asked, "Hank, why don't you fix your roof?" To which Hank replied, "Can't go up there in the rain." That joke resonates with me these days. Here's why:

Just read an interesting piece on how a few companies are using technology to spot an incipient pandemic in its earliest stages when there is still a great deal that can be done about it. One such company in Canada had assembled a diverse team of engineers, ecologists, geographers, veterinarians, and tech people and spent a year teaching its computer software to recognize pathogens in the texts when combing through news reports and official documents, medical bulletins and livestock reports in 65 languages for mentions of them, repeating the task every 15 minutes, day and night. The program detected the outbreak in Wuhan on December 31, in spite of the Chinese government's secrecy, and notified client governments of the threat. At that point, a second layer of surveillance kicked into pace. They were able to access ticketing data from 4000 airports to know how many people were leaving Wuhan on flights and their destinations, thereby making a prediction where and how quickly the virus would spread, calculating

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the cities at highest risk. It also accessed anonymized cell phone data to show population movements as the epidemic developed into a pandemic. This kind of early warning system enables governments to prepare, to stockpile supplies, and to make public health decisions based on real-time estimates of risk.

California's state government, for example, signed on early in the present outbreak to receive analyses from several companies using mapping technologies and cell phone data to predict which hospitals would be hardest hit and whether Californians were really staying home, tracking on a daily, hourly, or moment-by-moment basis, even by neighborhood when necessary. If the data show people gathering, public health officials can investigate as needed. This does, of course, raise privacy issues; but it seems worthwhile to me to establish safeguards that assure the data gathered truly is anonymized so that the government can discover how much and where people are moving around without being able to track individual, identifiable persons.

Whatever the price tag for this kind of work—and I'm going to guess it is substantial, surely it is less than the economic impact of what we're doing now added to the roughly \$2.5 trillion we've spent here to offset that damage. All those scientists who have been warning us for at least a decade of the risk of an event exactly like the one we're living through now were right. We've been advised to get our act together and put this sort of system in place at the federal level; but instead of building on what we had and developing these capabilities, we dismantled the systems we had. It's probably time we all get on board with the government spending some money when we're not in the middle of a crisis in order to avoid getting into the middle of another one. I certainly do not wish to experience this again.

I've been seeing some stories of people finding ways to come together while carefully staying apart. In New Orleans, hard-hit by the disease and with a rising death toll, three musicians, a trombonist, a trumpeter, and a singer, got together—while staying apart—in City Park to record a song frequently used at traditional local funerals, "I'll Fly Away." They wanted to honor the memories of the dead and send them off in style; it appears they also comforted a grieving city. You can watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXoOtlfM2I>

And there was the Washington, DC, couple who had reluctantly concluded their April wedding was going to have to be rescheduled for November. Their neighborhood said, "Not so fast," and then proceeded to pitch in to create a crowd-sourced, socially-distant wedding. People made paper flowers and ornaments and festooned the trees with them. Children drew chalk hearts up and down the sidewalks the couple walked and picked flowers to construct the bride's bouquet. Folks tidied up dead leaves, contributed plants from their homes, set up loud speakers for music, and built an altar; they put up poster-board signs in their yards to congratulate the couple. Then they went into their houses and dressed themselves up for a wedding so that they were prepared to witness the beginning of a life together. And they closed the street for a half-hour so the couple could get married right in the middle of it with their friends and family in attendance and the groom's father officiating via Zoom. There were toasts offered from front steps, and there was dancing. And the wedding went off on schedule, joyously celebrated by all. I suspect this was, in many ways, a better wedding than the poshest affair at the swankiest hotel; it certainly must have created more enduring memories for everyone in attendance.

On a smaller scale, a friend, saddened that her daughter, a senior in high school, would miss her last prom (in addition to all the other things this year's seniors will miss and never get back), but determined to squeeze just one glass of lemonade out of the situation, invited the daughter's prom date over for a socially-distant photo shoot with both of them all decked out in their fancy prom clothing. This event—and those pictures, which for the record, were beautiful—will, I predict, create a more lasting memory for her daughter than the actual prom could possibly have done, a fact to which I bear witness when I tell you I

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have no idea what I wore to or where the pictures are from either of the high school proms I attended. Most American kids get a prom or two; only the rare few get an experience like this one.

Let's use this time at home with the usual social obligations stripped away to contemplate our priorities, what matters most. Let's allow ourselves the time to reflect on the ways in which our lives have been characterized by extraordinary luck we didn't earn and couldn't possibly deserve, even if it wasn't all roses and even if we're having a bad time at this moment. Let's all take the opportunity to come together while we're forced to stay apart. Let's find the blessing wrapped up in this curse and then share it with someone who needs one.

Be well. I'll see you tomorrow.

**605**  
**STRONG**

The **Road** to  
**Recovery**

## South Dakota's **Back to Normal** Plan

*Thanks to a strong commitment and respect for the principle of personal responsibility, South Dakotans have dramatically changed the trajectory of our initial COVID-19 projections. With our hospitalization capacity currently at a manageable level, South Dakotans are asked to consider the following steps as we look to get back to normal.*

- Governor Kristi Noem

[COVID.sd.gov](https://www.covid.sd.gov)

## South Dakota's Back to Normal Plan

### Individuals:

- ▶ Continue to [practice good hygiene](#)
- ▶ Continue to stay home when sick
- ▶ Continue to practice physical distancing, as appropriate
- ▶ [Vulnerable individuals](#) are at higher risk for this virus. Accordingly, they should:
  - » Take extra care to practice good hygiene
  - » Avoid those who are sick or those who have been exposed to people who are sick
  - » Consider staying home whenever possible

### Employers:

- ▶ Encourage good hygiene and [sanitation practices](#), especially in high-traffic areas
- ▶ Encourage employees to stay home when sick
- ▶ If previously operating via telework, begin transitioning employees back to the workplace
- ▶ Where appropriate, [screen employees](#) for symptoms prior to entering the workplace

### Enclosed Retail Businesses<sup>1</sup> that Promote Public Gatherings:

- ▶ Resume operations in a manner that allows for reasonable physical distancing, good hygiene, and appropriate sanitation
- ▶ Consider restricting occupancy and continue innovating in this uncertain environment

### Schools:

- ▶ Continue remote learning
- ▶ Consider a limited return to in-person instruction to "check in" before school year ends
- ▶ Encourage good hygiene and sanitation practices, especially in high-traffic areas

### Health Care Providers:

- ▶ Hospitals treating COVID-19 patients should reserve 30% of their hospital beds and maintain appropriate stores of PPE to meet surge demand
- ▶ Other hospitals and surgery centers must have updated transfer protocols and adequate stores of independently-sourced PPE
- ▶ Non-hospital healthcare can resume with adequate stores of independently sourced PPE
- ▶ Continue to restrict visits to senior care facilities and hospitals

### Local Governments:

- ▶ Consider current and future actions in light of these guidelines

Frequently Asked Questions ([Appendix 2](#)) will be kept up to date with further clarifications.

Note: The Governor and Department of Health may respond to significant clusters with enhanced mitigation on a county-by-county basis.

<sup>1</sup>As defined in [Executive Order 2020-08](#), this includes any indoor restaurant, bar, brewery, café, casino, coffee shop, recreational or athletic facility, health club, or entertainment venue.

## Criteria to Initiate Plan

### SYMPTOMS

Downward trajectory of influenza-like illnesses (ILI) reported within the last 14-day period

Plan in place so all persons with COVID-19 symptoms can receive a test upon recommendation from their provider

### CASES

Downward trajectory of documented cases within a 14-day period in areas with sustained community spread\*

No clusters that pose a risk to public\*\*

### HOSPITALS

Treat all patients without crisis care

Testing program in place for at-risk healthcare workers, including emerging antibody testing

Adequate supply of independently procured personal protective equipment is available for all work-force and patients

### STATE

SD DOH has the capacity to rapidly investigate COVID-19 cases and initiate containment (isolation and quarantine)

SD EOC maintains a rapid response team to support high-risk businesses with a confirmed COVID-19 case

\*Either minimal/moderate or substantial community spread from the Community Impact Map. Map will be updated to reflect changes:

- Substantial to Minimal/Moderate: No active cases
- Minimal/Moderate to No Community Spread: No new community-acquired cases within 14 days and no active cases

\*\*Clusters that pose a risk to the public: 10 or more cases that are not confined to a single setting OR a large exposure event (>50 people) with currently increasing number of cases

## Frequently Asked Questions FAQs

**Q: When can churches and other places of worship resume religious services?**

**A:** Churches were never required to close; as they resume services, they are encouraged to consider the guidelines for “public gatherings” and to consider steps to maintain reasonable physical distancing.

**Q: Does this mean schools could resume in-person classes before the end of the school year?**

**A:** Each school district should make its own decisions about the remainder of the school year; school districts are encouraged to take steps to contact all students and assess student learning.

**Q: When can daycare centers reopen?**

**A:** Daycares were never explicitly required to close; they can reopen at any time and are encouraged to emphasize appropriate sanitation.

**Q: Do I have to keep wearing a mask when I am in public?**

**A:** Masks have never been required, but South Dakotans are encouraged to continue to consider [CDC guidance](#) and use.

**Q: Does this mean I no longer have to “stay at home”?**

**A:** South Dakota never issued a “stay at home” or “shelter in place” order. South Dakotans are encouraged to use common sense and practice good hygiene and reasonable physical distancing.

**Q: Are businesses, including outdoor venues and events, allowed to reopen?**

**A:** No business was ever required to close. Business are encouraged to consider these guidelines as they resume normal operations, and also must adhere to any local restrictions.

**Q: Is travel allowed to and from South Dakota, or within South Dakota?**

**A:** South Dakota never prohibited travel to or from other states, or within the state. South Dakotans and visitors from out of state are encouraged to use common sense.

**Q: Can doctors resume clinic visits? Can dentists, optometrists, chiropractors, and other healthcare providers resume operation?**

**A:** Non-hospital healthcare, including clinic visits, can resume so long as providers secure adequate supplies of personal protective equipment without relying on the state supply.



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## April 28th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent  
from Dept. of Health Lab records

Buffalo County recorded its first positive case while Clay County now has a clean bill of health.

South Dakota:

Positive: +68 (2313 total)

Negative: +169 (14,299 total)

Hospitalized: +7 (157 total) - 69 currently hospitalized (8 more than yesterday)

Deaths: 11 total (no change)

Recovered: +76 (1316 total)

Active Cases: 910

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests (Lost Buffalo County): Bennett 13, Brule +2 (53), Butte +31 (54), Campbell 7, Custer +29 (47), Day +1 (58), Dewey 26, Edmunds 20, Grant 38, Gregory 32, Haakon 16, Hanson +3 (28), Harding 1, Jackson +1 (10), Jones 4, Kingsburg +2 (66), Mellette 11, Perkins 5, Potter 31, Tripp 54, Ziebach 3, unassigned -481 (749).

Brown: +3 recovered (21 of 30 recovered) No no positives.

Buffalo: First positive case

Clay: +1 recovered (5 of 5 recovered)

Lake: +1 recovered (3 of 4 recovered)

Lincoln: +2 positive, +3 recovered (77 of 133 recovered)

Minnehaha: +59 positive, +68 recovered (1133 of 1939 recovered) {Smithfield: 853 positive among employees, 245 with close contact.}

Stanley: +4 positive (6 total)

Union: +2 positive (14 total)

Fully recovered from positive cases: Aurora, Bon Homme, Clay, Charles Mix, Calrk, Corson, Deuel, Fall River, Faulk, Hamlin, Hutchinson, Hyde, Lawrence, Lyman, Marshall, Meade, Oglala Lakota, Roberts, Sanborn, Spink, Sully, Todd, Walworth.

The N.D. DoH & private labs are reporting 1,289 total completed tests today for COVID-19, with 49 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 991.

State & private labs have conducted 23,723 total tests with 22,732 negative results.

409 ND patients are considered recovered.

### COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Active Cases	910
Currently Hospitalized	69
Recovered	1392
Total Positive Cases*	2313
Total Negative Cases*	14299
Ever Hospitalized**	157
Deaths***	11

### AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	149	0
20-29 years	435	0
30-39 years	533	0
40-49 years	461	0
50-59 years	415	4
60-69 years	213	3
70-79 years	53	1
80+ years	54	3

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	1	1	37
Beadle	21	19	177
Bennett	0	0	13
Bon Homme	4	4	100
Brookings	12	9	341
Brown	30	21	579
Brule	0	0	53
Buffalo	1	0	10
Butte	0	0	54
Campbell	0	0	7
Charles Mix	4	4	81
Clark	1	1	54
Clay	5	5	125
Codington	14	13	455
Corson	1	1	17
Custer	0	0	47
Davison	5	4	293
Day	0	0	58
Deuel	1	1	75
Dewey	0	0	26
Douglas	1	0	25
Edmunds	0	0	20
Fall River	1	1	46
Faulk	1	1	17
Grant	0	0	38
Gregory	0	0	32
Haakon	0	0	16
Hamlin	2	2	61
Hand	1	0	21
Hanson	0	0	28
Harding	0	0	1
Hughes	7	6	229
Hutchinson	3	2	90

Hyde	1	1	13
Jackson	0	0	10
Jerauld	6	4	34
Jones	0	0	4
Kingsbury	0	0	66
Lake	4	3	128
Lawrence	9	9	171
Lincoln	133	77	1370
Lyman	2	2	26
Marshall	1	1	38
McCook	4	3	89
McPherson	1	0	16
Meade	1	1	156
Mellette	0	0	11
Miner	1	0	20
Minnehaha	1939	1133	6088
Moody	3	1	90
Oglala Lakota	1	1	42
Pennington	12	10	789
Perkins	0	0	5
Potter	0	0	31
Roberts	4	4	95
Sanborn	3	3	37
Spink	3	3	92
Stanley	6	0	33
Sully	1	1	13
Todd	1	1	47
Tripp	0	0	54
Turner	15	5	140
Union	14	7	153
Walworth	5	5	41
Yankton	27	22	419
Ziebach	0	0	3
Unassigned****	0	0	749

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	1089	2
Male	1224	9

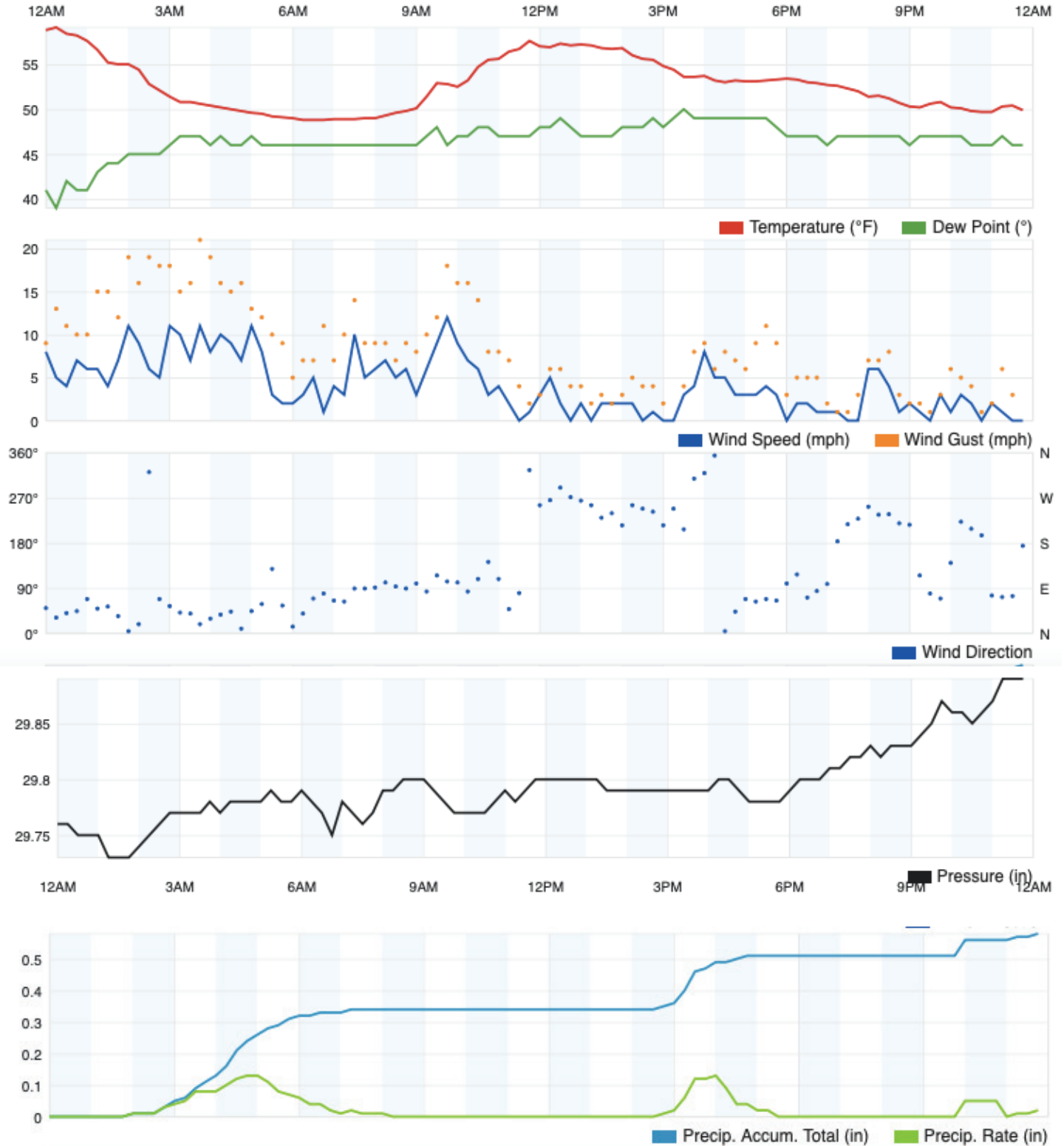
## COVID-19 DEATHS IN SOUTH DAKOTA BY COUNTY

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	2
Jerauld	1
McCook	1
Minnehaha	6
Pennington	1

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Decreasing  
Clouds

High: 63 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 39 °F

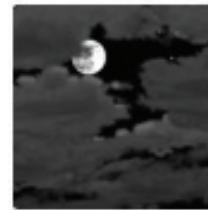
Thursday



Sunny

High: 72 °F

Thursday  
Night



Increasing  
Clouds

Low: 52 °F


Friday







Mostly Sunny

High: 77 °F

Dry through Friday!

Today  Becoming Mostly Sunny  
60s

Thursday  Warmer  
68 to 81°

 National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD  
weather.gov/Aberdeen  National Weather Service Aberdeen  @NWSAberdeen

Expect dry conditions, with a warming trend to the high temperatures through Friday! High pressure moving overhead today will result in diminishing clouds and slowly diminishing winds across central South Dakota. The area of high pressure will shift to our east Thursday, with warmer air surging in on increasing southerly winds. Highs Thursday will range from the upper 60s over far northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota, to the 70s across much of the area, and even a few low 80s across south central South Dakota.

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## Today in Weather History

April 29, 1942: An estimated F3 tornado moved east through Marshall County, destroying almost every building on a farm northeast of Kidder. Barns were heavily damaged on two other farms. One person was reported killed, with five others injured.

1905 - The town of Taylor, in southeastern Texas, was deluged with 2.4 inches of rain in fifteen minutes. (The Weather Channel)

1910 - The temperature at Kansas City, MO, soared to 95 degrees to establish a record for the month of April. Four days earlier the afternoon high in Kansas City was 44 degrees, following a record cold morning low of 34 degrees. (The Weather Channel) (The Kansas City Weather Almanac)

1963 - A tornado, as much as 100 yards in width, touched down south of Shannon, MS. The tornado destroyed twenty-seven homes along its eighteen mile path, killing three persons. Asphalt was torn from Highway 45 and thrown hundreds of yards away. Little rain or snow accompanied the tornado, so it was visible for miles. (The Weather Channel)

1973 - The Mississippi River reached a crest of 43.4 feet, breaking the previous record of 42 feet established in 1785. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A storm off the southeast coast of Massachusetts blanketed southern New England with heavy snow. Totals of three inches at Boston MA, 11 inches at Milton MA, and 17 inches at Worcester MA, were records for so late in the season. Princeton MA was buried under 25 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced large hail and high winds in central Texas. Baseball size hail was reported at Nixon, and wind gusts to 70 mph were reported at Cotulla. Heavy rain in Maine caused flooding along the Pemigewasset and Ammonoosuc Rivers. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Arkansas, Louisiana and eastern Texas, with more than 70 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Softball size hail was reported at Palestine TX. Hail as large as tennis balls caused ten million dollars damage around Pine Bluff AR. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - A storm system crossing northern New Mexico blanketed parts of the Rocky Mountain Region and the Northern High Plains with heavy snow, and produced blizzard conditions in central Montana. Much of southern Colorado was buried under one to three feet of snow. Pueblo tied an April record with 16.8 inches of snow in 24 hours. Strong canyon winds in New Mexico, enhanced by local showers, gusted to 65 mph at Albuquerque. Afternoon temperatures across the Great Plains Region ranged from the 20s in North Dakota to 107 degrees at Laredo TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1991: Southeast Bangladesh was devastated by a tropical cyclone with sustained winds of approximately 155 mph in the during the late night hours. A 20-foot storm surge inundated the offshore islands south of Chittagong and pushed water from the Bay of Bengal inland for miles. Best estimated put the loss of life from this cyclone between 135,000 and 145,000 people.

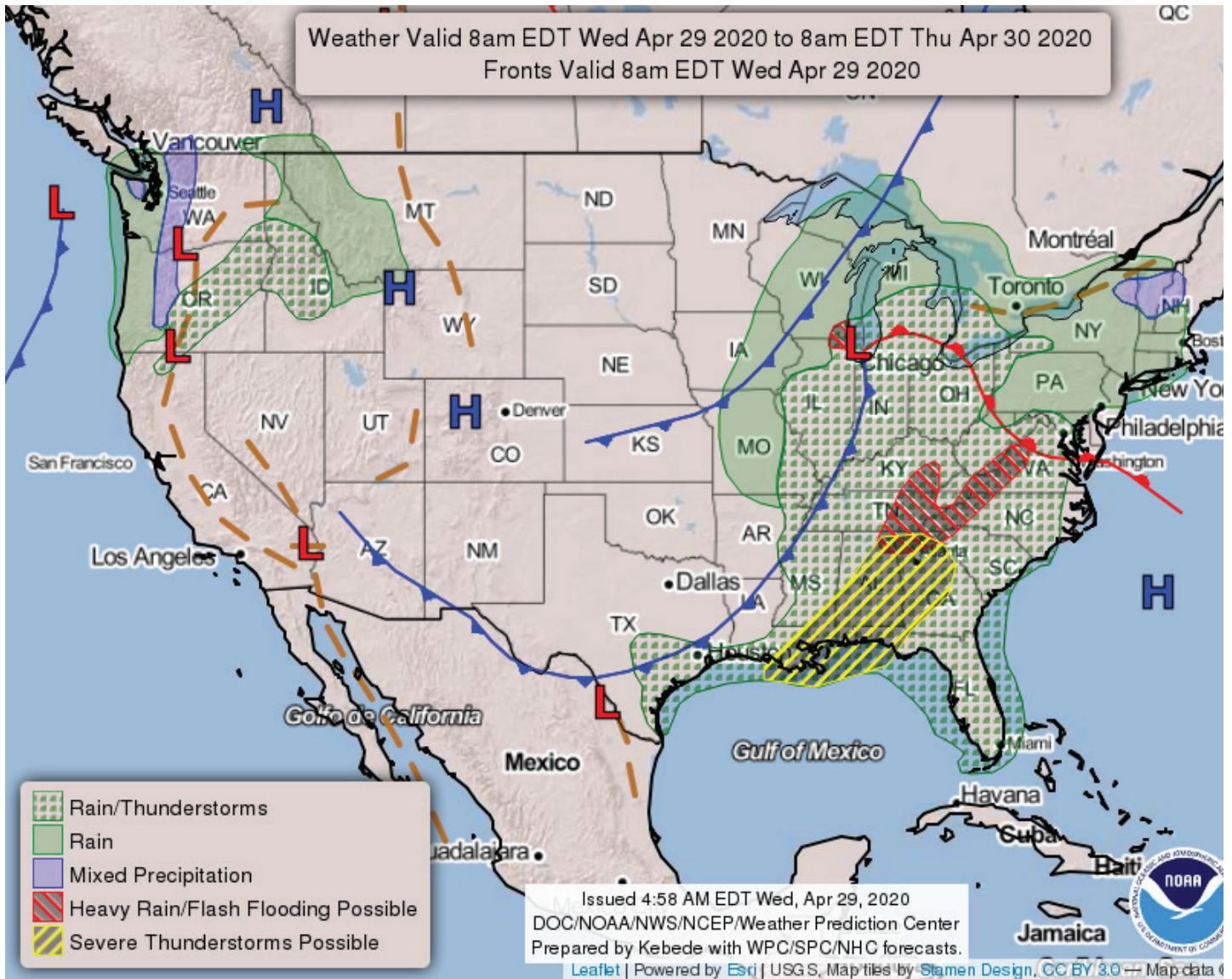
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 59 °F at 12:18 AM**  
**Low Temp: 49 °F at 6:29 AM**  
**Wind: 21 mph at 3:37 AM**  
**Precip: 0.58**

**Record High: 92° in 1934**  
**Record Low: 16° in 1966**  
**Average High: 64°F**  
**Average Low: 38°F**  
**Average Precip in April.: 1.68**  
**Precip to date in April.: 1.55**  
**Average Precip to date: 3.86**  
**Precip Year to Date: 1.90**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:39 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:23 a.m.**





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## WHAT COUNTS

In the game of baseball, victory is determined by runs. It is not determined by strikes or strike-outs, hits, double plays, triple plays or the number of innings a game may go. It is only determined by runs.

The player who hits the ball into left field for a single and even stretches it into a double and slides safely into second is not rewarded with "half-a-run." It is not part of the final score.

How true of life. How true of everything we do. It is not how well we start, how well we continue for a while, but whether or not we finish what we started.

Paul had a co-worker named Demas. How long he was involved with Paul or whether or not he had any particular skills in church planting is not known. What is known is that he deserted Paul because he loved the things of "this life." He allowed his desire for worldly things and pleasures to surpass his desire for the things of the Lord.

There are two ways we might view the world. One is the way God intended it to be and the way it will be when He returns in His glory. The other way we might look at the world is as Demas did - as it is now with its evil attractions and sinful pleasures.

All of us have the same choices as Demas and Paul: to live for the things of this world or the world to come. Life is a choice. Choose wisely.

Prayer: Create within us, Lord, the desire to seek first the Kingdom of God and a life of righteousness. May we honor You in all we do and forsake the world. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: 2 Timothy 4:10 Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica.

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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

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

13-19-53-54-63, Mega Ball: 17, Megaplier: 3

(thirteen, nineteen, fifty-three, fifty-four, sixty-three; Mega Ball: seventeen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$186 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$43 million

### Trump order keeping meat packing plants open worries unions

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump took executive action to order meat processing plants to stay open amid concerns over growing coronavirus cases and the impact on the nation's food supply.

The order signed Tuesday uses the Defense Production Act to classify meat processing as critical infrastructure to try to prevent a shortage of chicken, pork and other meat on supermarket shelves. Unions fired back, saying the White House was jeopardizing lives and prioritizing cold cuts over workers' health.

More than 20 meatpacking plants have closed temporarily under pressure from local authorities and their own workers because of the virus, including two of the nation's largest, one in Iowa and one in South Dakota. Others have slowed production as workers have fallen ill or stayed home to avoid getting sick.

"Such closures threaten the continued functioning of the national meat and poultry supply chain, undermining critical infrastructure during the national emergency," the order states.

The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, which represents 1.3 million food and retail workers, said Tuesday that 20 food-processing and meatpacking union workers in the U.S. have died of the virus. An estimated 6,500 are sick or have been exposed while working near someone who tested positive, the union says.

As a result, industry leaders have warned that consumers could see meat shortages in a matter of days. Tyson Foods Inc., one of the world's largest food companies, ran a full-page advertisement in The New York Times and other newspapers Sunday warning, "The food supply chain is breaking."

"As pork, beef and chicken plants are being forced to close, even for short periods of time, millions of pounds of meat will disappear from the supply chain," it read.

Tyson suspended operations at its pork plant in Waterloo, Iowa after a slew of infections, and Smithfield Foods halted production at its plant in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, after an outbreak infected 853 workers there.

The 15 largest pork-packing plants account for 60% of all pork processed in the U.S., and the country has already seen a 25% reduction in pork slaughter capacity, according to UFCW.

A senior White House official said the administration was trying to prevent a situation in which a "vast majority" of the nation's meat processing plants might have temporarily closed operations, reducing the availability of meat in supermarkets by as much as 80%.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the order before its release, said the White House was also working with the Labor Department to provide enhanced safety guidance for meatpacking workers. That will include trying to minimize the risk to workers who may be prone to serious complications from the virus, including strongly recommending those over the age of 65 and with preexisting conditions stay home.

The order, which was developed in consultation with industry leaders including Tyson and Smithfield, is

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designed, in part, to provide companies with additional liability protections in case workers get sick.

Trump on Tuesday said the order would address what he described as a "legal roadblock." It will "solve any liability problems where they had certain liability problems and we'll be in very good shape."

But UFCW International President Marc Perrone said that more must be done to protect the safety of workers.

"Simply put, we cannot have a secure food supply without the safety of these workers," he said in a statement, urging the administration "to immediately enact clear and enforceable safety standards" and compel companies to provide protective equipment, make daily testing available to workers, and enforce physical distancing, among other measures.

Stuart Appelbaum, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, said the administration should have acted earlier to put safety measures in place.

"We only wish that this administration cared as much about the lives of working people as it does about meat, pork and poultry products," he said.

And Kim Cordova, president of UFCW Local 7, which represents 3,000 workers at the JBS meat processing plant in Greeley, Colorado, said the order "will only ensure that more workers get sick, jeopardizing lives, family's income, communities, and of course, the country's food supply chain."

The administration is working with companies to help them secure protective equipment, like face shields and masks, and ramp up testing, the official said. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration have issued extensive guidelines on steps companies and workers should take.

Protecting workers can be especially challenging at plants that typically employ thousands of people who often work side-by-side carving meat, making social distancing all but impossible. Some companies have been working to reduce infections by checking workers' temperatures, staggering breaks and altering start times. Owners said they have also done more to clean plants and added plastic shields between workstations.

When outbreaks have happened, local public health agencies have pushed in some cases for temporary closures so they can limit wider outbreaks in communities and conduct mass testing to determine who is carrying the virus. Some plants have also briefly closed for deep cleaning and to install new safety measures.

Yet concerns about working conditions persist and have led some to walk off the job. In central Minnesota, some workers at the Pilgrim's Pride poultry plant walked out Monday night to protest the company's record on worker safety.

Mohamed Goni, an organizer with Greater Minnesota Worker Center, said workers have complained the company is not sharing information about sick colleagues, has not implemented social distancing on the line, and that workers who were sick returned after just two or three days, and some workers who developed symptoms were not allowed to leave when they asked to go home.

"The company refused, saying there would be a shortage of workers," Goni said, adding that 80% to 85% of the plant's workers are Somali.

"They have other family members living with them — elderly, children, people with underlying conditions. So if one of them brings that to their homes, it's going to be more worse and a more serious problem," Goni said.

Cameron Bruett, head of corporate affairs for JBS USA and Pilgrim's, said in an email that employees are never forced to work or punished for an absence due to health reasons.

"We will endeavor to keep our facilities open to help feed the nation, but we will not operate a facility if we do not believe it is safe. The health and safety of our team members remains our number one priority," Bruett said.

In South Dakota, Gov. Kristi Noem has said she hopes to see a reopening plan for Smithfield this week, but sidestepped questions Tuesday about whether she agreed with Trump's order, which might have prevented the Sioux Falls plant from shutting down if it had been in place earlier.

"We need to keep (plants) running, but we also need to protect people," Noem said.

Associated Press writers Ryan J. Foley in Iowa City, Iowa; Amy Forliti in Minneapolis; and Stephen Groves in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, contributed to this report.

## Tribes urge Treasury to disburse coronavirus relief funding

By **FELICIA FONSECA** Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Tribes urged the federal government to quickly disburse coronavirus relief funding after a judge handed them an early victory in a case centered on who is eligible for a share of the \$8 billion allocated to tribes.

U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta in Washington D.C. ruled in favor of the tribes late Monday in their bid to keep Alaska Native corporations from getting any of the money — at least for now. The decision clears the U.S. Treasury Department to send payments to 574 federally recognized tribes to response to the coronavirus.

At least 18 tribes sued the Treasury Department, alleging that Congress intended the funding to go only to tribal governments. They said the corporations that own most of the Native land in Alaska don't fit within the definition of "Indian Tribe" in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act signed into law last month.

Mehta said the tribes easily showed they would suffer irreparable harm unless he limited the funding temporarily to tribal governments while he awaited more argument on the question of eligibility of Alaska Native corporations.

"These are monies that Congress appropriated on an emergency basis to assist tribal governments in providing core public services to battle a pandemic that is ravaging the nation, including in Indian Country," Mehta said.

The U.S. Justice Department, which represented Treasury, declined comment Tuesday. The Treasury Department did not respond to requests for comment.

Justice Department attorney Jason Lynch had argued that the Treasury Department's decision to include Alaska Native corporations wasn't subject to judicial review because the funding is for a public health emergency. Mehta rejected the argument.

The Treasury Department has said it could start sending payments to tribes Tuesday — two days past the deadline in the coronavirus relief bill. But it has not said how it would determine who gets what.

Congress set aside \$8 billion for tribes in the \$2.2 trillion bill. Mehta did not order the Treasury Department to disburse all the money to tribal governments.

Harry Pickernell Sr., chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation in Washington state, said he was pleased with the judge's decision.

"This ruling will help tribal governments to lead in the aid and recovery of their people," he said in a statement.

The tribes that have sued are in Alaska, Arizona, California, Maine, New Mexico, South Dakota, Utah and Washington state.

Alaska Native corporations are unique to Alaska and own most of the Native land in the state under a 1971 settlement known as the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Mehta said neither the corporations nor the Treasury Department showed the corporations are providing public services comparable to tribal governments to combat the coronavirus.

The corporations, which are not parties to the lawsuit, have said they support Alaska Natives economically, socially and culturally.

Two associations that together represent most of the corporations — the ANCSA Regional Association and the Alaska Native Village Corporation Association — said they believe the corporations ultimately will be deemed eligible for funding.

"This will mean a delay in necessary resources and economic assistance for Alaska Native people in our communities and our state," the groups said. "However, Alaska Native people have a history of resilience and strength. Together we will prevent the spread of COVID-19, care for those who get sick, and repair

our economies.”

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

## **Feds: Inmate who gave birth while on ventilator dies**

**By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A pregnant inmate whose baby was delivered by cesarean section while she was on a ventilator after being hospitalized with coronavirus symptoms has died in federal custody, the Bureau of Prisons said Tuesday.

Andrea Circle Bear, 30, died on Tuesday, about a month after she was hospitalized while serving a 26-month sentence for maintaining a drug-involved premises.

She is the 29th federal inmate to die in the Bureau of Prisons custody since late March. As of Tuesday, more than 1,700 federal inmates have tested positive for COVID-19. About 400 of those inmates have recovered.

Circle Bear was first brought to FMC Carswell, a federal prison medical facility in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 20 from a local jail in South Dakota. As a new inmate in the federal prison system, she was quarantined as part of the Bureau of Prisons’ plan to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

She was taken to a local hospital on March 28 for “potential concerns regarding her pregnancy,” but was discharged from the hospital the same day and brought back to the prison, officials said. Three days later, prison medical staff members decided she should be brought back to the hospital after she developed a fever, dry cough and other symptoms, according to the Bureau of Prisons.

Circle Bear was put on a ventilator the same day she arrived at the hospital and her baby was born the next day by C-section, officials said. She tested positive for COVID-19 days later, on April 4.

BOP did not disclose information about the baby’s health.

Circle Bear’s pregnancy made her high risk for the virus, but she would not be considered priority for release under the Bureau of Prisons and Justice Department guidelines on releasing prisoners to home confinement to help stop the spread. She was already on a ventilator when an expanded home confinement memo was handed down by the Justice Department in early April.

Attorney General William Barr ordered the increased use of home confinement and the expedited release of eligible inmates by the Bureau of Prisons, with priority for those at low- or medium-security prisons — starting with virus hot spots. Under the Bureau of Prisons guidelines, the agency is prioritizing the release of those who have served half of their sentence or inmates who have 18 months or less left and who served at least 25% of their time.

Circle Bear, of Eagle Butte, South Dakota, had been sentenced in January after she pleaded guilty in federal court. The charges stemmed from incidents in April 2018 when she “unlawfully and knowingly used and maintained a place for the purpose of distributing methamphetamine on the Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation,” the Justice Department said.

Follow Balsamo on Twitter at [twitter.com/MikeBalsamo1](https://twitter.com/MikeBalsamo1)

## **Governor unveils plan to get South Dakota ‘back to normal’**

**By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Republican Gov. Kristi Noem unveiled her plan Tuesday to get South Dakota “back to normal” by encouraging schools and businesses to allow limited gatherings and cautioning people to continue to keep their distance from one another.

Noem continued to stress that she wouldn’t force people to take precautions to limit the spread of the coronavirus, though she acknowledged the relaxed recommendations could result in flareups in infections.

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She said she would handle those as they come, issuing orders county by county.

Noem said her plan is all about putting decision-making "into the hands of the people." She began her announcement by acknowledging that people who lose loved ones to the coronavirus pandemic "will never be able to return to normal" before she shifted her focus to its effects on social interactions, the economy and education.

She is advising businesses to open their doors to customers and employees while taking precautions such as keeping people spread apart and taking their temperatures. She is also asking schools to consider hosting small groups of students in school to check in with them before the school year ends. Some schools have reported that they have not heard from students since closing, the governor said.

While warning health care providers that the state cannot provide personal protective equipment, Noem asked them to reserve 30% of hospital beds and extra protective equipment as the state prepares for a surge in hospitalizations.

State health officials believe the peak of infections will come in mid-June when hospitals will need to care for 2,200 people. State epidemiologist Josh Clayton explained they decreased the estimate of hospital beds needed from previous projections due to new data on the rate of people infected who will need hospital care and the average time they spend in the hospital.

The state had previously expected to need 5,000 hospital beds at the peak of infections. Clayton said they are still preparing to be able to have that many if necessary.

Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon also said the state currently has the capacity to test 3,000 people a day and is working to be able to test up to 5,000. But she said testing will only be available to people who have COVID-19 symptoms.

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.

Health officials reported 68 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the state on Tuesday, including 59 cases in Minnehaha County. There were no new deaths reported, leaving the state's COVID-19 death toll at 11.

The state has had 2,313 confirmed cases of the disease since the outbreak began. Of those, 1,939 of have been in Minnehaha County, which is the location of Smithfield Foods, a pork processing plant that shut down indefinitely after hundreds of employees tested positive for COVID-19.

The actual number of COVID-19 infections is thought to be far higher than the number of confirmed because many people have not been tested and studies suggest people can be infected without feeling sick.

Noem offered no guarantees her plan will stand.

She said, "We will be more than willing to come back if we start to see more spread and people getting sick, that we will put more mitigation measures in place."

Check out more of the AP's coronavirus coverage at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## Takeaways from a trend toward natural flood controls

By JOHN FLESHER AP Environmental Writer

Some communities in the U.S. heartland are taking a more natural approach to preventing the kinds of floods that have devastated the region in recent years.

As climate change brings more extreme weather, the network of levees and walls that keeps rivers such as the Mississippi and the Missouri under control has come under greater stress.

The emerging idea is to let rivers behave more naturally instead of simply trying to control them.

Takeaways from an Associated Press examination:

### OUT OF HARM'S WAY

The St. Louis suburb of Arnold, Missouri, has bought out hundreds of homes that once lined the Meramec River, which flows into the Mississippi. It's an example of steps taken by a number of cities to give rivers

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more room to sprawl.

The homes are cleared and the land is allowed to revert to wetlands. Or it's used for parks, which occasionally can be flooded with little harm done.

Davenport, Iowa, has resisted building a levee between city from the Mississippi River, relying instead on parkland and a 300-acre marsh.

## WIDENING THE PATH

An alternative under consideration in rural areas is moving levees back, giving rivers a wider path so overflows or breaches are less likely.

In Missouri's Atchison County, several owners are negotiating the sale of more than 500 acres of cropland so a levee can be rerouted. Officials hope the project can serve as a model for other places where levees are vulnerable.

Some landowners contend the real problem is the way the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulates water flow on the river. They want damaged levees rebuilt and reinforced.

## GOVERNMENT GETTING ON BOARD

The Army Corps has been identified with man-made infrastructure such as levees and dams for more than a century, but is showing interest in natural alternatives. Congress has instructed the Corps to consider them.

"We are definitely trying to make sure we're giving these features a fair shake," said Maria Wegner, senior policy adviser with the Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C.

A new Corps plan for the Lower Meramec River, hit by three record floods since August 2015, endorses wetland restoration and property buyouts.

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Follow John Flesher on Twitter: @johnflesher.

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## South Dakota man stopped in Oregon with \$230K, arrested

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A South Dakota man was arrested on suspicion of money laundering after police found more than \$200,000 in his minivan Monday in southern Oregon, authorities said.

An Oregon State Police sergeant pulled over Drew Miller on several traffic violations on Oregon 66 near the community of Keno, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

The sergeant saw undescribed "signs of criminal activity," in the 2019 Dodge Caravan, according to police. A search ensued, and \$236,090 was found in vacuum-sealed bags.

Miller, a 27-year-old Sioux Falls man, was arrested on suspicion of several charges, troopers said.

He's being held in the Klamath County Jail. It wasn't immediately known if he has a lawyer to comment for him.

## Battered by floods, U.S. river communities try new remedies

By JOHN FLESHER AP Environmental Writer

ARNOLD, Mo. (AP) — Hollywood Beach Road was once such prime real estate that the neighborhood had its own airstrip, enabling well-heeled residents to zip back and forth between homes in nearby St. Louis and weekend cottages on the Meramec River in suburban Arnold, Missouri.

Floods eventually took their toll. Nowadays, all that remains of those waterfront dwellings are crumbling concrete foundations amid a tangle of skinny trees and beaver-gnawed stumps. Nature is reclaiming the area — and is welcome to it, local leaders say.

Instead of building levees to keep floodwaters out, Arnold has used federal and local tax dollars to buy out hundreds of homeowners so the landscape could revert to wetlands that soak up overflow waters.

Those wetlands helped the town of 21,000 escape major damage in 2019 when the Mississippi River



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reached its second-highest level on record. And they reflect a pattern quietly emerging from a growing number of communities that could help the nation's midsection cope with rivers often surging beyond their banks at this time of year.

Each spring, melting snow in the north and seasonal rains send huge volumes of runoff into waterways that have been heavily armored to protect surrounding land from flooding. This system of levees, dikes and walls usually held up during the last century but is now being over-topped more frequently by heavier storms that scientists link to global warming.

Floods in the Missouri, Mississippi and Arkansas river basins caused \$20 billion in damage in 2019, the second-wettest year on record. The National Weather Service forecast moderate to severe problems in 23 states this spring but said last week the risk had declined because of below-normal rainfall in the past two months. Longer term, one government assessment predicts annual flood damage in the Midwest growing by \$500 million by 2050.

But the floodplain awaiting this year's surge is part of a changing picture, altered from just a few decades ago. It is now dotted with more parks, marshes and forests on land surrendered in recent years by communities and individuals. Some experts envision this expanding green patchwork as a promising model for relieving pressure on a river system that can no longer stay in its man-made channels.

"It's becoming evident that we have to do something different," said Colin Wellenkamp, executive director of the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative. "That increasingly means shaping our cities around the river instead of shaping the river around our cities."

To give rivers more room to sprawl, cities are keeping adjacent lands for limited uses such as parks that can flood when rivers rise. A few rural levees have been set back or removed to create wider flow paths. Wetlands have been restored as buffers.

In Arnold, the improvement was evident after last year's Midwestern floods, said Robert Shockey, police chief and emergency management director. "Instead of 100 homes getting wet, we have a dozen."

No one suggests replacing levees, dams and walls as a primary means of flood control.

"But they need to be augmented by natural assets," said Wellenkamp, whose organization represents nearly 100 municipalities.

This approach is gradually catching state and federal policymakers' attention. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has built dams and levees since the late 19th Century, is becoming more receptive.

Congress has instructed the agency in recent years to consider "natural" or "nature-based" flood control measures.

"We are definitely trying to make sure we're giving these features a fair shake," said Maria Wegner, senior policy adviser with the Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Experts don't know exactly how many land buyouts or set-asides have taken place to create new buffers, but said the cases are adding up. Wellenkamp's organization has commissioned a study to compile a list.

Some projects emphasize restoring wildlife habitat, with flood prevention an additional benefit. In one case, the Army Corps moved back a levee south of Hannibal, Missouri, to open about 325 acres to river flow.

But for many towns, flood control is the primary motive.

Davenport, Iowa, is in the vanguard of rethinking flood control. Even after waters covered its downtown business district last year, the town decided against a flood wall. Instead, it will continue relying on parkland along its 9-mile-long Mississippi riverfront and on a 300-acre marsh.

The small town of Grafton, Illinois, perched where the Mississippi and Illinois rivers meet, also has rejected building walls that would obscure scenic views. Instead, it used sediment dredged from a marina to recreate a wetland in a shallow area of the Mississippi.

Similar projects are being tried elsewhere. Minneapolis went with natural floodwater retention basins instead of levees to protect a new mixed-use development. Dubuque, Iowa, restored a Mississippi tributary creek and floodplain paved over a century earlier. Cape Girardeau, Missouri, created a natural area for floodwaters rather than extend a wall north of town.

Skeptics question whether natural features can play a major role.

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"You're seeing a little bit of a trend," said Nicholas Pinter, an earth sciences professor at the University of California, Davis. But such projects are "small in scale and the exception to the rule."

Some attempts to give rivers more room have drawn resistance — particularly along the Missouri, the nation's longest.

Hundreds of farmers and business owners sued the Army Corps for creating more wildlife habitat along the Lower Missouri, saying it worsened flooding. And property rights activists have opposed federal plans to expand the Big Muddy National Wildlife Refuge from 16,600 to 60,000 acres by purchasing more land from willing sellers.

Still, there are signs of changing attitudes. Republican senators from Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska introduced legislation in March that calls for the Army Corps to use "both structural and nonstructural measures" to reduce flooding on the Missouri.

A new Corps plan for the Lower Meramec River, hit by three record floods since August 2015, endorses wetland restoration and property buyouts.

In Atchison County, several farmland owners are negotiating to sell more than 500 acres to move back portions of a levee on the Missouri River.

"I'd much rather be farming it, but I've come to the realization that it's not going to happen," said tenant farmer Phil Graves, who grew corn and soybeans on land now smeared with up to four feet of sandy silt from last year's flooding.

If completed, the project could set an example for other flood-prone counties along the Missouri, said Dru Buntin, deputy director of the state Department of Natural Resources.

Already, said Buntin, "you have landowners themselves talking about how this approach benefited them, as opposed to state or federal agencies trying to convince them."

After last year's flooding, nearly 750 farmers in a dozen heartland states volunteered for a federal program that pays to take property out of production and restore natural features. Federal disaster legislation provided an extra \$217.5 million for conservation easements in 13 hard-hit states.

"We don't have anywhere near the funding we'd need" to accept all who want to participate, said Jon Hubbert of the Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Des Moines, Iowa.

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Associated Press writer Scott McFetridge in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this story.

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Follow John Flesher on Twitter: @johnflesher.

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## The Latest: Rapid City adopts business reopening plan

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Latest on the coronavirus outbreak in South Dakota (all times local): 9:20 a.m.

The Rapid City Council has adopted a plan to reopen many businesses immediately, but with social distancing protocol.

The council voted 7-2 Monday night to implement Mayor Steve Allender's plan until the end of May.

The Rapid City Journal says that under the plan restaurants and bars can reopen with a minimum of six feet between tables, chairs and bar stools, and with capacity limits set to half of business' occupancy rating.

At retail locations, hand sanitizer is required throughout the store. Grocery, retail, recreation and fitness businesses would be limited to one customer for every 200 square feet (18.5 square meters).

Public social gatherings are limited to 10 people.

The plan also includes limitations on seating at entertainment venues as well, with seats in businesses and theaters marked as not available to enforce social distancing guidelines.

## Women who dare dissent targeted for abuse by Yemen's rebels

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Samera al-Huri's fellow activists were disappearing, one by one. When she asked their families, each gave the same cryptic reply: "She's traveling." A few of the women re-emerged. But they seemed broken and refused to say where they had been for months.

Al-Huri soon found out.

A dozen officers from the Houthi rebels who control northern Yemen snatched her from her home in the capital, Sanaa, at dawn.

They took her to the basement of a converted school, its filthy cells filled with female detainees. Interrogators beat her bloody, gave her electrical shocks and, as psychological torture, scheduled her execution only to call it off last-minute.

Women who dare dissent, or even enter the public sphere, have become targets in an escalating crackdown by the Houthis.

Activists and former detainees described to The Associated Press a network of secret detention facilities where they are tortured and sometimes raped. Taiz Street, a main avenue in Sanaa, is dotted with several of them, hidden inside private villas and the school where al-Huri was held.

"Many had it worse than me," said al-Huri, 33, who survived three months in detention until she confessed on camera to fabricated prostitution charges, a grave insult in conservative Yemen.

Long-held traditions and tribal protections once guarded women from detention and abuse, but those taboos are succumbing to the pressures of war.

As men die in battle or languish in jail in a conflict now dragging into its sixth year, Yemeni women have increasingly taken political roles. In many cases, women are organizing protests, leading movements, working for international organizations or advocating peace initiatives — all acts the Houthis increasingly view as a threat.

"This is the darkest age for Yemeni women," said Rasha Jarhum, founder of the Peace Track Initiative, which lobbies for women's inclusion in peace talks between the Houthis and Yemen's internationally recognized government.

"It used to be shameful for even traffic police to stop a woman."

### "I'D FALLEN OFF THE EARTH"

Systematic arrests and prisons rife with torture have been central to war efforts by both sides, the Iranian-backed Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition trying to oust them, the AP has found.

Yet the intimidation campaign against women, observers say, is unique to rebel-held areas.

Estimates of women currently detained range from 200 to 350 in the governorate of Sanaa alone, according to multiple rights groups. The Yemeni Organization for Combating Human Trafficking says that's likely an undercount.

Other provinces are more difficult to pin down. Noura al-Jarwi, head of the Women for Peace in Yemen Coalition, estimates that over 100 women are detained in Dhamar province south of the capital, a major crossing point from government-controlled areas into Houthi-run territory.

Al-Jarwi, who runs an informal support group in Cairo for women released from Houthi detention, has documented 33 cases of rape and eight instances of women debilitated by torture.

The AP met with six former detainees who managed to flee to Cairo before the coronavirus pandemic grounded flights and closed borders. Their accounts are supported by a recent report from a U.N. panel of experts, which said sexual violations may amount to war crimes.

One woman, a former history teacher who asked not to be identified to protect family in Yemen, was swept up in a crackdown on protests in December 2017.

She was taken to a villa somewhere on Sanaa's outskirts, though she didn't know where. At night, all she could hear was barking dogs, not even the call to prayer.

"I was so far away, like I'd fallen off the earth," she said.

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Around 40 women were captives in the villa, she said. Interrogators tortured her, one time tearing her toenails out. In more than one case, three masked officers told her to pray and said they would purify her from sin. They took turns raping her. Female guards held her down.

The Houthis' human rights minister denied the torture allegations and the existence of clandestine women's prisons.

"If this is found, we will tackle this problem," Radia Abdullah, one of two female Houthi ministers, said in an interview.

She acknowledged many women had been arrested in a recent anti-prostitution sweep of cafes, apartments and women's gatherings. They were accused of "aiming to corrupt society and serving the enemy," she said, referring to the Saudi-led coalition.

A parliamentary committee created last fall to probe reports of illegal detention discovered and released dozens of male detainees in its first weeks of work.

It planned to pursue the issue of women as well. But a Feb. 16 internal memo obtained by the AP complains that the Interior Ministry pressured the committee to end its investigation.

## A WIDENING CRACKDOWN

The first major round-up of women came in late 2017, after the Houthis killed their one-time ally in the war, former ruler Ali Abdullah Saleh. The rebels detained scores of women who thronged public squares, chanting for the return of Saleh's body.

The scope has expanded since, said al-Jarwi. "First they came for opposition leaders, then protesters, now it's any woman who speaks against them."

One woman told the AP she was dragged from her taxi at a protest spot, beaten and detained. A peace advocate for a London-based humanitarian group was locked in a Sanaa police station for weeks.

A computer teacher, 48, recalled how 18 armed men broke into her home and beat everyone inside, stomping on her face and screaming sexual insults at her. She had no connection to politics but had posted a video on Facebook complaining that government salaries had not been paid for months. She and her children fled to Egypt soon after.

Al-Huri said when she rejected a Houthi official's request to snitch on other activists, she was abducted in July 2019 by a dozen masked officers with Kalashnikovs, "as though I was Osama bin Laden."

She was imprisoned in Dar al-Hilal, an abandoned school on Taiz Street. A fellow detainee, Bardis Assayaghi, a prominent poet who circulated verses about Houthi repression, counted around 120 women held there, "schoolteachers, human rights activists, teenagers." She said officers banged her head against a table so hard that she needed eye surgery to see properly when released months later.

The head of the Sanaa criminal investigation division, Sultan Zabin, conducted interrogations in the school, al-Huri and Assayaghi said. Some nights, they said, Zabin took the "young, pretty girls" out of the school to rape them.

The U.N. panel of experts identified Zabin as running an undisclosed detention site where women have been raped and tortured.

At least two villas on Taiz Street have been used to detain women, along with other sites around the capital, including apartments confiscated from exiled politicians, two hospitals and five schools, al-Jarwi and the ex-detainees said.

## "GET US OUT"

When the history teacher was released in March 2018, her limp body was dumped under an overpass. Her family refused to see her because of the shame.

In their eyes, "I had gone out to protest, so I deserved what happened," she said.

Female ex-detainees say the Houthis aim to humiliate them with rapes and allegations of prostitution.

"It's intimidation to the core," said Fatima Abo Alasrar, a non-resident scholar at the Washington-based Middle East Institute. In Yemen's patriarchal society, survivors of sexual assault are often ostracized, sometimes even killed by relatives to preserve family "honor."

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Women are set free only after pledging to stop protesting or posting on social media, and after they videotape confessions to prostitution and espionage.

"They told me: If you leave Sanaa, we will kill you, if you spread information, we will kill you, if you speak against us, we will kill you," said Assayaghi.

In Cairo, the women help each other cope and move forward.

Over home-cooked dinners, they gather with their children and recall their city before the war, when they performed poetry and smoked water pipes in bustling cafes, many of which the Houthis have shut down to keep men and women from mingling.

Many still receive threats from the Houthis. None can see their families in Sanaa again.

Al-Huri struggles with insomnia. She knows the Houthis will release her confession soon. But she's convinced that telling her story is worth the risk.

"There are girls still in prison," she said. "When I try to sleep, I hear their voices. I hear them pleading, 'Samera, get us out.'"

## Irrfan Khan, of 'Slumdog Millionaire,' 'Life of Pi,' dies

NEW DELHI (AP) — Irrfan Khan, a veteran character actor in Bollywood movies and one of India's best-known exports to Hollywood, has died. He was 54.

Khan played the police inspector in "Slumdog Millionaire" and the park executive Masrani in "Jurassic World." He also appeared in "The Amazing Spider-Man" and the adventure fantasy "Life of Pi."

Khan died Wednesday after being admitted to Mumbai's Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani hospital with a colon infection.

"Irrfan was a strong soul, someone who fought till the very end and always inspired everyone who came close to him," a statement released by the actor's team said.

Khan made his screen debut in the Academy Award-nominated 1988 drama "Salaam Bombay!," a tale of Mumbai's street children. He later worked with directors Mira Nair, Wes Anderson and Ang Lee.

Khan in 2018 was diagnosed with a rare neuroendocrine cancer and underwent months of treatment in the United Kingdom.

"I trust, I have surrendered," he wrote in a heartfelt note after he broke the news of his battle with cancer.

Khan won a number of film awards in India, including a 2012 Indian National Film Award for best actor for his performance in "Paan Singh Tomar," a compelling tale of a seven-time national champion athlete who quit India's armed forces to rule the Chambal ravines in central India.

Khan received an Independent Spirit Award for supporting actor in 2006 for the Indian-American drama "The Namesake" and a viewers' choice award at the Cannes festival 2013 for his role in the Indian romantic drama "The Lunchbox."

Khan also starred in the Hamlet-inspired "Haider," a Bollywood film set in militarized Himalayan Kashmir.

Tributes came from Bollywood, including from fellow actor Amitabh Bachchan, who said Khan was an "incredible talent" and "a prolific contributor to the World of Cinema."

Khan "left us too soon," Bachchan wrote on Twitter.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that "Khan's demise is a loss to the world of cinema and theatre."

In an interview with The Associated Press in 2018, Khan said: "I've seen life from a completely different angle. You sit down and you see the other side and that's fascinating. I'm engaged on a journey."

Khan's last Bollywood movie, "Angrezi Medium," a sequel to one of his biggest hits, "Hindi Medium" (2017), was released before India went into a lockdown in March because of the coronavirus pandemic.

He is survived by his wife, television writer and producer Sutapa Sikdar, and sons, Babil and Ayan.

## Virus lockdown worsens suffering for Johannesburg beggars

By **BRAM JANSSEN** Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Inock Mukanhairi shows the small amount of food that he has for himself, his wife, Angeline, and five children — barely enough to make it through another week of South Africa's strict coronavirus lockdown.

The 58-year-old and his wife are both blind. Normally, they would be begging at traffic lights on Johannesburg's streets, relying on handouts from motorists, pedestrians and shop owners.

But the lockdown, now in its fifth week, has changed that.

Police are preventing them from leaving their dilapidated building to beg on the empty streets and barren sidewalks.

The building houses about two dozen blind or otherwise disabled foreigners who rely on handouts to make enough for food and rent. With their children, they make up about 70 people. Many have entered South Africa illegally from Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi.

"I really understand that the coronavirus is killing a lot of people. But at the same time, I'm locked inside my room," said Mukanhairi. "So death is death, due to corona or due to hunger."

South Africa has the most confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Africa, with more than 4,360, including 86 deaths.

The country's far-reaching restrictions have been in effect since March 27 and residents must stay home, except for visits to grocery stores, pharmacies and health facilities. The lockdown will be eased starting May 1, but this is unlikely to help the beggars, because people will still be required to stay home.

Families of six to eight people are crammed into small rooms where they cook, eat and sleep. Under such conditions, social distancing is not possible. The building has a few taps for water, so regular hand-washing is also difficult.

The elderly and blind often just sit on their beds as their children play in the dimly lit and narrow hallways, where loose electric cords dangle from the ceiling.

Without any donations, they say they are uncertain about where they will get their next meals.

Last week, South Africa announced an increase in social grants for the poor, elderly and disabled, but these immigrants are not eligible for that aid.

At the start of the lockdown, authorities swept the homeless from the streets and took them to a housing facility where food is provided. The beggars say they fled to their own building at the time to avoid being rounded up.

They are not alone in being uncertain about how getting adequate food. The U.N. World Food Program said this month that the number of people around the world with acute hunger could almost double this year because of the pandemic. At least 265 million people could face food insecurity by the end of this year, a jump of 130 million.

Rosewite Prikise, 41, lives with her four children in one of the small rooms, where all share a bed.

"We have one week's worth of food left," she said. "So we cannot survive, especially us who are blind. We cannot go outside and our situation is not right."

## Lives Lost: Doctor taught a generation of Italian physicians

By **NICOLE WINFIELD** Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Every October, on the feast day of the patron saint of physicians, Dr. Roberto Stella organized a simple ceremony at a tiny church in northern Italy to honor Italian doctors who had died that year in the line of service.

As a key member of the governing body of Italy's general practitioners, Stella cherished the tradition at the Temple of Duno and invited colleagues from around the country to attend.

This year, it will likely be Stella who is honored at the chapel.

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

A doctor and teacher who trained a generation of family practitioners in Lombardy, Stella now occupies a place of tragic distinction in the pandemic in Italy: the first name on the list of more than 150 MDs who died in the COVID-19 crisis.

He kept seeing patients even after his protective masks ran out.

Stella's March 11 death shocked the Italian medical establishment, such that he was eulogized on live national television during the nightly civil protection briefing. But as more of his colleagues have died, his death has also come to symbolize the plight of Italy's family doctors, who were largely left on their own to tend to the first wave of COVID-19 patients at home as hospitals filled up.

"It was like the captain of doctors was hit," said his longtime friend and colleague, Alessandro Colombo.

Lombardy's family practitioners have lamented that they had virtually no clinical information to go on or guidelines to know when to admit patients, much less access to protective equipment that hospital personnel had.

Stella, 67, didn't complain when his masks ran out — he just got on with it, Colombo said — but his death has nevertheless taken on a significance beyond the loss of a husband, father and colleague. It has come to epitomize the virus' horrific toll on medical personnel, 20,000 of whom have become infected in Italy.

"I understood, as my colleagues did, how close this threat is to us, how vulnerable we all were," said Dr. Laura Turetta, one of Stella's former students at the Lombardy academy where general practitioners train. "Unfortunately he was the first in a long series."

Stella was a giant of a man. Tall and strapping, he commanded attention when he walked into a room. He was known as a reformer, dedicated to his students and to keeping Italy's practicing GPs up to date on the latest research.

The last course he organized was a free e-learning course on COVID-19 open to all Italian doctors. More than 35,000 signed up. After Stella spent weeks preparing it, the course opened Feb. 22, the day after Italy recorded its first homegrown case.

"The last time I saw him he was so so proud of this course," said Dr. Giovanni Leoni, the head of the Venice doctors' association.

Stella knew the importance of small gestures, like the quiet thumbs up he gave Turetta after she successfully defended her dissertation. She still has a video of the moment, and watches it every so often. She says she has modeled her family practice on his.

"He didn't like the title of 'general practitioner' because it almost undermined our role, which in reality is 360 degrees in the management of the patient and the family," she said.

Colombo said he last spoke to Stella on the evening of Thursday, March 5. Stella was at home in Busto Arsizio, tired, and wanted to go to bed. But he assured Colombo he wasn't sick. The next day he went to the hospital. By March 11 he was dead.

"I wept bitterly," said Dr. Gianluigi Spata, the head of the Lombardy regional doctors' association who was in another hospital at the time, on oxygen, after contracting COVID-19 himself.

Stella did his military service in the Italian army's mountain infantry corps, known as the Alpini, and used to joke that when things would get tough at work that he could handle it because he managed to carry his Alpino backpack. When the powerful 6.9-magnitude earthquake flattened huge swaths of southern Italy in 1980, killing more than 2,700 people, Stella joined in the rescue effort as a volunteer Alpino medic.

He was a reader and guitar player who liked the newest tech gadgets. When he wasn't delayed in Rome at a meeting, he would rush home to take his son to volleyball practice.

Colombo said what was tragic — and at the same time extraordinary — was that the reforms Stella fought for to improve medicine in Lombardy were being implemented out of necessity as a result of the pandemic.

He cited the decision, from one day to the next, to let young new doctors work in hospitals, when in the

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past such on-the-job training was subject to the availability of university scholarships. After the outbreak exploded and Italy ran into a shortage of physicians, the government abolished a state exam for newly graduated medics. Within a few days, the region radically reorganized Lombardy's hospitals to rationalize and redistribute care where it was needed, not where it benefited certain powerful interests.

Stella had spent years fighting for such reforms, only to run into obstacles and resistance, Colombo said. "It's a pity, it's a shame that he's not seeing the changes that are occurring now," Colombo said. "The miracle that Roberto fought for for ages became possible as soon as he died."

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

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

By The Associated Press undefined

Your daily look at nonvirus stories in the news:

1. OHIO PULLS OFF MAIL-IN PRIMARY Joe Biden wins the battleground state's delayed Democratic presidential primary, the first major test of statewide elections via mail.

2. WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW ABOUT KIM JONG UN The answer is crucial because the North Korean leader's intentions, and the as-yet-unknown state of his health, play an outsized role in the workings of Northeast Asia.

3. 'THIS IS THE DARKEST AGE FOR YEMENI WOMEN' Former detainees and other activists tell the AP that hundreds of women have vanished into secret prisons where they are tortured and sometimes raped by Houthi rebels.

4. BOLLYWOOD TO HOLLYWOOD STAR DIES Irrfan Khan, a veteran character actor in India, had appeared in American blockbusters such as "Slumdog Millionaire", "Jurassic World" and "Life of Pi."

5. A SPECIAL DELIVERY Boris Johnson and his partner Carrie Symonds announce the birth of a son — the third baby born to a sitting British prime minister this century.

## Medicare applications raise anxiety for seniors in pandemic

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — At greater risk from COVID-19, some seniors now face added anxiety due to delays obtaining Medicare coverage.

Advocates for older people say the main problem involves certain applications for Medicare's "Part B" coverage for outpatient care. It stems from the closure of local Social Security offices in the coronavirus pandemic.

Part B is particularly important these days because it covers lab tests, like ones for the coronavirus.

Social Security handles eligibility determinations for Medicare, and while many issues can still be resolved online, some require personal attention. That can now entail hold times of 90 minutes or more to reach Social Security on its national 800 number, according to the agency's website.

Even in normal times, signing up for Part B could be tricky for people who worked past age 65 and kept their workplace coverage. People need to apply separately for the outpatient coverage, and provide Social Security with documentation of their employer policy, to avoid hefty late-enrollment penalties.

Fred Riccardi, president of the advocacy group Medicare Rights Center, said an already cumbersome process has been exacerbated by the pandemic shutdown, raising the risk that some seniors will fall into a coverage gap or end up owing penalties.

"We are concerned that people who are eligible will go without coverage due to unnecessary administrative barriers and the lack of information from federal agencies," said Riccardi. "The problem is serious."

His organization is among groups asking Congress to hold seniors harmless from Medicare application problems during the coronavirus emergency. It's unclear how many are affected.

Social Security declined several interview requests and instead sent The Associated Press written re-



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sponses to questions. The agency said it has seen an increase in requests for Part B enrollment because of older workers losing job-based coverage.

Social Security said it worked with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to waive certain signature requirements for Part B forms during the pandemic and has set up a dedicated fax number to receive applications.

Social Security gets credit for trying, said Leslie Fried of the National Council on Aging, but that "I don't know anyone who has a fax machine anymore."

With the economy shedding millions of jobs, older workers going from employer coverage to Medicare can find themselves in a holding pattern.

Carol Berul of Sacramento, California, retired from state government on Feb. 1. She said she's still trying to figure out what happened to her Medicare Part B application, which she mailed in January. In her early 70s, Berul said she's worried her health could be jeopardized by bogged-down paperwork. She has an immune system disorder triggered by a medication that she once took.

"I've been avoiding going anywhere," she said.

Berul said she's faced hold times of more than an hour trying to call Social Security. When she finally got through, she learned the agency had no record of her Part B application. She resubmitted it.

Berul said Social Security employees she's talked with have been helpful and empathetic but "with all the people working from home trying to get information from point to point, it's like a pyramid, and they haven't connected all the dots."

For John Breithart of Grand Haven, Michigan, it was a different Medicare issue but a similar experience.

Breithart, who works for an oil and gas delivery company, turns 65 this year and becomes eligible for Medicare's Part A inpatient coverage.

He's covered through this wife's retiree health plan and earlier this month the insurer sent him a letter saying he'd be kicked off if he didn't provide a Medicare number.

Breithart started calling Social Security. He said on one occasion he was on hold for an hour and 52 minutes. Another time a returned call fell through and the case worker didn't leave a callback number.

The logjam finally broke after he contacted his two U.S. senators. Social Security confirmed that his Medicare application had been approved. Breithart quickly called Medicare. After asking a litany of questions, an agent read him his Medicare number over the phone. He was able to complete the relay to his wife's insurer.

"You don't think of people who don't have health insurance when you've had it all your life," said Breithart. "Then you get ready to retire and someone says you need a number you don't have, and it gets stressful."

Social Security said the pandemic did lead to much longer telephone holds, but its latest weekly average was down to 45 minutes, depending on when a person calls and whether others are trying at the same time. Agency employees have been able to continue to serve the public by teleworking.

According to Webster Phillips, a policy expert with the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, wait times before the pandemic averaged around 20 minutes.

Natalie Kean, a lawyer with the advocacy group Justice in Aging, said, "Going through the normal channels is just going to be slow, and it's not responsive to the increased need right now."

On Capitol Hill, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee said the committee is trying to assess what's going on.

"Seniors should not be penalized for disruptions in service due to the crisis," Chairman Richard Neal, D-Mass., said in a statement.

Amid health worries, Kim Jong Un's role looms large

By FOSTER KLUG Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — New rumors about Kim Jong Un pour in daily. The North Korean leader is dead. Or he's very ill. Or maybe he's just recuperating in his luxury compound, or isolating himself from the coronavirus.

As speculation about his health builds, an underlying question looms for professional spies, policymak-

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ers, academics and curious news consumers alike.

What do we really know about the man who leads North Korea?

The answer is crucial because Kim's intentions, and the as-yet-unknown state of his health, play an out-sized role in the workings of Northeast Asia, an uneasy collection of wary neighbors at the best of times and home to two of the three biggest economies in the world and a huge buildup of American military machinery and manpower.

Sandwiched amid goliaths, North Korea is a small, impoverished, extraordinarily proud nation that through sheer force of will — and a relentless cult of personality built around a single family — has been at the center of a half-century security headache for its neighbors.

No matter how successful China, South Korea and Japan become — and their transformation from war, poverty and domestic infighting into political and economic might has been spectacular — North Korea and its single-minded pursuit of nuclear-tipped missiles meant to protect the Kim family has made itself impossible to ignore, holding the region and Washington hostage to its narrow ambitions.

## THE DISAPPEARANCE

There's not much to go on here despite the building media coverage.

Some unconfirmed news reports say Kim is in fragile condition or even a vegetative state following heart surgery.

The South Korean government, however, maintains that Kim still appears to be in power and that there have been no signs that something big has happened in North Korea.

What's uncontested is that Kim hasn't appeared in public since an April 11 meeting focused on the coronavirus. This sort of vanishing act has happened before, but what has set rumors ablaze now is that for the first time as leader he missed the most important holiday of the North Korean year, the April 15 celebration of his grandfather's birth.

There have been no photographs and no videos of the leader in nearly three weeks, only state media reports of him sending written greetings to world leaders or citizens of merit.

## THE MAN

Those looking to understand Kim face a problem. Much of what the outside world sees is filtered through relentless North Korean propaganda meant to build him into an infallible paragon of leadership.

Add to that vaguely sourced or misleading outside media reports and the extreme difficulty of cracking North Korea's ultra-secrecy surrounding anything to do with the leader, and the picture that emerges of Kim is often more mosaic than profile.

In South Korea, he is seen as both demon and statesman. He has repeatedly threatened to burn Seoul to the ground. He has also rolled out the red carpet for a visit to Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, by South Korea's president and sent his own sister south for the 2018 Olympics.

In the West, portrayals of Kim often run to caricature. His broken friendship with Dennis Rodman, the former basketball star he reportedly idolized as a schoolboy; the rumors about his extreme love of cheese and his allegedly creative ways of disposing of officials who displease him.

Then there's the stunning series of summits over the last two years with the leaders of Russia, China, the United States and South Korea.

Kim was likely born in 1984 and attended boarding school for several years in Switzerland. Early on, some observers argued that his time in the West would lead him to eventually embrace Chinese-style reforms.

That has not happened so far, though he has taken a markedly different approach to leadership than his publicity-shy father, Kim Jong Il, who died in 2011.

Outside governments and experts initially questioned the ability of a man then in his 20s to lead, but Kim Jong Un quickly consolidated power. He ordered the 2013 execution of his uncle and mentor, Jang Song Thaek, who was accused of treason. Kim is also suspected of ordering the assassination of his estranged half brother, and potential rival, at a Malaysian airport in 2017.

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Kim has shown a growing confidence on the world stage, most clearly with the high-stakes diplomacy that followed a run of nuclear and missile tests in 2017 that had many fearing war.

The sight of a North Korean leader meeting with his South Korean and U.S. rivals was extraordinary, though it's not yet clear whether the diplomacy will settle an uneasy region.

Kim entered 2020 vowing to bolster his nuclear deterrent in the face of "gangster-like" U.S. economic sanctions, and he supervised a series of weapons launches and military drills in March.

Much of what happens now will depend on Kim's health.

North Korea, despite its poverty, has long commanded world attention because of its sustained, belligerent pursuit of what it calls self-defensive measures in response to U.S. hostility — and what critics call an illegal accumulation of nuclear bombs.

There's debate about whether North Korea ever intended to give up its nuclear weapons during the summits with Washington and Seoul. But the diplomacy seems inconceivable without Kim.

That raises fears, during a potential moment of massive political instability, of a return to threats and increasingly powerful weapons tests meant to perfect the nuclear weapons seen as the only real guarantee of the Kim family's power.

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Associated Press writer Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul, South Korea, contributed to this report.

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Foster Klug, AP's news director for the Koreas, Japan and the South Pacific, has covered North Korea since 2005.

## China to convene Congress, showing confidence in virus fight

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China, taking a step toward a return to business as normal, announced Wednesday that its previously postponed national legislature session will be held in late May.

The National People's Congress, delayed from early March because of the coronavirus outbreak, will start on May 22, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the 3,000 or so delegates would come to Beijing for what is the biggest political meeting of the year, or if it would be held virtually through videoconference.

A more than 2,000-member advisory body that meets in tandem with the Congress will start one day earlier on May 21, Xinhua reported.

"I'm not aware of the specifics, but I believe because of the epidemic, the two sessions this year will be somewhat different from other years," foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said when asked if there would be any changes.

The two-week annual meetings are largely ceremonial, with the legislature rubber-stamping decisions reached earlier by Communist Party leaders, but in typical years they are a colorful spectacle in the nation's capital.

The delegates to the congress normally descend on Beijing by plane and train and sit shoulder-to-shoulder in the colossal auditorium at the Great Hall of the People to hear a state-of-the-country address from the country's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Keqiang.

The May 22 start date was announced at the end of a four-day meeting of the congress's standing committee, which handles most legislative affairs when the congress is not in session. Of its 170 members, 47 participated remotely through online video.

With the epidemic situation improving and economic and social life gradually resuming, the conditions have been met for holding the session, a standing committee statement said, according to Xinhua.

The National Health Commission reported 22 new cases of coronavirus on Wednesday, including 21 that came from abroad and one in Guangdong province, the southern manufacturing hub bordering Hong Kong. That was an uptick from recent days but a sharp decline from the hundreds and even thousands of new cases being tallied daily until early March.

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China has registered 82,858 cases and 4,633 deaths. Most were in the central city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus was first detected last last year.

Authorities have relaxed restrictions on going out but maintained strict quarantine rules on those coming from abroad or even other parts of the country to ward off a second wave of virus cases.

Beijing announced Wednesday that museums would reopen in the capital on Friday, the start of the five-day May Day holiday, Xinhua reported. A limited number of visitors will be allowed daily. Movie theaters and swimming pools remain closed.

The outbreak exposed problems in the nation's public health laws and indicated a need for systemic improvements, Shen Chunyao, director of the Legislative Affairs Commission, told the National People's Congress standing committee earlier this week.

Shen presented a report on plans to revise health-related laws over the next two years, Xinhua said. This year's congress is expected to approve a ban on illegal wildlife trade and legal changes to strengthen the management of medical waste.

Scientists believe the coronavirus likely started in bats and spread to humans, possibly through the wildlife trade.

## Making public transport safe next hurdle in easing lockdowns

By **MIKE CORDER, ANGELA CHARLTON and CHRIS BLAKE** Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — In cities around the world, public transport systems are the key to getting workers back on the job and restarting devastated economies, yet everything from trains to buses to ferries to bicycles will have to be re-imagined for the coronavirus era.

In Europe in particular, public transport is shaping up as a new front line in the battle to tame the pandemic that has already killed over 120,000 of its citizens.

In hard-hit Italy, Spain, France and Britain, standing cheek-to-jowl with fellow commuters in packed trains or trams was as much a part of the morning routine in pre-coronavirus times as a steaming shot of espresso or a crispy croissant.

That's going to have to change as authorities try to balance restarting shut-down economies while still clinging to hard-won gains in controlling the spread of the virus.

Solutions include putting red stickers on the floor to tell bus travelers in Milan how far apart to stand. The Dutch are putting on longer, roomier trains and many cities including Berlin are opening up more lanes to cyclists. In Britain, bus passengers are entering through the middle or rear doors to reduce the virus risks for drivers.

Announcing a gradual easing of France's strict lockdown, Prime Minister Édouard Philippe called public transport a "key measure for the economic recovery" yet acknowledged concerns among passengers.

"I understand the apprehension of a good number of our compatriots before taking a metro, a train, a bus, a tram, which are sometimes very densely packed," he said.

When and how to ease restrictions, keep people safe and prevent a second wave of infections is a matter of intense debate around the world.

"There will never be a perfect amount of protection," said Josh Santarpia, a microbiology expert at the University of Nebraska Medical Center who is studying the coronavirus. "It's a personal risk assessment. Everybody has to decide, person by person, what risk they're willing to tolerate."

As restrictions loosen, health authorities will be watching closely for any sign of a resurgence of the virus. Germany has reported an slight uptick in the infection rate since some small businesses were allowed to reopen over a week ago, but authorities said it was too soon to say whether the loosening was to blame.

The United States was bracing Wednesday for news of just how hard the pandemic has hammered the world's biggest economy. The Commerce Department is expected to estimate that the gross domestic product, the broadest gauge of the economy, shrank at an annual rate of 5% or more in the January-March quarter. That would be the sharpest quarterly drop in GDP since the Great Recession, which ended in 2009.

In Paris, Aircraft maker Airbus reported 481 million euros (\$515 million) in losses in the first quarter, put

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thousands of workers on furlough and sought billions in loans to survive the coronavirus crisis. Even with all that, its CEO said Wednesday that the aviation industry's unprecedented troubles are still at an "early stage."

Ratings agency Fitch cut Italy's government debt grade, the first downgrade to a major economy, to reflect the surge in public debt that is expected to hit countries dealing with the vast costs of the pandemic lockdown.

The agency lowered Italy's rating by 1 notch to BBB- from BBB, just one level above junk bond status. It expects the pandemic to shrink the Italian economy by 8% this year and warned there is a risk of a deeper downturn.

France, Spain and Greece were the latest countries to announce roadmaps for reopening businesses and schools. They promised to spread people out on trains, trams and buses and masked faces will be the new normal in public.

The Dutch national railway service on Wednesday began boosting its skeleton coronavirus lockdown timetable by bringing longer intercity trains back into service to make it easier for passengers to stay apart.

The capacity of Milan's metro system will be slashed to just 350,000 passengers a day, compared to 1.3 million on normal workdays. Meanwhile, the region's commuter train service will be able to guarantee only 300,000 round-trip journeys, down over 60% from its earlier capacity.

Milan's mayor, Giuseppe Sala, is calling for staggered working hours and more working from home to help deal with the decrease — in particular when more shops and commercial business open on May 18. Access to train stations and metro stations also will be controlled and limited starting next Monday, when the first easing of Italy's strict two-month lockdown begins.

In Spain, under a gradual easing of restrictions starting May 10, capacity in most long-distance buses and trains will be gradually increased from the current 30% of the capacity.

Around the world, confirmed infections stood at more than 3.1 million — including 1 million in the U.S. — and the confirmed global death toll topped 217,000, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. The true toll is believed to be much higher because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and deliberate under-counting by some governments.

For millions, the advice so far is still to stay home.

With South Koreans about to celebrate their longest holiday since infections there surged in February, authorities on Wednesday urged people to think twice about traveling and to continue to wear masks, not share food and stay home if they are feeling sick. Officials in Japan also asked people not to travel during that country's upcoming Golden Week holiday.

"We must not let a moment of carelessness trigger mass transmissions that would make the efforts we invested so far vanish like bubbles of water," South Korean Vice Health Minister Kim Gang-lip said.

In China, where the virus first emerged late last year, the government announced that its ceremonial parliament will be held late next month after its original meeting was postponed. The convening of the full session, which will involve 3,000 members, is a sign of China's growing confidence that it has largely overcome the pandemic.

In Japan, Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike called for an extension of a nationwide state of emergency that urges people to stay home and practice social distancing. She noted that new reported cases of the virus in Tokyo have topped 100 people a day recently.

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Associated Press journalists around the world contributed to this report.

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

## Streaming films eligible for Oscars, but for 1 year only

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Movies that debuted on a streaming service without a theatrical run will be eligible for the Oscars, but only for this year.

The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences on Tuesday announced the change for the 93rd Academy Awards as a response to how the coronavirus pandemic has impacted the film industry.

The film academy also said it will condense the two sound categories into one and prohibit DVD screeners for 2022's 94th Oscars in an effort to become more carbon neutral.

Oscars eligibility has been a major question since stay at home and social distancing orders led to both the cancellation of major film festivals and the closure of movie theaters. Previously, a film would have to have a minimum seven-day theatrical run in a Los Angeles County commercial theater in order to be considered for film's highest honor. Now films that had a previously planned theatrical release but are made available on a home video on demand service may qualify for best picture and other categories.

"We're dealing with the unfolding reality of an unanticipated, unprecedented global health crisis and trying to be responsive to what's going on in the world and at the same time support our filmmakers who are in a circumstance beyond their control," film academy president David Rubin told The Associated Press Tuesday.

Dawn Hudson, the CEO of the film academy, said that they have been in "constant conversation with all parts of our community from studios to filmmakers to theater owners" to make decisions that support all.

Earlier this month, the film academy donated \$6 million to help motion picture employees and their families during this crisis.

"Our primary message is take care of yourselves," Hudson added. "We'll be flexible on our rules this year because we understand how unprecedented and devastating this is."

The academy's board noted, however, that when theaters reopen, the rules exemption will no longer apply. Many expect cinemas nationwide to reopen by June or July. If that is the case, the film academy will expand the qualifying theaters beyond Los Angeles County to include venues in New York City, Chicago, San Francisco, Miami and Atlanta.

"The theatrical experience is the DNA of the academy and that communal experience of the movie theater is something we feel is intrinsic to movies," said Hudson.

Other changes included combining the sound mixing and sound editing categories into best achievement in sound.

"This is something long in the making and generated by the experts in the sound field. They wanted to propose this change after reviewing a long history of overlap," Rubin said. "They wanted it to be reflective of how the sound industry works together today."

Additionally, all film academy members are now able to vote in the first round for international feature film, the category formerly known as best foreign language film.

The board also said for a film score to be eligible in the original score category, it must have 60% original music. For sequels and franchise films, there must be a minimum of 80% new music.

Rubin and Hudson said that the film academy's response to COVID-19 will continue to be fluid. No decisions have been made yet as to plans for the annual Governors Awards, which are typically held in the fall in Los Angeles. But the 93rd Academy Awards are still a go, scheduled to be held in Los Angeles on Feb. 28, 2021.

## Worried about virus, US House won't return — for now

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing the stark, startling reality that Congress may not be able to fully resume for a year, House leaders are desperately reaching for work-from-home options after a revolt from the ranks over the health risks of convening during the coronavirus pandemic.

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House Democratic leaders abruptly reversed course Tuesday, shelving plans for the chamber's 400-plus lawmakers to return for work on the next virus aid package after warnings from the Capitol physician that the public health danger was too great. The Senate, with its smaller numbers, still expects to return next Monday.

"We had no choice," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said. "If the House physician recommends that we not come back, then we have to take that guidance."

It's not just the elected officials at risk. The U.S. Capitol is a throwback of crowded hearing rooms, packed hallways and thousands of congressional staff crunched in office cubicles and cafeteria lunch lines — all unwelcome in the new era of social distancing. It additionally relies on an army of cooks, custodians, electricians and police, who keep the iconic domed building and sprawling maze of offices running.

Despite a halt in public tours, started in mid-March and extended Tuesday through mid-May by the House and Senate sergeants at arms, few other protocols have been announced beyond masks for lawmakers and staggered roll call votes.

Closing normal operations for weeks, months or even longer seems unthinkable to some, more dire than actions taken during the deadly 1918 Spanish flu or the Sept. 11 attack. There really is no direct comparison in U.S. history.

President Donald Trump scoffed from the White House that the stay-home House members were "enjoying their vacation."

Trump derided Pelosi's recent appearance on a comedy show displaying her home kitchen freezer stocked with specialty ice cream.

"You look at Nancy Pelosi eating ice cream on late night television," Trump said. "They're having a good time. I think they should be back. I think they should all come back and we should work on this together."

Pelosi and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer declared the sudden about-face on regular meetings after consultation with the Capitol physician as lawmakers vigorously objected to next week's schedule.

During a private caucus call, one lawmaker, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., said plans to return were dangerous.

Others questioned whether virus testing would be available and what steps were being taken to keep staff safe. They heard few answers, according to a person unauthorized to discuss the private call and granted anonymity to comment.

The Capitol physician has privately warned key lawmakers it will be at least a year before Congress can return to business as usual.

While frustrated lawmakers long for what's being lost as a co-equal branch of government, many are also older and in high-risk categories for contracting the virus. Some care for children and families. Most have to commute from their states while airlines are running fewer flights.

Because the Washington, D.C., area remains a "hotspot" under stay-home orders, with the number of cases "going up and not down," Hoyer said it makes sense to hold off reopening for now.

House Democratic leaders were negotiating Tuesday with Republican counterparts on remote legislating and proxy vote proposals.

As lawmakers envision the new norm in Congress, one top priority for both parties is to reopen their committees to conduct oversight of nearly \$3 trillion in coronavirus relief and to draft legislation, including the next virus aid package.

"Technology has enabled us to do things without physically being in the same place together," Hoyer said. "That's what I hope we can achieve for committees."

Holding committee meetings via teleconference would require a change to House rules that now largely mandate that lawmakers be physically present for most sessions.

GOP leader Kevin McCarthy of California has signaled he favors opening up committees for work.

A bipartisan House task force agreed to have committees test-drive technology options with public round-table meetings in the days ahead.

But House Republicans argued the House should return to work and panned a more ambitious proposal for proxy voting that was shelved last week so talks could continue. Pelosi said Tuesday she still hopes

to “get that done.”

The Senate, meanwhile, remains on track to return Monday.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said that if it is essential for doctors, nurses and grocery workers “to keep carefully manning their own duty stations, then it is essential for senators to carefully man ours.”

It’s unclear whether the GOP leader sought guidance from the physician’s office. McConnell’s office said it had no further comment.

If the Senate resumes, Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said it must hold public hearings on the Trump administration’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Schumer said he wants to hear why coronavirus testing “isn’t working” and to probe the new small business lending program that faces accusations of not sending enough aid to smaller shops.

“This is part of what the Constitution gave Congress the responsibility to do — oversight of the executive branch,” Schumer said on MSNBC. “We need these oversight hearings, and we need them now.”

While the coronavirus pandemic did the nearly unthinkable in Washington, sparking a rare bipartisan accord between Democrats and Republicans on the biggest rescue package in history — a \$2 trillion effort, followed by \$500 billion last week — it may not extend to the next effort to provide aid.

The two parties are far apart on priorities. Pelosi wants at least \$500 billion for hard-hit state and local governments to pay police, fire and other front-line “heroes.” McConnell has suggested changing the laws to let states declare bankruptcy and said on Fox his “red line” is liability protection for health providers and business owners in the pandemic.

As the Senate resumes, McConnell has said its most important job remains confirming Trump’s judicial nominees to federal courts.

“The pandemic will not prevent us from achieving that goal,” he said.

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Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick, Alan Fram and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

## Oklahoma, Utah face scrutiny over malaria drug purchases

By SEAN MURPHY, BRADY McCOMBS and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Republican state leaders in Oklahoma and Utah are facing scrutiny for spending millions of dollars combined to purchase malaria drugs promoted by President Trump to treat COVID-19 patients that many other states obtained for free and that doctors warned shouldn’t be used without more testing.

While governments in at least 20 other states obtained more than 30 million doses of the drug through donations from the federal reserve or private companies, Oklahoma and Utah instead bought them from private pharmaceutical companies.

Top officials in both states chalked up the decisions to “the fog of war.”

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt on Tuesday defended the state’s \$2 million purchase, saying the drug was showing some promise. His health secretary attributed buying the 1.2 million hydroxychloroquine pills to something that happens in the “fog of war.”

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert at first defended the state’s \$800,000 purchase of 20,000 packets of hydroxychloroquine compounded with zinc, but has since ordered an investigation of a no-bid contract with a local company that had been promoting the drugs. Herbert, a Republican, also canceled an additional plan to spend \$8 million more to buy 200,000 additional treatments from the same company.

A left-leaning nonprofit group in Utah filed a price gouging complaint Tuesday with state regulators, arguing the \$40 per pack drug was grossly overpriced.

Oklahoma’s attorney general requested an investigative audit on Tuesday of its Department of Health over spending and warned the agency about retaliating against employees who report wrongful government activities under the state’s Whistleblower Act. A spokesman for Attorney General Mike Hunter declined to comment on whether the request was related to the \$2 million spent on the drug.

Doctors can already prescribe the malaria drug to patients with COVID-19, a practice known as off-label



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prescribing, and many do. But the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Friday warned doctors against prescribing hydroxychloroquine for treating the coronavirus outside of hospitals or research settings because of reports of serious side effects, including irregular heart rhythms and death among patients.

Preliminary results from a recent study done on coronavirus patients at U.S. veterans hospitals showed no benefit, casting more doubt on the drug's efficacy during the pandemic.

Those were the latest admonitions against the drug that Trump has regularly promoted in public appearances, touting its potential despite his own health advisors telling him it is unproven.

Oklahoma acquired 1.2 million pills, or about 100,000 doses, on April 4 from FFF Enterprises, a California-based medical supply wholesaler, according to the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

Oklahoma state Rep. Melissa Provenzano, a Democrat from Tulsa, said the state's purchase shows that Gov. Stitt's actions don't follow his claim that he relies on data to drive his decisions.

"Two million dollars is a lot of money to waste, especially when we have unemployment claims approved yet going unpaid, health care professionals without proper protective equipment, and diagnosed cases and deaths continuing to rise," Provenzano said.

Stitt, a first-term Republican, said hydroxychloroquine was showing some promise as a treatment in early March, and he didn't want Oklahoma to miss out on an opportunity to acquire it.

"Now there's some evidence the chloroquine may not be as effective, but I was being proactive to try and protect Oklahomans," Stitt said Tuesday when asked about the purchase. "That's always going to be my first instinct, to get the equipment and things we need that I'm seeing in the future would help Oklahomans."

Oklahoma's Secretary of Health Jerome Loughridge said several physicians, including some in Oklahoma, were previously optimistic about the drug's promise in treating COVID-19. He added that the drug is also useful for treating lupus and some other auto-immune diseases, so the state's supply "will not have gone to waste."

"When we were battling sort of the fog of war at that point, we certainly acquired it on the potential that it would have utility," Loughridge said.

Jeff Burton, a former adjutant general of the Utah National Guard chosen to lead the state health department's coronavirus task force, offered a similar explanation for why the state made its purchase. He said the state never received the pills and is trying to get its money back.

"I chalk it up to fog of war," Burton told the state's pharmacy board. "There was a lot going on. It's easy to judge it from (an) easy chair. . . . Since then we've decided that was not a wise purchase."

Doctors in Oklahoma have been using the drug to treat patients with COVID-19, often in conjunction with a second drug, azithromycin, but the results "just are not that promising," said Dr. Douglas Drevets, chief of infectious diseases at University of Oklahoma Medicine.

FFF Enterprises said it's the company's policy not to comment on transactions with customers.

Utah gave a local company called Meds in Motion the \$800,000 contract without taking bids from other companies under emergency procurement rules, said Christopher Hughes, director of Utah's division of purchasing. State officials haven't explained why they didn't seek to get the drugs for free.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said Saturday it has sent out 28.6 million tablets of hydroxychloroquine sulfate free of cost to states around the country. Several states including New York, Connecticut and Texas received donations of the medication from a private company based in New Jersey called Amneal Pharmaceutical, according to information compiled by The Associated Press.

Utah taxpayers deserve to know what happened to allow a purchase that seems like a company taking advantage of the early, chaotic days of the pandemic, said Chase Thomas, executive director of the group called Alliance for a Better Utah that submitted the price gouging complaint. The complaint alleges Utah paid at least double the common price for the medication.

"Whether they were buying drugs we didn't need or paying too much for it when they could have gotten them for free, there just needed to be a lot more thought going into this," Thomas said.

Meds in Motion didn't answer an email seeking comment about the allegations.

Herbert declined to provide an update Tuesday about the investigation of the purchase. He said Friday the state's legal counsel would aim to find out what, how and why it happened. He said he believed state officials acted in good faith as they scrambled to slow the spread of coronavirus, but acknowledged a mistake may have been made.

"I have some questions about how it came about," Herbert said Friday. "Bottom line is, we're not purchasing any more of this drug."

McCombs and Whitehurst reported from Salt Lake City.

## Video shows Chicago officer shooting subway rider in back

By MICHAEL TARM AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Extended security and body-cam video released Tuesday shows Chicago police shooting an unarmed short-order cook at the foot of a subway escalator and then again with his back turned to officers after they tried to stop him for violating a city ordinance by walking from one train car to another.

The Chicago Transit Authority and police body-cam videos for the first time provide a detailed look at how the incident unfolded from the time Ariel Roman used a subway's gangway doors to when he was shot for the second time after scrambling away from officers up the escalator. Roman, 33, survived but was severely injured.

In the most striking video segment from a CTA camera, Roman is seen running up to the top of the escalator in the busy red line station holding a coat in his right hand. With the pursuing officers about 10 feet behind him, and with his back still turned to them, a female officer shoots him and he immediately slams face first onto the floor. The officer reholsters her gun and appears to handcuff him.

The Feb. 28 shooting raised questions about whether the Chicago Police Department is complying with a court-monitored reform plan that, among other things, seeks to remedy decades of excessive force by the 13,000-officer force through training that stresses conflict de-escalation.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot characterized the shooting at the time as "extremely disturbing" based on a short bystander video. She also said she wanted a full picture of what happened.

One of Roman's Chicago lawyers, Andrew M. Stroth, said Tuesday the shooting and disturbing video posed a test for Lightfoot and new Police Superintendent David Brown, who comes from Dallas with a reputation as a reformer.

"While managing the COVID pandemic is the top priority, Mayor Lightfoot must address another crisis in Chicago and that is the use of excessive and lethal force by Chicago police officers," he said.

The new videos were released by the Civilian Office of Police Accountability, the city agency that investigates alleged misconduct by police.

The accountability agency said their release was consistent with a transparency policy, one implemented in the wake of 2015 protests after the city delayed release of video for over a year that showed a white officer shooting black teenager Laquan McDonald 16 times as he walked away from police with a folded knife.

The officers in Roman's case have been stripped of their police powers pending the outcome of an investigation. They could face criminal charges if the shooting is deemed unjustified.

Minutes before the shooting, video shows a seemingly relaxed Roman walking from one subway car to another, while listening to earphones. One officer follows him into the other car and approaches him as he pulls off his earphones to listen. Seconds later, he steps off the train at the Grand station stop.

Off the train, officers speak to Roman briefly before he seems to bolt for the escalator, with the officers on his heels. The bystander video released earlier shows officers tackling Roman, pepper spraying and Tasering him as he tries to wriggle from their grasp. In the bystander video, Roman can be heard saying, "I did nothing to you." A male officer on his back keeps yelling, "Stop resisting!"

Moments later, as Roman stands, he is shot in the stomach and he then scurries up the stairs. He is shot a second time in the lower back when he gets to the top.

Lawyers for Roman say he clearly wasn't armed when the female officer shot him the first time, nor when the injured Roman scrambled up the escalator with his back turned. The first bullet damaged his small intestine and bladder, and the second one entered his buttocks and lodged near a sciatic nerve, his lawyers say.

Two days after Roman was shot, Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx's office dropped resisting arrest and criminal narcotics charges against Roman at the request of then-interim Police Superintendent Charlie Beck. Roman in March sued the city and the two officers for unspecified damages.

Follow Michael Tarm on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/mtarm>

## What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

The summertime chimes of ice cream trucks could be replaced by school bells in California. Gov. Gavin Newsom said Tuesday students could return to the classroom as early as July, and starting early could help make up for some of the "learning losses" as parents have tried to teach their children at home during the coronavirus pandemic.

At the Vatican, Pope Francis called for "prudence and obedience" to government protocols on virus-imposed lockdowns of religious services to prevent infections from surging again. His appeal came two days after bishops complained the Italian government provided no provisions for Masses in its plan to reopen business, social and sporting life starting May 4.

And people are already beginning to mourn the summer of 2020 as festivals are being canceled, youth baseball league officials don't know if they'll have a season and restaurants wonder if they will open given new guidelines that reduce their seating capacity.

Here are some of AP's top stories Tuesday on the world's coronavirus pandemic. Follow [APNews.com/VirusOutbreak](https://www.apnews.com/VirusOutbreak) for updates through the day and [APNews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak](https://www.apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak) for stories explaining some of its complexities.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— Vice President Mike Pence came under fire after he chose not to wear a face mask while touring the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. It's an apparent violation of the world-renowned medical center's policy requiring masks.

— France and Spain, two of the worst-hit countries in the coronavirus pandemic, are laying out separate roadmaps for lifting their lockdowns. Signs are emerging that the virus has been all but vanquished in New Zealand and Australia, while Brazil is emerging as a new hot spot for infections.

— New doubts are being raised over whether Japan will be able to host the already postponed Summer Olympics next year without the development of a vaccine.

— Some U.S. states are beginning the process of easing restrictions imposed because of the coronavirus pandemic, but the various plans show that "normal" is a long way off. Among the states with aggressive plans to reopen businesses is Georgia, where officials on Tuesday reported the death toll had topped 1,000 people.

— Prisoners in Peru staged a riot to protest their precarious living conditions following the deaths of several fellow inmates from the new coronavirus, but the revolt in itself proved fatal, with nine prisoners winding up dead, authorities said.

— Amid fears of a meat shortage, President Donald Trump signed an executive order classifying meat processing as critical infrastructure to keep processing plants open.

— Facing fierce blowback, House Democratic leadership announced that the House will not resume session next week as planned because of risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic. Majority Leader Steny Hoyer declared the sudden about-face a day after lawmakers revolted.

— Workers who had been exposed to the new coronavirus at Washington state's largest psychiatric hospital were herded into a small building to be tested. Inside, few wore masks. They were given test

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kits by people without gloves and told to swirl a swab inside their noses. The method was designed only for people showing symptoms, but the staffers said none of them did. Many told The Associated Press that the flawed testing process likely produced inaccurate results and exposed them to the virus again.

— In Belgium, which claims to be the birthplace of what Americans know as french fries, the trade association for the potato industry is urging people to keep the deep fryers fired up at home while lockdown orders are keeping businesses, including the country's 5,000 fries stands, closed.

## 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:

— 29: A pregnant inmate whose baby was delivered by cesarean section while she was on a ventilator after being hospitalized with coronavirus symptoms has died. She became the 29th person incarcerated in federal prisons in the U.S. who has died from COVID-19, according to the Bureau of Prisons.

## IN OTHER NEWS:

— **PIZZA'S BACK:** Wood is burning again in pizza ovens in Naples, Italy, giving a symbolic and savory boost to Neapolitans after two months of lockdown meant an end to their most iconic and favorite food.

— **NO JOKE:** In Kentucky, Tupac Shakur has been waiting for his unemployment benefits since March 13. That's Tupac Malik Shakur, not the deceased rapper with the same name. Once the Lexington Herald-Leader reported that Tupac Malik Shakur, who goes by Malik, was not filing a false claim as a prank, the state began working to clear it and the governor called Shakur to apologize.

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

## Easing lockdowns makes day-to-day choices more complicated

By CARLA K. JOHNSON, ADAM GELLER and ERIC OLSON Associated Press

Things were so much clearer when just about everything was locked down.

Now, with states lifting coronavirus restrictions piecemeal and by often arbitrary timetables, Americans are facing bewildering decisions about what they should and should not do to protect their health, their livelihoods and their neighbors.

Is it safe to join the crowds at the beach or eat at a restaurant? To visit the elderly parents you haven't seen in nearly two months? To reopen a struggling business?

In many cases, the less-than-satisfying answer from the experts is: It depends.

"There will never be a perfect amount of protection," said Josh Santarpia, a microbiology expert at the University of Nebraska Medical Center who is studying the coronavirus. "It's a personal risk assessment. Everybody has to decide, person by person, what risk they're willing to tolerate."

The quandary comes as the confirmed death toll from coronavirus in the U.S. on Tuesday surpassed the 58,220 American service members killed in Vietnam, according to Johns Hopkins University. Globally,

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at least 216,000 have died, thought the true toll is undoubtedly much higher because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and concealment by some governments.

With the crisis easing in many places, France, Spain and Greece were among the latest countries to announce their plans for restarting their economies. As governments make their moves to reopen businesses and schools, the next decisions made will be personal.

Jill Faust, 53, of Council Bluffs, Iowa, said she would hesitate to eat at an indoor restaurant when such businesses are allowed to reopen in her community Friday.

"We would have to know ahead of time what precautions they're taking," she said, citing the way some restaurants may rely on limited seating, well-spaced tables, masks for employees and disposable cups and plates. Even then, she said, it might not be worth the trouble.

"Going to a restaurant to me is this lovely, relaxing experience where you can sit with people and relax and catch up after a long day. If your experience is going to be limited by all these safety concerns, why spend the money?" she said.

In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom said schoolchildren could return to classrooms as early as July, though a formal decision had not yet been made.

President Donald Trump signed a measure ordering meat processing plants to stay open to prevent shortages. Unions responded by accusing the White House of jeopardizing lives and prioritizing cold cuts over workers' health.

As restrictions loosen, health authorities will be watching closely for any sign of a resurgence of the virus.

On Tuesday, for example, Germany reported an uptick in the infection rate since some small businesses were allowed to reopen just over a week ago. But it was too soon to say whether the loosening was to blame.

Around the world, confirmed infections exceeded 3 million — including 1 million in the U.S., according to the Johns Hopkins tally.

In China, where the pandemic began, cases have slowed to a trickle from the peak in February and March that even forced a delay in the country's ceremonial parliament meeting. State media reported Wednesday the National People's Congress would convene on May 22.

In the U.S., the uncertainty ahead was spotlighted in Georgia after businesses such as barber shops and tattoo parlors were given the go-ahead to reopen.

Savannah Mayor Van Johnson said people could find the changes perplexing.

"In reality we're under a stay-at-home order until April 30," Johnson said. "Yet you can go get your nails done, you can go get a tattoo, you can go to movie theaters, you can go to bowling alleys. It's those kinds of things that leave people confused."

Mixed messages are coming from even the U.S. Congress. The House is scrambling for ways for members to work from home after a revolt over convening during the pandemic, and said they wouldn't return to the Capitol on Monday. The smaller Senate, however, plans to convene there.

The decisions people make are likely to vary widely depending on where they live, and how close that puts them to known virus clusters. In Georgia, where COVID-19 has killed at least 1,000, many new cases are still being reported.

But even in places with fewer known infections, people are facing uneasy choices.

In Omaha, Nebraska, where businesses can reopen next week, teachers Michelle and Mark Aschenbrenner said they are eager to dine out again. Mark Aschenbrenner has set up an appointment for a long-delayed haircut.

"I think we're four weeks too early," he said of the plans to lift restrictions. But "I think I'll probably still go because we've been stuck at home for seven weeks and we're going stir crazy."

With warmer weather enticing more people to venture out in the weeks ahead, it will be up to individuals to exercise caution.

"You can't swear that if somebody happens to cough on the beach chair to your left and then you have a breeze that blows that over across you, that you don't have the exposure in that way," said Dr. Marybeth

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Sexton, infectious-disease specialist at Emory University School of Medicine.

Even following guidelines to maintain 6-foot (2-meter) distances may not be enough. That rule is based on how far a different coronavirus, SARS, spread among airline passengers.

When doctors treated more than a dozen COVID-19 patients at an Omaha hospital, researchers found genetic material from the virus at greater distances — on window ledges, cellphones, in hallways and on toilet seats, Santarpia said.

That doesn't mean people shouldn't go out. But they should be very deliberate in doing so, limiting visits with relatives and friends to moments that matter, said Dr. Emily Landon, who leads infection control at the University of Chicago Medical Center.

Mother's Day — May 10 in the United States — may qualify if Mom lives nearby, she said. But limit the number of people involved and wear masks the entire time. Even if you check to make sure everyone present has been feeling well, accept that there will be risk, she said.

The virus remains a long-term foe. The president of the Japan Medical Association, Yoshitake Yokokura, said he thinks it will be difficult to hold the rescheduled Tokyo Summer Olympics even in 2021 without an effective vaccine.

In the shorter term, it will be up to individuals as much as policymakers to make the decisions that will help chart the virus' course.

"I think everyone still needs to use their judgment. I'm not having a book club in my house. I'm going to my doctor for an allergy shot because that's safe to do," said Landon, the Chicago infection-control expert. "You can try and make it political, make it about freedom, but it's a virus. It's biology. Biology doesn't negotiate."

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This story has been corrected to show that Jill Faust's hometown is Council Bluffs, Iowa.

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AP video journalist Haven Daley in San Francisco contributed.

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## **GDP report to show a damaged economy sliding into recession**

**By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy began 2020 riding the crest of a record-long expansion with every expectation that its 11th year of growth would not be its last.

Then the economy screeched to a sudden halt. And now it's in free-fall.

On Wednesday, the government will offer a glimpse of how dark the picture has grown and how much worse it could get as the coronavirus pandemic inflicts ruinous damage. The Commerce Department is expected to estimate that the gross domestic product, the broadest gauge of the economy, shrank at an annual rate of 5% or more in the January-March quarter.

That would be the sharpest quarterly drop in GDP since the Great Recession, which ended in 2009. And it would be the first quarterly contraction in six years.

And yet forecasters say that will be only a precursor of a far grimmer GDP report to come for the current April-June quarter, when business shutdowns and layoffs have struck with devastating force. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that GDP will plunge in the current quarter by a 40% annual rate. That would be, by a breathtaking margin, the bleakest quarter since such records were first compiled in 1947.

In just a few weeks, businesses across the country have shut down and laid off tens of millions of workers. Factories and stores are shuttered. Home sales are falling. Households are slashing spending. Consumer confidence is sinking.

As the economy slides into what looks like a severe recession, some economists are holding out hope that a recovery will arrive quickly and robustly once the health crisis has been solved — what some call

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a V-shaped recovery. Increasingly, though, analysts say they think the economy will struggle to regain its momentum even after the viral outbreak has subsided.

Many Americans, they suggest, could remain too fearful to travel, shop at stores or visit restaurants or movie theaters anywhere near as much as they used to. In addition, local and state officials may continue to limit, for health reasons, how many people may congregate in such places at any one time, thereby making it difficult for many businesses to survive. It's why some economists say the damage from the downturn could persist far longer than some may assume.

"The recession will be worse than the one we went through from 2007 to 2009," said Sung Won Sohn, economics and business professor at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, referring to the downturn that came to be called the Great Recession because it was the worst slump since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

There is also fear that the coronavirus could flare up again after the economy is re-opened, forcing reopened businesses to shut down again.

"The virus has done a lot of damage to the economy, and there is just so much uncertainty now," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics.

Zandi said he thought the economy could resume its growth in the July-September quarter before faltering in the final quarter of 2020 and then regaining its footing on a sustained basis in mid-2021 — assuming that a coronavirus vaccine is ready for use by then.

"I would characterize this period as going through quicksand until we get a vaccine," Zandi said.

The Trump administration takes a rosier view. President Donald Trump told reporters this week that he expects a "big rise" in GDP in the third quarter, followed by an "incredible fourth quarter, and you're going to have an incredible next year."

The president is predicating his re-election campaign on the argument that he built a powerful economy over the past three years and can do so again after the health crisis has been resolved.

## **Biden wins Ohio's mail-in primary delayed by coronavirus**

**By WILL WEISSERT and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press**

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Joe Biden won Ohio's presidential primary Tuesday, clinching a contest that was less about the Democratic nomination and more about how states can conduct elections in the era of the coronavirus.

The primary was the first major test of statewide elections via mail amid an outbreak.

There were reports of confusion but no widespread disruption. It wasn't like Wisconsin earlier this month, when voters were forced to overlook social distancing guidelines to stand in line wearing masks to cast ballots.

"Within the context of the threat of the virus, it's a decision that we will have made the best of," Republican Ken Blackwell, a former Ohio elections chief who chairs the bipartisan International Foundation for Electoral Systems, said of mail-in balloting.

Overall turnout was surprisingly strong, said Secretary of State Frank LaRose. While his office said about 1.5 million votes had been cast as of midday Saturday, down sharply from the 3.2 million cast in Ohio's 2016 presidential primary, he said some larger counties received tens of thousands of additional ballots Tuesday.

"It was better than OK. It was great," he said.

The primary, originally scheduled for March 17, was delayed just hours before polls were supposed to open. Citing a "health emergency," Republican Gov. Mike DeWine recommended that in-person balloting not be held until June 2. But amid legal challenges, officials moved balloting to this week while converting to a mail-in process since the state remains under a stay-at-home order.

Most Ohioans casting absentee ballots had to run at least three pieces of mail — an application, a blank ballot and a completed one — through the U.S. Postal Service. Only homeless and disabled people were initially encouraged to cast in-person ballots at county election board offices, though anyone not receiving ballots by mail in time to participate could also turn up in person.

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Lynne Marshall, of Sylvania, opened her mailbox Tuesday and was disappointed to see that her ballot had not arrived. She then agonized over whether to cast a vote in person at the election board and put her health at risk or stay home and skip an election for the first time she can remember.

"What should I do?" she asked. "I'm just really disgusted with it all. Of course, I'll feel guilty if I don't vote."

LaRose said that after he raised concerns last week, the Postal Service relocated a sorting facility into Ohio, searched meticulously for all in-transit election mail and deployed top-level executives to sites to oversee the effort.

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law said it fielded calls and complaints. It called on Ohio to mail ballots directly to eligible voters in the future, as other states do, a proposal so far rejected by the Republican-controlled state Legislature.

With his last competitor, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, leaving the race weeks ago, Biden has emerged as the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, and the Ohio results were never in doubt. Still, moving to a mail-in primary on the fly was watched around the country as states with upcoming elections grapple with how to fulfill one of the most basic functions of American democracy, voting, while battling the coronavirus's spread.

Some governors have suggested they would consider moving to an all-mail voting system for the November general election, something President Donald Trump has strongly opposed. Polling suggests that Democrats are now more in favor of their states conducting elections exclusively by mail than Republicans are — a partisan divide that has grown amid the coronavirus outbreak and may have been exacerbated by Trump's opposition.

Five states currently conduct all elections entirely by mail: Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington and Utah, but none had to adopt such practices amid a pandemic.

Maryland was also balancing balloting and voter safety on Tuesday for a special election to finish the term of the late Democratic Rep. Elijah Cummings. Democrat Kweisi Mfume, a former NAACP leader, defeated Republican Kimberly Klacik, returning to the seat that he held before Cummings.

Most of the focus, though, was on Ohio, which also held congressional primaries. It's traditionally a battleground state that has shifted to more consistently Republican in recent cycles. Trump won it by a surprisingly high 8 percentage points in 2016, after Barack Obama, with Biden as his running mate, carried the state twice.

Jen Miller, the head of the League of Women Voters in Ohio, said it will be impossible to know how many people stayed home because they didn't get a ballot in time.

"We've had people waiting weeks and weeks," Miller said.

Meanwhile, Ohio's early voting began Feb. 19, meaning Sanders was in a position to still pick up some of its delegates — though he was held to just a handful in Ohio. The senator has reminded his supporters that his name will be on the ballot in all upcoming races and urged them to vote for him so he can amass delegates and better shape the Democratic Party platform at its national convention in Milwaukee in August.

But Sanders has endorsed Biden, and a group of his top advisers announced Tuesday that they were forming an outside political committee to promote the former vice president and progressive values. The efforts at unification of Democratic forces against Trump in November could defuse tensions heading into the party's convention.

Blackwell, the former Ohio election chief, said he didn't see Tuesday's results setting a precedent.

"My opinion going forward is that no serious thought should be given to converting to mail-in balloting for the November election," Blackwell said. "You lick an envelope and mail in a ballot, there's all kinds of evidence that would suggest that there would be ballots lost, and because you've taken out the bipartisan oversight at the basic community level, you lose a degree of almost guaranteed legitimacy."

Weissert reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Dan Sewell in Cincinnati and John Seewer in Toledo contributed to this report.



## Groups sow doubt about COVID vaccine before one even exists

By DAVID KLEPPER and BEATRICE DUPUY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A coronavirus vaccine is still months or years away, but groups that peddle misinformation about immunizations are already taking aim, potentially eroding confidence in what could be humanity's best chance to defeat the virus.

In recent weeks, vaccine opponents have made several unsubstantiated claims, including allegations that vaccine trials will be dangerously rushed or that Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious diseases expert, is blocking cures to enrich vaccine makers. They've also falsely claimed that Microsoft founder Bill Gates wants to use a vaccine to inject microchips into people — or to cull 15% of the world's population.

Vaccine opponents in the U.S. have been around for a long time. Their claims range from relatively modest safety concerns about specific vaccines or the risk of side effects to conspiracy theories that border on the bizarre.

The movement is receiving renewed attention, especially as it aligns itself with groups loudly protesting restrictions on daily life aimed at controlling the spread of the virus. Health professionals say vaccine misinformation could have lethal consequences if it leads people to opt for bogus cures instead.

"Only a coronavirus vaccine can truly protect us from future outbreaks," said Dr. Scott Ratzan, a physician and medical misinformation expert at the City University of New York and Columbia University. "But what if the effort succeeds and large numbers of people decide not to vaccinate themselves or their children?"

While vaccines for diseases such as polio, smallpox and measles have benefited millions, some skeptics reject the science, citing a distrust of modern medicine and government. Others say mandatory vaccine requirements violate their religious freedom.

Rita Palma, the leader of the anti-vaccine group in Long Island called My Kids, My Choice, is among those who say their families won't get the coronavirus vaccine.

"Many of us are anxiety stricken at the thought of being forced to get a vaccine," Palma said. "I will never choose to have a COVID-19 vaccine. I don't want the government forcing it on my community or my family."

From the outset of the coronavirus pandemic, vaccine skeptics have tailored several long-standing claims about vaccine safety to fit the current outbreak. When the first U.S. case was announced in January, some alleged the coronavirus was manufactured and that patents for it could be found online.

Thousands of deaths later, vaccine opponents are endorsing unapproved treatments, second-guessing medical experts and pushing fears about mandatory vaccinations. They've also latched onto protests against stay-at-home orders in the U.S.

"The coronavirus has created this perfect storm of misinformation," remarked David A. Broniatowski, an associate professor at George Washington University's school of engineering and applied science who has published several studies on vaccine misinformation.

Last week, an anti-vaccine activist was arrested in Idaho after repeatedly refusing police orders to leave a playground closed because of the pandemic. The woman, who was there with other families, is affiliated with two groups that protested at the Idaho Statehouse against stay-at-home orders.

Facebook groups formed to organize the protests have been peppered with vaccine hoaxes and myths. Perhaps no one plays a bigger role in the conspiracy theories than Gates, who is funding vaccine research. The online movement has centered concerns around a COVID-19 vaccine on false claims that Gates is planning to microchip people with the vaccine or use it to reduce the world's population.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a vaccine critic who helped popularize unsubstantiated claims that vaccines can cause autism, said Gates' work gives him "dictatorial control of global health policy." Roger Stone, a former adviser to President Donald Trump, went further on a New York City radio show, saying Gates "and other globalists" are using the coronavirus "for mandatory vaccinations and microchipping people."

Such wild theories can have real-world effects. False rumors that Gates hoped to test an experimental vaccine in South Africa became mainstream after a news site erroneously reported the claim. One of the country's political parties then sent a letter to President Cyril Rampahosa demanding answers about

“deals” struck with Gates.

In fact, Gates and his wife are financing a vaccine trial in Philadelphia and Kansas City, Missouri, not South Africa. He also suggested creating a database of people immune to the virus, not implanting microchips.

On Monday, during remarks recognizing World Immunization Week, World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus criticized vaccine skeptics for spreading misinformation at a time when many families are delaying or skipping routine childhood immunizations because they’re afraid of COVID-19 exposure in doctors’ offices.

“Myths and misinformation about vaccines are adding fuel to the fire,” he said.

Health experts have repeatedly said there is no evidence the coronavirus was intentionally created or spread. They also insist that vaccines are not only safe, but essential to global health.

“Vaccine researchers and anyone who is a vaccine advocate cares deeply about vaccine safety,” said Dr. Paul Offit, a Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia physician and co-inventor of a vaccine for rotavirus, which kills hundreds of thousands of children annually.

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

The vaccine debate is fertile ground for groups looking to sow discord in the United States. Russia seized on it to create divisions before the 2016 U.S. election, and appears to be at it again.

A report from a European Union disinformation task force found numerous conspiracy theories in English-language Russian media, including state-run RT, claiming an eventual vaccine will be used to inject nanoparticles into people.

“When pro-Kremlin disinformation outlets spread anti-vaccine tropes, they become responsible for those who will hesitate to seek professional medical care,” the EU report said.

## **Airway experts’ work puts them inches from where virus lives**

**By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer**

It starts with pulling on head-to-toe protective gear. Then comes a brisk walk down a hospital corridor, triple-gloved hands pushing a rattling anesthesia cart toward a door that leads to a frightened patient, gasping for air.

Hundreds of times every week during this pandemic, doctors and nurses treating critically ill COVID-19 patients steel themselves for a procedure that remains anything but routine.

These are the intubators, the airway experts inserting ventilator breathing tubes that place them mere inches away from where the contagious virus lives.

“You’re in COVID central when you’re intubating,” said Dr. Roy Soto, an anesthesiologist at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan. “They’re frequently coughing and gasping. With a vivid imagination, you can almost visualize the COVID particles drifting throughout the room.”

In normal times, these experts work with patients who need help breathing during elective surgery, operations for gunshot wounds and other emergency cases.

What’s different now is not just that how critically ill and highly contagious these ventilator patients are—it’s also the grim, mounting numbers. In hot spots like New York City and Detroit, some hospitals report inserting breathing tubes for 20 or more COVID-19 patients in one day, hundreds in the past month — at least double the normal rate. Most don’t survive.

“We’re all used to seeing sick people, just not over and over and over again,” Soto said.

“Just an unprecedented wave of patients has been coming into the hospitals,” said Angella Jones, a nurse anesthetist at Detroit’s Sinai-Grace Hospital who is president of the Michigan Association of Nurse Anesthetists.

“You are very fearful of contracting the virus just because of the closeness of you to the patient’s airway and the virus,” she said.

Just how many airway experts have become infected on the job is unknown since detecting the source

of coronavirus infections is difficult, but many have gotten sick. At Mount Sinai Health System in New York City, where hundreds of COVID-19 patients have been treated, about 20% of the anesthesiology team has been diagnosed with the illness, said Dr. Andrew Leibowitz, chairman of anesthesiology.

Fear of infection isn't the only big concern for airway experts: The fate of their patients also weighs heavily. Some hospitals in China and Italy have reported survival rates of around 20% for COVID-19 patients on ventilators. Rates reported by some U.S. hospitals are only slightly better.

But when patients can't breathe on their own, whatever their chance of survival is, a ventilator might be their final option. "It really doesn't matter if they have a 90% chance of success or a 10% chance of success," Leibowitz said. "For that patient, it's all or none."

Most COVID-19 patients have only mild illness and recover without ventilator treatment. Exact numbers of those who need ventilators aren't available but, at some U.S. hospitals, 1 in 4 COVID-19 patients who are admitted are given breathing tubes. One report estimated that almost 1 million U.S. patients would require ventilator treatment at some point during the pandemic.

"They are alone, most of them are afraid, they don't know what's going on and if they'll wake up with a breathing tube in or not wake up at all," said nurse anesthetist Samantha Kuzmanovski of Sinai-Grace Hospital.

Soto recalls twice entering rooms and overhearing telephone calls with family members saying tearful goodbyes to patients before intubations.

"We're very much aware of the fact that this is a potentially terminal event. This is potentially the last time that these people are going to be awake and breathing on their own. It's pretty heavy," he said.

"For a while, I kept track of who I had intubated to see how they were doing and after a while I stopped," Soto said. "It was a little depressing."

Recognizing the infection risk and potential emotional toll on those doing the intubations, Chinese authorities offered online education on best practices, along with free mental health care for all anesthesia providers caring for critically ill COVID-19 patients.

In the U.S., the American Medical Association is encouraging hospitals to provide mental health resources for doctors and other caregivers treating coronavirus patients. The University of California, San Francisco's anesthesia department offers weekly video support sessions, giving airway experts a chance to discuss their worries and how they're coping, and several other U.S. hospitals are offering similar outlets.

"It kind of normalizes those emotions and makes you feel like it's OK to kind of feel the fear, the anxiety, the guilt that you feel," said Dr. Jina Sinskey, an assistant anesthesiology professor at UCSF.

Jones acknowledges that the job "is very stressful at times." She said she prays at her patients' bedside, and then again when she gets home. For them. And for herself, to remain disease-free and able to return to work the next day and start all over again.

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Federica Narancio contributed to this story from Washington.

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## **Blind justice: No visual cues in high court phone cases**

**By JESSICA GRESKO and MARK SHERMAN Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — On the evening before he was to argue a case before the Supreme Court years ago, Jeffrey Fisher broke his glasses. That left the very nearsighted lawyer with an unappealing choice. He could wear contacts and clearly see the justices but not his notes, or skip the contacts and see only his notes.

It wasn't hard to decide. "I couldn't imagine doing argument without seeing their faces," Fisher said.

He won't have a choice next month.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic the high court is, for the first time in its 230-year history, holding

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arguments by telephone. Beyond not being able to see the justices' nods, frowns and hand gestures, the teleconference arguments in 10 cases over six days present a range of challenges, attorneys said, but also opportunities.

Roman Martinez, who will argue in a free speech case, said the lack of visual cues may change what sense is most important. "Maybe it will concentrate the mind on listening," he said.

The unprecedented decision to hold arguments by phone was an effort to help slow the spread of the virus. Most of the justices are at risk because of their age; six are over 65. And hearing arguments by phone allows them to decide significant cases by the court's traditional summer break.

The attorneys arguing before the court include government lawyers as well as those in private practice. Three of the 25 are women. Most have made multiple Supreme Court arguments and are familiar to the justices, although seven are giving their first arguments before the court. The Trump administration's top Supreme Court lawyer, Solicitor General Noel Francisco, will argue twice.

The cases the justices are hearing include fights over subpoenas for President Donald Trump's financial records and cases about whether presidential electors are required to cast their Electoral College ballots for the candidate who won their state.

Justices have long said that the written briefs lawyers submit are vastly more important to the cases' outcomes than what's said in court. But the arguments also help them resolve nagging issues and occasionally can change a justice's vote.

Beyond their importance to the justices, arguments in the soaring, columned courtroom can crackle with drama that would seem to be hard to replicate over the telephone. The court is taking steps to maintain the solemnity, however. The telephone sessions will begin with the traditional cry from the court's marshal of "Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!"

Noah Purcell, who is arguing on behalf of Washington state in one of the presidential elector cases, has one experience that makes him feel somewhat fortunate: A previous high-profile phone argument. In 2017 he argued by phone, and won, a challenge to Trump's travel ban before three appellate judges, although the Supreme Court later sided with the president.

This phone argument, with nine justices, presents different hurdles. Most of the justices have distinctive voices, but several lawyers said they feared mixing up Brett Kavanaugh and Neil Gorsuch, the two newest justices. The court removed that pitfall Tuesday when it announced the justices would ask questions in order of seniority instead of their usual free-for-all-style argument. Purcell had said he would "probably just say 'your honor'" to be safe. And arguing from his home isn't really an option because there are "too many risks of interruption:" his children, ages 2, 5 and 7.

Purcell plans to go to his office, but because he's on the West Coast, his case will be heard at 7 a.m. PDT, making for an unusually early start to his day. It's tough to sleep on the night before a Supreme Court argument anyway, said Purcell, who is making his third argument before the high court.

Like other advocates, he's doing practice arguments by phone. Lawyers who already have done telephone arguments as the virus outbreak has forced courts around the country to move to phone or video hearings also have advice.

William Jay, who has argued Supreme Court cases both as a government lawyer and in private practice, said he took a friend's suggestion and spread a towel over his desk to reduce the noise of shuffling papers when he had a recent appellate argument by phone.

He stood for the entire argument, as he would in court, but he didn't put on a suit and tie. "I'm not going to tell you just how disheveled I might have been," Jay said.

Being invisible to the justices has other advantages, too.

Ian Gershengorn, who will be at his home in Bethesda, Maryland, to argue in an Indian lands case, said he will probably hear from colleagues by text before he wraps up his arguments. If he were arguing in court, they might instead pass him a yellow sticky. And Gershengorn, who is making his 16th argument, said he won't memorize his opening as he usually does, because the justices won't be able to tell if he's looking at notes. Reading from a prepared script is frowned upon in the court's arguments guide for lawyers.

Some things won't change, including Gershengorn's muffin and Diet Coke on the morning of arguments.

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He'll try to relax. But instead of looking around at the courtroom's marble columns and friezes and thinking "this is pretty awesome that I get to do this for a living," he expects he'll be at the desk in his guest bedroom. What will he think?

"This is a really weird way to do this," he said. "Hopefully that will relax me too."

## Hillary Clinton becomes latest Democrat to endorse Biden

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

Hillary Clinton, the first woman to become a major party's presidential nominee, endorsed Joe Biden's White House bid on Tuesday, continuing Democrats' efforts to coalesce around the former vice president as he takes on President Donald Trump.

Clinton made her announcement during a Biden campaign town hall to discuss the coronavirus and its effect on women. Without mentioning Trump by name, Clinton assailed the Republican president and hailed Biden's experience and temperament in comparison.

"Just think of what a difference it would make right now if we had a president who not only listened to the science ... but brought us together," said Clinton, who lost the 2016 election despite leading Trump in the national popular vote. "Think of what it would mean if we had a real president," Clinton continued, rather than a man who "plays one on TV."

Biden, as a former vice president and six-term senator, "has been preparing for this moment his entire life," said Clinton, a former secretary of state. "This is a moment when we need a leader, a president like Joe Biden."

With her historic candidacy, Clinton remains a powerful — and complex — figure in American life. Her 2016 campaign inspired many women, and her loss to Trump resonates to this day. The female candidates in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary often faced skepticism that a woman could win the White House.

Biden has pledged to select a woman as his vice president.

Given her 2016 experience, Clinton could offer Biden unique insight as he prepares for the November general election. Her endorsement is the latest example of leaders from across the Democratic spectrum rallying behind Biden.

In recent weeks, Biden has picked up support from former President Barack Obama, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and leading progressives such as Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Bernie Sanders of Vermont. Hillary Clinton's husband, former President Bill Clinton, has not yet publicly endorsed Biden and has kept a lower profile during the Trump era.

The swift unification around Biden stands in stark contrast to four years ago, when Hillary Clinton was unable to win over a significant portion of the electorate's left flank. Sanders battled her to the end of the primary calendar and waged a bitter fight over the party platform before endorsing her and campaigning for her in the fall. Hillary and Bill Clinton have argued that Sanders' push deeply wounded her campaign against Trump.

The Trump campaign sought to foment the same tension on Tuesday by arguing that the Democratic establishment is again asserting itself.

"There is no greater concentration of Democrat establishment than Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton together," Brad Parscale, Trump's campaign manager, said in a statement. "Both of them carry the baggage of decades in the Washington swamp and both of them schemed to keep the Democrat nomination from Bernie Sanders."

During a wide-ranging conversation, Biden and Clinton sidestepped talk of campaign strategy and tactics, instead sticking mostly to policy proposals and critiques of Trump, from the president's penchant for conflict to recent reports that he ignored repeated warnings about the coronavirus threat, including in his daily intelligence briefings throughout January.

They pitched themselves as friends, recounting their time together in the Senate and recalling their breakfast meetings at the vice presidential residence when they served in the Obama administration. Still, the Clintons and Biden have never been especially close allies. Biden's nearest alignment with Hillary Clinton

came during Obama's first term, when Biden was vice president and Clinton was secretary of state. Both had sought the Democratic nomination in 2008 — and both were dogged by their 2002 votes as senators in favor of the war powers resolution that President George W. Bush used to invade Iraq in 2003.

Biden suggested in his 2017 book, "Promise Me, Dad," that Obama favored Clinton's 2016 presidential bid over the possibility of Biden running. With Obama by his side, Biden announced from the White House Rose Garden in 2015 that he wouldn't seek the presidency the following year.

As first lady and secretary of state, Clinton was among the leading voices in women's rights discussions around the world. She made headlines during her husband's first term with forceful advocacy for women during a United Nations conference in Beijing, where the Chinese government was under fire for human rights abuses.

"It is time for us to say here in Beijing, and the world to hear, that it is no longer acceptable to discuss women's rights as separate from human rights," Clinton said.

She punctuated her argument with a line that has been replayed countless times since: "Human rights are women's rights, and women's rights are human rights."

Yet Clinton's advocacy for Biden presents complications. After decades in the spotlight, she's a polarizing figure criticized for everything from her push for a health care overhaul in the 1990s to her decision to remain in her marriage following her husband's affair with a White House intern.

Her presidential endorsement comes as a former Senate staffer has recently accused Biden of sexually assaulting her in the 1990s, when he was a senator from Delaware. Trump made Bill Clinton's affairs an issue during the 2016 campaign despite his own indiscretions and allegations of sexual assault.

Biden campaigned for Hillary Clinton in the fall of 2016, and he's said often during the 2020 campaign that she "would have made a great president."

He has nonetheless implicitly criticized her campaign by saying Democrats did a poor job of reaching white working-class voters who defected to Republicans in 2016. As recently as an April 15 fundraiser, Biden touted ability to win "the kind of folks I grew up with," the "high-school educated" population who believe Democrats have abandoned them, and he sometimes boasts he can carry Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania — the three states where Clinton's narrow losses handed Trump an Electoral College majority.

Biden studiously avoided such talk with Clinton at his side Tuesday. "I have to tell you something completely honestly," he said near the end of their chat. "I wish this were us doing this and my supporting your reelection for president of the United States."

## **Bolsonaro's latest crisis threatens Brazil's virus response**

**By DAVID BILLER and MARCELO DE SOUSA Associated Press**

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — As Brazil careens toward a full-blown public health emergency and economic meltdown, President Jair Bolsonaro has managed to add a third ingredient to the toxic mix: political crisis. Even if it doesn't speed his downfall, it will render Brazilians more vulnerable to the pandemic.

Bolsonaro's decision last week to replace the federal police chief — and cross his popular justice minister, Sérgio Moro, who quit and alleged impropriety — has sparked an investigation into the president's actions that will be conducted by the federal police itself. Already the scandal threatens to supplant coronavirus as the day's most urgent matter.

"He is dividing the attention of the government and of society, and draining efforts and energy that, in such a grave moment of pandemic, should be exclusively concentrated on efforts to fight COVID-19," said Paulo Calmon, a professor of political science at the University of Brasilia.

During the announcement of his resignation Friday, Moro said Bolsonaro told him on multiple occasions that he wanted to replace the federal police chief with someone who would give him access to police investigations, some of which reportedly target one or more of the president's sons. That pitched the administration into turmoil and prompted Bolsonaro's own prosecutor-general to call for a Supreme Court investigation.irate Brazilians observing government stay-at-home recommendations because of the virus banged pots and pans from their windows in protest.

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Justice Celso de Mello authorized the probe into Bolsonaro's actions late Monday, including possible crimes of coercion and corruption, and gave the federal police 60 days to question Moro.

"The President of the Republic — who is also subject to the laws, like any other citizen of this country — is not exonerated from criminal liability stemming from his acts," Mello wrote in his decision, which was published on the Supreme Court's website.

The criminal probe and Moro's resignation threaten to weaken Bolsonaro's standing at a time when he already has come under fire for opposition to state efforts to control the rapidly spreading coronavirus. More than 71,000 Brazilians have been infected and more than 5,000 have died — vast under-counts according to experts who point to the country's widespread lack of testing. Bolsonaro also tossed his popular health minister, Luiz Henrique Mandetta, who had supported confinement measures put in place by state governors.

Margareth Dalcolmo, a clinical researcher and professor of respiratory medicine at the state-funded Oswaldo Cruz Foundation in Rio, said that "ambivalence" and inconsistencies by Bolsonaro's administration have paved the way for "the biggest humanitarian tragedy we've ever seen in Brazil."

"We are running against time in a chaotic way," Dalcolmo told an online panel Tuesday sponsored by the Washington-based Wilson Center. "We should have learned more from the countries that preceded us and we didn't."

Bolsonaro has called COVID-19 "a little flu" and said sweeping state measures that have closed down all but essential businesses will cause economic damage far worse than allowing the disease to spread while isolating only high-risk Brazilians, such as the elderly and those with health problems. Bolsonaro's newly named Health Minister Nelson Teich, in his first address to the nation, declared himself "completely aligned" with the president, adding that "health and the economy are complementary."

The International Monetary Fund this month forecast Brazil's GDP will plunge 5.3% in 2020. That would be the deepest single-year tumble since at least 1901, when national accounts data from the government's economics institute began. Brazil contracted 2% in 1918, the year of the Spanish flu pandemic, according to the institute.

The exits of Mandetta and Moro have laid bare the divides within Bolsonaro's administration, in addition to rifts between him and the governors, and with the legislature, Calmon said.

"These divisions further weaken the government's response capacity, especially in the health system that was already considerably battered by the economic crisis," he said.

Pollster Datafolha on Monday found the percentage of people surveyed who grade Bolsonaro's handling of the coronavirus as bad or terrible has risen to 45% from 33% in March, while approval fell to 27%.

In addition, 45% of respondents supported an impeachment process against the president, and 46% backed his resignation, up from 37% at the start of the month, according to the poll, which had a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

"It's time to talk. The president is digging his grave," former President Fernando Henrique Cardoso wrote on Twitter on Friday. "He should resign before he is forced to resign. Save us, in addition to coronavirus, from having a long impeachment process."

Bruno Carazza, professor of economic law at the business school Ibmec and a columnist for newspaper Valor Econômico, said Bolsonaro has begun losing the support of wealthier, more educated Brazilians, whose backing had been based on rejection of the leftist Workers' Party — more than a dozen of whose members were jailed during a sprawling corruption probe.

Still, Bolsonaro's approval rating has so far hovered around 33%, and Moro's resignation has galvanized his base, which has vilified Moro as a traitor.

"I doubt that will be maintained in the medium-term, primarily because the impact of the economic crisis will be strong and the peak of the pandemic hasn't yet been reached," Carazza said, adding Bolsonaro will suffer further public opinion damage as revelations from the investigation dribble out.

Congress, which had been trying to hammer out solutions for the economic and health crises, will now have to absorb the impact of the probe, and possibly conduct an impeachment process if crimes are proven.

Bolsonaro on Monday appointed André Mendonça, an evangelical pastor who has served as attorney general since 2019, to replace Moro, and Alexandre Ramagem to serve as director general of the federal

police.

Ramagem, who had been director of Brazil's intelligence agency ABIN, has been photographed with Bolsonaro's sons and his closeness with the Bolsonaro family has prompted concern among critics that he would give them undue preferential treatment.

Leftist lawmaker Marcelo Freixo said Tuesday on Twitter he has filed suit to annul Ramagem's nomination. Brazil's last two impeachments — in 2016 and 1992 — both followed allegations of crimes, deep recession and massive street demonstrations. While the first two are now in place, the last, paradoxically, has been held back by the very self-quarantine measures Bolsonaro opposes.

As the political crisis grabs a bigger spotlight, focus on social isolation is likely to fade, Carazza said. "To the extent that the political crisis assumes more media attention, people will start feeling the worst of the health crisis has passed and start getting lax with taking care," Carazza said. "And we will start seeing the health situation worsen."

AP writer Joshua Goodman contributed from Miami.

## 'Infecting our dreams': Pandemic sabotages sleep worldwide

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

For millions of people around the world dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, sleep brings no relief. The horrors of COVID-19, and the surreal and frightening ways it has upended daily life, are infecting dreams and exposing feelings of fear, loss, isolation and grief that transcend culture, language and national boundaries.

Everyone from a college teacher in Pakistan to a mall cashier in Canada to an Episcopal priest in Florida is confronting the same daytime demon. Each is waking up in a sweat in the dead of night.

Experts say humanity has rarely experienced "collective dreaming" on such a broad scale in recorded history — and certainly never while also being able to share those nightmares in real time.

"It's that alarming feeling of when you wake up and think, 'Thank heavens I woke up,'" said Holly Smith, an elementary school librarian in Detroit. "Once it hits your dreams, you think, 'Great, now I can't even escape there.'"

The psychological toll is staggering, particularly for health care workers whose dreams show similarities to those of combat veterans and 9/11 responders, said Deirdre Barrett, a Harvard University professor who is surveying COVID dreamers worldwide. She has collected 6,000 dream samples from about 2,400 people.

So many people are sharing accounts of dreams online that there's a Twitter account dedicated to gathering them in a virtual library under the handle "I Dream of COVID."

"As far as I know, no one has dream samples from the flu pandemic of 1918 — and that would probably be the most comparable thing," said Barrett, who has studied the dreams of 9/11 survivors and British prisoners of war in World War II. "Now we just all have our smartphones by our bed, so you can just reach over and speak it or type it down. Recording our dreams has never been easier."

The dreams are also exposing what is bothering us the most about the pandemic. The themes seem universal.

Dreams of a safe place suddenly overtaken by the virus speak to contagion's terrifying invisibility, says Cathy Caruth, a professor at Cornell University who has studied trauma for 30 years. Pandemic dreams, she says, are reminiscent of the experience of Hiroshima survivors, who worried about invisible radiation exposure, and also of some nightmares described by Vietnam veterans.

"They seem to be in part about things that are hard to grasp, what it means that anybody can be a threat and you can be a threat to everybody," Caruth said.

Episcopal priest Mary Alice Mathison dreamed 500 people showed up for a funeral in her church and wouldn't go home. Other dreams underscore that no one knows how the pandemic will end. In those, the dreamer wakes with a start before learning how it turned out.

Ashley Trevino is still trying to process one terrifying dream. The 24-year-old barista is out of work due



to the pandemic and was spooked when officials announced the first COVID-19 death in her central Texas county.

A few days later, she dreamed she and her girlfriend were in line to enter a dark, metal warehouse where they'd be injected with the new coronavirus by government workers wearing Hazmat suits. Fluorescent lights in the parking lot cast an eerie glow as she watched her partner get the shot and gasp for breath. Then she got the shot, too.

"I watched her kind of collapse against the wall and while I was trying to fight the effects of it and not pass out myself, I was like ... 'Is she dead now?'"

Trevino woke up whimpering. She immediately felt an impulse to share her nightmare with someone — anyone — and tweeted it to the world from her bed.

In Pakistan's Punjab province, a college literature teacher described dreaming she was one of only 100 people left on the planet who didn't have COVID-19. The infected population had gained political control and was chasing the uninfected "so the world would become the same for everyone," said Roha Rafiq, 28.

Rafiq is terrified for her elderly father, who insists on going to prayers every day despite a cough and a stay-at-home order. "I think," she said in a Twitter direct message, "this anxiety has given me this dream."

According to Barrett, many people dream they are sick with COVID-19 or of being overcome by what seem to be stand-ins for the virus: swarms of bugs, slithering worms, witches, grasshoppers with fangs. Others dream of being in crowded public places without a mask or proper social distancing.

Still others dream of losing control. In one such dream, the dreamer was held down by infected people who coughed on her. In another, the dreamer came across bands of people shooting at random strangers.

Most are lower-level anxiety dreams, not trauma-induced nightmares. But that changes dramatically for frontline health workers, Barrett says.

"The health care providers are the ones who look like a trauma population. They are having flat-out nightmares that reenact the things they're experiencing and ... they all have the theme that 'I am responsible for saving this person's life and I'm not succeeding and this person is about to die,'" she said.

"And when they dream about their child or parent getting it, for the care providers there's always the next step in the dream where they realize ... 'I gave it to them.'"

Even the simple, unadorned dreams — far from the drama of the ICU — seem poignant right now. Some people dream of getting a hug, attending a party, getting a haircut, going to the library.

Lauren Nickols, 30, an avid reader, stocked up on library books before Ohio's stay-at-home order. Now her supply is running low. She recently dreamed her dresser was piled with books. She found the dream reassuring, but a reminder of the mundane things that have been lost.

"I guess it's a bit of a sense of shared community, but it's also really sad that we're all missing things. It really shows you all the things you do without realizing it," she says. "And now that you can't, it's a shock to the system."

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Follow Gillian Flaccus on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/gflaccus>

## Canada mass shooter obtained police car replica at auction

By **ROB GILLIES** Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — A gunman who killed 22 people in Nova Scotia this month obtained a replica police car at an auction and outfitted it with a light bar and decals that made it look almost identical to a genuine RCMP vehicle before using it to go on a rampage, police said Tuesday.

Thirteen of the victims were shot to death and nine died in fires set by the suspect, said Royal Canadian Mounted Police Cpl. Jennifer Clarke.

RCMP Supt. Darren Campbell said Gabriel Wortman, 51, owned four used police cars obtained at auction and said he collected police uniforms. He said Wortman was related to retired RCMP officers and they've been interviewed. He said there is no indication that a former RCMP officer assisted Wortman or provided him with any police equipment.

Campbell reiterated the weekend rampage on April 18 and 19 started with an assault by Wortman on his girlfriend and ended with 22 people dead in communities across central and northern Nova Scotia. His girlfriend, who survived and is cooperating with police, hid overnight in the woods as the suspect shot his neighbors and set homes on fire. His girlfriend was a neighbor

Campbell said they don't think Wortman was purposely targeting women.

"It appeared as if he was just targeting individuals that he knew or individuals for whatever reason. I don't think we'll ever understand," he said. "It's completely senseless."

Campbell said a number of people had a disputes with the gunman.

"That included everyone from associates to business partners to family members," he said.

Police found 13 deceased victims in the rural community of Portapique, a quiet community of 100 residents where the suspect lived part time. Police arrived and discovered bodies in the road and homes on fire. They believe Wortman left Portapique shortly after police arrived and spent the night in a nearby industrial area before waking up just before 6 a.m. on Sunday and continuing his rampage in other communities.

Police said they have been in contact with U.S. authorities about Wortman but declined to elaborate. They have said he used a handgun that was obtained in Canada and long guns that he obtained in the U.S.

## Nearly 70 dead in 'horrific' outbreak at veterans home

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

Nearly 70 residents sickened with the coronavirus have died at a Massachusetts home for aging veterans, as state and federal officials try to figure out what went wrong in the deadliest known outbreak at a long-term care facility in the U.S.

While the death toll at the state-run Holyoke Soldiers' Home continues to climb, federal officials are investigating whether residents were denied proper medical care and the state's top prosecutor is deciding whether to bring legal action.

"It's horrific," said Edward Lapointe, whose father-in-law lives at the home and had a mild case of the virus. "These guys never had a chance."

Sixty-eight veteran residents who tested positive for the virus have died, officials said Tuesday, and it's not known whether another person who died had COVID-19. Another 82 residents and 81 employees have tested positive.

The home's superintendent, who's been placed on administrative leave, has defended his response and accused state officials of falsely claiming they were unaware of the scope of the problem there.

The superintendent, Bennett Walsh, said earlier this month state officials knew that the home was in "crisis mode" when it came to staffing shortages and were notified early and often about the contagion at the facility.

Staffing problems that plagued the home for years contributed to the virus spreading like wildfire, said Joan Miller, a nurse at the home.

Because staffing was so tight, workers from one unit were constantly moving to other units to help out — and bringing their germs with them, she said. At one point, a unit was shut down because there wasn't enough staff to operate it, and those veterans were moved into close quarters in other parts of the building, she said.

"Veterans were on top of each other," she said. "We didn't know who was positive and who was negative and then they grouped people together and that really exacerbated it even more," said Miller, who spoke through a mask during a break from her job at the facility.

"That's when it really blew up," she said.

The situation is now "somewhat contained" because there are so few veterans living there, Miller said. There were nearly 230 residents living at the home in late March and only about 100 remained on Monday, The Boston Globe reported.

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 the infirm, it can cause more severe

illness, including pneumonia.

Beth Lapointe said her father's roommate tested positive for the virus in March — and later died — but her father was initially denied a test because he didn't show any symptoms. As the virus spread, family members were kept in the dark about what was going on inside, she said.

"Every day I would ask different people, 'What's going on in there?' And I would never get information," she said.

Republican Gov. Charlie Baker's administration has hired an outside attorney to conduct an investigation into the deaths. Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey is also investigating to determine "what went wrong at this facility and determine if legal action is warranted."

And the U.S. attorney's office in Massachusetts and Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division are looking into whether the home violated residents' rights by failing to provide them proper medical care.

The death toll at the home appears to be the largest at a long-term care facility in the United States, experts said.

"It's also symbolic of how unprepared many nursing facilities have been," said Dr. Michael Wasserman, president of the California Association of Long Term Care Medicine.

"Geriatricians and experts in long-term care medicine were sounding alarms at the beginning of March and we've essentially been ignored by everyone. Federal, state, local government and the nursing home industry," he said.

There is currently no official count of nursing home deaths across the country. The federal government has only recently required the nation's more than 15,000 nursing homes to start reporting numbers of confirmed and presumed deaths and infections, but it is not yet clear when that count will be published.

In the meantime, The Associated Press has been compiling its own tally from state health departments and media reports, finding at least 13,762 deaths from outbreaks in nursing homes and long-term care facilities across the country.

But that is also likely an undercount because only about half the states are currently reporting nursing home deaths and not all count those who died without ever being tested for COVID-19.

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Associated Press reporter Jim Mustian contributed to this report.

## Takeaways from a trend toward natural flood controls

By JOHN FLESHER AP Environmental Writer

Some communities in the U.S. heartland are taking a more natural approach to preventing the kinds of floods that have devastated the region in recent years.

As climate change brings more extreme weather, the network of levees and walls that keeps rivers such as the Mississippi and the Missouri under control has come under greater stress.

The emerging idea is to let rivers behave more naturally instead of simply trying to control them.

Takeaways from an Associated Press examination:

### OUT OF HARM'S WAY

The St. Louis suburb of Arnold, Missouri, has bought out hundreds of homes that once lined the Meramec River, which flows into the Mississippi. It's an example of steps taken by a number of cities to give rivers more room to sprawl.

The homes are cleared and the land is allowed to revert to wetlands. Or it's used for parks, which occasionally can be flooded with little harm done.

Davenport, Iowa, has resisted building a levee between city from the Mississippi River, relying instead on parkland and a 300-acre marsh.

### WIDENING THE PATH

An alternative under consideration in rural areas is moving levees back, giving rivers a wider path so overflows or breaches are less likely.

In Missouri's Atchison County, several owners are negotiating the sale of more than 500 acres of crop-

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land so a levee can be rerouted. Officials hope the project can serve as a model for other places where levees are vulnerable.

Some landowners contend the real problem is the way the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulates water flow on the river. They want damaged levees rebuilt and reinforced.

## GOVERNMENT GETTING ON BOARD

The Army Corps has been identified with man-made infrastructure such as levees and dams for more than a century, but is showing interest in natural alternatives. Congress has instructed the Corps to consider them.

"We are definitely trying to make sure we're giving these features a fair shake," said Maria Wegner, senior policy adviser with the Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C.

A new Corps plan for the Lower Meramec River, hit by three record floods since August 2015, endorses wetland restoration and property buyouts.

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Follow John Flesher on Twitter: @johnflesher.

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

## Riots in crisis-hit Lebanon reflect growing poverty, despair

By BASSAM HATOUM and BILAL HUSSEIN Associated Press

TRIPOLI, Lebanon (AP) — Hundreds of protesters in Lebanon's northern city of Tripoli clashed with troops until late Tuesday night leaving several injured on both sides in some of the most serious riots triggered by an economic crisis spiraling out of control amid a weeks-long virus lockdown.

After a brief lull when Muslims broke their fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan at sunset, clashes resumed following a tense funeral for a 27-year-old man killed during riots overnight in the country's second largest city. Fawwaz Samman was shot by soldiers during confrontations that began Monday night and died in a hospital hours later.

Late Tuesday night, dozens of protesters gathered outside the central bank headquarters in the capital Beirut throwing stones toward the building before Lebanese soldiers dispersed them. Protesters in other parts of Lebanon cut major roads including the highway linking Beirut with southern Lebanon.

The Lebanese Red Cross said its paramedics evacuated four injured persons to hospitals and treated 22 on the spot in Tripoli.

The protests intensified Monday as Lebanon began easing a weeks-long lockdown to limit the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in the country, which has reported 717 cases and 24 deaths so far.

In Tripoli on Tuesday, protesters set fire to two banks and hurled stones at soldiers who responded with tear gas and batons in renewed clashes triggered by an economic crisis, crash of the local currency and a sharp increase in prices of consumer goods.

Tripoli, a predominantly Sunni Muslim city, is in one of the most neglected and poorest regions in Lebanon, and there were concerns the confrontations would escalate to wider chaos.

The violence was a reflection of the rising poverty and despair gripping the country amid a crippling financial crisis that has worsened since October, when nationwide protests against a corrupt political class broke out. A lockdown to stem the spread of the new coronavirus has further aggravated the crisis, throwing tens of thousands more people out of work.

The national currency has lost more than 50% of its value, and banks have imposed crippling capital controls amid a liquidity crunch. But it appeared to be in a free fall over the last few days, selling as low as 4,000 Lebanese pounds to the dollar on the parallel market, down from a fixed peg of 1,500 pounds to the dollar in place for 30 years.

"What you're seeing is a result of accumulated problems. We had a revolution, people were suffering, then came corona and people were locked in their homes for a month and a half without the state securing

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food and drink or anything else for them," said protester Abdelaziz Sarkousi, 47. "Now we have reached a state where unfortunately you cannot control people anymore. People are hungry!"

Nearby, in a street lined with banks, dozens of protesters hurled Molotov cocktails, setting off blazing fires in at least two banks. Troops deployed quickly in the area to try to prevent further riots, occasionally firing rounds of tear gas to disperse the protesters.

Riots intensified in the afternoon with protesters setting two police vehicles ablaze as the army brought more reinforcements into the area to try to bring the situation under control. Soldiers chased protesters through the streets after they threw stones at troops. Soldiers also fired tear gas and rubber bullets.

"I was driving here yesterday with my wife and found protesters destroying and smashing (the banks), then they opened tear gas and bullets on us," said resident Talal Sradar.

Earlier in the day, hundreds marched in the funeral procession for Samman and gunmen fired in the air in a display of anger and mourning. The man's body was brought from his parents' home and placed briefly in front of his motorcycle repair shop before he was laid to rest in a Tripoli cemetery.

"The army command expresses its deep regret for the fall of a martyr," the military said, adding that an investigation has been opened into Samman's death.

Smaller protests also erupted elsewhere in Lebanon, including in Beirut's city center, where hundreds of demonstrators gathered Tuesday evening.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said in reaction to the clashes that the world body urges protesters to "exercise their right to protest peacefully and security personnel to protect peaceful protests and to act proportionally in maintaining law and order."

U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Dorothy C. Shea tweeted that the frustration of the Lebanese people "over the economic crisis is understandable, and the demands of protesters are justified. But incidents of violence, threats, and destruction of property are deeply concerning, and must stop."

Last week, scattered anti-government protests resumed when the parliament held two days of meetings to draft and approve some laws but the protests were mostly in cars although there were some gatherings despite the lockdown.

In a statement about the overnight riots, the Lebanese army said "troublemakers who had infiltrated the protesters to attack banks" also threw firebombs and grenades at the military, setting a military vehicle on fire. It said 54 troops were injured across the country and that the army detained 13 people.

Public anger has mounted against banks in Lebanon after they imposed capital controls on people's deposits.

The tiny Mediterranean country of about 5 million people is one the most indebted in the world. Nationwide protests broke out in October against the government because of widespread corruption and mismanagement of resources.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab's government came to office in January after his predecessor, Saad Hariri, stepped down. He was quickly engulfed in a nationwide health crisis over the novel coronavirus, a crisis that deepened the country's economic recession.

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Associated Press writers Zeina Karam and Bassem Mroue in Beirut, and Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations in New York contributed reporting.

## Pence comes under fire for going maskless at Mayo Clinic

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence chose not to wear a face mask Tuesday during a tour of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, an apparent violation of the world-renowned medical center's policy requiring them.

Video feeds show that Pence did not wear a mask when he met with a Mayo employee who has recovered from COVID-19 and is now donating plasma, even though everyone else in the room appeared to be wearing one. He was also maskless when he visited a lab where Mayo conducts coronavirus tests.

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And Pence was the only participant not to wear a mask during a roundtable discussion on Mayo's coronavirus testing and research programs. All the other participants did, including Food and Drug Administration chief Stephen Hahn, top Mayo officials, Gov. Tim Walz and U.S. Rep. Jim Hagedorn.

Mayo tweeted that it had informed the vice president of its mask policy prior to his arrival. The tweet was later removed. Mayo officials did not directly respond to a request for comment on why it was removed, or at whose request.

"Mayo shared the masking policy with the VP's office," the health care system said in its response.

Pence explained his decision by stressing that he has been frequently tested for the virus.

"As vice president of the United States I'm tested for the coronavirus on a regular basis, and everyone who is around me is tested for the coronavirus," Pence said, adding that he is following CDC guidelines, which indicate that the mask is good for preventing the spread of the virus by those who have it.

"And since I don't have the coronavirus, I thought it'd be a good opportunity for me to be here, to be able to speak to these researchers, these incredible healthcare personnel, and look them in the eye and say 'thank you.'"

Pence is not the only White House official who has shown a reluctance for face masks. When President Donald Trump announced new federal guidelines recommending that Americans wear face coverings when in public, he immediately said he had no intention of following that advice himself, saying, "I'm choosing not to do it."

Pence also went without a mask a week earlier when he visited a GE Healthcare facility that makes ventilators. Some at the event in Madison, Wisconsin, wore masks and others did not. The White House said then that Pence had tested negative for the coronavirus and suggested that under the guidelines developed by the coronavirus task force there was no need for him to wear a mask.

Freking reported from Washington.

## **Virus, stalled economy raise Democratic hopes to take Senate**

**By ALAN FRAM and MATT VOLZ Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Steve Bullock was the lame-duck governor of solidly red Montana, fresh off a failed Democratic presidential bid, when he announced he'd challenge Republican Sen. Steve Daines for his seat.

Days after declaring his candidacy last month, Montana's first coronavirus cases appeared. That shifted the spotlight onto Bullock as he leads the state's pandemic response, leaving Daines in the unusual position of a sitting senator competing for attention.

"I look forward to when I can spend more time thinking about the campaign and doing that work," Bullock said last week. Right now, he said, he's making sure "lives are being saved."

The coronavirus, the resulting economic shutdown and President Donald Trump's stumbles addressing the crises have abruptly scrambled this fall's battle for Senate control. Democrats have rising hopes of gaining the minimum three seats they'll need to capture a majority, while Republicans who once banked on a robust economy and improving Trump approval ratings are showing signs of nervousness.

Old GOP assumptions about the political climate "are totally upside-down," said GOP pollster Neil Newhouse. "Republicans have to be prepared for an all-out battle, and it's going to be a challenge."

Although much can change by Election Day, favorable signs for Democrats are evident.

Self-described democratic socialist Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., ceded the Democratic presidential nomination to former Vice President Joe Biden, a relief to moderate Democratic candidates everywhere.

Democrats outperformed Republicans in nine of 12 higher-profile Senate races in this year's first quarter. Besides Bullock outperforming Daines, Democratic challengers raised more than GOP Sens. Martha McSally of Arizona, Cory Gardner of Colorado, Susan Collins of Maine and Thom Tillis of North Carolina.

Even Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham raised less than long shot Democratic opponents.

Underscoring the direction the political arrow now points, two major GOP committees reserved \$100

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million for autumn ads in eight states. The spending by the National Republican Senatorial Committee and Senate Leadership Fund is entirely for defending GOP incumbents except in Michigan, where Democratic Sen. Gary Peters faces well-funded GOP businessman John James.

The Senate Democratic campaign committee went on offense, reserving \$31 million for spots challenging GOP incumbents McSally, Daines, Tillis and Iowa's Joni Ernst.

Polls this month indicate the potential peril for GOP candidates. Fewer than 1 in 4 surveyed said they highly trust Trump's characterizations of the outbreak, an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research survey showed. Trump's favorable rating tumbled to 43% in a mid-April Gallup poll, down from 49% two weeks earlier.

A recent Republican National Committee survey of 17 battleground states showed Trump's support eroding since the virus outbreak, a warning for GOP Senate candidates. The Republican senatorial committee sent candidates a 57-page memo by strategic communications firm O'Donnell & Associates, urging them to blame China for the pandemic and advising, "Don't defend Trump, other than the China Travel Ban — attack China."

"More and more are signs the voters are looking for change, they're looking for greater stability," said J.B. Poersch, who runs the Senate Majority PAC, an outside ally to Democratic leadership.

Illustrating one Republican's approach to Trump, Collins said his speculation about the virus is "not helpful." Trump mused the next day about injecting disinfectants as a treatment, which doctors warned could kill.

Asked about Trump, Collins noted she didn't back him in 2016. "I'll work with whomever is elected president," she said during an Instagram live event hosted by Colby College.

Happily for Republicans, their candidates have accumulated more cash than their Democratic challengers in most of the Senate's closest races. Indications the economy's revival may drag mean fundraising could be tough all year, helping those already boasting formidable bank accounts.

Both sides' advisers say stay-at-home orders shackling most Americans' movements generally disadvantage challengers, ominously for Democrats who must oust more incumbents to prevail.

Indefinitely eliminated are attention-grabbing public events and big-dollar fundraisers, forcing a reliance on virtual town halls and money-raising events.

"All you can do is hold a Zoom meeting your supporters show up at and a few bored reporters," Steven Law, who runs Republicans' Senate Leadership Fund, said of challengers.

Republicans control the Senate 53-47 but are defending 23 of the 35 contested seats.

Yet all but two GOP-held seats at stake, Colorado and Maine, are from states Trump won in 2016, mostly easily. Even so, Republican seats in Georgia and Kansas are plausible Democratic targets.

Sen. Doug Jones of solidly Republican Alabama is Democrats' most endangered incumbent yet has banked a formidable \$15 million. He narrowly won a 2017 special election against Republican Roy Moore, who faced accusations of sexually harassing teenagers decades ago when he was a prosecutor, which he denied.

In Arizona, McSally has blamed China for covering up and not containing the disease. Gun control advocate and former astronaut Mark Kelly, her Democratic challenger, has faulted Republicans for trying to repeal former President Barack Obama's health care law, arguing the virus makes its protections crucial.

In Maine, Collins already faced a difficult reelection following her 2018 support for Brett Kavanaugh, Trump's controversial Supreme Court pick. She's mixed generally positive ads thanking local employers like L.L. Bean for producing protective masks with occasional slaps at Democratic challenger Sara Gideon, the Maine House speaker.

One spot by the Democratic-allied Majority Forward denounced Collins for saying Trump initially "did a lot that was right." A Collins ad called Gideon allies "shameless" for politicizing "the worst health and economic crisis in a century."

Daines is reaching Montana voters with telephone town halls and Facebook chats. "I'm focused on ensuring the voice of Montana is heard in federal policy," he said.

While in the spotlight as governor, Bullock's been pressured by the Trump administration and Daines to ease his statewide stay-at-home order. Bullock let some curbs lapse this week, citing health care and economic realities, not politics.

<sup>—</sup>Volz reported from Helena, Montana. Associated Press reporters David Sharp in Portland, Maine, Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix and Zeke Miller in Washington contributed to this report.

## Is it safe to order take-out during the pandemic?

By The Associated Press undefined

Is it safe to order food via take-out or delivery?

Unlike some germs, there's no indication the coronavirus can spread through food, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

"This is a respiratory virus, not a foodborne virus ... you can't catch it from eating food," says Michelle Danyluk at the University of Florida, which published tips on food safety amid the pandemic.

The biggest concern remains person-to-person contact. Contactless delivery, in which the order is left outside the recipient's door, reduces that risk.

For take-out, the FDA advises restaurant workers and customers to stay at least six feet from others.

The risk from packaging is "likely very low," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. To be safe, Danyluk advises hand washing before and after touching food or packaging.

<sup>—</sup>The AP is answering your questions about the coronavirus in this series. Submit them at: [FactCheck@AP.org](mailto:FactCheck@AP.org).

## Pandemic upends lives of Latin America's domestic servants

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The coronavirus pandemic has upended the lives of many of Latin America's household maids, leaving them without work or government assistance or effectively trapping them inside the homes of their employers because of government-ordered lockdowns.

Millions of domestic servants are woven into the fabric of family life throughout the region, where even lower middle-class families often have hired help. They are paid as little as \$4 per day, under the table, with no benefits.

Servants frequently care for their employers' children as much or more than they can care for their own, as depicted in the 2018 Oscar-winning movie "Roma." Maids sometimes live in rooms on the roofs of their employers' homes or rent rooms atop tenement apartment buildings.

Now the virus has resulted in hundreds of thousands of domestic workers being let go or unable to leave their employers' homes, even on days off or to visit their own families.

One 35-year-old Mexico City maid, a single mother with two children, had worked for the same family for seven years until March, when they told her she was no longer needed.

"They only paid me the last week of work, and now I don't have money for even the basic necessities for my two little kids. Even when I was working, I was living hand to mouth," she said.

She feels trapped. She cannot go out looking for a new job because it would risk exposing herself and her family to contagion. And with no job contract, health care or formal employment history, she isn't eligible for most government aid.

"In Mexico and around the whole world, there isn't just this one pandemic, there are two: COVID-19 and inequality, and it's the inequality that has me more isolated than ever," said the maid, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because she feared being denied references.

The first person to die of COVID-19 in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro state was a 63-year-old domestic worker in one of the country's wealthiest neighborhoods, Leblon. Her employer was infected during a trip to Italy, but the maid's family members said she was not informed that her boss was in isolation awaiting test results, according to Camila Ramos de Miranda, health secretary of the worker's hometown, located two hours north of Leblon.

Domestic work has even become a topic on social media in Brazil.



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Actress Maitê Proença posted a humorous video with instructions on how to vacuum for people, like her, who are doing so for the first time. She said one side effect is learning to value those who do it on a daily basis. She recommended her followers continue paying their maids while they are in their home.

"You can do it, and she deserves it!" Proença wrote.

A nationwide survey of 1,131 people in Brazil conducted in mid-April by research company Locomotiva found 39% of employers with daily domestic workers had laid off their employees without pay. The same percentage had put their domestic workers on leave but continued to pay them, and almost a quarter still had their maids working. The poll had a margin of error of plus or minus 2.9 percentage points.

In Mexico, those who still have jobs face being stuck inside with their employers and increased workloads from families who now spend all day at home.

Some employers have prohibited maids from going out for any reason — even to visit their children on days off or to see a doctor — for fear they could pick up the virus and bring it back.

"Today I feel very bad, so I asked for permission to go the hospital," said one domestic worker who declined to use her name for fear of reprisals. "My employer said I couldn't go. She said, 'Don't you remember, we can't go out?'" But she still has people coming in to visit her. How is that a quarantine?"

Marcelina Bautista, who runs the Center for Support and Training for Domestic Workers, said the organization knows of live-in workers whose employers have forbidden them from leaving since early March.

"That implies they have to work around the clock," Bautista said, adding that some employers limit their workers from going out, but still send them to buy things. "So where is the precaution?"

Maria Isidra Llanos, the general secretary of the National Union of Domestic Workers, complained that employers are also asking domestic workers to use more aggressive cleaning agents in hopes of killing the virus. Chlorine bleach, when mixed with almost anything other than water, can release toxic vapors.

"They tell us 'Just smelling it makes my face swell up,'" Llanos said.

One maid said her employers left Mexico City when the lockdown started, and she has no idea when they will return.

"They haven't called me, and they don't answer," she wrote to the union. "The only thing I do know is that I have been left without an income. I am a single mother and I pay rent. Right now, I am making Jell-O and salsa to sell to my neighbors, but I haven't had much success."

Llanos said many union members make a grim prediction about their future: "If the virus doesn't kill them, hunger will."

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Associated Press writers David Biller in Rio de Janeiro and Debora Rey and Mayra Pertossi in Buenos Aires, Argentina, contributed to this report.

## Blood test helped detect cancer before symptoms, study finds

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Chief Medical Writer

For the first time, a blood test has been shown to help detect many types of cancer in a study of thousands of people with no history or symptoms of the disease.

The test is still experimental. Even its fans say it needs to be improved and that Tuesday's results are not ideal. Yet they show what benefits and drawbacks might come from using these gene-based tests, called liquid biopsies, in routine care -- in this case, with PET scans to confirm or rule out suspected tumors.

"We think that it's feasible," said Nickolas Papadopoulos, a Johns Hopkins University scientist who helped develop the test. Using it along with standard screening methods "doubled the cancers that were detected" in the study, he said.

But the test also missed many more cancers than it found and raised some false alarms that led to unnecessary followup procedures. It was only studied in women 65 to 75 years old and needs to be tried in men, other ages and more diverse groups.

"This is not at the place where it could be used today," said Dr. Len Lichtenfeld, deputy chief medical officer for the American Cancer Society. "It will need many more studies to demonstrate value," including whether it improves survival, he said.

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Results were published in the journal *Science* and discussed at an American Association for Cancer Research conference that was held online because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Many companies are working on liquid biopsies, which look for DNA and other things that tumors shed into blood, to try to find cancer at an early stage. This test was invented by Hopkins doctors who formed a company, Thrive Earlier Detection Corp., to develop it with Third Rock Ventures, a biotech finance firm.

Until now, these multi-cancer detection tools have been tested on blood samples from people with and without cancer to estimate their accuracy. The new study was the first "real world" test in routine medical care, following patients through surgery or other treatment to see how they fared.

Nearly 10,000 women 65 to 75 years old with no history of cancer were recruited through the Geisinger Health System in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. That's because some deadly cancers such as ovarian have no screening test now, and women in this age group have a higher risk for cancer yet are young enough to benefit from finding it early, Papadopoulos said.

They were encouraged to continue regular screenings such as mammograms and colonoscopies and were given the blood test, which was repeated if findings suggested cancer. If the second test also was suspicious, they were given a whole-body PET-CT scan, an imaging test that costs around \$1,000 and can reveal the location of any tumors.

After one year, 96 cancers had been diagnosed. Usual screenings found 24 and the blood test helped find 26 others. The remaining 46 were found because symptoms appeared or the cancer was discovered in other ways, such as an imaging test for a different reason.

Blood testing "made a genuine difference in discovering cancers in a small number of patients," took seven months on average, and led 1% of women to get a PET scan they turned out not to need, Lichtenfeld said.

The blood test helped reveal six ovarian cancers, including one in Rosemary Jemo, 71, a hairdresser and exercise instructor who lives near Hazleton in eastern Pennsylvania.

"I would have never known ... I didn't feel anything" before the football-sized tumor was found, she said. Surgeons were able to remove it and she is being monitored now.

Alberto Bardelli, a cancer specialist at the University of Turin in Italy who discussed the study at the conference, called it "extraordinary" and said it shows a way to move liquid biopsies into routine care.

The test still needs to be improved, but "it can become very valuable," he said.

The research was funded by foundations and government grants. Many study leaders have financial ties to Thrive or other companies related to the work and Johns Hopkins holds some patent rights.

Some companies may seek to market liquid biopsies under rules that allow certain tests to be sold without federal Food and Drug Administration approval.

Thrive's CEO Dave Daly said the company plans a larger, definitive study and is committed to working with the FDA, but that "all options are on the table" for developing the test.

Cost hasn't been decided, he said, but will be "in the hundreds of dollars, not the thousands."

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Marilynn Marchione can be followed on Twitter: @MMarchioneAP

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## European doctors warn rare kids' syndrome may have virus tie

By MARIA CHENG AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — Doctors in Britain, Italy, and Spain have been warned to look out for a rare inflammatory condition in children that is possibly linked to the new coronavirus.

Earlier this week, Britain's Paediatric Intensive Care Society issued an alert to doctors noting that, in the past three weeks, there has been an increase in the number of children with "a multi-system inflammatory state requiring intensive care" across the country. The group said there was "growing concern" that either a COVID-19 related syndrome was emerging in children or that a different, unidentified disease

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might be responsible.

"We already know that a very small number of children can become severely ill with COVID-19 but this is very rare," said Dr. Russell Viner, president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. He said the syndrome was likely caused by an overreaction of the body's immune system and noted similar symptoms had been seen in some adults infected with the coronavirus.

The cases were also reported to have features of toxic shock syndrome or Kawasaki disease, a rare blood vessel disorder. Only some of the children tested positive for COVID-19, so scientists are unsure if these rare symptoms are caused by the new coronavirus or by something else. Health officials estimate there have been about 10-20 such cases in Britain and NHS England said it is urgently investigating the reports.

Viner said that although doctors were considering other potential causes for the syndrome, including other viruses or new medications, "the working hypothesis is that it's COVID-related."

Spain's Association of Pediatrics recently made a similar warning, telling doctors that in recent weeks, there had been a number of school-age children suffering from "an unusual picture of abdominal pain, accompanied by gastrointestinal symptoms" that could lead within hours to shock, low blood pressure and heart problems.

"It is a priority to recognize these (symptoms) to urgently refer these patients to a hospital," the pediatric association said.

In Italy, Dr. Angelo Ravelli of Gaslini Hospital and a member of the Italian Paediatricians' Society, sent a note to 10,000 colleagues raising his concerns. He and his team reported an unusual increase in the number of patients with Kawasaki disease in regions of Italy hit hard by the pandemic, noting some children had COVID-19 or had contacts with confirmed virus cases.

"These children do not respond to traditional treatment," he said, adding that some were given a high dose of steroids. Those who developed toxic shock syndrome needed help breathing and were admitted to intensive care units, Ravelli said.

Kawasaki symptoms include a high temperature that lasts for 5 days or more, a rash and swollen glands in the neck, according to Britain's National Health Service.

Dr. James Gill, an honorary clinical lecturer at Warwick Medical School, said while the reports were concerning there was still no solid evidence that the rare syndrome was caused by COVID-19.

"Regardless of source, multi-system inflammatory diseases are exceptionally serious for children and already stretched intensive care teams, so keeping an extra eye out for new symptoms arising in the patients we see is always a good thing," he said.

Some possible cases have also been reported in France and Belgium.

Dr. Sonja Rasmussen, a University of Florida pediatrics professor, noted one similar case in the United States involving a 6-month old girl in California who was diagnosed with Kawasaki disease and then COVID-19. That report, from Stanford University, doesn't clarify whether both illnesses happened coincidentally or if COVID-19 might have somehow caused Kawasaki disease, said Rasmussen, who co-authored a recent JAMA Pediatrics article about COVID-19 and children.

"We'll need more information published in the peer-reviewed literature to better understand this association. However, Kawasaki disease is a relatively rare condition, so seeing these cases makes us concerned that Kawasaki disease could be a rare complication of COVID-19," she said. "We need to remain vigilant when we see children with findings that aren't typical for COVID-19."

To date, children have been among the least affected group by the coronavirus. Data from more than 75,000 cases in China showed they comprised 2.4% of all cases and mostly suffered only mild symptoms.

The World Health Organization said it was attempting to gather more information on any new, coronavirus-related syndrome in children from its global network of doctors but had not received any official reports about it.

Aritz Parra in Madrid, Andrea Foa in Genoa, Italy and AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner in Chicago contributed to this report.

## Russian doctors, nurses face more risks as virus cases grow

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A patient who had routine surgery at a hospital in St. Petersburg suddenly developed a fever after an operation. Doctors insisted on testing him for coronavirus and results showed that he had it.

And so did the Russian doctors, nurses and other patients who had unwittingly come in contact with him.

"It just snowballed from there," said Dr. Dmitry Ptashnikov, head of the spinal surgery ward at the Vreden Institute for Traumatology and Orthopedics and one of the many medical workers who became infected. More than half of its staff and patients — dozens in all — eventually tested positive for COVID-19.

Reports of infected medical workers are emerging almost daily as Russia copes with the virus. Last week alone, more than 200 doctors in Moscow and St. Petersburg were reported to have it, with some turning to social media to make their plight known.

It's unclear how many Russian doctors and nurses overall have been infected. The Health Ministry did not respond to requests for comment but news reports from a dozen regions in the past two weeks suggest at least 450 medical workers have had COVID-19, with 11 doctors and five nurses dying.

The number is likely to be much higher because hospital officials often hide such infections, said Semyon Galperin, head of the Doctors Defense League.

"I know of cases of hospital administrations not reporting medics getting infected because it may lead to sealing off the facility for quarantine and halting its operations," Galperin told The Associated Press.

The number of coronavirus cases in Russia has risen quickly to more than 93,000 with 867 deaths, although some in the West question the accuracy of those reports. Most of Russia's big cities have been locked down since March 30 under measures that were extended to May 11.

Of 285 virus hot spots in the country, medical facilities account for more than half, said Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova.

As cases rise, widespread shortages of personal protective equipment and questionable infection control procedures are becoming the biggest challenges in Russia. The Kremlin insists there are only isolated shortages.

"We only had regular surgical gowns, masks, gloves," Ptashnikov told the AP. "Later we received proper protective equipment, but it was, unfortunately, a bit too late."

Russia inherited a robust health care network from Soviet times — about 5,300 hospitals and 1.1 million beds, the third largest amount of both in the world, according to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development. That provided a big head start when the outbreak was still in its early stages.

By late March, about 80,000 beds were available. A little over half were occupied as of last week, officials said, and more beds are being prepared.

"To Russia's credit, so far, except in a couple of the most overloaded hospitals in Moscow, we're not hearing stories of inadequate capacity," said Judy Twigg, a professor at Virginia Commonwealth University and senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"We worry a lot about shortages of personal protective equipment, distribution of that equipment to the right places at the right time. And we worry about infection control procedures within health care facilities," she told the AP.

Since the outbreak began, Russian health officials have been dividing hospitals into those treating coronavirus patients and those that aren't. In Moscow, which has almost 52% of confirmed cases, 29 hospitals out of almost 100 have been repurposed and 24 more are being prepared. In St. Petersburg, 12 hospitals out of more than 30 are being converted.

The hospitals get protective gear, and wards with virus patients are divided into "dirty" and "clean" zones, with patients and staff tested regularly.

Yelena Sibikina, head of internal medicine in a coronavirus ward at Moscow's Vinogradov Hospital No. 64, said the staff rehearsed protocols for two weeks before infected patients were admitted. Its 280 beds -- including 36 in the intensive care unit -- filled up in days. It is adequately stocked with protective suits, face masks, goggles, gloves and shoe covers.

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But doctors say the hospitals not treating virus patients lack proper procedures or supplies, putting those workers at risk if an infected person is admitted.

"There are no protocols in place for dividing patients, there is no special protective equipment for medics. ... The chances of getting sick are very high," Dr. Alexei Erlikh, a Moscow cardiologist, told the AP.

Five wards at Moscow City Hospital No. 29, which is not yet ready for coronavirus patients, had to be shut down for quarantine, Erlikh said. The cardiac ICU he heads was sealed off last week after about a third of its staff got infected.

St. Petersburg's Pokrovsky hospital was initially repurposed for treating pneumonia cases, but staff there immediately complained about needing protective equipment. City officials responded they didn't need such gear for treating pneumonia - yet four days later, six patients were diagnosed with coronavirus. Only after a series of media appearances and videos sent to the government did workers get what they wanted. Now the hospital officially treats coronavirus patients.

"It was hard. Only us joining forces helped," Sergey Sayapin, an ICU specialist at the hospital, told the AP. He and four colleagues are being treated for COVID-19 that they caught at work.

As more Russian doctors speak out, it is difficult to keep the problem under wraps. Such complaints have grown in recent weeks, with social media filled with messages of outrage and videos of doctors pleading for help.

On Monday, about 50 workers at the Mariinsky hospital in St. Petersburg were reported to have been infected, and workers at two hospitals in the Moscow suburbs lodged complaints last week after dozens of doctors and nurses also got COVID-19.

Ptashnikov's hospital was quarantined April 9 and many medical workers and patients are still locked inside. "Cynical as this may sound, we should first and foremost take care of doctors and medical personnel, not the patients," he said, "because if they are out of commission, then no one will be able to treat anyone."

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

## Companies seek to limit legal liability for virus infections

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press Writers

As companies start planning their reopenings, business groups are pushing Congress to limit liability from potential lawsuits filed by workers and customers infected by the coronavirus.

They appear to have the White House's ear.

President Donald Trump has floated shielding businesses from lawsuits. His top economic adviser Larry Kudlow said on CNBC last week that businesses shouldn't be held liable to trial lawyers "putting on false lawsuits that will probably be thrown out of court." He said the issue could require legislation, and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Monday that the issue would be a priority when lawmakers return.

At issue is how to balance protecting businesses from lawsuits that could distract them and even lead to financial ruin, while also enabling justice for customers and workers who in a time of rapidly rising unemployment may not have the option of leaving their jobs for something safer.

"If there is no liability on the part of employers without a set of rules by which employers have to abide by, then that means you can have a wild wild west," said Kent Swig, president of Swig Equities, LLC, a privately owned real estate investment and development company.

"You have to have a balance," he added, "and you have to have rules and regulations."

Swig says he's planning measures like one-way lanes in public corridors in the lobbies and plexiglass dividers in offices at his properties. But he's seeking national guidelines as well.

Linda Kelly, general counsel at the National Association of Manufacturers, said her trade group is "not trying to protect bad actors, and we are also not saying that liability should be completely eliminated."

Rather, she said, the group believes "there should be a higher standard in place in order to impose legal liability and that employers who are doing the best that they can with the knowledge they have should

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not be subject to legal liability.”

The debate comes as lawsuits are already starting to surface. The cruise industry is facing a slew of complaints, including in California and Florida. A family of a Walmart worker who died of complications from COVID-19 sued the company, accusing managers of a Chicago-area store of not doing enough to protect its workers.

Walmart said it's taken various steps, including extra cleaning measures and requiring workers to wear masks.

“We take this issue seriously and will respond as appropriate with the court,” Walmart said in a statement to The Associated Press.

The American Federation of Government Employees, which represents health care workers at veterans' hospitals and correctional officers at federal prisons, alleged in a class action suit that the federal government had not offered enough protective equipment.

The grocery industry is similarly a ripe target for lawsuits as it confronts pressure from unions like the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, which has 900,000 members nationwide and has publicized that about 30 grocery workers have died from COVID-19.

Amazon, the nation's largest online company, faces rising unrest among workers and pressure from an organized coalition of labor-backed groups.

“If the administration is not willing to hold giant corporations like Amazon and Walmart accountable to protect workers during this pandemic, they will be putting millions of American workers and families at risk,” UFCW president Marc Perrone said in a statement.

That worries business owners like Scott Nash, CEO of MOM's Organic Market, which operates 19 stores in the mid-Atlantic region.

Nash said some degree of immunity for businesses is needed given the highly charged atmosphere. He said his business has been attacked by some customers who verbally abuse workers. And some workers are making what he calls unreasonable demands like hazard pay even though he's already provided several rounds of temporary pay bumps.

“We want immunity from masses who can't manage their anxiety and opportunist lawyers, and not to mention unions who are taking advantage of the situation,” Nash said. “We are under a lot of stress.”

There's no question Congress is empowered to regulate interstate commerce and has the authority to shield certain classes of businesses and people from liability — something it has done before, said Sachin Pandya, a University of Connecticut law professor with expertise in workplace law.

In fact, lawmakers in the recently enacted \$2 trillion coronavirus rescue bill prevented, with some exceptions, volunteer health care workers from being held liable for harm caused by acts or omissions during the pandemic response.

But, Pandya added, “The hard part would be identifying what exactly would be the type of business activity which would qualify for this kind of immunity. Is it everything? Is it customer-facing services? They have to sort of figure out the scope of the immunity.”

Though it's likely difficult for anyone to link an illness to a particular company's business activities, there are nonetheless fairness questions if potential plaintiffs are denied compensation from a place that can be shown to be responsible for their injury, Pandya said.

And when it comes to companies, Pandya noted, “It is also important to give businesses a reason to invest the time and effort to put into place all reasonable precautions to reduce the risk of contagion.”

Anthony Sebok, a professor at Cardozo School of Law, said if Congress did shield companies from lawsuits, “they have to come up with, I think, an adequate substitute for the tort rights they are replacing.”

That could theoretically include a government fund that people could seek compensation from, similar to one created for victims of the Sept. 11 attacks.

“If Kudlow wants to give blanket immunity to a restaurant chain,” Sebok added, “I think the right way to do it would be to come up with an equivalent like we've done” in the past.

But J.H. (Rip) Verkerke, a University of Virginia law professor, sees no evidence of such a fund thus far.

"This looks to me more like, 'Let's get rid of liability,'" Verkerke said. And eliminating liability, he warned, could be "constitutionally suspect."

Tucker reported from Washington, D.C.

## How some companies survive, even thrive, in viral crisis

By PAUL WISEMAN and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — When the coronavirus struck the United States hard last month, 22-year-old entrepreneur David Zamarin knew his company needed a Plan B — fast. As the economy essentially shut down, demand for his stain-resistant coatings was sure to drop.

So Zamarin decided to retool his company, DetraPel, in Framingham, Massachusetts, to start making disinfectants to help fight the virus's spread. Within weeks, "we completely changed our whole system."

Sales of the DetraPel ecoCleaner & Disinfectant have been strong, he said, and Zamarin expects to produce the cleaner even after the health crisis has passed.

"I don't want this to be a one-time thing," he said. "I don't want to capitalize on this to make short-term money."

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an epic catastrophe for American business. Economic life is all but frozen. Stores are idle. Sales have sunk as people isolate at home, slash spending on autos and appliances and halt shopping trips, restaurant meals and movie outings.

Many iconic retailers are reeling. Gap warns it may run out of cash. Neiman Marcus and J.C. Penney could be headed for bankruptcy protection.

Yet by dint of circumstance, resourcefulness or just plain luck, some companies have positioned themselves to withstand, even thrive, in the crisis. The most fortunate work in sectors mostly shielded from damage, like pharmacies. Or they can capitalize on the quirks of the times — a spike in demand for groceries, pizza delivery, movie streaming, online packages and cleaning products.

Some companies were prudent enough to have built financial cushions or credit lines to access cash. And then there are nimble ones like DetraPel that somehow find opportunity in the chaos.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime — we hope — event," said Andrew Corbett of Babson College's Butler Institute for Free Enterprise through Entrepreneurship. "The people who are used to dealing with ambiguity and trying new things — they're going to embrace this and run with it."

Corbett pointed to Bauer, a sports equipment maker that has pivoted from making visors for hockey helmets to producing medical visors for health care workers fighting the outbreak. That kind of drastic reversal is beyond the reach of most companies.

"It's hard to change your business model," said Gregg Lemos-Stein, who studies corporate analytics at S&P Global Ratings. "It's like trying to change your tires while the car is going 100 miles an hour."

For most companies, the key to survival is maintaining enough cash to stay afloat until the economy begins to grind back to health. Some businesses, Lemos-Stein said, have drained their credit lines to try to withstand a period of plunging revenue.

"Cash is king," Robert Kaplan of Harvard Business School said in a video seminar on the coronavirus' threat to companies. "Preserve what you have and grab more cash wherever you can to help you get through and survive the crisis."

United Airlines is trying to raise \$1 billion by issuing stock. Darden Restaurants, owner of Olive Garden and other chain restaurants, is seeking \$400 million in a stock offering.

The government has intervened to provide small businesses with loans they don't have to repay if they use most of the money to keep workers on the payroll. The Federal Reserve poured money into financial markets to ensure that companies can maintain access to vital short-term credit for everyday operations.

But government money goes only so far for a company whose business has collapsed.

"It doesn't put people back on planes or back in the malls," S&P's Lemos-Stein said.

"I haven't talked to a CEO yet who thinks the government is going to be their savior," said Rich Lesser,

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CEO of the Boston Consulting Group.

Even while the health crisis has crushed purchases for most goods and services, it's ignited consumers' appetite for other offerings. Netflix is capitalizing on a burst of demand for streaming entertainment. Amazon's stock is up on a surge in online shopping. Clorox is benefiting from panic buying for cleaning supplies. Zoom and other video conference services have filled a rising need of employees working from home.

The data firm Womply found that grocery stores enjoyed a 40% increase in revenue earlier this month from a year ago. Also seeing surges: Gun shops (120%) and liquor stores (60%).

Still, millions of businesses have at least temporarily closed, Womply found: 71% of shoe stores, 77% of thrift shops and 68% of antique dealers. Forty-two percent of restaurants have shuttered. Those that have a brisk takeout or delivery service have been likelier to remain open: Only 21% of pizza shops and 17% of chicken wings purveyors have stopped doing business.

"Businesses are reorganizing around curbside (pickup) and takeout," said Brad Plothow. Womply's marketing chief.

With widespread shutdowns of malls and stores, the pandemic is putting many clothing retailers further in peril, while increasing the dominance of big box stores that have remained open because they sell essentials like food and household goods. Walmart, Amazon and others are on a hiring spree and doling out bonuses or pay increases.

But even they face pressures. They're spending more on labor and online operations. Some are seeing profits squeezed because shoppers are turning to low-margin groceries and avoiding higher-margin items like clothing. Amazon has struggled to handle an accelerating demand for essentials, disappointing many of its Prime members, who pay \$129 a year and are accustomed to receiving deliveries within two days.

The crisis risks intensifying what many regard as a troubling trend: Commerce increasingly concentrated among big companies as smaller firms fail, thereby reducing competition.

The Open Markets Institute, which campaigns against monopolies, has called for a ban on acquisitions by companies with annual revenue above \$100 million or by large investment firms. Lynn Barry, the institute's executive director, notes that many big companies swallowed up smaller rivals in the financial crisis and Great Recession, sometimes in deals brokered by the government.

He's worried about a repeat:

"You've got Apple and Google and Amazon with these massive piles of cash, the Saudis and others with these massive piles of cash, and everyone else is half-bankrupt and paralyzed."

D'Innocenzio reported from New York. AP Business Writer Joyce M. Rosenberg in New York contributed to this report.

## Comics keep laughs coming even with clubs closed by COVID-19

By JOHN ROGERS Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Whenever she's down, Tiffany Haddish says she finds a good joke can bring her right back up.

That's why the popular star of TV, film and stand-up decided to crack wise about ways to survive in the year of coronavirus in a nearly empty room recently while dressed in a bright orange pantsuit, protective gloves and armed with a can of Lysol.

"You told me you loved me, then bring me some groceries. I'm down to my last roll of T.P.," she sang as she opened her act with a raucous tune she said she'd written just the day before to sum up what weeks of self-isolation has been like.

Haddish was performing at the venerable Los Angeles club the Laugh Factory, where she got her start as part of a kids' comedy camp more than 20 years ago. No one was in the audience on that weekday afternoon, except four people including a guy videoing the show.

But people perched in front of laptops all around the world could tune in and many provided virtual LOLs



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while the cameraman chuckled in the background. Fellow comic Craig Robinson, dressed in protective gloves and a mask, accompanied her on piano and sometimes played straight man.

With comedy clubs from California to New York dark due to social-distancing mandates, comedians are finding ways to keep bringing the laughs to the public.

In New York, members of the Magnet Theater's popular improv groups gather each night through the magic of Zoom to put on shows from their homes while audiences tune in through the platform Twitch.

The theater sells virtual tickets to its several shows a week, as do some other venues scattered around the country.

But people who can't afford a ticket to a Magnet show don't have to pay. They can throw a couple bucks into the virtual "busker's hat" afterward. A recent performance drew 250 viewers, far more than the 70 who could have squeezed into the small theater.

"So we blew right past capacity," laughed improviser and improv teacher Elana Fishbein.

The troupes can't see the audience. That's not so much a problem for a make-it-up-as-you-go-along group that's worked together for some time, Fishbein says. But it's taken some stand-ups a period of adjustment.

"It is tough to perform in your living room in front of nobody," acknowledges comic Will C, speaking by phone from the living room of his Kansas City, Missouri, home. "All I get is my wife walking by me, rolling her eyes and shaking her head."

Veteran stand-up comic Bob Zany said he still sometimes pauses during the moments where the laughs — or sometimes the hoots of derision — are supposed to be.

It also reminds him of starting out on the stand-up circuit 40 years ago.

"In the old days I'd do spots like at the Improv at 1:40 in the morning to two people. And they were passed out drunk," he recalls with a laugh. "So what's the difference?"

As he waits to resume things, Zany drove from his home in Las Vegas to Los Angeles one recent day to do an hour at the Laugh Factory.

As to what's the attraction — the comics are being paid little to nothing — most echo the words of Haddish.

"I find whenever I'm feeling down, a good laugh really changes everything and makes me feel better. A lot of people are down and depressed right now and maybe I can inspire a little laughter in them," she said after spending an hour performing in front of a microphone, which she had generously doused in Lysol.

Laugh Factory owner Jamie Masada started streaming live comedy shows Monday through Friday afternoons shortly after California ordered all non-essential businesses closed. It was partly a response, he said, to club regulars who complained they'd be left with nothing to do sitting at home, and to comics who suddenly saw most of their income vanish.

He limits the gathering to no more than five, including the people on stage and a person behind the camera. He's paying performers \$500 an appearance and says some who don't need the money are donating to charity.

"We are taking a big financial hit," he said. "I'm even thinking of going and getting a small-business loan."

The comics are taking a big hit too.

Zany has gigs at casinos and clubs across the country booked through the summer but as to whether he'll get to do them, he says, "Your guess is as good as mine."

Will C has been traveling the country the past six years with the troupe Veterans of Comedy when not visiting Los Angeles for frequent guest roles in sitcoms and the occasional movie. All that's on hold now as he does his shows from his living room in Missouri.

Ironically, he had just partnered with the non-profit Mission Warriors to put on a weekly "Couch Comedy Club" show on its Facebook page that was aimed at both providing entertainment to current and ex-military as well as helping them overcome PTSD and other trauma. Now it's been opened to everybody and he has launched a nightly talk show called "Broken Zzzzs" that pulls in hundreds of viewers.

Neither brings in any money. But Will C is ok with that. Other people are hurting too, he says, and if he can give them a few minutes of laughter every night, it's worth it.

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"If you love the art of comedy you just want to do it," he says, "Not because you want to get paid."

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, April 29, the 120th day of 2020. There are 246 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 29, 1945, during World War II, American soldiers liberated the Dachau (DAH'-khow) concentration camp. Adolf Hitler married Eva Braun inside his "Führerbunker" and designated Adm. Karl Doenitz (DUHR'-nihtz) president.

On this date:

In 1798, Joseph Haydn's oratorio "The Creation" was rehearsed in Vienna, Austria, before an invited audience.

In 1916, the Easter Rising in Dublin collapsed as Irish nationalists surrendered to British authorities.

In 1946, 28 former Japanese officials went on trial in Tokyo as war criminals; seven ended up being sentenced to death.

In 1957, the SM-1, the first military nuclear power plant, was dedicated at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

In 1967, Aretha Franklin's cover of Otis Redding's "Respect" was released as a single by Atlantic Records.

In 1961, "ABC's Wide World of Sports" premiered, with Jim McKay as host.

In 1991, a cyclone began striking the South Asian country of Bangladesh; it ended up killing more than 138,000 people, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

In 1992, a jury in Simi Valley, California, acquitted four Los Angeles police officers of almost all state charges in the videotaped beating of motorist Rodney King; the verdicts were followed by rioting in Los Angeles resulting in 55 deaths.

In 1997, Staff Sgt. Delmar Simpson, a drill instructor at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, was convicted of raping six female trainees (he was sentenced to 25 years in prison and dishonorably discharged). A worldwide treaty to ban chemical weapons went into effect.

In 2000, Tens of thousands of angry Cuban-Americans marched peacefully through Miami's Little Havana, protesting the raid in which armed federal agents yanked 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez from the home of relatives.

In 2008, Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama denounced his former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, for what he termed "divisive and destructive" remarks on race.

In 2018, T-Mobile and Sprint reached a \$26.5 billion merger agreement that would reduce the U.S. wireless industry to three major players. (The deal would be approved by federal regulators in July 2019).

Ten years ago: Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal (JIN'-dul) declared a state of emergency in the face of the worsening oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The U.S. Navy officially ended a ban on women serving on submarines, saying the first women would be reporting for duty by 2012. A knife-wielding man slashed 29 children and three teachers at a school in eastern China (the assailant was executed a month later). The NCAA's Board of Directors approved a 68-team format for the men's basketball tournament beginning the next season.

Five years ago: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (shin-zoh ah-bay) offered condolences for Americans killed in World War II in the first address by a Japanese leader to a joint meeting of Congress, but stopped short of apologizing for wartime atrocities. In what was believed to be the first major league game played without fans in attendance, Chris Davis hit a three-run homer in a six-run first inning and the Baltimore Orioles beat the Chicago White Sox 8-2. (The gates at Camden Yards were locked because of concern for fan safety following recent rioting in Baltimore.) Calvin Peete, 71, who became the most successful black player on the PGA Tour before the arrival of Tiger Woods, died in Atlanta.

One year ago: President Donald Trump, his family and the Trump Organization filed a lawsuit against Deutsche Bank and Capital One in an attempt to block congressional subpoenas seeking their banking

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and financial records. At his first public rally as a 2020 presidential candidate, Joe Biden accused President Donald Trump of abusing the powers of his office and ignoring everyone but his political base. John Singleton, director of the Oscar-nominated "Boyz N the Hood," died in Los Angeles at the age of 51; he had suffered a major stroke eleven days prior.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Keith Baxter is 87. Conductor Zubin Mehta is 84. Disgraced financier Bernard Madoff is 82. Pop singer Bob Miranda (The Happenings) is 78. Country singer Duane Allen (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 77. Singer Tommy James is 73. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., is 70. Movie director Phillip Noyce is 70. Comedian Jerry Seinfeld is 66. Actor Leslie Jordan is 65. Actress Kate Mulgrew is 65. Actor Daniel Day-Lewis is 63. Actress Michelle Pfeiffer is 62. Actress Eve Plumb is 62. Rock musician Phil King is 60. Country singer Stephanie Bentley is 57. Actor Vincent Ventresca is 54. Singer Carnie Wilson (Wilson Phillips) is 52. Actor Paul Adelstein is 51. Actress Uma Thurman is 50. International Tennis Hall of Famer Andre Agassi is 50. Rapper Master P is 50. Actor Darby Stanchfield is 49. Country singer James Bonamy is 48. Gospel/rhythm-and-blues singer Erica Campbell (Mary Mary) is 48. Rock musician Mike Hogan (The Cranberries) is 47. Actor Tyler Labine is 42. Actress Megan Boone is 37. Actress-model Taylor Cole is 36. Actor Zane Carney is 35. Pop singer Amy Heidemann (Karmin) is 34. NHL center Jonathan Toews is 32. Pop singer Foxes is 31. Actress Grace Kaufman is 18.

Thought for Today: "In any great organization it is far, far safer to be wrong with the majority than to be right alone." — John Kenneth Galbraith (1908-2006).

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