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President Trump Announces He Will Join Us at Mt. Rushmore for Fireworks

PIERRE, S.D. - Today, President Donald J. Trump announced he plans to join Governor Kristi Noem on July 3rd for the fireworks at Mount Rushmore in honor of Independence Day.

“This year, after more than a year of diligent efforts, we’re finally bringing fireworks back to Mount Rushmore,” said Governor Noem. “There’s truly no better place to celebrate America’s birthday. We’re excited that President Trump is coming to enjoy the show with us. He and the Department of Interior have been great partners in bringing this celebration back to our great state and the entire nation.”

The Obama-administration National Park Service shut down the fireworks celebration following the 2009 Independence Day holiday. On December 13, 2018, then Governor-elect Noem first raised the idea of the fireworks celebration with President Trump at a meeting in the Cabinet Room. On May 7, 2019, Governor Noem, in partnership with the Department of Interior, announced an agreement to bring the fireworks back; President Trump tweeted his excitement about the fireworks that same day. The National Parks Service announced the official return of the fireworks in a news release on April 28th. President Trump announced his planned visit today on The Dan Bongino Show.

For more information on the Mount Rushmore fireworks display, visit TravelSouthDakota.com.

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

The numbers, overall, continue downward.

We're at 1,109,270 cases in the US. The increase, both in raw number and percentage, is slightly up today. NY leads with 313,575 cases, a nice decline in both number and percentage increase for the second day consecutively. NJ, with 121,190 cases, is holding about steady in its rate of growth. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: MA – 64,311, IL – 56,055, CA – 52,120, PA – 49,764, MI – 42,348, FL – 34,720, TX – 30,293, and CT – 28,764. These ten states still account for 72% of US cases. 3 more states have over 20,000 cases, 7 more have over 10,000, 10 more over 5000, 15 more + DC, PR, and GU over 1000, 5 more over 100, and VI + MP under 100.

Here's the latest on movement in new case reports. Those with substantial numbers of cases which are not showing much change include NY, TX, CA, GA, PA, WA, MI, and TN. States where new case reports are increasing include MA, VA, IL, CO, MD, NC, IN, and AZ. States where new case reports are decreasing include NJ, OH, FL, AR, CT, SD, LA, and ID. We'll watch the states showing increases and hope those with decreases continue the decline.

There have been 64,870 deaths in the US. The growth in percentage and raw number showed declines from the trend established before the adjustment. NY has 23,616, NJ has 7228, MI has 3788, MA has 3562, PA has 2489, IL has 2361, CT has 2257, CA has 2055, and LA has 1862. There are 4 more states over 1000 deaths, 5 more over 500, 18 more + DC over 100, and 14 + PR, GU, VI, and MP under 100.

We've been hearing about the symptoms to watch out for: respiratory stuff, fever, maybe even intestinal upset. I just read a troubling article describing all the ways elderly patients might not present this way and so might not be diagnosed in time to help them and to prevent spread. Cases were described where the elderly person became dizzy and fell, so was treated as a trauma instead of Covid-19, where the person became confused, lethargic, and incontinent and was not tested until the spouse insisted, where someone presented with symptoms of a stroke, where people have nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, but no respiratory symptoms at all. A paper is due for publication from Switzerland that lists typical and atypical symptoms of Covid-19 in older patients as follows: changes in usual status, delirium, falls, fatigue, lethargy, low blood pressure, painful swallowing, fainting, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, loss of smell and taste. Missing these can mean lack of treatment and death for the senior; it can also mean unknowing exposure for caregivers and family contacts who then carry the infection out into the world with them.

I've read an article in Nature, just published yesterday, that describes a fascinating approach to identifying drugs which might have activity against SARS-CoV-2. A team of researchers at UCSF decided to map all of the proteins of the virus against human cell proteins they might interact with, then review all the drugs currently approved by the FDA for use in humans, looking for those drugs which interact with those same human proteins. They identified 69 such drugs. Then they started shipping boxes of these compounds to Institut Pasteur in Paris and Mount Sinai in New York for testing to see whether they do have an effect on the virus. So far, 47 of these have been tested.

Because we don't yet know which human cells would be the best to use for this sort of testing, they used green monkey cells known to be susceptible to the virus and also a good model for drug action in human cells. The cells were in tissue culture, meaning they were growing in containers in labs. They infected the cells, then added the drug to half the cells and not to the other half, the controls. They measured the amount of virus in the samples and how many cells remained alive; where the viral count dropped and more cells remained alive, this would suggest the drug might disrupt viral replication without being too toxic to the cells.

Now it's important to remember monkey cells in a lab dish are not human beings with an infection, but this is a very reasonable way to start things off. Some of the drugs do appear to have antiviral activity. (And a few, interestingly, seem to promote viral replication.) These are clearly preliminary findings, but they provide new avenues for exploration. That was the goal.

A few examples and how they might work were mentioned in an article published for the more general public, including the following:

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(1) Disrupting viral protein production: Ternatin-4 and zotafin, both currently used to treat multiple myeloma, seem to inhibit enzymes needed for protein production. A drug called plitidepsin, similar to ternatin-4, is in clinical trial now. These researchers are working with the manufacturer of zotafin to get that into trials as soon as possible.

(2) Sigma receptor interference: Sigma receptors are found in human cells and are used by some viruses to replicate inside the cell. Apparently, these drugs interfere with the virus's ability to do so, although the mechanisms of action for this are not entirely clear at present. There are two antipsychotic drugs, haloperidol and melperone; two antihistamines, clemastine and cloperastine; and two other drugs, compound PB28 and progesterone, which appear to have this sort of activity. There's another common drug, dextromethorphan, commonly found in over-the-counter cough remedies, which also interacts with the virus at sigma receptors, but its action appears to help the virus replicate, not exactly what we're looking for. It's probably too soon to warn you against taking dextromethorphan when you may have Covid-19, but that could happen. Someone needs to get on with testing that. We know that that hydroxychloroquine also binds to sigma receptors, but it doesn't do so very efficiently, further evidence it's probably not going to prove highly useful in treating Covid-19, especially given we know it also binds to receptors in the heart, where it does real damage. We'll soon have our answers on that one, what with all the clinical trials now underway for this drug.

The findings here are strengthened by the additional finding that the proteins this virus uses to infect and replicate in cells are the same ones seen in use in SARS-1 and MERS infections. That makes it more likely these folks are on the right track and, importantly, makes it more likely any drugs we find that are effective against Covid-19 will also have some effect against relatives of these viruses that may emerge in the future.

These authors are continuing to facilitate laboratory tests of the remaining compounds they've identified with potential activity against this virus, and they are encouraging clinical trials. Since these are all FDA-approved for human use, those can get underway sooner than would be possible with an entirely new or still-investigational drug.

I don't think anyone believes we're going to find this one drug that's the magic bullet—the one that miraculously cures everyone with symptoms of Covid-19; but the more tools we place in doctors' hands, the more people will survive this infection. And until we have a vaccine, effective treatment options are critical.

Last thing tonight: I've seen some numbers on an issue that keeps coming up in public discussion of Covid-19, and that is the assertion that this thing is no worse than influenza—after all, the CDC says, on average, 36,000 deaths occur from influenza each year, this year around 60,000. We're right now around 65,000 Covid-19 deaths, which is not all that much higher.

So how are influenza deaths counted? Turns out the numbers you see for flu aren't actually the result of counting at all. What happens is that the National Center for Health Statistics collects the cause of death from every death certificate issued in the US in a given year and reports those causes and counts for each. The number for influenza in those totals is not, however, what gets reported to the public. The CDC "considers this figure to be a very substantial undercounting of the true number of deaths from influenza. Therefore, the CDC uses indirect modeling methods to estimate the number of deaths associated with influenza." This means they take the number of actual counted deaths and apply some mathematical wizardry to produce an estimate of the number of deaths they think are associated with flu. So the flu death numbers you see are not actual counted deaths from flu; they are mathematically modeled estimates computed from the actual counted deaths—a number which has been revised upward, by a lot.

There's an additional rub: If you read the fine print, you discover what's actually being reported is P&I deaths, that is, pneumonia and influenza. Those two groups are compiled and reported as a single sum, and it this sum which is used in the computation of influenza death estimates. The reasoning seems to be that, because many of the people with severe influenza actually have pneumonia which contributes to their deaths, pneumonia deaths are considered flu-associated deaths, even when influenza does not appear on the death certificate as an underlying cause—and even though many cases of pneumonia are

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completely unrelated to a case of influenza.

So how much difference does it make to include pneumonia deaths right in there with influenza deaths? Quite a lot, actually: In 2003, CDC's model calculated an average annual 36,155 deaths from influenza-associated underlying respiratory and circulatory causes. 8097 of these were described as flu or flu-associated underlying pneumonia deaths. It was difficult to find annual numbers that are broken out separately as pneumonia and influenza, but weekly totals are fairly easy to find. For Week 17 (the final week of the 2019-2020 flu season, the breakdown is 28 for influenza and 2214 for pneumonia. If these are all getting used to compute flu deaths, seems to me that's going to overshoot the mark by a fair margin.

Now, we know we're not counting all Covid-19 deaths either. Some states aren't even reporting as Covid-19 deaths all of those for which Covid-19 does appear on the death certificate, only those which also have a confirmed positive test. And then there are the deaths that occur at home in people who were never diagnosed or seen for Covid-19; these are not being reported as Covid-19 deaths. The difference is that, when we comparing to estimated flu and pneumonia deaths, the number we're using to compare is this actual counted number of deaths based on either death certificate attribution or, in some jurisdictions, only on confirmed positive tests, no matter what the death certificate says.

So we're doing a real apples-to-oranges comparison here. We're taking the number of deaths from two causes combined (flu and pneumonia) and revised it substantially upward to account for the degree of underreporting CDC thinks is happening; and then we're comparing it with the actual reported cases from one cause (Covid-19), a number which we know for sure is underreported. And still, we're getting something like 60,000 P&I deaths for a 7-month flu season compared with almost 65,000 Covid-19 deaths in not quite 2 1/2 months. Under these circumstances, you have to be looking with your eyes closed to conclude the comparison is valid or that this infection is no worse than the flu.

Now, I want to be clear that I don't think there's anything particularly shady about the way the CDC reports flu deaths; there is good reason to estimate high rather than missing some deaths so that we place adequate emphasis on the importance of influenza and, particularly, influenza prevention. But when you're going to compare death rates for two diseases, you have to be sure (a) you're counting deaths only from the disease, not deaths you cannot certainly attribute to that disease and (b) you're comparing actual counted deaths to actual counted deaths, not actual counted deaths to mathematically-adjusted estimates.

We're ending a week tomorrow and started a month today. Here's to endings and beginnings, something we actually have, if you think about it, every single day. Let's make tomorrow a better day than yesterday for someone. Each of us does this, there's going to be a whole lot of folks having a better day—and one of them will be you.

We'll talk tomorrow. Stay well.

COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Active Cases	818
Currently Hospitalized	69
Recovered	1686
Total Positive Cases*	2525
Total Negative Cases*	14838
Ever Hospitalized**	179
Deaths***	21

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	161	0
20-29 years	476	0
30-39 years	585	0
40-49 years	494	1
50-59 years	444	4
60-69 years	233	4
70-79 years	59	3
80+ years	73	9



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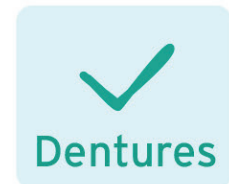
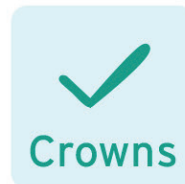
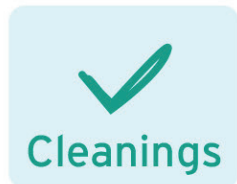
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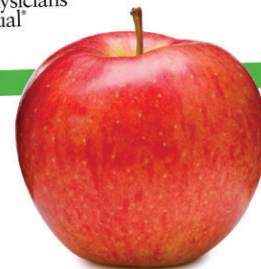
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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Apr. 18	Apr. 19	Apr. 20	Apr. 21	Apr. 22	Apr. 23	Apr. 24	Apr. 25	Apr. 26	Apr. 27
Minnesota	2,213	2,356	2,470	2,567	2,721	2,942	3,185	3,446	3,602	3,816
Nebraska	1,287	1,474	1,648	1,722	1813	2,124	2,421	2,732	3,028	3,358
Montana	426	433	433	437	439	442	444	445	448	449
Colorado	9,433	9,730	10,106	10,447	10,878	11,262	12,256	12,968	13,441	13,879
Wyoming	309	313	317	322	326	332	349	362	370	389
North Dakota	528	585	627	644	679	709	748	803	867	942
South Dakota	1542	1635	1685	1755	1858	1,956	2,040	2,147	2,212	2,245
United States	735,287	758,720	786,638	824,438	842,624	867,459	905,364	938,154	965,435	988,189
US Deaths	39,090	40,666	42,295	45,039	46,785	49,804	51,956	53,755	54,856	56,255
Minnesota	+142	+143	+114	+97	+154	+221	+243	+261	+156	+214
Nebraska	+149	+187	+174	+74	+91	+311	+297	+311	+296	+330
Montana	+4	+7	0	+4	+2	+3	+2	+1	+3	+1
Colorado	+379	+297	+376	+341	+431	+384	+994	+712	+473	+438
Wyoming	+7	+4	+4	+5	+4	+6	+7	+13	+8	+19
North Dakota	+89	+57	+42	+17	+35	+30	+39	+55	+64	+75
South Dakota	+131	+93	+50	+70	+103	+98	+84	+107	+65	+33
United States	+28,508	+23,433	+27,918	+37,800	+18,186	+24,835	+37,905	+32,790	+27,281	+22,754
US Deaths	+2,011	+1,576	+1,629	+2,744	+1,746	+3,019	+2,152	+1,799	+1,101	+1,399
	Apr. 28	Apr. 29	Apr. 30	May 1						
Minnesota	4,181	4,644	5,136	5,730						
Nebraska	3,374	3,784	4,281	4,838						
Montana	451	451	453	453						
Colorado	14,316	14,758	15,284	15,768						
Wyoming	396	404	415	420						
North Dakota	991	1,033	1,067	1,107						
South Dakota	2,313	2,373	2,449	2,525						
United States	1,012,583	1,040,488	1,070,032	1,104,161						
US Deaths	58,355	60,999	63,019	65,068						
Minnesota	+365	+463	+492	+594						
Nebraska	+16	+410	+497	+557						
Montana	+2	0	+2	0						
Colorado	+437	+442	+526	+484						
Wyoming	+7	+8	+11	+5						
North Dakota	+49	+42	+34	+40						
South Dakota	+68	+60	+76	+76						
United States	+24,394	+27,905	+29,544	+34,129						
US Deaths	+2,100	+2,644	+2,020	+2,049						

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22 Cases at DemKota Facility

8 more die in the Dakotas

May 1st COVID-19 UPDATE

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from Dept. of Health Lab records

Four more deaths in Minnehaha County have been recorded, with a total of 16 in that county. North Dakota also had four more deaths which brings the total deaths in the Dakotas to 44.

There are a number of counties reporting multiple positive cases which include 51 in Minnehaha, 6 in Lincoln, 4 in Roberts, 3 in Brown, 3 in Day, 3 in Union and 2 in Turner, plus other counties with one each including Dewey County getting its first positive case.

The SD DOH reported that there are 22 positive cases affiliated with the DemKota facility in Brown County. South Dakota:

Positive: +76 (2525 total) (Same amount as yesterday)

Negative: +259 (14,838 total)

Hospitalized: +6 (179 total) - 69 currently hospitalized (7 less than yesterday)

Deaths: +4 (21 total) (4 more from Minnehaha)

Recovered: +114 (1686 total) (up 37 from yesterday)

Active Cases: 818 (40 less than yesterday)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests (Lost Dewey County): Bennett +1 (12), Brule +3 (58), Butte +3 (54), Campbell 8, Custer +1 (42), Edmunds +2 (24), Grant +1 (43), Gregory +1 (34), Haakon 15, Hanson 29, Harding 1, Jackson 9, Jones +1 (5), Kingsbury +2 (69), Mellette 11, Perkins 5, Potter 32, Tripp +2 (56), Ziebach -1 (3), unassigned -145 (615).

Brookings: +2 recovered (12 of 13 recovered)

Brown: +3 positive, +1 recovered (23 of 42 recovered)

Day: +3 positive (4 total)

Dewey: First Positive Case

Hughes: +1 positive (9 total)

Hutchinson: +1 recovered (3 of 3 recovered)

Jerauld: +1 recovered (5 of 6 recovered)

Lincoln: +6 positive, +3 recovered (97 of 153 recovered)

Minnehaha: +51 positive, +99 recovered (1385 of 2089 recovered)

Pennington: +1 positive (13 total)

Roberts: +4 positive (8 total)

Stanley: +1 positive, +1 recovered (1 of 8 recovered)

Todd: +1 positive (2 total)

Turner: +2 recovered (11 of 17 recovered)

Union: +3 positive, +3 recovered (11 of 21 recovered)

Yankton: +1 positive (27 total)

Fully recovered from positive cases (Lost Hughes, Roberts, Todd): Aurora, Bon Homme, Clay, Clark, Corson, Davison, Deuel, Fall River, Faulk, Hamlin, Hutchinson, Hyde, Lawrence, Marshall, McPherson, Meade, Miner, Oglala Lakota, Sanborn, Spink, Sully, Walworth.

The N.D. DoH & private labs report 2,065 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 40 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 1,107. NDDoH reports 4 new deaths (23 total).

State & private labs have reported 29,525 total tests & 28,418 negatives.

482 ND patients are recovered.

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	1	1	41
Beadle	21	19	189
Bennett	0	0	12
Bon Homme	4	4	107
Brookings	13	12	358
Brown	42	23	613
Brule	0	0	58
Buffalo	1	0	14
Butte	0	0	54
Campbell	0	0	8
Charles Mix	5	4	88
Clark	1	1	56
Clay	6	6	132
Codington	14	13	487
Corson	1	1	19
Custer	0	0	42
Davison	5	5	302
Day	4	0	58
Deuel	1	1	80
Dewey	1	0	33
Douglas	1	0	26
Edmunds	0	0	24
Fall River	1	1	53
Faulk	1	1	19
Grant	0	0	43
Gregory	0	0	34
Haakon	0	0	15
Hamlin	2	2	66
Hand	1	0	22
Hanson	0	0	29
Harding	0	0	1
Hughes	9	7	242
Hutchinson	3	3	96

Hyde	1	1	15
Jackson	0	0	9
Jerauld	6	5	37
Jones	0	0	5
Kingsbury	0	0	69
Lake	4	3	132
Lawrence	9	9	166
Lincoln	153	97	1456
Lyman	3	2	34
Marshall	1	1	42
McCook	4	3	91
McPherson	1	1	16
Meade	1	1	143
Mellette	0	0	11
Miner	1	1	22
Minnehaha	2089	1385	6459
Moody	5	1	93
Oglala Lakota	1	1	44
Pennington	13	10	725
Perkins	0	0	5
Potter	0	0	32
Roberts	8	4	105
Sanborn	3	3	38
Spink	3	3	96
Stanley	8	1	38
Sully	1	1	13
Todd	2	1	62
Tripp	0	0	56
Turner	17	11	148
Union	21	11	166
Walworth	5	5	48
Yankton	27	21	423
Ziebach	0	0	3
Unassigned****	0	0	615

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	1200	6
Male	1325	15

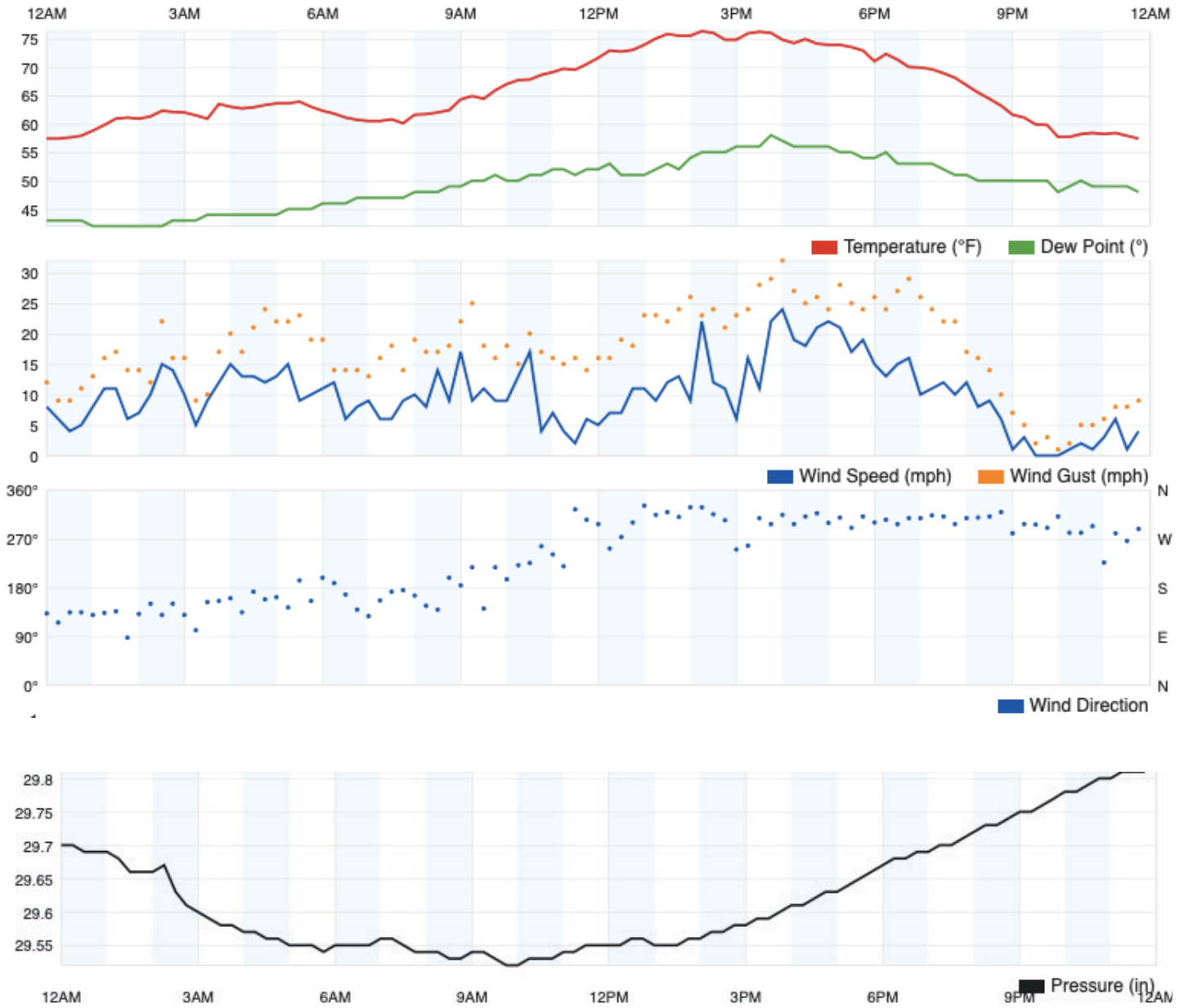
COVID-19 DEATHS IN SOUTH DAKOTA BY COUNTY

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	2
Jerauld	1
McCook	1
Minnehaha	16
Pennington	1

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 72 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 41 °F

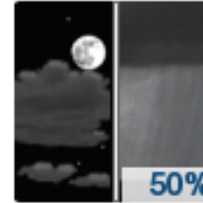
Sunday



Sunny

High: 68 °F

Sunday
Night



Partly Cloudy
then Chance
Showers

Low: 46 °F

Monday



Showers
Likely

High: 61 °F

Low 70s
Northwest winds becoming **breezy**
over northeastern SD and western MN

Elevated Fire Weather concerns over MN due to breezy conditions, low relative humidity, and limited rainfall over the past few weeks.

Move planned outdoor burning to a lighter wind day!

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

www.weather.gov/abr

Created: 5/2/2020 3:22 AM

Dry today, with temperatures topping out in the low 70s! Breezy winds out of the northwest this afternoon, and ongoing dry conditions will result in elevated fire weather concerns over portions of MN this afternoon. Move any planned burning to a lighter wind day!

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Today in Weather History

May 2, 1984: High winds picked up a trailer home northwest of the Pierre Airport and hurled it through the air, smashing it to the ground 50 yards away. The upper sections of a home were damaged by the airborne trailer. Several branches and shed roofs were also damaged nearby.

May 2, 2008: A two-day blizzard dropped two to four feet of snow across the northern Black Hills and in Harding and Butte counties. Six to 14 inches of snow fell along the eastern foothills and in western Perkins and Meade counties.

1762: A tornado struck Port Royal Island, South Carolina. It left a path 400 yards wide, tore up trees by the roots, and carried away houses and bridges.

1899 - A storm buried Havre, MT, under 24.8 inches of snow, an all-time record for that location. The water equivalent of 2.48 inches was a record 24 hour total for the month of May. (The Weather Channel)

1920 - A swarm of tornadoes in Rogers, Mayes and Cherokee Counties in Oklahoma killed 64 persons. (David Ludlum)

1929: Virginia's worst tornado disaster occurred on this day. Six tornadoes, two of which were west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, killed 22 people. One tornado killed twelve children and a teacher at Rye Cove, in Scott County. The storms destroyed four schools.

1983 - Severe thunderstorms spawned twenty tornadoes across Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York State. The tornadoes caused five deaths. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in the Lower Mississippi Valley produced golf ball size hail in northern Louisiana, and wind gusts to 77 mph at Lake Providence LA. Thunderstorms in Arkansas produced 4.20 inches of rain at Arkadelphia and 4.00 inches at Bismarck. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A powerful storm produced snow and high winds in the Central Rockies and the Central High Plains Region. Snowfall totals in Colorado ranged up to 12 inches at Strasburg, and winds in southeastern Colorado gusted to 87 mph at Lamar. Snow and high winds created blizzard conditions in eastern Colorado and southeastern Wyoming. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing to the north of a warm front produced severe weather in Oklahoma and Texas. There were 93 reports of severe weather. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 80 mph at Beattie, and baseball size hail was reported at Ranger and Breckenridge. Juneau AK reported a record high temperature of 72 degrees while Honolulu equalled their record low for the month of May with a reading of 60 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Fourteen cities in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the 90s. Tampa FL reported a record high of 97 degrees, and Fort Stewart GA was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 100 degrees.

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from northeastern Texas to western Arkansas during the evening and early nighttime hours. Thunderstorms spawned a tornado which injured thirteen persons at Paris TX, and produced baseball size hail at Rio Vista TX. Thunderstorm rains of four to seven inches caused flash flooding in west central Arkansas, southern and eastern Oklahoma, and northern Texas. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

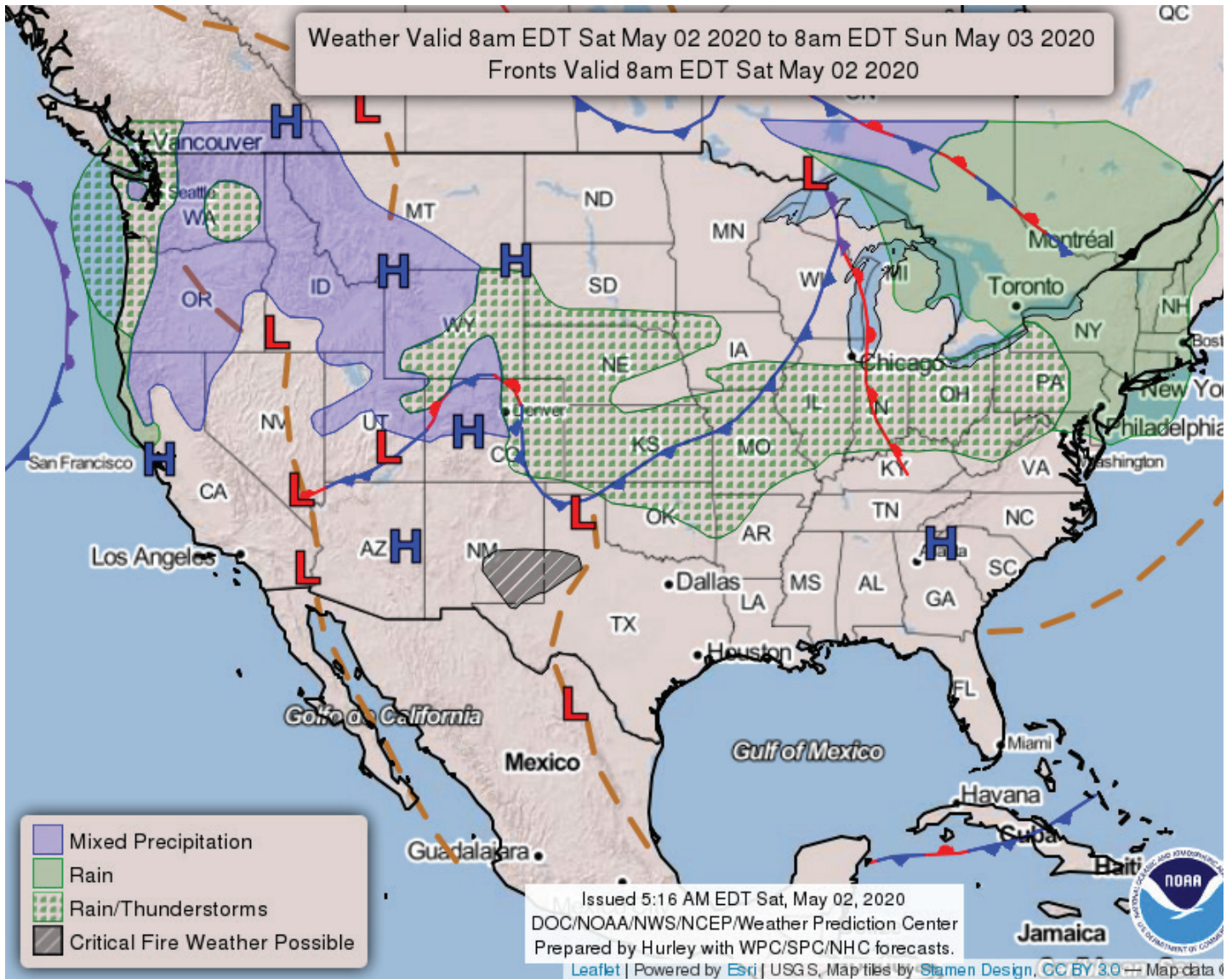
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 77 °F at 3:37 PM
Low Temp: 56 °F at 11:58 PM
Wind: 33 mph at 3:50 PM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 90° in 1955
Record Low: 20° in 1909, 1908
Average High: 65°F
Average Low: 39°F
Average Precip in May.: 0.10
Precip to date in May.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 4.03
Precip Year to Date: 1.90
Sunset Tonight: 8:42 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:18 a.m.



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WHAT'S IN A NUMBER?

When Harlan Sanders turned forty, he realized that he could not point to anything in his life that could be considered a success. No matter what he attempted to accomplish, he never succeeded. One day someone said to him, "Harlan, life begins at forty!" It jolted him so strongly that it awakened his faltering faith, and he determined, with God's help, to begin again.

After a time of prayer, he decided to open a service station. Shortly after its opening, he added a luncheonette. One meal his customers enjoyed the most was his fried chicken. To make it tastier and more appealing, he came up with a "special" batter and called it the Harlan Sanders' Kentucky Fried Chicken. People enjoyed it so much that they soon recommended it to their friends. It brought him so much fame and fortune that the Governor of Kentucky made him a "Kentucky Colonel." Soon people everywhere were buying the "Colonel's" Kentucky Fried Chicken.

By God's grace and the Colonel's faith, what had been a life of failure and frustration became a life with a future and personal fulfillment. His new life, however, did not begin at forty. It began when God became the major ingredient in his life's "recipe."

When God becomes the main "ingredient" of our life, everything will change and become new. With God as the centerpiece and His Word as our guide, we can overcome any obstacle or difficulty that stands in the way of our success.

Prayer: Let us realize, Lord, that greater things are possible when we trust in You and use the gifts You have given us to honor You. Take us and bless us for Your sake. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

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

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

28-30-31-35-66, Mega Ball: 14, Megaplier: 2

(twenty-eight, thirty, thirty-one, thirty-five, sixty-six; Mega Ball: fourteen; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$200 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$51 million

Yankton native helps heal the healers

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — For Dr. Clarissa Barnes, COVID-19 has taken an already stressful job to new heights.

Barnes, a Yankton native, works at Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center in Sioux Falls. South Dakota's largest city has become one of the nation's hot spots for the virus.

"Because of COVID, I now spend additional time getting suited up when I treat a patient," she said. "When patients come in, they're already scared. Now, they're treated by someone whose face and body are covered."

At Avera McKennan, she specializes in internal medicine. As a hospitalist, she works with acutely ill patients only while they are in the hospital. Even with additional protective clothing and gear, health care workers are constantly aware they could contract the virus.

The concerns aren't limited to Sioux Falls. Avera Health System employees in a five-state region — including Yankton — are ramped up to deal with an issue that doesn't stop when their shift ends and they return home.

"It's a generally exhausting period for health care providers," Barnes told the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan.

So who's helping those who help the patients?

That's where Barnes steps into the picture.

As part of her Avera work, she serves as medical director of the LIGHT program, a nationally recognized program that promotes well-being for medical providers and their spouses with free and confidential access to resources.

"LIGHT is unique to Avera in South Dakota," she said. "It promotes work-life balance and maintaining good health. But it's not for patients. Instead, it cares for the physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants."

Barnes remains available whenever a colleague wants to meet with her, and the service is offered through the Avera Health system and beyond.

"Sometimes, they just need to talk with someone who can guide them to a work-life balance," she said. "If the person needs additional help, they can be directed to a mental health professional."

The LIGHT program helps participants understand burnout, take inventory of their own life and thrive in the fast-paced world of health care.

TAKING A TOLL

Barnes has seen stress and burnout both in urban and rural areas. She attended Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and completed her residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital, both in Baltimore. She returned to South Dakota, working with patients at Yankton and Pierre before moving to Sioux Falls.

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"We've been talking about burnout for a long time," she said. "When you looked at mental health figures for medical professionals, physician burnout was running at 40 percent — and that was before the pandemic."

As a physician herself, Barnes knew the toll that the profession often takes on colleagues. Still, she was stunned to learn how many physicians were resorting to substance abuse and even taking their lives.

"At one of the large psychiatrist conferences, a presenter showed data indicating that physicians had a high rate of suicide," she said. "When the data was presented, I remember, I was shocked, but then I thought about it and wasn't all that surprised."

In South Dakota, doctors and other health professionals face additional challenges, Barnes said. Those medical providers may feel unable to disclose anxiety, depression or substance abuse for fear of what their colleagues and patients may think. They may fear for their jobs and professional standing.

In rural areas — particularly isolated communities — they may not have easy access to resources. And regardless of location, they may feel unable to confide their struggles with colleagues or even spouses.

"One of the barriers was, in the state of South Dakota, if you had any diagnosis of mental health or if you have been treated for it, you had to report it to the state board," Barnes said. "(The health care providers) were concerned about what it could mean for their licenses."

Barnes worked for a rule change on the matter, testifying at a March meeting of the South Dakota Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners. She discussed how the proposed rule change would remove the stigmatizing language related to mental health. She indicated the rule change's importance when considering the suicide rate among physicians.

The board approved the proposed rule change, set to go into effect May 5.

REACHING OUT

For Barnes, her LIGHT work and the state board's rule change have gone hand in hand in helping doctors and others deal with their stressors.

"Part of what my crusade has focused on is being able to normalize it and make it OK to talk about it in the first place," she said.

The LIGHT program promotes wellness and healthy relationships in a number of ways: one-on-one consultations, couples retreats for providers and their spouses, along with executive and peer strategy coaching.

In addition, self-assessments help the person identify signs of compassion fatigue, depression, alcohol abuse, anxiety, bipolar disorder, resiliency, suicide risk and trauma.

The program's ultimate goal is to have every provider experiencing wellness in every facet of their lives.

The goal has become increasingly more difficult with COVID-19, Barnes admitted.

"It's hard because you never know how any individual is going to react. Everyone is a little bit different," she said. "There is a whole lot more stress throughout the day. And you have (medical professionals) who worry about the safety of their own families. They don't want to make others sick when they go home."

As a certified life coach, Barnes helps health care providers find a work-life balance. A major part is finding ways for them to leave behind their jobs and focusing on taking care of themselves, she said.

"A lot of it is boundaries. You turn off when you go home and you're with family. You're not in the clinic mindset anymore," she said. "And you need to do what we tell patients: exercise, eat well and get enough rest."

In the end, it's all about how you're going to live your life during this pandemic, Barnes said.

"Generally, I tell people you have to make a decision on how you want to live and how to handle this crisis situation," she said. "I want to reassure them: we're well trained and can handle this."

The current models call for Sioux Falls' COVID-19 cases to peak in mid-May, while the rest of South Dakota is expected to peak between mid-June and early July. And a second wave of cases could arrive later in the year.

"We don't know what's happening six months from now, but we know there's going to be a lot of stress," Barnes said. "We want people to know we're there for them, whatever they need."

High schoolers show off prom attire as celebration goes away

By ABIGAIL DOLLINS and ERIN BORMETT Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The impact of school closures from the COVID-19 crisis has been particularly hard for high school students, many of whom hoped to make lifetime memories and embrace the celebration and satisfaction that comes with graduation.

Since this is prom season, the Argus Leader decided to catch up with some of these students and give them a chance to show off their finery while talking about how their lives have been affected.

'I wasn't able to say goodbye'

Like many other high school students, Addison Thie gathered her things from her locker not knowing it would be the last day she would spend at Washington High.

"I wasn't able to say goodbye to my teachers or friends I don't see outside of school," Thie said.

The senior is worried she might not get to experience the "lasts" she spent her school year looking forward to, like her final show choir performance.

Had it not been for the pandemic, she would have performed in front of family and friends as a way to commemorate the end of the year. Thie was also looking forward to renting a limo with friends as their ride to prom.

"It was so sudden, and of course you look forward to prom because you hear so much about it," she said. "I'm just hoping we get to do some things to make up for it."

'First thing that felt like me'

Cee Nevin tried on dress after dress, but nothing felt right. When she walked into David Jones Fashions, she was immediately greeted by a mint-colored three-piece suit and figured it was fate.

"It was perfect," said the New Technology senior. "It was the first thing that felt like me."

Nevin said that yes, she is sad to miss the hallmark events of senior year. The sparkling mint suit was going to be her graduation attire as well. But the loss felt by the class of 2020 can be formative all on its own.

"It's a unique experience that I'll be sharing with my class," she said. "It's something we're all experiencing, and to have that connection with them is a sort of bittersweet consequence."

'We want the real thing'

Stephan Burkhart was looking forward to finishing high school and moving on to the next stage of life, but now would give anything to walk the halls of Washington High again.

"None of this seemed real at first," said the senior. "It felt like this was just some crazy media thing that was going to blow over. But then when the reality kicked in, we realized we were never going to experience any of the senior stuff."

A recent school survey floated the possibility of an in-person graduation ceremony later in the year. Burkhart said that he believes students across the board would be in favor of that rather than a virtual ceremony at the typical end of the school year.

"It's hard to find closure when you're sitting at home watching the last quarter just go out the window," he said. "I think I speak for everyone when I say we want the real thing."

'Still made some great memories'

As the only senior on the prom committee at New Technology, Emily Hill called the shots. She spent weeks brainstorming and dreaming up the perfect prom theme – Midnight Garden Party.

Her hard work was put on pause because of the COVID-19 crisis.

"It was disappointing at first, but if it's going to be canceled for anything, I'm glad it's to keep people healthy and safe," Hill said. "I'm not giving up hope that it will happen."

Since she had not yet purchased a dress, Hill decided she would wear her mom's prom dress from 1998. As a young girl, she would pull the dress out of the closet at her grandma's house and let it engulf her. It would trail behind her as she walked. Today, its black velvet and white satin hold more meaning.

"It's going to be one of those things where I'll look back on this time and think, 'Sure I missed out on some big moments, but I still made some great memories,'" Hill said.

'Nothing feels real'

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Morgan Oskar's prom dress was going to fulfill a fantasy. Inspired by the queen's gown at the renaissance fair she's attended every year of her life, a blue puffy ball gown fit the bill perfectly.

Now, the Lincoln senior does feel like she's living in a dream, but not the one she planned for.

"Nothing feels real," she said. "I've just been trying to keep it together, but being so isolated really sucks. PTSD, paranoia is all crashing in."

Just before the pandemic hit, Oskar's car broke down and was sold for parts. With no mode of transportation, she hasn't left the house in over month.

Stuck inside for so long, her worries about the virus have translated into a heightened concern for safety in general. She checks the locks on her doors every few hours.

"It's like a dystopian sci-fi movie you'd see at the theater," she said. "It's been really hard."

Save the last dance

Prom is not the only dance that Beresford senior Brooklin Nothdurft was looking forward to. As she prepares for the next chapter of her life, her sights are set on the college dance program at Minnesota State in Mankato.

Unable to travel because of the pandemic, she was forced to try out for the team by sending in videos. Weeks and months of preparation all for that moment. The high school senior is trying to make the most of everything, though.

She eventually hopes to have a small prom with friends and dance in her dress as planned.

"I'm sad that it got cut short, but there's nothing we can do about it," Nothdurft said.

'I get really scared about it'

Megan Gusso knows what it feels like to be intubated. The O'Gorman senior has severe asthma and a lung condition that puts her at a high risk for the coronavirus.

"With my background, I get really scared about it," Gusso said. "Especially with not having any kind of medication specific to treating COVID-19, I know if I were to get it, things wouldn't go well."

A cough or a snuffle triggers a routine of vitamins and medications to keep sickness at bay. Gusso spent the first part of her life laying in a neonatal intensive care unit and was hospitalized every year until the eighth grade.

She has already missed out.

In September 2019, she struggled to walk the halls of her school without stopping to catch her breath. During that time, Gusso was the captain of a competitive cheer team and was training for the season. She spent five days in the hospital recovering from a common cold.

Early on, Gusso began practicing social distancing.

"I want people to understand it's not for you, it's for the people who are really going to struggle with something like this," Gusso said. "It's still hard knowing that everything has been taken, but it is for the best and in some sense, I can understand why when others can't."

Not just about dressing up

Alyssa Eichmann's date was going to travel across the country to take her to prom. Her friend Logan joined the U.S. Marines in San Diego after graduating from Roosevelt last year. He was going to make a special trip just for her, until prom was canceled.

"The best part isn't dressing up," said Eichmann, a senior. "It's being with your friends and having fun and staying out late."

This wouldn't be Eichmann's first prom, but as a senior it meant something more.

"I still wanted to feel that it was more mine, and not just being there for someone else."

'I've never been able to do this'

On what would have been prom night, Saylor Hutcheson's only plans were family dinner and a movie on the couch. But that didn't stop her from getting dressed to the nines.

"All my siblings were watching me get ready," said the Canistota High junior. "I at least wanted to wear my dress on prom night."

Her brother, a senior, had a tuxedo ready for prom as well, but he didn't join Hutcheson in her fancy

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at-home evening.

Hutcheson is a junior, so she gets another chance at prom next year. This year's event was special for her, however, because it would have been her first formal event of any kind.

"No homecoming dance, no formals," she said. "I've never been able to do this or anything like it before."

When the pandemic passes, a group of Hutcheson's friends plan to dress up for a night and end with a bonfire to make up for lost time.

'Nervous about saying goodbye'

During his time at New Technology High, Grant Peterson met some of his best friends. "It's hard to find someone at New Tech that doesn't know everyone around them," Peterson said.

Now he's unsure of when he'll see them next.

While Peterson has missed out on some of the experiences that come with being a senior, the senior hopes the next chapter of his life will look different.

Peterson plans to continue his education at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and study industrial engineering. He won't soon forget the people he spent the past four years with.

"I'm nervous about saying goodbye to everyone that I've either known for most of my life or known the last four years and formed such close bonds with," Peterson said.

'Go big for senior year'

Harrisburg High School's prom was canceled, but that didn't stop Hailey Reynolds and her boyfriend, Jerry Snellinger, from sharing a special evening together.

As sunset approached, the pair sat across from each other under string lights that decorated the pergola in her backyard. Instead of getting Sonic with friends before the dance, they had a steak dinner cooked by her family.

Reynolds has had her dress picked out since February. She mainly bought it because it has pockets. In years past, she opted for something simpler but wanted to make this year special.

"Green is my favorite color," Reynolds said. "I might as well go big for senior year."

Some meat plants reopen, but Trump order may not be cure-all

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Signs Friday that several big meatpacking plants will soon reopen might appear to support President Donald Trump's assertion that he had "solved their problems" in keeping grocery stores' coolers stocked during the coronavirus crisis. But the reality isn't likely to be so easy.

Though meatpackers have been moving to shift operations to make employees less vulnerable to coronavirus infection, they still have a workforce depleted by illness, with at least 4,900 employees nationwide infected. Many others may be unwilling to risk entering plants that have been rife with infections. Even plants that keep the production lines moving will have to do so more slowly, renewing concerns about whether Americans can count on seeing as much meat as they're used to.

A Smithfield Foods pork processing plant in South Dakota where more than 850 workers tested positive will partially reopen Monday after shuttering for more than two weeks, a union that represents plant workers said Friday. And Arkansas-based Tyson Foods said its Logansport, Indiana, pork processing plant where nearly 900 employees tested positive will also resume "limited production" on Monday.

"We toured the plant and feel the additional measures implemented will allow employees to work safely, while continuing to follow (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines and recommendations," Dori Ditty, the health officer for the county where the Tyson plant is located, said in a statement.

As Trump touted his executive order on Wednesday that requires meat plants to stay open, he suggested it would solve the breakdown in the food supply chain that threatens the availability of meat in grocery stores while farmers face the prospect of euthanizing hundreds of thousands of healthy pigs.

"We solved their problems," the president said Wednesday after getting off a call with meatpacking executives. "We unblocked some of the bottlenecks."

But the clearing of those "bottlenecks" depends on thousands of people who work physically-demanding

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jobs that must be performed by hand and can take weeks to learn. In the latest sign of the strain on workers, Missouri health officials said Friday that nearly 300 employees at a Triumph Foods pork plant in St. Joseph have tested positive for the virus.

"I think it's ridiculous that (Agriculture Secretary) Sonny Perdue can think all of a sudden he can wave a magic wand and all of a sudden these plants are going to operate at capacity," said Mark Lauritsen, who directs the meatpackers division at the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

According to a CDC report released Friday, more than 4,900 workers at meat and poultry processing facilities have been diagnosed with the coronavirus, including 20 who died. The illnesses occurred among 130,000 workers at 115 facilities in 19 states, according to the CDC. Some states didn't provide data, so the actual count is believed to be higher.

The researchers said plant workers may be at risk for a number of reasons, including difficulties with physical distancing and hygiene and crowded living and transportation conditions. They suggested that disinfection be enhanced and that workers get regular screening for the virus, more space from co-workers and training materials in their native languages.

The United Food and Commercial Workers union, which represents roughly 80% of beef and pork workers and 33% of poultry workers nationwide, has appealed to governors for help enforcing worker safety rules. They also want to get rid of waivers that allow some plants to operate at faster speeds.

With so many employees staying home because they are sick or worried about getting sick, many plants are operating only at half capacity, according to Lauritsen.

Smithfield Foods asked about 250 employees to report to its Sioux Falls plant on Monday to staff two departments — ground seasoned pork and night cleanup, according to the United Food and Commercial Workers union local.

The Virginia-based company asked that employees who are sick or who might be more susceptible to severe illness and death from the virus — those over age 60 or who have existing health problems — to stay home, according to the union. For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks.

Smithfield Foods said in a statement welcoming Trump's order that it should make for easier access to protective equipment and testing. It is not clear how that will happen. Hospitals have struggled to source protective equipment from private manufacturers, and access to testing is handled on a state-by-state basis.

Some states have set up special testing sites near meatpacking plants, including one announced Friday by Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan.

All of this puts considerable strain on a supply chain that only has a few days to slaughter animals, process them and deliver meat to market, according to Katie Wowak, a University of Notre Dame professor who researches food supply chains.

"There's thin margins in the food industry anyways," she said. "When you add something like this, it can really cripple entities."

Associated Press writers Mike Stobbe in New York and Brian Witte in Annapolis, Md., contributed to this report.

Healthy pigs being killed as meatpacking backlog hits farms

By DAVID PITT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — After spending two decades raising pigs to send to slaughterhouses, Dean Meyer now faces the mentally draining, physically difficult task of killing them even before they leave his northwest Iowa farm.

Meyer said he and other farmers across the Midwest have been devastated by the prospect of euthanizing hundreds of thousands of hogs after the temporary closure of giant pork production plants due to the coronavirus.

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The unprecedented dilemma for the U.S. pork industry has forced farmers to figure out how to kill healthy hogs and dispose of carcasses weighing up to 300 pounds (136 kilograms) in landfills, or by composting them on farms for fertilizer.

Meyer, who has already killed baby pigs to reduce his herd size, said it's awful but necessary.

"Believe me, we're double-stocking barns. We're putting pigs in pens that we never had pigs in before just trying to hold them. We're feeding them diets that have low energy just to try to stall their growth and just to maintain," said Meyer, who also grows corn and soybeans on his family's farm near Rock Rapids.

It's all a result of colliding forces as plants that normally process up to 20,000 hogs a day are closing because of ill workers, leaving few options for farmers raising millions of hogs. Experts describe the pork industry as similar to an escalator that efficiently supplies the nation with food only as long as it never stops.

More than 60,000 farmers normally send about 115 million pigs a year to slaughter in the U.S. A little less than a quarter of those hogs are raised in Iowa, by far the biggest pork-producing state.

Officials estimate that about 700,000 pigs across the nation can't be processed each week and must be euthanized. Most of the hogs are being killed at farms, but up to 13,000 a day also may be euthanized at the JBS pork plant in Worthington, Minnesota.

U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson, a Minnesota Democrat who chairs the House Agriculture Committee, went to the plant Wednesday, in part to thank JBS officials for agreeing to kill the hogs at his request.

"The only thing they wanted out of me was for me to come down here and say I'm the one who asked for this, not them. ... Blame me if you don't like it," he said.

It all means that meat can't be delivered to grocery stores, restaurants that now are beginning to reopen or food banks that are seeing record demand from people suddenly out of work. Some of that demand is being met by high levels of meat in cold storage, but analysts say that supply will quickly dwindle, likely causing people to soon see higher prices and less selection.

To help farmers, the USDA already has set up a center that can supply the tools needed to euthanize hogs. That includes captive bolt guns and cartridges that can be shot into the heads of larger animals as well as chutes, trailers and personal protective equipment.

Iowa officials have asked that federal aid include funding for mental health services available to farmers and the veterinarians who help them.

Meyer said euthanizing healthy animals is a difficult decision for a farmer.

"It is a tough one," he said. "We got keep our heads up and try to be resourceful and if we can make it through this cloud, I think there will be good opportunities if we're left standing yet."

The USDA has a program designed to connect farmers with local meat lockers and small processors that can slaughter some hogs and donate the meat to food banks. However, that effort has been hindered by the fact that small processors already were overwhelmed with customers who have turned away from mass-produced meat and instead bought a hog or cow to be processed locally.

Chuck Ryherd, owner of State Center Locker in State Center, Iowa, said he's almost completely booked through the end of the year and has been turning away customers.

Chris Young, the executive director for the American Association of Meat Processors, a trade group for about 1,500 smaller meat lockers, said that while some local processors in Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin have been able to take a few extra hogs, the shortage is being felt nationwide.

"When the pandemic started, all across the country, a lot of these small processing plants with a retail store in the front were just overrun," he said. "They're still crazy busy. It hasn't really backed off."

On Wednesday, President Donald Trump used the Defense Production Act to order that large meat processors remain open, giving hog farmers hope the situation could improve.

However, Howard Roth, a Wisconsin farmer and president of the National Pork Producers Council, said farmers will need to keep euthanizing pigs as the slaughterhouses struggle to resume their full production. Farmers will definitely need federal help to keep them afloat.

"We are going to need indemnity money for these farmers," he said. "This situation is unprecedented."

Peterson also said he'll seek a change in the law so that the USDA can retroactively compensate farm-

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ers for euthanizing healthy animals in such emergencies. He said the USDA told him it doesn't have the authority at the moment to do that for healthy animals, just diseased animals, as it did during for chickens and turkeys in the bird flu outbreak.

"It's going to be in there, I'll guarantee you," he said.

Midwest Economy: April state-by-state glance

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The Institute for Supply Management, formerly the Purchasing Management Association, began formally surveying its membership in 1931 to gauge business conditions.

The Creighton Economic Forecasting Group uses the same methodology as the national survey to consult supply managers and business leaders. Creighton University economics professor Ernie Goss oversees the report.

The overall index ranges between 0 and 100. Growth neutral is 50, and a figure greater than 50 indicates growth in that factor over the next three to six months. A figure below 50 indicates decline.

Here are the state-by-state results for April:

Arkansas: The state's overall index sank to 35.1 from March's 47.3. Index components were new orders at 21.0, production or sales at 36.9, delivery lead time at 68.2, inventories at 23.3, and employment at 26.1.

Iowa: Iowa's overall index slumped to 34.4 from 45.8 in March. Index components were new orders at 23.7, production or sales at 19.7, delivery lead time at 67.4, employment at 25.6, and inventories at 35.5.

Kansas: The state's overall index tumbled to 36.3 from March's 48.3. Index components were new orders at 23.2, production or sales at 39.2, delivery lead time at 69.7, employment at 27.0, and inventories at 22.5.

Minnesota: Minnesota's overall index sank to 34.8 from March's 45.5. Index components were new orders at 20.5, production or sales at 23.4, delivery lead time at 67.9, inventories at 22.5, and employment at 26.0.

Missouri: The state's overall index dropped to 35.1 from 45.3 in March. Index components were new orders at 21.1, production or sales at 23.2, delivery lead time at 68.3, inventories at 37.0, and employment at 26.2.

Nebraska: Nebraska's overall index declined to 36.0 from 47.8 in March. Index components were new orders at 22.7, production or sales at 22.7, delivery lead time at 69.3, inventories at 38.7, and employment at 26.8.

North Dakota: The state's overall index plummeted to 35.8 from 46.8 in March. Index components were new orders at 22.3, production or sales at 26.6, delivery lead time at 69.1, employment at 22.8, and inventories at 38.3.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma's overall index slumped to 34.2 from March's 45.7. Index components were new orders at 19.3, production or sales at 23.8, delivery lead time at 67.1, inventories at 38.3, and employment at 25.5.

South Dakota: The state's overall index tumbled to 35.9 from March's 47.4. Index components were new orders at 22.4, production or sales at 22.8, delivery lead time at 69.2, inventories at 38.4, and employment at 26.7.

Survey shows hope for recovery even as economic indices drop

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The latest survey of supply managers in a nine-state region of the Midwest and Plains shows that many are holding out hope for an economic rebound later this year, even though the coronavirus has knocked the region for a loop.

The Mid-American Business Conditions index plummeted in April to 35.1 from March's already-anemic 46.7, according to a survey report released Friday. April's index was the lowest since February 2009, during the Great Recession.

But the survey's confidence index suggested that business leaders have more hope for recovery over the next six months. The index soared to 45.5 in April, up from March's 14.5.

"The federal stimulus plan, the Federal Reserve monetary incentive programs, and the rebound in U.S. stock markets boosted confidence from March's record lows," said Creighton University economist Ernie

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Goss, who oversees the survey.

Still, other indices painted a grim picture. The April employment index bottomed out at 26.2 — its lowest level since the survey began in 1993. The March employment index was an already-weak 34.7.

U.S. Labor Department data showed that only 164,040 workers in the nine-state region were unemployed and receiving unemployment insurance benefits, in mid-March, Goss said.

“By the first week of April, 980,196 workers were receiving unemployment insurance benefits,” Goss said.

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth. A score below that suggests decline. The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Goss echoed comments he made last month, insisting that the recent survey results indicating a recession have not been solely caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

“The coronavirus had a less significant impact on the manufacturing sector than other areas of the economy more directly tied to the consumer,” Goss said. “This is a consumer-led recession with manufacturing lagging. As a result, I expect the manufacturing to worsen in next month.”

Regional trade numbers were split in the April survey, the report said. The index for new export orders tumbled to 19.4, from March’s 34.7, while the import index rose to 38.7, from 32.7 in March.

In three other measures of economic health, the index for new orders sank to 21.0, from March’s 40.0, and the index for production or sales plunged to 23.3, from March’s 37.8. The index gauging speed of deliveries of raw materials and supplies dipped slightly to 68.3, from March’s 68.4, reflecting slower deliveries and/or shipping difficulties.

Air travel wanes, but bodies still fly to Israel for burial

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Air travel to Israel has come to a near standstill due to coronavirus restrictions, but one type of voyage still endures: the final journey of Jews wishing to be buried in Israel.

For centuries, Jews have sought to be interred in the Holy Land, going to great lengths to secure their final resting place in the land of their biblical forefathers. Today, not even a once-in-a-century pandemic is halting this ancient last wish.

“The Land of Israel is a very special place for Jewish people to be buried,” said Rabbi Michael Fletcher, who facilitates purchases of burial plots in Israel for Jews from abroad. “The flights have been reduced heavily, but there are cargo flights. So it may take a bit longer, but we are getting people coming in.”

Despite the challenges presented by the coronavirus, families, the aviation industry and health workers are finding ways to keep the deceased flying in — chartering private planes, adding cargo flights and striking deals with handling companies. Israel’s Foreign Ministry said 300 bodies, including many COVID-19 victims, have been flown in for burial since February.

During that time, Israel’s typically bustling Ben-Gurion International airport has become a ghost town, with only a few hundred passengers arriving on a handful of flights each week.

Jews have long aspired to be buried in the Holy Land. The biblical forefather Jacob and his son Joseph both requested to be buried in the Promised Land after having died in Egypt. Some Jews believe that being buried in the Holy Land grants atonement for sins or will make resurrection easier when the Messiah comes.

Israel has managed to keep the coronavirus crisis largely in check, and though it has reported 225 deaths out of more than 16,100 cases, it has not seen hospitals or morgues overwhelmed. More than half of the reported cases in Israel have recovered.

The virus causes mild to moderate flu-like symptoms in most patients, who recover within a few weeks. But it is highly contagious and can cause severe illness or death, particularly in older patients or those with underlying health problems.

Bringing in bodies is complex and costly, even under ordinary circumstances. Purchasing a plot can cost

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anywhere from a few thousand to tens of thousands of dollars, depending on the location. Many choose to spend hefty sums for a prime spot in Jerusalem's Mount of Olives cemetery, which overlooks the storied Old City and its important Jewish sites. Additional costs include flights and transport from the airport to the cemetery.

Those who choose to be buried in Israel must also navigate a web of bureaucracy, starting with handling companies at their departure point to their local Israeli consulate or embassy as well as the Israeli Health Ministry.

The coronavirus crisis has complicated an already onerous process. While families typically fly in from abroad to escort the body and attend the funeral, that's not possible under current travel restrictions, which require a two-week quarantine for anyone entering from abroad.

Extra measures are required to prevent contagion, including additional wrapping material and a separate ritual purification process. In hard-hit New York, which has a large Jewish community, some handling companies have refused to deal with the bodies of those who have died of COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus.

Last month, Dan Leshem's father Amnon died from the coronavirus in Belgium, his home for the last 20 years. The bureaucracy and high costs were not a deterrent to bringing his father for burial in Israel, where Leshem lives.

"His last wish was to be buried in Israel," said Leshem, who streamed the funeral to relatives and friends abroad. "It was clear that we must bring him."

An Israeli aviation official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the process of transporting bodies with the media, said a cargo flight that comes from Belgium five times a week brings in about 20 bodies a flight — "an exceptional amount."

Most come from France, which has a large Jewish community and a severe outbreak, the official said. He said a weekly cargo flight from New York also brings in bodies but often can't meet families' needs, as Jewish custom requires burying the dead promptly.

Fletcher, the burial facilitator, said many in New York have opted to bury their dead in the U.S., intending to exhume the bodies once flights to Israel resume.

But solutions are being found even now. The aviation official said that even if a cargo flight is full, room will be made for the caskets. "We will not delay bodies because there is no space," he said. Additional cargo flights are expected to be added in Europe, he said.

Wealthier families have hired private planes, which have been shipping in bodies about every other day from Europe and the U.S. In a photo released by ZAKA, an Israeli medical service, the sleek, slim interior of a private jet that had recently touched down was packed with four wooden caskets.

Israeli airline El Al struck a deal last week with a handling company in New York prepared to process the bodies of people who have died of the coronavirus.

Yossi Landau, a ZAKA official who has been assisting families with burials during the outbreak, said dignity for the dead, and the bereaved, was a main driver behind getting the bodies to Israel.

"Behind every person who dies there is also a family, people who are living," said Landau. "They must be respected."

Weary Moroccan medics fight virus, nightmares and tears

By AMIRA EL MASAITI Associated Press

RABAT, Morocco (AP) — When Moroccan nurse Mofadal Ahyane lost his first patient to COVID-19, he had a recurring nightmare: His patient in agony slips from his body, which gradually transforms into Ahyane's own father, then brother, then friend.

"The death of that man will never leave me as long as I live," Ahyane said, his voice cracking as he recalled the vain efforts of doctors and nurses at the hospital in the northern city of Tetouan to save the man's life.

The virus has upended life for Morocco's medical workers. They enjoy better medical facilities than in much of Africa but are often short of the equipment available in European hospitals, which also found

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themselves overwhelmed.

Medical professionals around this Muslim kingdom in North Africa spoke to The Associated Press, showing that the heartbreak and fears and the challenges of working safely are shared with Western counterparts, as is the devotion to saving lives.

Two Moroccan doctors have died after becoming infected, officials have said. Morocco, which is under a strict lockdown, currently has more than 4,500 confirmed cases and some 170 deaths, according to a Johns Hopkins University count.

Since early March, the Moroccan government has steadily introduced virus control measures that have gradually turned vibrant cities into near ghost towns. Health minister Khalid Ait Boutaleb says that if it weren't for preventive measures, Morocco would now be facing 6,000 coronavirus-related deaths.

Still, the virus has wrought personal havoc for some health workers, temporarily tearing them apart their families as they self-isolate at the end of the day to keep their loved ones safe.

Radiology nurse Iman Benali at Casablanca's Sidi Moumen Hospital has been away from her husband and 6-year-old child since early March. Some nurses working with Benali had to stop breastfeeding their infants when duty called, she said.

Her long days end in self-isolation at a hotel with 70 other medical professionals. The hotel housekeepers are also forced to exchange families for hotel rooms because of their contact with the health professionals.

Benali said the sacrifices shared with co-workers has created a special bond.

"We watch out for each other out of compassion, but also out of fear for our own health," she said. "If a hospital worker gets contaminated, it means the entire hospital workforce may be contaminated."

At Moulay Abdellah Hospital in Morocco's Atlantic coastal city of Sale, Dr. Youssef Dhabbi said he believes the deaths of his colleagues are a driving force for caregivers.

"If the deceased doctors were given a chance to return to work, they would take it instantly. You'd find them in their protective gear, treating patients," he said.

During his 12-hour shift, nurse Ahyane rarely eats because he fears contamination. "You wonder, are your hands clean enough to eat?" he says.

Dr. Houcine Benazouz doesn't even consider eating. Since early March, he has been running between departments at the Tetouan hospital. At night, he stays in a white, impersonal hotel room far from the comfort of his loved ones.

"It has to be the hardest choice I made, leaving my wife and children behind me," he said.

Nabil Zouini, who works with a testing task force in his hometown of Meknes, hasn't been home in over a month, something his 3-year-old daughter can't understand.

"She smiles at me every night and asks me: 'Dad, are you coming back home tomorrow?'" Zouini said of his video chats with his child. "If I say no, she cries."

Zouini dons a new mask and gown at every encounter with suspected cases, but he is never certain he's safe.

"The hardest part is taking the gown off. We have to do it in a way that we don't touch the outside of the suit, which is fully contaminated. We can only take off the suit from the inside out." He removes gowns at least 10 times a day.

It's now beginning to feel like the ancient ramparts of Meknes are closing in.

"The psychological turmoil is incredibly hard," he said. "Many of us will be scarred by what we see."

Zouini described an eerie emptiness in the streets of his city, an image that collides with the once-lively ambiance of Meknes, which in normal times draws tourists from around the world.

"As I drive to homes of suspected cases, my eyes flash for a second and I see the cafés, the playgrounds buzzing with life ... before I'm brought back to reality," he said.

Using a typical Moroccan expression that may speak to all the country's health workers, Zouini added: "I say to myself, we can't meet each other today, but we will hug tomorrow."

Kim reappears in public, ending absence amid health rumors

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made his first public appearance in 20 days as he celebrated the completion of a fertilizer factory near Pyongyang, state media said Saturday, ending an absence that had triggered global rumors that he may be seriously ill.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency reported that Kim attended the ceremony Friday in Sunchon with other senior officials, including his sister Kim Yo Jong, who many analysts predict would take over if her brother is suddenly unable to rule.

State media showed videos and photos of Kim wearing a black Mao suit and constantly smiling, walking around facilities, applauding, cutting a huge red ribbon with a scissor handed by his sister, and smoking inside and outside of buildings while talking with other officials.

Seemingly thousands of workers, many of them masked, stood in lines at the massive complex, roaring in celebration and releasing balloons into the air. A sign installed on a stage where Kim sat with other senior officials read: "Sunchon Phosphatic Fertilizer Factory; Completion Ceremony; May 1, 2020."

There were no clear signs that Kim was in discomfort. He was shown moving without a walking stick, like the one he used in 2014 when he was recovering from a presumed ankle surgery. However, he was also seen riding a green electric cart, which appeared similar to a vehicle he used in 2014.

It was Kim's first public appearance since April 11, when he presided over a ruling Workers' Party meeting to discuss the coronavirus and reappoint his sister as an alternate member of the powerful decision-making Political Bureau of the party's Central Committee. That move confirmed her substantial role in the government.

Speculation about his health swirled after he missed the April 15 birthday celebration for his late grandfather Kim Il Sung, the country's most important holiday, for the first time since taking power in 2011.

The possibility of high-level instability raised troubling questions about the future of the secretive, nuclear-armed state that has been steadily building an arsenal meant to threaten the U.S. mainland while diplomacy between Kim and President Donald Trump has stalled.

Some experts say South Korea, as well as its regional neighbors and ally Washington, must begin preparing for the possible chaos that could come if Kim is sidelined by health problems or even dies. Worst-case scenarios include North Korean refugees flooding South Korea or China or military hard-liners letting loose nuclear weapons.

"The world is largely unprepared for instability in North Korea," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul. "Washington, Seoul and Tokyo need tighter coordination on contingency plans while international organizations need more resources and less controversy over the role of China."

South Korea's Unification Ministry, which deals with inter-Korean affairs, confirmed Kim's visit to the fertilizer factory and said it was part of his efforts to emphasize economic development. The ministry called for discretion on information related to North Korea, saying that the "groundless" rumors of past weeks have caused "unnecessary confusion and cost" for South Korea's society and financial markets.

South Korea's government, which has a mixed record of tracking Pyongyang's ruling elite, repeatedly downplayed speculation that Kim, believed to be 36, was in poor health following surgery.

The office of President Moon Jae-in said it detected no unusual signs in North Korea or any emergency reaction by its ruling party, military and cabinet. Seoul said it believed Kim was still managing state affairs but staying at an unspecified location outside Pyongyang.

The KCNA said workers at the fertilizer factory broke into "thunderous cheers" for Kim, who it said is guiding the nation in a struggle to build a self-reliant economy in the face of "head wind" by "hostile forces."

The report didn't mention any direct comment toward Washington or Seoul.

Speaking to reporters at the White House, Trump declined to comment about Kim's reappearance but said he would "have something to say about it at the appropriate time."

State media reported Kim was carrying out routine activities outside public view, such as sending greetings to the leaders of Syria, Cuba and South Africa and expressing gratitude to workers building tourist

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facilities in the coastal town of Wonsan, where some speculated he was staying.

It wasn't immediately clear what caused Kim's absence in past weeks. In 2014, Kim vanished from the public eye for nearly six weeks and then reappeared with a cane. South Korea's spy agency said he had a cyst removed from his ankle.

Analysts say his health could become an increasing factor in years ahead: he's overweight, smokes and drinks, and has a family history of heart issues.

If he's suddenly unable to rule, some analysts said his sister would be installed as leader to continue Pyongyang's heredity dynasty that began after World War II.

But others question whether core members of North Korea's elite, mostly men in their 60s or 70s, would find it hard to accept a young and untested female leader who lacks military credentials. Some predict a collective leadership or violent power struggles.

Following an unusually provocative run in missile and nuclear tests in 2017, Kim used the Winter Olympics in South Korea to initiate negotiations with Washington and Seoul in 2018. That led to a surprising series of summits, including three between Kim and Trump.

But negotiations have faltered in past months over disagreements in exchanging sanctions relief and disarmament steps, which raised doubts about whether Kim would ever fully deal away an arsenal he likely sees as his strongest guarantee of survival.

Kim entered 2020 vowing to build up his nuclear stockpile and defeat sanctions through economic "self-reliance." Some experts say the North's self-imposed lockdown amid the coronavirus crisis could potentially hamper his ability to mobilize people for labor.

Misery of Italy's migrants grows not from virus but lockdown

By TRISHA THOMAS Associated Press

CASTEL VOLTURNO, Italy (AP) — They are known as "the invisibles": Undocumented African migrants who, even before the coronavirus outbreak plunged Italy into crisis, barely scraped by as day laborers, prostitutes, freelance hairdressers and seasonal farm hands.

Locked down for two months in crumbling apartments in a mob-infiltrated town north of Naples, their hand-to-mouth existence has grown even more precarious with no work, no food and no hope.

Italy is preparing to reopen some business and industry on Monday in a preliminary easing of its virus shutdown. But there is no indication that "the invisibles" of Castel Volturno will get back to work anytime soon, and no evidence that the government's social nets will ease their misery.

"I need help. Help me. For my children, for my husband, I need help," said a tearful Mary Sado Ofori, a Nigerian hairdresser and mother of three who has been holed up in her overcrowded apartment block. She ran out of milk for her 6-month old, and is getting by on handouts from a friend.

A patchwork team of a volunteers, medics, a priest, a cultural mediator and local city hall officials are trying to make sure "the invisibles" aren't forgotten entirely, delivering groceries daily to their choked apartments and trying to provide health care. But the need is outstripping the resources.

"There is an emergency within the COVID emergency which is a social emergency," said Sergio Ser-raiano, who runs a health clinic in town. "We knew this was going to happen, and we were waiting for it from the beginning."

The virus struck hardest in Italy's prosperous industrial north, where the first homegrown case was registered Feb. 21 and where most of the infected and 27,000 dead were recorded. The bulk of the government's attention and response focused on reinforcing the health care system there to withstand the onslaught of tens of thousands of sick.

Castel Volturno is another world entirely, a 27-kilometer (17-mile) strip of land running along the sea north of Naples that is controlled by the Camorra organized crime syndicate. Here there have only been about a dozen COVID cases, and none among the migrants.

But Castel Volturno has other problems that the COVID crisis has exacerbated. Known as the "Terra dei Fuochi" or land of fires, Castel Volturno and surrounding areas have unusually high cancer rates, blamed

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on the illegal dumping and burning of toxic waste that have polluted the air, sea and underground wells. Here the mob runs drugs and waste disposal, and officials have warned the clans are primed to exploit the economic misery that the virus shutdowns have caused.

It is also here that "the invisibles" have settled over the years, many after crossing the Mediterranean from Libya in smugglers boats hoping for a better life. No one knows their numbers for certain, but estimates run as high as 600,000 nationally. In Castel Volturno, a city with an official population of around 26,000, there are estimates of 10,000 to 20,000.

The men get by on day jobs picking tomatoes, lemons or oranges, or in construction where they earn 25 euros (US\$28) a day. The women sell their bodies, or if they are lucky, work as freelance hairstylists or selling trinkets and cigarette lighters on the street.

In normal times, the men gather at 4 a.m. at the roundabouts that dot the Via Domiziana main drag, waiting for trucks to pick them up and take them to farms or construction sites. But since the lockdown, even that illegal off-the-books system known as "caporalato" has ground to a halt.

The migrants, who already were living precariously without official residency or work permits, now can't pay their rent or buy food.

"We don't have electricity. We don't have water. We don't have documents," said Jimmy Donko, a 43-year-old Ghanaian migrant who lives with 46 Nigerian and Ghanaian men in a dark, rundown house where filthy dishes fill the kitchen sink and old blankets serve as curtains over broken windows.

To bathe, wash and flush the toilet, he and his housemates walk 300 meters (yards) with buckets to a fountain and back.

The level of desperation is apparent everywhere: With no electricity or refrigeration, food spoils quickly and is cooked immediately. On a recent day, cooked fish and goat heads were left out on shelves. Outside, chicken was being cooked on a makeshift stove made from old mattress springs.

A consortium of unions and nonprofit organizations has called for a general amnesty to legalize undocumented migrants. Government ministers have vowed to help even those in the black-market economy survive the emergency. A proposed law would legalize migrant farm workers for the strawberry, peach and melon harvests, given that Italy's legal seasonal farm hands have been kept at home in Eastern Europe because of virus travel restrictions.

But no proposals have made it into law, and there is fierce opposition nationwide and in tiny Castel Volturno to any moves to legalize the African workforce currently here.

"We are talking about 20,000 illegal migrants in a population of 26,000 inhabitants – that makes it almost equal one foreigner for one Italian," said Mayor Luigi Petrella, of the right-wing, anti-migrant Brothers of Italy party. "It seems absurd to propose something like that."

That said, city hall is working to feed the masses, teaming up with the local Centro Fernandes refugee center to bring bags of food each day to the locked-down, out-of-work migrants.

The Rev. Daniele Moschetti, a former missionary in Nairobi, Kenya, now delivers groceries to the poor in his homeland.

"It was different when I was in Nairobi," he said, during a break in his grocery rounds. "There was poverty, but it was more human. Here there is something diabolical about all this, something evil in how all these people are treated."

NY hospital lobby's power stretches to DC in stimulus battle

By BRIAN SLODYSKO and RICHARD LARDNER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The stated mission of The Greater New York Hospital Association is simple enough: to help members deliver "the finest patient care in the most cost-effective way." But it's more complicated than that.

While the association, which represents health care providers at the epicenter of the pandemic, is a nonprofit organization, it has the balance sheet of a robust private company, pays executive salaries that top \$3 million and spent millions more to lobby in Washington for some of the nation's most profitable

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hospitals.

So when it came time to secure its share of the record \$3.6 trillion in federal stimulus money, the association was well positioned. It helped steer over \$11.5 billion in funding to the state, with billions more on the way soon, in a competition with other hospital groups, major corporations and thousands of small businesses.

"On the surface, the purpose (of the stimulus) is to relieve financial damage caused by COVID-19. But in reality, it's likely to actually increase the disparity," said Ge Bai, a Johns Hopkins University professor who studies the economics of hospitals. "It's very political. The money coming from the federal government is a zero sum game and we have some extremely powerful, large and rich hospitals."

The story of how the New York group leveraged its power during the pandemic shows that the Washington influence industry functions much the same way in a public health crisis as it does in normal times, where the better heeled and connected get far closer to a desired result.

Many smaller organizations say the group's connections and resources make it hard to compete.

"We did feel that we were being a little outgunned," said Maggie Elehwany, vice president of government affairs and policy for the National Rural Health Association, which has spent just over \$403,000 on lobbying since January 2019, a fraction when compared to the \$3 million outlay by the Greater New York Hospital Association during the same period.

The association helped secure billions for its member hospitals inundated by the virus, particularly New York City's underfunded public health system.

But the aid will also flow to profitable hospitals that have generated millions — and in some cases billions — of dollars in revenue in recent years, records show.

What's more, some of the group's recent lobbying has been aimed at rolling back consumer protections or blocking new ones rather than securing resources for New York.

The association declined to answer questions. Brian Conway, the group's spokesman, said in a statement, "GNYHA advocates fiercely and without apology for our entire membership, including public hospitals, financially struggling safety net hospitals, and academic medical centers, and we will continue to do so."

The Trump administration has wide latitude to decide where much of the \$175 billion in emergency coronavirus funding allotted for hospitals and other health care providers will go. And New York isn't the only state seeking to influence how the money is distributed.

If it does prevail, one reason is likely to be its well tended political connections.

The association has served as a deep-pocketed donor to the interests of powerful Democratic officials in New York such as Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Sen. Chuck Schumer, while also maintaining Republican ties, including the ability to contact Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law and a top adviser, by phone when needed.

The organization has given more than \$8.5 million since 2016 to a super PAC aligned with Schumer, and about \$2.2 million to a similar super PAC that elects House Democrats. Its chief lobbyist, David Rich, has donated more than \$130,000 to Cuomo, a Democrat, records show.

The contributions to the two super PACs were more than double what the American Hospital Association's political action committee gave to Republicans and Democrats alike during the same period.

Raske recently touted the organization's contacts with high-ranking White House officials.

"GNYHA has been totally engaged with the Trump Administration on this issue," Raske wrote in an April 10 statement that also mentioned he spoke directly with Kushner.

New York has since received an additional \$4.3 billion made available through a \$10 billion pot of money for coronavirus "hotspots." And more money is coming through a \$500 billion coronavirus aid bill Trump recently signed.

Beyond seeking relief money, the association has been instrumental in fighting a consumer protection measure that would prevent hospitals from sending surprise bills to care recipients.

The group told members in an email that it "advocated strongly against" it and was "pleased that extraneous measures supported by the Trump Administration, such as surprise billing and price transparency

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provisions, were not included in the final legislation," the news website ModernHealthcare reported.

It also secured legal protections in New York to reduce hospitals' liability during the pandemic

Smaller, less powerful hospital associations have not been so successful.

Timothy Moore, president of the Mississippi Hospital Association, said revenues at hospitals in his state have dropped as much as 60%.

Nearly 100 hospitals Mississippi have received \$175 million in stimulus money so far -- barely enough to cover a month's worth of expenses for many of these facilities, according to Moore.

"I've had large hospitals in the state of Mississippi that call me and say, 'I had nobody in the parking lot.' There's not a car in the parking lot.' Well, you can't do that long," Moore said.

The New York hospital association does not show signs of financial distress.

The group's most recent tax filing revealed revenue of \$38 million in 2018 and assets valued at more than \$147 million, including five for-profit companies that took in an additional \$75 million in income. The association also paid seven executives over \$13 million. Raske, the association's president, was paid a salary of \$3.4 million while the hospital covered first-class travel for him and his wife. Vice President Lee H. Perlman made \$3.2 million. And Rich, the lobbyist, earned over \$1.8 million. Former New York Congressman Charlie Rangel was also on the payroll, collecting \$75,000 a year as the group's only paid board director.

Roughly a month before the World Health Organization declared a pandemic, the group spun off two of its for-profit companies, which specialized in hospital consulting and supply chain management, in a deal worth over \$291 million, according to SEC filings.

In comparison, the California Hospital Association spent \$1.9 million on federal lobbying since the beginning of last year and held \$14.7 million in assets. Associations in Illinois and Texas all reported spending far less on lobbying and also held less in assets.

The organization does more than direct lobbying. They've also organized pressure campaigns that have lauded Schumer while urging people to contact their federal representatives. Recent Facebook ads ran in states where vulnerable Republicans are on the ballot, pressing for more hospital funding.

Gerard Anderson, a Johns Hopkins public health and business professor, recalls dealing with the New York association when he served at the Department of Health and Human Services under presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan.

"They are notorious in Washington for being one of the best, strongest and most ruthless lobbying groups," Anderson said.

The Latest: Russia reports sharp spike in coronavirus cases

By The Associated Press undefined

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

TOP OF THE HOUR:

- Russia reports sharp spike in coronavirus cases.
- Singapore lets select businesses reopen May 12.
- China reports one new virus case, but no deaths.

MOSCOW — Russia reported a sharp spike in its daily tally of coronavirus infection cases, with a new one-day high of 9,633 on Saturday.

That figure is a 20% increase from the previous day's count. More than half of the new cases were reported in Moscow, where concern is growing about whether hospitals could become overwhelmed.

The Russian capital's mayor said this week officials are considering establishing temporary hospitals at sports complexes and shopping malls.

Infection cases have reached the highest levels of government, with both the prime minister and the construction minister reporting they have the virus.

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SOAVE, Italy —Italy's special commissioner for the coronavirus says antibody blood tests will begin Monday, along with a gradual loosening of Italy's two-month lockdown.

Domenico Arcuri calls it a new challenge, "which by now is clear to everyone, we don't know how long it will last."

The government says it will administer the first 150,000 antibody blood tests on a sample population starting Monday. More nasal tests have been distributed throughout the country in a bid to identify and isolate positive cases.

The blood tests and nasal tests are meant to give a snapshot of where the virus has spread to focus further testing.

Arcuri says more masks would be distributed for people riding on public transportation, which is expected to spike up as the manufacturing and construction sectors emerge from lockdown. Stores, restaurants, bars and cultural sites such as museums remain closed until May 18.

Italy is opening parks and allowing funerals to resume with a maximum 15 people. Individuals must observe social distancing rules.

JOHANNESBURG — Africa now has more than 40,000 coronavirus cases.

That's according to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There have been more than 1,600 deaths across the continent.

Fifty-three of Africa's 54 countries have confirmed cases, all but tiny mountainous Lesotho, which is surrounded by South Africa.

SINGAPORE — Selected businesses will be allowed to reopen from May 12 in a cautious rollback of Singapore's two-month partial lockdown to curb the virus spread.

The city-state has seen a sharp rise in infections, with 447 new cases Saturday to take its total to 17,548. About 85 percent of its infections are linked to foreign workers living in crowded dormitories.

Despite this, the health ministry said cases in the local community has declined. It said the average daily infections among natives has dropped by more than half to 12 in the past week, while cases with unknown sources have also fallen to an average of six a day.

The ministry said restrictions will be eased cautiously and gradually to avoid a flare-up of the virus. Selected activities such as home-based businesses, food manufacturing, selected food retail outlets, laundry services, barbers and pet supplies can reopen from May 12. Small groups of students will be allowed back to school from May 19.

It said a gradual reopening of the economy and work premises will be phased in, with strict health rules including a digital mobile app to speed up contact tracing. Other lockdown measures remain, including confining more than 300,000 migrant workers in their dorms until the lockdown period ends June 1.

BEIJING — China, where the pandemic began in December, reported one new infection and no deaths in the 24 hours through midnight Friday.

The country has reported a total of 82,875 confirmed cases and 4,633 deaths.

The National Health Commission reported 43 people were released from hospitals Friday after being declared recovered, raising the total to 77,685. There were a total 557 people still hospitalized on the mainland.

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan recorded its highest single day increase in new COVID-19 infections with 1,297 new cases reported to bring the total in the country of 220 million people to 18,114.

The increase also coincides with a growing number of daily tests being carried out. In the last 24 hours Pakistan conducted more than 9,000 tests, also its largest single day testing as it struggles to climb to a daily testing of 20,000 promised nearly two weeks ago by Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Even as the number of new cases increase pictures in local newspapers showed large numbers of the

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faithful attending some of Pakistan's mosques with only sporadic signs of the social distancing rules imposed by the government when it refused to shut down mosques during Ramadan, Islam's fasting month.

Khan's government has also suggested it might ease lockdown rules governing retail shops ahead of the holiday of Eid-ul Fitr that marks the end of Ramadan, later this month.

Doctors in several parts of the country, however, have pleaded for stricter lockdowns, warning an explosion of infections would overwhelm the country's struggling health care facilities that count barely 3,000 intensive care beds countrywide.

SANTA FE, N.M. — A modern trading post on the southern outskirts of the Navajo Nation was on lockdown over the weekend under the watch of National Guard troops and state police to discourage nonessential travel and commerce as local coronavirus infections soar.

Invoking provisions of the state Riot Control Act, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham ordered residents of Gallup to remain home except for emergencies and blocked roads leading in and out of town to nonessential travel and any vehicles carrying more than two people.

The restrictions were welcomed by local and state officials who have watched COVID-19 infections spread to nursing homes and homeless populations as well as overwhelm hospital intensive care units, leading coronavirus patients to be transferred to Albuquerque.

Some visitors were caught off guard as they traveled from the Navajo Nation to stock up on supplies, only to find entire sections of the Gallup Walmart cordoned off as sales were restricted to food and other essential commodities.

"They didn't tell us on the radio or anything," said Patrick Sandoval of Ganado, Arizona, who came in search of food, games, baby wipes and other items for his family and neighbors. "You don't find out until you get in there that it's just essential items."

LOS ANGELES -- Oprah Winfrey keeps updated with the coronavirus news, but she has often focused her attention more on the positive "acts of valor" while being on lockdown during the pandemic.

The media mogul said Friday evening that she wants people to digest daily information wisely during the Call to Unite 24-hour livestream global relief event. She was among 200 star-studded participants including President Bill Clinton and Julia Roberts to take part in the event.

The event was initiated to help inspire people to endure and overcome the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

"I have a small diet and managed how I took in the news," said Winfrey on Friday evening from her home, where she has been self-quarantining with three others for nearly 50 days. She said she hopes the event can help the world become better.

"If you leave it on all the time — as I know some people do — you will be consumed by the agitation, the hysteria, the confusion and constant angst that has been put into your phone, home and into your spirit," she continued. "I have chosen to focus on so many acts of courage and valor, determination and people not giving up."

Each participant will answer calls in their own way, whether through performing a song, sharing a story or offering a prayer.

HONOLULU — Hawaii Lt. Gov. Josh Green said Friday the state is moving into "Phase 2" of its effort against the coronavirus now that it has successfully reduced the rate of new infections and "flattened the curve."

Green said in a video posted on social media that low-risk activities like elective medical procedures are resuming and officials in the next few weeks will consider authorizing medium-risk activities.

"Can our gyms open? Can restaurants that do social distancing open? That's what we're working on," Green said.

The next step after these activities would be "higher risk stuff" like large gatherings of people and bars, he said.

On Friday, Hawaii reported one new case of COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 619. Sixteen people have

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died.

Gov. David Ige has extended the state's stay-at-home order through May 31. A 14-day quarantine for travelers arriving in the state also remains in effect.

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea has reported six fresh cases of the new coronavirus, continuing a month-long streak of below 100.

Infections continue to wane in the hardest-hit city of Daegu, where no new cases were detected.

Figures released by South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Saturday brought national figures to 10,780 cases and 250 virus-related deaths.

At least 1,081 cases have been linked to international arrivals, but these cases have also declined in recent weeks as the government strengthened border controls, such as enforcing 14-day quarantines on all passengers coming from overseas.

With its caseload slowing, government officials have been relaxing social distancing guidelines and shifting focus to ease the shock on the economy. During the first three months of the year, the economy saw its worst contraction since late 2008 as the pandemic hit both domestic consumption and exports.

Health authorities still raise concern about a broader "quiet spread" and is planning antibody tests to learn how widespread the virus is.

DOVER, Del. — Protesters gathered outside Delaware's statehouse on Friday demanding that Democratic Gov. John Carney lift restrictions he has imposed on individuals and businesses in an effort to stem the spread of the coronavirus.

More than 400 people defied Carney's prohibition on gatherings of more than 10 people and mandates requiring social distancing and the wearing of face coverings in public. The rally was preceded by a noisy, flag-waving parade of vehicles slowly circling the capitol and Legislative Mall.

"It's going to let him know that we're not happy, at the very least," said Bill Hinds of Newark. "There's a lot of people being hurt by this lockdown. Losing their jobs, losing their businesses. ... This is a life-changing event for everybody in Delaware."

Carney said he understands people are getting frustrated, but he seemed unswayed by the protests.

"Everybody has the right to express their opinion and folks are doing that," he said. "I guess I would have hoped that the protesters were more here to express their appreciation for what we're doing and their support for what we're doing."

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee says he is extending the state's coronavirus stay-at-home order through at least May 31.

The Democratic governor said Friday he will ease the restrictions in four stages, starting with allowing retail curbside pickup, automobile sales and car washes by mid-May.

There will be a minimum of three weeks between each phase, though Inslee said some counties with lower numbers of cases and deaths may be able to open parts of their economy sooner if approved by the Department of Health.

Washington state had the nation's first confirmed COVID-19 case in January, as well as the first deadly cluster, at a Seattle-area nursing home. Inslee in March was among the first governors to issue a sweeping social-distancing mandate.

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump says he's hoping that the total number of COVID-19 deaths in the United States will be below 100,000.

Even that, he acknowledged on Friday, is a "horrible number."

Trump's predictions of the expected U.S. death toll have changed over time, and he repeatedly has used high estimates to make the case that his administration's actions, especially his decision to restrict travel from China, have saved lives. His actions have been challenged by state, local and public health officials

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who have complained about shortages of testing supplies and safety gear for doctors and nurses.

On March 29, Dr. Deborah Birx, coordinator of the White House coronavirus task force, revealed models projecting the deaths of 100,000 to 240,000 Americans, assuming social distancing efforts were ongoing.

At the same time, she said epidemiology models initially had predicted a worst-case scenario of 1.5 million to 2.2 million U.S. deaths without mitigation efforts such as social distancing, hand washing and staying home as much as possible.

Soon after, Trump began speculating that the 100,000 figure was an outer limit. Later, he leaned more toward a projection of 60,000, but that now has been eclipsed by the current death toll of more than 64,000. On Monday, he was thinking 60,000 or 70,000.

At a White House event on Friday, Trump said "maybe millions of lives" have been saved by shutting down the economy.

COLUMBIA, S.C. — South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster says he will end the state's stay-at-home order on Monday.

McMaster's announcement came Friday, the same day many hotels near the state beaches could reopen and state parks unlocked their gates for the first time in more than a month.

The Republican governor also said outdoor dining areas of restaurants can reopen Monday as long as they follow strict distancing requirements, restrict tables to no more than eight people and sanitize seats and tables after each customer.

Hotels in the state's most popular tourist destination, Myrtle Beach, can only honor reservations already made before the COVID-19 pandemic until May 15. Then they can take new reservations.

Saudi Arabia eyes more moves in time of pandemic, oil woes

By **MATTHEW LEE and AYA BATRAWY** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A beleaguered Saudi Arabia is taking modest steps to improve its human rights record as it tries to navigate the coronavirus pandemic and the fallout from plunging oil prices that have rankled the United States and the Trump administration.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the force behind Saudi Arabia's sweeping changes and risky gambles, is eyeing further steps he hopes will improve the kingdom's international image, which was badly damaged by the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi by government agents in 2018 and by the war in Yemen.

In the past week alone, the kingdom announced two changes to the law: banning flogging as a punishment and doing away with the death penalty for crimes committed by minors.

People familiar with the crown prince's plans say future steps are likely to be announced within weeks and months and will involve penal changes so that punishments meted out for specific crimes are no longer the sole purview of judges.

Still, it may not be enough to win Riyadh fresh support in Washington or praise from human rights groups.

The crown prince, while transforming life inside Saudi Arabia, has overseen a parallel crackdown on activists and perceived critics. Among those detained in the prince's quest to solidify power are dual U.S.-Saudi nationals, women's rights activists, writers, moderate clerics and senior princes.

Saudi Arabia's already strained relationship with Congress has worsened in past weeks, including among members of President Donald Trump's party.

Republicans have accused Saudi Arabia of exacerbating instability in the oil market. That came after the kingdom ramped up oil production and slashed prices following a breakdown in talks with Russia over production cuts before a new deal was reached.

The volatility and price crash in oil, amid already weakened demand due to the coronavirus pandemic, pummeled U.S. shale producers, leading to layoffs in the industry, particularly in Republican-run states.

Some Republican senators warned in late March that if Saudi Arabia does not change course, it risks

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losing American defense support and facing a range of potential “levers of statecraft” such as tariffs and other trade restrictions, investigations and sanctions.

The backlash couldn't have come at a worse time for the kingdom as tensions remain high with rival Iran.

The crown prince may be hoping that continuous reforms can revive what had largely been a warm relationship with the Trump administration, which has deployed U.S. troops to the kingdom to deter Iranian attacks. Positive headlines could also help maintain support from Washington even if Trump is defeated in November.

Domestically, the crown prince's reform efforts are aimed at modernizing the country and creating millions of jobs to stave off an upswell in unemployment and discontent among the majority of the population, who are under the age of 35.

To do this, the crown prince has forged a friendship with Trump, his influential son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner, courted foreign investors and used the country's sovereign wealth fund to scoop up investments abroad. It has paid millions of dollars to Western public relations firms and consultancies to revamp Saudi Arabia's image and put together a plan to diversify the oil-dependent economy.

That's meant pivoting Saudi Arabia away from its ultraconservative Islamic roots, known as Wahhabism, which many in the country closely adhere to.

There are, however, hard limits on the kingdom's reforms, which the prince is dribbling out with the blessing of his father, King Salman.

Executions for crimes committed as minors have been relatively rare, so ending that practice isn't a major change. It appears only one of the 184 executions in 2019 was for a crime committed as a minor. In addition, the reforms are expected to spare the lives of at least six Shiite men who were facing possible death penalty for crimes committed as minors. Many minority Shiites in the Sunni-ruled country complain of discrimination as sectarian tensions have soared regionally.

There's also no indication that Saudi Arabia is curbing the crackdown on perceived critics.

The killing of Khashoggi, a Saudi critic and Washington Post columnist, in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul by agents who worked for Prince Mohammed cast a pall over the reforms the 34-year-old prince had been lauded for. It also complicated his ability to court foreign investment needed to transform the Saudi economy.

Members of Congress voted unanimously to hold the crown prince responsible for Khashoggi's death, despite his insistence that he had no knowledge of the operation.

Not long after, Congress voted to end U.S.-assistance in Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, a conflict that has killed thousands of civilians, displaced millions and pushed people to the brink of famine. Trump vetoed the bill.

Since Khashoggi's killing, few U.S. lawmakers have traveled to Saudi Arabia to meet Prince Mohammed.

It wasn't always like this. The young royal had been highly praised in Washington before Khashoggi's killing for decisions on ending the ban on women driving, allowing concerts and movie theaters and curbing the powers of the religious police.

These moves allowed young Saudis to mix publicly without strict gender segregation rules. They gave Saudi women more freedom in how they wear the floor-length abaya in public. Women were also encouraged to play sports and work in greater numbers.

Last year, Saudi Arabia allowed women to travel abroad and obtain a passport without the permission of a male relative. For years before this change, women of all ages had to rely on the whims of husbands, fathers, brothers or sometimes their own sons to travel. It led to women fleeing Saudi Arabia to escape abusive homes.

Progress on women's rights, however, coincided with the arrest of more than a dozen Saudi women rights activists in mid-2018. Several remain imprisoned and face trial on crimes related to national security and their human rights outreach.

Some have testified of being tortured and sexually assaulted during interrogations by masked men. At least one of the women attempted suicide.

Farmers markets scaling down with eye on safety due to virus

By COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Johnny Gyergyó has been selling his farm's meat, poultry and eggs at a Detroit farmers market for more than a decade, but like many of his regular shoppers, he's been staying home in recent weeks to wait out the coronavirus crisis.

Gyergyó, 72, said the crowds at Eastern Market just aren't big enough to make it cost-effective for his typical 33-mile (53-kilometer) Saturday trips into the city from his farm in Berlin Township.

"We've been doing fairly well (selling) at the farm. It's not Eastern Market sales by no means, but at least it's helping us along here," said Gyergyó, who added that he's heard other vendors say they were scared to sell in Detroit, which has been hit particularly hard by the coronavirus.

Farmers, growers and operators of open-air markets are heading into one of their busiest times of year while facing the added challenge of the coronavirus. The disease has led to stay-at-home orders and the closure of nonessential businesses in many places, and has killed more than 60,000 people in the U.S. and at least 230,000 worldwide.

Shoppers venturing to farmers markets this spring are likely to see a lot fewer vendors and fellow customers. The ones they do see will be taking precautions to guard against the spread of COVID-19, such as the wearing of face masks and frequent use of hand sanitizer. Many markets have already taken other steps, including turning to drive-through shopping, reducing their hours of operation and using fencing for crowd control.

The farmers market in Overland Park, Kansas, has been relocated to the city's convention center, where patrons drive past vendors who bring produce to their vehicles. About 35 vendors participated on April 25 and vehicles were at the gate when the market opened at 8 a.m. About 700 drove through before a 2 p.m. closing, said Meg Ralph, a city spokeswoman.

In Vermont, officials are requiring all farmers markets to be held outdoors and have banned entertainment, children's activities and cooking demonstrations to prevent people from congregating in small spaces. The Bennington Farmers' Market was scheduled to reopen on Saturday as a pre-order drive-thru market. And in the state's quaint capital city of Montpelier, the Capital City Market was prepared for pre-order pickups and in-person shoppers, with no more than 10 people allowed in the market at a time. Vendors must be spaced 12 feet apart and wear face coverings and gloves.

Such precautions can take some of the joy out of outdoor shopping, but that's the price of safety.

"They won't be able to talk about recipes (or) their families — converse about the kids, like they normally do," said Myra Gorman, market manager for the farmers market in Evanston, Illinois. "Some of them will share phone numbers so they can do that stuff later."

The market just north of Chicago typically attracts as many as 7,000 people on a Saturday. This weekend, 35 vendors will be set up and only 105 or so customers will be allowed inside at any time. Once inside, all the thumping, touching, smelling and grabbing of fruits and vegetables will be replaced by pointing by mask-wearing customers to mask- and glove-wearing vendors.

No farmers have backed out, said Gorman, adding that "this is their business, their livelihood."

One of the vendors, Todd Nichols, said he couldn't skip the market even if he wanted to. Nichols is an owner of Nichols Farm & Orchard in Marengo, a community about 55 miles (90 kilometers) northwest of Chicago. He said about 90% of his income comes from farmers markets and restaurants. Restaurant sales have fallen through the floor during the pandemic, he said.

"Farmers markets are just too important not to go," Nichols said.

The Saturday market in Collingswood, New Jersey, near Philadelphia, launched 20 years ago. The 2020 edition, which was set open Saturday, won't have live music or some of the other attractions that has made it a festival-like destination in years past. Like so many other markets trying to survive the pandemic, it will be a stripped-down "farm-to-car" market that has moved to a big parking lot.

Continuing the market provides normalcy for area residents and help for some now-struggling farmers, said Collingswood Mayor Jim Maley.

"Their crops didn't know there was a pandemic going on," he said.

Meanwhile, Detroit's Eastern Market is considering putting up fencing to maintain social distancing and will paint grids on the floors to remind people to keep space between themselves and others.

About a dozen vendors are participating in drive-thru shopping on Tuesdays at the market.

The restrictions aren't limited to the U.S., either. At the farmers market near the Primrose Hill neighborhood in London, shopping has been restricted to a few people at a time who are given gloves upon entering. Vendors are spread out and work behind plastic shields.

Believe women? Sure, say Democrats, but vet their claims

By LAURIE KELLMAN and BILL BARROW Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — "Believe women" was never a call to believe all women automatically.

That's what leading Democrats, including the prominent figures of the #MeToo movement, are suggesting as they stand behind former Vice President Joe Biden and his bid to unseat President Donald Trump. From House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to the female senators who ran for president and prominent Hollywood activists, they're not backing down after Biden on Friday publicly denied a former aide's accusation that he assaulted her in 1993.

"It never happened," Biden said on MSNBC's "Morning Joe." "Believing women means taking the woman's claim seriously when she steps forward, and then vet it, look into it. That's true in this case as well. ... But in the end, the truth is what matters, and in this case, the truth is the claims are false."

It was largely the denial Democrats were hoping for.

Even so, there was a clear discomfort and perhaps resentment with being on defense on the issue while campaigning against a president accused by more than two dozen women of sexual misconduct. (Trump has denied the allegations.) Especially galling to some is the charge by Republicans that Democrats are giving Biden a pass they didn't afford Justice Brett Kavanaugh when he denied Christine Blasey Ford's accusation of sexual assault when they were teenagers.

Pelosi, the nation's highest-ranking Democrat, recognized the maw and curtly stepped around it.

"I don't need a lecture or a speech," she said at her weekly news conference as she cut into a reporter's question about a double standard. "With all the respect in the world for any woman who comes forward, I have the highest regard for Joe Biden. And that's what I have to say about that."

Others have been less succinct. Actress and leading #MeToo activist Alyssa Milano sat behind Kavanaugh during his televised confirmation hearings, a position she sought as a way to stand in "solidarity" with Blasey Ford.

But as the Reade allegations swirled around Biden and a party finally uniting around him, Milano penned an essay for Deadline.com in which she acknowledged "shades of gray" and reiterated her support for the former vice president.

"Believing women was never about 'Believe all women no matter what they say,' it was about changing the culture of NOT believing women by default," Milano wrote.

Karen Finney, a prominent Democratic strategist and message-maker who worked for Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign, rejected the Kavanaugh comparison outright.

In the context of sexual assault allegations, Finney said "believe women" doesn't mean accepting as fact any assertion, but instead means affording women the default credibility to take claims seriously.

"If you start from the premise that this person is telling the truth, then you do the investigation and look at the facts," she said, "and if the facts tell a different story, then that's an important conversation to have."

Biden's supporters in the Senate, too, have stood by him, including some who challenged him for the nomination and are now said to be on his short list for a running mate.

But a few hours after his appearance on MSNBC, Trump's campaign posted a video featuring many of them — Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, Kamala Harris of California and Mazie Hirono of Hawaii — saying in the past that female accusers should be believed.

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The reel begins and ends with Biden and Clinton, the 2016 Democratic nominee whose husband, Bill Clinton, was impeached in connection with his extramarital affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. The Senate acquitted him, but the episode remains one of the party's fraught chapters in its advocacy for women.

Biden appeared Friday to recognize the need to reinforce his commitment.

During an evening virtual fundraiser with hundreds of veterans from the Obama administration, he addressed the matter again, repeating his assertions that Reade's account "didn't happen," but explaining that his reaction doesn't amount to hypocrisy because of how Democrats have approached the #MeToo movement.

"My knowledge that it isn't true does nothing to shake my belief that women have to be able to be heard and that all the claims be taken seriously," Biden said. "It isn't enough just to simply take my word for it and dismiss it out of hand. Frankly, that shouldn't be enough for anyone because we know that sort of approach is how the culture of abuse has been allowed to fester for so long."

Unreleased document troves — Biden's at the the University of Delaware and other Senate files at the National Archives — have raised questions about what might be found in them. Reade says she filed a complaint about Biden with the Senate. Biden says such a document, if it exists, would be stored in the archives.

A dozen times on MSNBC, Biden said he knew of no complaint Reade had filed against him and got somewhat mired in the details of where such a document might be stored.

Biden was asked if he is "absolutely certain" and "absolutely positive, that there is no record of any complaint by Tara Reade" against him.

His answer was highly qualified: "I'm absolutely positive that no one that I'm aware of, ever, was —been made aware of any complaint, a formal complaint, made by or a complaint by Tara Reade against me at the time this allegedly happened, 27 years ago," until he announced his campaign for president.

Then Biden tried again:

"I know of no one who's aware that any complaint was made."

W. Europe relaxes virus measures, but Russia numbers spike

By JOSEPH WILSON, DAVID RISING and JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Spaniards filled the streets Saturday to exercise outside in gorgeous spring weather for the first time in seven weeks, while German children rushed to playgrounds as countries in Western Europe moved ahead with the gradual relaxation of coronavirus lockdown restrictions.

Russia and Pakistan, however, reported their biggest one-day spikes in new infections, in a sign the pandemic is far from over.

Concern was growing in Moscow about the possibility that hospitals might become overwhelmed after Russia recorded a new one-day high of 9,633 new infections, a 20% increase over Friday's count which, itself, was a new daily record.

Russia has now reported 124,054 total cases, with 15,013 recoveries and 1,222 fatalities. True numbers are believed to be higher because not everyone is tested and Russian tests are reported to be only 70% to 80% accurate.

Moscow's mayor said this week that officials are considering establishing temporary hospitals at sports complexes and shopping malls to deal with the influx of patients. Infection cases have reached the highest levels of government, with both the prime minister and the construction minister reporting they had contracted the virus.

At the same time, Spain, one of the worst-hit countries in the world with 24,543 deaths and more than 213,000 cases of COVID-19, was rolling back such emergency measures that helped bring the outbreak under control and save hospitals from collapse. A huge field hospital the military helped set up at a Madrid convention center was closed on Friday, and the capital has already closed a makeshift morgue the army had established at an ice rink in a shopping mall.

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Since Spain's lockdown started March 14, only adults have been able to leave home, for shopping for food, medicine and other essential goods, and to walk dogs close to home. The lockdown is credited with succeeding in reducing daily increases of infections from more than 20% to less than 1%.

As restrictions were relaxed Saturday, people ran, walked, or rode bicycles under a brilliant sunny sky in Barcelona, where many flocked to the maritime promenade to get as close as possible to the still-off-limits beach.

"I feel good, but tired. You sure notice that it has been a month and I am not in shape," 36-year-old Cristina Palomeque said in Barcelona. "Some people think it may be too early, as I do, but it is also important to do exercise for health reasons."

The government has set up time slots for age groups and activities, and social-distancing measures are still in place.

Spain has detailed a complex rollback plan that will vary by province. Those with the fewest cases and with health care resources in place to handle a rebound of the virus will be the first to enjoy a further loosening of the measures.

The virus has killed more than 238,000 people worldwide, including more than 65,000 in the United States and more than 20,000 each in Italy, Britain, France and Spain, according to a count kept by Johns Hopkins University. Health experts warn a second wave of infections could hit unless testing is expanded dramatically.

U.S. President Donald Trump said Friday he hopes the total number of U.S. deaths will be below 100,000, which he acknowledged is a "horrible number."

As the crisis stabilizes in some European countries and American states, governments are easing the shutdown of businesses that plunged the global economy into its deepest slump since the 1930s and wiped out millions of jobs.

Trump, who is running for reelection in the midst of a U.S. economic slump that has wiped out more than 10 million jobs, is pressing state governors to lift anti-disease controls despite warnings by some health experts that that might lead to a spike in infections.

In Italy, which has seen the most deaths in Europe with more than 28,000, people looked enviously on at Spain as they awaited their own relaxation of restrictions now that the number of new cases has leveled out.

Italy's special commissioner for combating the coronavirus, Domenico Arcuri, said that the gradual loosening of the two-month lockdown, starting Monday, signals a new challenge, "which by now is clear to everyone; we don't know how long it will last."

More masks will be distributed for people riding public transportation, whose numbers are expected to climb as the manufacturing and construction sectors emerge from the lockdown. Stores, restaurants, bars and cultural sites like museums remain closed until May 18.

Germany, which has registered more than 164,000 cases but seen only about 6,700 deaths, has strict social distancing guidelines but never restricted people going outside for exercise. Smaller shops have already been opened and this is the first weekend in which playgrounds, museums and zoos have been permitted to open as well.

Elsewhere, China, where the pandemic began in December, reported a single new infection Saturday, extending a steady decline in confirmed cases. South Korea reported six new cases on Saturday, none of them in the hard-hit city of Daegu in the southeast. Both countries are easing anti-virus controls and reviving economic activity.

But Pakistan on Saturday announced 1,297 new cases, raising the total in the country of 220 million people to 18,114.

The increase coincides with increased testing. The government said more than 9,000 tests were conducted in the previous 24 hours. Prime Minister Imran Khan has set a goal of 20,000 per day.

Photos in newspapers showed large numbers of the faithful at Pakistani mosques and only some following social distancing rules. Khan's government said it might ease controls, but doctors have pleaded for stricter lockdowns, warning an explosion of infections would overwhelm hospitals that have only 3,000

intensive care beds nationwide.

Africa now has more than 40,000 reported cases, according to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There have also been more than 1,600 deaths across the continent from the virus, which has been reported in every country except for tiny and mountainous Lesotho.

Rising reported from Berlin; Heintz reported from Moscow. AP journalists around the world contributed to this report.

UN: COVID-19 deaths for people over 80 are 5 times average

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Friday that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing "untold fear and suffering" for older people around the world who are dying at a higher rate, and especially for those over age 80, whose fatality rate is five times the global average.

The U.N. chief said that beyond the health risks, "the pandemic is putting older people at greater risk of poverty," with an especially devastating impact on the elderly in developing countries.

Guterres issued a 16-page policy briefing on the impact of COVID-19 on older people with several key messages, most importantly that "no person, young or old, is expendable" and "older people have the same rights to life and health as everyone else."

The secretary-general, who celebrated his 71st birthday Thursday, said: "As an older person myself, with responsibility for an even older mother, I am deeply concerned about the pandemic on a personal level, and about its effects on our communities and societies."

He called for improved social support and "smarter efforts" to use digital technology to reach older people who may face great suffering because of isolation and restrictions on their movements.

Guterres said all social, economic and humanitarian responses to the pandemic must take the needs of older people into account, noting that the majority are women who are more likely to enter their later years in poverty, without access to health care.

He also said older people must not be treated as "invisible or powerless," pointing out that many are working and fully engaged in family life, teaching, learning and looking after others.

"To get through this pandemic together, we need a surge in global and national solidarity and the contributions of all members of society, including older people," Guterres said in a video message accompanying the policy report that also stressed the importance of building "age-friendly societies."

The report warns that not only are those over 80 dying at five times the average rate from the new coronavirus but "an estimated 66% of people aged 70 and over have at least one underlying condition, placing them at increased risk of severe impact from COVID-19."

According to the report, over 95% of fatalities due to COVID-19 in Europe have been people 60 and older. In the United States, 80% of deaths are among adults 65 and over, it said, and in China, approximately 80% of deaths occurred among adults aged 60 or older.

The report warned that "the mortality rate for older persons could climb even higher" as COVID-19 spreads to developing countries, "likely overwhelming health and social protection systems."

In the midst of the pandemic, the U.N. report said, overburdened hospitals and medical facilities face difficult decisions around the use of scarce resources.

Human rights experts have noted with concern that decisions about using these resources, including ventilators, "have in some cases been made based on age, or on generalized assumptions about the impact of a particular diagnosis, such as dementia, on overall health, life expectancy or chances of survival," the report said.

"Less visible but no less worrisome," it said, "are the broader effects: health care denied for conditions unrelated to COVID-19; neglect and abuse in institutions and care facilities; an increase in poverty and unemployment; the dramatic impact on well-being and mental health; and the trauma of stigma and discrimination."

US allows use of 1st drug shown to help virus recovery

By **MATTHEW PERRONE** and **MARILYNN MARCHIONE** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. regulators on Friday allowed emergency use of the first drug that appears to help some COVID-19 patients recover faster, a milestone in the global search for effective therapies against the coronavirus.

The Food and Drug Administration cleared Gilead Science's intravenous drug for hospitalized patients with "severe disease," such as those experiencing breathing problems requiring supplemental oxygen or ventilators.

President Donald Trump announced the news at the White House alongside Gilead CEO Daniel O'Day and Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Stephen Hahn.

"This was lightning speed in terms of getting something approved" said Hahn, calling the drug "an important clinical advance."

The FDA acted after preliminary results from a government-sponsored study showed that the drug, remdesivir, shortened the time to recovery by 31%, or about four days on average, for hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

Those given the drug were able to leave the hospital in 11 days on average vs. 15 days for the comparison group. The drug may also help avert deaths, but that effect is not yet large enough for scientists to know for sure.

Dr. Sameer Khanijo, a critical care specialist, said he wants to see additional studies to clarify the drug's benefit.

"I don't think this is a cure yet, but I think it's starting to point us in the right direction," said Khanijo of North Shore University Hospital in New York. "As a society it's nice to have something that will help stem the tide of this disease."

The FDA said preliminary results from the government study warranted Friday's decision, though regulators acknowledged "there is limited information known about the safety and effectiveness of using remdesivir."

The drug's side effects include potential inflammation of the liver and problems related to its infusion, which could lead to nausea, vomiting, sweating and low blood pressure. Information about dosing and potential safety issues will be provided to physicians and patients, the FDA said.

The National Institutes of Health's Dr. Anthony Fauci said Wednesday the drug would become a new standard of care for severely ill COVID-19 patients. Remdesivir, which blocks an enzyme the virus uses to copy its genetic material, has not been tested on people with milder illness.

The FDA authorized the drug under its emergency powers to quickly speed the availability of experimental drugs, tests and other medical products during public health crises.

In normal times the FDA requires "substantial evidence" of a drug's safety and effectiveness, usually through one or more large, rigorously controlled patient studies. But during public health emergencies the agency can waive those standards and require only that an experimental treatment's potential benefits outweigh its risks.

Gilead has said it will donate its currently available stock of the drug and is ramping up production to make more. It said the U.S. government would coordinate distribution of remdesivir to parts of the country that need it most.

No drugs are currently FDA-approved for treating the coronavirus, and remdesivir will still need formal approval.

The FDA can convert the drug's status to full approval if Gilead or other researchers provide additional data of remdesivir's safety and effectiveness.

"This is a very, very early stage so you wouldn't expect to have any sort of full approval at this point," said Cathy Burgess, an attorney specializing in FDA issues. "But obviously they want to get this out to patients as quickly as possible."

The FDA previously allowed narrow use of a malaria drug, hydroxychloroquine, for hospitalized patients

who were unable to take part in ongoing studies of the medication. Trump repeatedly promoted it as a possible COVID-19 treatment, but no large high-quality studies have shown the drug works for that and it has significant safety concerns.

The FDA warned doctors late last month against prescribing the drug outside of hospital or research settings, due to risks of sometimes fatal heart side effects. The agency made the announcements after receiving new reports of injury and death with the medication, which is also used to treat lupus and rheumatoid arthritis.

Two small studies published Friday add to concerns about hydroxychloroquine. Critically ill COVID-19 patients given the pill-based drug were prone to heart rhythm problems, and for many risks mounted when it was combined with an antibiotic, the studies found.

Women's soccer claim of unequal pay tossed, can argue travel

By ANNE M. PETERSON and RONALD BLUM AP Sports Writers

A federal judge threw out the unequal pay claim by players on the U.S. women's national soccer team in a surprising loss for the defending World Cup champions but allowed their allegation of discriminatory working conditions to go to trial.

Players led by Alex Morgan sued in March 2019, claiming they have not been paid equally under their collective bargaining agreement to what the men's national team receives under its labor deal. They asked for more than \$66 million in damages under the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In a 32-page decision Friday, U.S. District Judge R. Gary Klausner granted in part a motion for partial summary judgment by the U.S. Soccer Federation. He threw out the Equal Pay Act allegations but left intact the Civil Rights Act claims.

"The history of negotiations between the parties demonstrates that the WNT rejected an offer to be paid under the same pay-to-play structure as the MNT, and the WNT was willing to forgo higher bonuses for benefits, such as greater base compensation and the guarantee of a higher number of contracted players," Klausner wrote.

"Accordingly, plaintiffs cannot now retroactively deem their CBA worse than the MNT CBA by reference to what they would have made had they been paid under the MNT's pay-to-play terms structure when they themselves rejected such a structure," he said.

Klausner left intact claims the USSF discriminated in the money it spent on commercial airfare, hotel accommodations, and medical and training support services.

A trial is scheduled for June 16 in federal court in Los Angeles.

"We are shocked and disappointed with today's decision, but we will not give up our hard work for equal pay," Molly Levinson, spokeswoman for the women's players, said in a statement. "We are confident in our case and steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that girls and women who play this sport will not be valued as lesser just because of their gender."

Players intend to ask the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn Klausner's decision, a move that could delay the trial into 2021 or later.

"If you know this team at all you know we have a lot of fight left in us. We knew this wasn't going to be easy, change never is," defender Becky Sauerbrunn wrote on Twitter.

While the Americans are the most successful women's team, with four World Cup titles including the last two, the U.S. men did not even qualify for the 2018 World Cup. The USSF argued the women actually made more than the men both overall and by game average, and the women claimed they should have the same bonus structure as the men.

"Merely comparing what WNT players received under their own CBA with what they would have received under the MNT CBA discounts the value that the team placed on guaranteed benefits they receive under their agreement, which they opted for at the expense of higher performance-based bonuses," Klausner wrote.

"This issue is insufficient to create a genuine issue of material fact for trial," he added.

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Klausner also said the women could not go forward with their claim that the USSF discriminated against them by scheduling more games on artificial turf than the men had. He said there was not sufficient evidence to show that decisions on field surface were made for discriminatory reasons.

He rejected the USSF's argument that the men had a competitive need for charter flights that the women lacked, allowing that part of the suit to go forward. The federation has argued that the men, who have struggled in World Cup qualifying, have more need for charters than the women in order to arrive more rested for their qualifiers.

"This rationale does not fully explain the gross disparity on money spent on airfare and hotels for the teams," Klausner wrote.

In addition, the USSF has said spending in these areas has been equal since the women's union agreed to a new labor deal in 2017.

Klausner allowed other claims of discriminatory travel accommodations, such as money spent on hotels and commercial flights, to go to trial along with claims on support services such as medical and training staff. He said the USSF's lawyers waited until reply briefs to ask for those claims to be thrown out, which meant he did not have to consider them.

Seyfarth Shaw's summary judgment motion for the USSF included arguments critical of American women's players. That filing caused an uproar and led to the resignation of USSF president Carlos Cordeiro, who was replaced by Cindy Parlow Cone, a former national team player. Latham & Watkins took over as counsel and filed the reply brief.

Parlow Cone has said she hopes the suit can settle before a trial.

"We look forward to working with the women's national team to chart a positive path forward to grow the game," the USSF said in a statement. "We are committed to continuing that work to ensure our women's national team remains the best in the world."

Earlier Friday, the women asked that Parlow Cone be included as a trial witness. Their lawyers said although the federation backed off earlier arguments saying women were inferior to their male counterparts in skill and effort, it still planned to contest differences in responsibility.

NY nursing home reports 98 deaths linked to coronavirus

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A New York City nursing home on Friday reported the deaths of 98 residents believed to have had the coronavirus — a staggering death toll that shocked public officials.

"It's absolutely horrifying," Mayor Bill de Blasio said. "It's inestimable loss, and it's just impossible to imagine so many people lost in one place."

It is hard to say whether the spate of deaths at the Isabella Geriatric Center, in Manhattan, is the worst nursing home outbreak yet in the U.S., because even within the city facilities have chosen to report fatalities in different ways. A state tally of nursing home deaths released Friday listed only 13 at the home.

But officials at the 705-bed center confirmed that through Wednesday 46 residents who tested positive for COVID-19 had died as well as an additional 52 people "suspected" to have the virus. Some died at the nursing home and some died after being treated at hospitals.

The number of bodies became so overwhelming the home ordered a refrigerator truck to store them because funeral homes have been taking days to pick up the deceased.

"Isabella, like all other nursing homes in New York City, initially had limited access to widespread and consistent in-house testing to quickly diagnose our residents and staff," Audrey Waters, a spokeswoman for the nursing home, wrote in an email. "This hampered our ability to identify those who were infected and asymptomatic, despite our efforts to swiftly separate anyone who presented symptoms."

Isabella also encountered staffing shortages, prompting it to hire from outside agencies and early challenges securing personal protective equipment for employees. Waters said the home finally is "getting more access to testing" now.

The nursing home's death toll was first reported by local cable news station NY1.

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Nursing homes have been known since the earliest days of the outbreak as a trouble spot. They have been particularly hard hit in New York, which has had at least 3,065 nursing home deaths — by far the most in the nation — as of Thursday, according to an Associated Press count.

The state Department of Health said it has received “outbreak reports” from 239 nursing homes, including at least six facilities with death tolls of 40 patients or more.

“The one thing we now know about the nursing homes is the status quo cannot continue to say the least,” de Blasio said. “Something very different has to happen.”

City officials are “trying to provide help in every way we can,” the mayor added, saying the city had delivered thousands of respirator masks to the Washington Heights facility.

U.S. Rep. Adriano Espaillat, a New York Democrat, accused Isabella of keeping the public and elected officials in the dark about the outbreak. He sent a letter Friday to Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York Attorney General Letitia James urging them to investigate the “information sharing practices” of New York nursing homes.

“People deserve to know what’s happening,” Espaillat said in an interview with AP.

Isabella Geriatric Center said it “could not speculate” as to why a state survey previously listed only 13 COVID-19 deaths at its facility. It sent a lengthy statement to AP on Friday insisting it “truthfully and accurately reported” its death toll to state officials.

State officials said they are building an updated data set intended to offer a more detailed window into nursing home deaths. Cuomo referred to a “vagueness” in some reporting of suspected COVID-19 cases but warned nursing homes not to misrepresent their death tolls.

“They submit these numbers under penalty of perjury,” Cuomo told reporters. “They can be prosecuted criminally for fraud on any of these reporting numbers.”

Isabella said it kept family members in the loop about changes in their loved ones’ conditions despite the circumstances.

“When we believe their loved one is nearing death, we do reach out to a resident’s primary contact and ask if they would like to say goodbye in person or via phone or an app,” Waters said. “In-person goodbye visits were never interrupted and continue to happen.”

Ex-Green Beret led failed attempt to oust Venezuela’s Maduro

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The plan was simple, but perilous. Some 300 heavily armed volunteers would sneak into Venezuela from the northern tip of South America. Along the way, they would raid military bases in the socialist country and ignite a popular rebellion that would end in President Nicolás Maduro’s arrest.

What could go wrong? As it turns out, pretty much everything.

The ringleader of the plot is now jailed in the U.S. on narcotics charges. Authorities in the U.S. and Colombia are asking questions about the role of his muscular American adviser, a former Green Beret. And dozens of desperate combatants who flocked to secret training camps in Colombia said they have been left to fend for themselves amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The failed attempt to start an uprising collapsed under the collective weight of skimpy planning, feuding among opposition politicians and a poorly trained force that stood little chance of beating the Venezuelan military.

“You’re not going to take out Maduro with 300 hungry, untrained men,” said Ephraim Mattos, a former U.S. Navy SEAL who trained some of the would-be combatants in first aid.

This bizarre, untold story of a call to arms that crashed before it launched is drawn from interviews with more than 30 Maduro opponents and aspiring freedom fighters who were directly involved in or familiar with its planning. Most spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing retaliation.

When hints of the conspiracy surfaced last month, the Maduro-controlled state media portrayed it as an invasion ginned up by the CIA, like the Cuban Bay of Pigs fiasco of 1961. An Associated Press investigation found no evidence of U.S. government involvement in the plot. Nevertheless, interviews revealed that lead-

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ers of Venezuela's U.S.-backed opposition knew of the covert force, even if they dismissed its prospects.

Planning for the incursion began after an April 30, 2019, barracks revolt by a cadre of soldiers who swore loyalty to Maduro's would-be replacement, Juan Guaidó, the opposition leader recognized by the U.S. and some 60 other nations as Venezuela's rightful leader. Contrary to U.S. expectations at the time, key Maduro aides never joined with the opposition and the government quickly quashed the uprising.

A few weeks later, some soldiers and politicians involved in the failed rebellion retreated to the JW Marriott in Bogota, Colombia. The hotel was a center of intrigue among Venezuelan exiles. For this occasion, conference rooms were reserved for what one participant described as the "Star Wars summit of anti-Maduro goofballs" — military deserters accused of drug trafficking, shady financiers and former Maduro officials seeking redemption.

Among those angling in the open lobby was Jordan Goudreau, an American citizen and three-time Bronze Star recipient for bravery in Iraq and Afghanistan, where he served as a medic in U.S. Army special forces, according to five people who met with the former soldier.

Those he interacted with in the U.S. and Colombia described him in interviews alternately as a freedom-loving patriot, a mercenary and a gifted warrior scarred by battle and in way over his head.

Two former special forces colleagues said Goudreau was always at the top of his class: a cell leader with a superb intellect for handling sources, an amazing shot and a devoted mixed martial arts fighter who still cut his hair high and tight.

At the end of an otherwise distinguished military career, the Canadian-born Goudreau was investigated in 2013 for allegedly defrauding the Army of \$62,000 in housing stipends. Goudreau said the investigation was closed with no charges.

After retiring in 2016, he worked as a private security contractor in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria. In 2018, he set up Silvercorp USA, a private security firm, near his home on Florida's Space Coast to embed counter-terror agents in schools disguised as teachers. The company's website features photos and videos of Goudreau firing machine guns in battle, running shirtless up a pyramid, flying on a private jet and sporting a military backpack with a rolled-up American flag.

Silvercorp's website touts operations in more than 50 countries, with an advisory team made up of former diplomats, experienced military strategists and heads of multinational corporations -- none of them named. It claims to have "led international security teams" for the president of the United States.

Goudreau, 43, declined to be interviewed. In a written statement, he said that "Silvercorp cannot disclose the identities of its network of sources, assets and advisors due to the nature of our work" and, more generally, "would never confirm nor deny any activities in any operational realm. No inference should be drawn from this response."

'CONTROLLING CHAOS'

Goudreau's focus on Venezuela started in February 2019, when he worked security at a concert in support of Guaidó organized by British billionaire Richard Branson on the Venezuelan-Colombian border.

"Controlling chaos on the Venezuela border where a dictator looks on with apprehension," he wrote in a photo of himself on the concert stage posted to his Instagram account.

"He was always chasing the golden BB," said Drew White, a former business partner at Silvercorp, using military slang for a one-in-a-million shot. White said he broke with his former special forces comrade last fall when Goudreau asked for help raising money to fund his regime change initiative.

"As supportive as you want to be as a friend, his head wasn't in the world of reality," said White. "Nothing he said lined up."

According to White, Goudreau came back from the concert looking to capitalize on the Trump administration's growing interest in toppling Maduro.

He had been introduced to Keith Schiller, President Donald Trump's longtime bodyguard, through someone who worked in private security. Schiller attended a March 2019 event at the University Club in Washington for potential donors with activist Lester Toledo, then Guaidó's coordinator for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

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Last May, Goudreau accompanied Schiller to a meeting in Miami with representatives of Guaidó. There was a lively discussion with Schiller about the need to beef up security for Guaidó and his growing team of advisers inside Venezuela and across the world, according to a person familiar with the meeting. Schiller thought Goudreau was naive and in over his head. He cut off all contact following the meeting, said a person close to the former White House official.

In Bogota, it was Toledo who introduced Goudreau to a rebellious former Venezuelan military officer the American would come to trust above all others — Cliver Alcalá, ringleader of the Venezuelan military deserters.

Alcalá, a retired major general in Venezuela's army, seemed an unlikely hero to restore democracy to his homeland. In 2011, he was sanctioned by the U.S. for allegedly supplying FARC guerrillas in Colombia with surface-to-air missiles in exchange for cocaine. And last month, Alcalá was indicted by U.S. prosecutors alongside Maduro as one of the architects of a narcoterrorist conspiracy that allegedly sent 250 metric tons of cocaine every year to the U.S.

Alcalá is now in federal custody in New York awaiting trial. But before his surrender in Colombia, where he had been living since 2018, he had emerged as a forceful opponent of Maduro, not shy about urging military force.

Over two days of meetings with Goudreau and Toledo at the JW Marriott, Alcalá explained how he had selected 300 combatants from among the throngs of low-ranking soldiers who abandoned Maduro and fled to Colombia in the early days of Guaidó's uprising, said three people who participated in the meeting and insisted on anonymity to discuss sensitive conversations.

Alcalá said several dozen men were already living in three camps he maintained in and around the desert-like La Guajira peninsula that Colombia shares with Venezuela, the three said. Among the combatants in the camps was an exiled national guardsman accused of participating in a 2018 drone attack on Maduro.

Goudreau told Alcalá his company could prepare the men for battle, according to the three sources. The two sides discussed weapons and equipment for the volunteer army, with Goudreau estimating a budget of around \$1.5 million for a rapid strike operation.

Goudreau told participants at the meeting that he had high-level contacts in the Trump administration who could assist the effort, although he offered few details, the three people said. Over time, many of the people involved in the plan to overthrow Maduro would come to doubt his word.

From the outset, the audacious plan split an opposition coalition already sharply divided by egos and strategy. There were concerns that Alcalá, with a murky past and ties to the regime through a brother who was Maduro's ambassador to Iran, couldn't be trusted. Others worried about going behind the backs of their Colombian allies and the U.S. government.

But Goudreau didn't share the concerns about Alcalá, according to two people close to the former American soldier. Over time, he would come to share Alcalá's mistrust of the opposition, whose talk of restoring democracy was belied by what he saw as festering corruption and closed-door deal making with the regime, they said.

More importantly to Goudreau, Alcalá retained influence in the armed forces that Maduro's opponents, mostly civilian elites, lacked. He also knew the terrain, having served as the top commander along the border.

"We needed someone who knew the monster from the inside," recalled one exiled former officer who joined the plot.

Guaidó's envoys, including Toledo, ended contact with Goudreau after the Bogota meeting because they believed it was a suicide mission, according to three people close to the opposition leader.

Undeterred, Goudreau returned to Colombia with four associates, all of them U.S. combat veterans, and began working directly with Alcalá.

Alcalá and Goudreau revealed little about their military plans when they toured the camps. Some of the would-be combatants were told by the two men that the rag-tag army would cross the border in a heavily armed convoy and sweep into Caracas within 96 hours, according to multiple soldiers at the camps.

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Goudreau told the volunteers that — once challenged in battle — Maduro's food-deprived, demoralized military would collapse like dominoes, several of the soldiers said.

NO CHANCE TO SUCCEED

Many saw the plan as foolhardy and there appears to have been no serious attempt to seek U.S. military support.

"There was no chance they were going to succeed without direct U.S. military intervention," said Mattos, the former Navy SEAL who spent two weeks in September training the volunteers in basic tactical medicine on behalf of his non-profit, which works in combat zones.

Mattos visited the camps after hearing about them from a friend working in Colombia. He said he never met Goudreau.

Mattos said he was surprised by the barren conditions. There was no running water and men were sleeping on the floors, skipping meals and training with sawed-off broomsticks in place of assault rifles. Five Belgian shepherds trained to sniff out explosives were as poorly fed as their handlers and had to be given away.

Mattos said he grew wary as the men recalled how Goudreau had boasted to them of having protected Trump and told them he was readying a shipment of weapons and arranging aerial support for an eventual assault of Maduro's compound.

The volunteers also shared with Mattos a three-page document listing supplies needed for a three-week operation, which he provided to AP. Items included 320 M4 assault rifles, an anti-tank rocket launcher, Zodiac boats, \$1 million in cash and state-of-the-art night vision goggles. The document's metadata indicates it was created by Goudreau on June 16.

"Unfortunately, there's a lot of cowboys in this business who try to peddle their military credentials into a big pay day," said Mattos.

AP found no indication U.S. officials sponsored Goudreau's actions nor that Trump has authorized covert operations against Maduro, something that requires congressional notification.

But Colombian authorities were aware of his movements, as were prominent opposition politicians in Venezuela and exiles in Bogota, some of whom shared their findings with U.S. officials, according to two people familiar with the discussions.

True to his reputation as a self-absorbed loose cannon, Alcalá openly touted his plans for an incursion in a June meeting with Colombia's National Intelligence Directorate and appealed for their support, said a former Colombian official familiar with the conversation. Alcalá also boasted about his relationship with Goudreau, describing him as a former CIA agent.

When the Colombians checked with their CIA counterparts in Bogota, they were told that the former Green Beret was never an agent. Alcalá was then told by his hosts to stop talking about an invasion or face expulsion, the former Colombian official said.

It's unclear where Alcalá and Goudreau got their backing, and whatever money was collected for the initiative appears to have been meager. One person who allegedly promised support was Roen Kraft, an eccentric descendant of the cheese-making family who — along with former Trump bodyguard Schiller — was among those meeting with opposition envoys in Miami and Washington.

At some point, Kraft started raising money among his own circle of fellow trust-fund friends for what he described as a "private coup" to be carried out by Silvercorp, according to two businessmen whom he asked for money.

Kraft allegedly lured prospective donors with the promise of preferential access to negotiate deals in the energy and mining sectors with an eventual Guaidó government, said one of the businessmen. He provided AP a two-page, unsigned draft memorandum for a six-figure commitment he said was sent by Kraft in October in which he represents himself as the "prime contractor" of Venezuela.

But it was never clear if Kraft really had the inside track with the Venezuelans.

In a phone interview with AP, Kraft acknowledged meeting with Goudreau three times last year. But he said the two never did any business together and only discussed the delivery of humanitarian aid for Venezuela. He said Goudreau broke off all communications with him on Oct. 14, when it seemed he was

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intent on a military action.

"I never gave him any money," said Kraft.

'WE KNEW EVERYTHING'

Back in Colombia, more recruits were arriving to the three camps — even if the promised money didn't. Goudreau tried to bring a semblance of order. Uniforms were provided, daily exercise routines intensified and Silvercorp instructed the would-be warriors in close quarter combat.

Goudreau is "more of a Venezuelan patriot than many Venezuelans," said Hernán Alemán, a lawmaker from western Zulia state and one of a few politicians to openly embrace the clandestine mission.

Alemán said in an interview that neither the U.S. nor the Colombian governments were involved in the plot to overthrow Maduro. He claims he tried to speak several times to Guaidó about the plan but said the opposition leader showed little interest.

"Lots of people knew about it, but they didn't support us," he said. "They were too afraid."

The plot quickly crumbled in early March when one of the volunteer combatants was arrested after sneaking across the border into Venezuela from Colombia.

Shortly after, Colombian police stopped a truck transporting a cache of brand new weapons and tactical equipment worth around \$150,000, including spotting scopes, night vision goggles, two-way radios and 26 American-made assault rifles with the serial numbers rubbed off. Fifteen brown-colored helmets were manufactured by High-End Defense Solutions, a Miami-based military equipment vendor owned by a Venezuelan immigrant family.

High-End Defense Solutions is the same company that Goudreau visited in November and December, allegedly to source weapons, according to two former Venezuelan soldiers who claim to have helped the American select the gear but later had a bitter falling out with Goudreau amid accusations that they were moles for Maduro.

Company owner Mark Von Reitzenstein did not respond to repeated email and phone requests seeking comment.

Alcalá claimed ownership of the weapons shortly before surrendering to face the U.S. drug charges, saying they belonged to the "Venezuelan people." He also lashed out against Guaidó, accusing him of betraying a contract signed between his "American advisers" and J.J. Rendon, a political strategist in Miami appointed by Guaidó to help force Maduro from power.

"We had everything ready," lamented Alcalá in a video published on social media. "But circumstances that have plagued us throughout this fight against the regime generated leaks from the very heart of the opposition, the part that wants to coexist with Maduro."

Through a spokesman, Guaidó stood by comments made to Colombian media that he never signed any contract of the kind described by Alcalá, whom he said he doesn't know. Rendon said his work for Guaidó is confidential and he would be required to deny any contract, whether or not it exists.

Meanwhile, Alcalá has offered no evidence and the alleged contract has yet to emerge, though AP repeatedly asked Goudreau for a copy.

In the aftermath of Alcalá's arrest, the would-be insurrection appears to have disbanded. As the coronavirus spreads, several of the remaining combatants have fled the camps and fanned out across Colombia, reconnecting with loved ones and figuring out their next steps. Most are broke, facing investigation by Colombian police and frustrated with Goudreau, whom they blame for leading them astray.

Meanwhile, the socialist leadership in Caracas couldn't help but gloat.

Diosdado Cabello, the No. 2 most powerful person in the country and eminence grise of Venezuela's vast intelligence network, insisted that the government had infiltrated the plot for months.

"We knew everything," said Cabello. "Some of their meetings we had to pay for. That's how infiltrated they were."

With quirks and restrictions, many states lift lockdowns

By JANET McCONNAUGHEY and GRANT SCHULTE Associated Press

GRETNA, La. (AP) — More than a dozen states let restaurants, stores or other businesses reopen Friday in the biggest one-day push yet to get their economies up and running again, acting at their own speed and with their own quirks and restrictions to make sure the coronavirus doesn't come storming back.

People in Louisiana could eat at restaurants again but had to sit outside at tables 10 feet (3 meters) apart with no waiter service. Maine residents could attend church services as long as they stayed in their cars. And a Nebraska mall reopened with plexiglass barriers and hand-sanitizing stations but few shoppers.

"I feel like I just got out of jail!" accountant Joy Palermo exclaimed as she sat down with a bacon-garnished bloody Mary at the Gretna Depot Cafe outside New Orleans.

Meanwhile, the first drug shown to help fight COVID-19 won emergency approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. In a major study, remdesivir shortened patients' recovery time from 15 days to 11 on average and may have also reduced deaths.

The virus has killed more than 230,000 people worldwide, including over 64,000 in the U.S. and more than 20,000 each in Italy, Britain, France and Spain, forcing lockdowns that have shuttered factories and businesses, thrown tens of millions out of work and throttled the world's economies.

President Donald Trump said Friday that he's hoping the total number of COVID-19 deaths in the United States will be below 100,000, which he acknowledged is a "horrible number." Trump's predictions of the expected U.S. death toll have changed over time, with his earlier 60,000 projection now being eclipsed. But he said at a White House event that "maybe millions of lives" have been saved by shutting down the economy.

With the crisis stabilizing in Europe and in many places in the U.S., countries and states are gradually easing their restrictions amid warnings from health experts that a second wave of infections could hit unless testing for the virus is expanded dramatically.

In much of Colorado, people could get their hair cut and shop at stores again, though stay-at-home orders remained in place in Denver and surrounding counties. Wyoming let barbershops, nail salons, gyms and daycare centers reopen. In Maine, golf courses, hairdressers and dentists opened.

Hotels near South Carolina beaches opened and state parks unlocked their gates for the first time in more than a month. But in Myrtle Beach, the state's most popular tourist destination, hotel elevators will be restricted to one person or one family — a potential inconvenience at the area's 15- and 20-story resorts.

Texas' reopening got underway with sparse crowds at shopping malls and restaurants allowing customers to dine in, though only at 25% capacity in most places. A video posted on social media showed a city park ranger in Austin getting shoved into the water Thursday while asking people in a crowd to keep 6 feet (2 meters) apart from each other. Police charged a 25-year-old man with attempted assault.

At Gattuso's Restaurant in Gretna, Louisiana, Kent and Doris Alimia and their daughters, Molly and Emily, celebrated Molly Alimia's 22nd birthday at one of the outdoor tables, which were screened by plants in wooden planters 5 feet high.

"It's a nice change of scenery to actually get out of the house," Molly Alimia said.

Outside Omaha, Nebraska, Jasmine Ramos was among a half-dozen shoppers wandering the open-air Nebraska Crossing mall. Most wore masks.

"I do think it's a little soon, but it's kind of slow and there aren't a lot of people here, so I'm not too worried," Ramos said.

Restrictions were still in place in Arizona, but warnings from police and health officials didn't stop Debbie Thompson from serving food Friday inside her Horseshoe Cafe in Wickenburg, a town of 6,300 people about 65 miles (105 kilometers) west of Phoenix. Cheered on by a few customers, Thompson was not arrested, but she later received a call from the state Department of Health Services telling her to stop violating Gov. Doug Ducey's stay-at-home order.

Around the country, protesters have demanded governors reboot the battered economy. More than 100 people chanted and carried signs in front of Chicago's Thompson Center, where Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker

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has an office, to call for an end to the statewide lockdown.

Pritzker has said he will not lift his order until it's safe, and several counterprotesters expressed support for his position. Nurse anesthetist Benjamin Salazar held up a sign that read, "Stay home. We are getting tired of seeing people die."

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham invoked the state's Riot Control Act as she sealed off all roads to nonessential traffic in the city of Gallup, population 70,000, to help control a surging coronavirus outbreak in the former trading post on the outskirts of the Navajo reservation.

In the hardest-hit corner of the U.S., New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said schools and colleges will remain closed through the rest of the academic year. A New York City nursing home on Friday reported the deaths of 98 residents believed to have had the coronavirus — a staggering death toll that shocked public officials.

In Washington state, where the nation's first COVID-19 case was confirmed in January, Gov. Jay Inslee said Friday that he is extending the state's coronavirus stay-at-home order through at least May 31 and that he will ease the restrictions in four stages. Washington also had the first deadly cluster of cases in the U.S., at a Seattle-area nursing home.

And in Michigan, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Friday that her stay-at-home order remains in effect through May 15 despite Republicans' refusal to extend her emergency declaration.

Elsewhere around the world, Beijing's Forbidden City, the imperial palace turned museum that is one of China's biggest tourist attractions, started welcoming visitors again, and Bangladesh began reopening factories.

In the U.S., Shani and Sergei Oveson were excited to resume dine-in seating at their small Salt Lake City restaurant, which has seen an 85% drop in sales since mid-March. Their place, the Ramen Bar, had only half the normal seating capacity because of social-distancing requirements.

"We're really excited to be open, but at the same time we're scared that the virus will reignite and we'll have to close again," Shani Oveson said. "Owning your own business can be so scary financially, we have to risk getting sick to survive."

Biden declares sexual assault 'never, never happened'

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE and BILL BARROW Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden on Friday emphatically denied allegations from a former Senate staffer that he sexually assaulted her in the early 1990s, declaring flatly that "this never happened."

Biden's first public remarks on the accusation by a former employee, Tara Reade, come at a critical moment for the presumptive Democratic nominee as he tries to relieve mounting pressure after weeks of leaving denials to his campaign.

"I'm saying unequivocally, it never, never happened," the former vice president and senator said in an interview on MSNBC's "Morning Joe."

Biden said he will ask the National Archives to determine whether there is any record of a complaint being filed, as Reade has claimed. Later Friday, Biden asked the secretary of the Senate via letter to assist in the search, though he told MSNBC that the Archives was the only possible place a complaint would be. He said his Senate papers held under seal at the University of Delaware do not contain personnel records.

"The former staffer has said she filed a complaint back in 1993," Biden said. "But she does not have a record of this alleged complaint."

Reade did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday.

The Archives deflected inquiries to Capitol Hill, saying any complaint "would have remained under the control of the Senate." A spokeswoman for the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights said confidentiality rules bar the office from commenting on "whether specific claims may or may not have been filed."

Biden, in his TV interview, said "there are so many inconsistencies" in Reade's various accounts. But he said he does not "question her motive." He said over his five decades in public life, none of his employees was asked to sign a nondisclosure agreement.

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Republicans worried about President Donald Trump's increasingly precarious political standing are casting Democrats as only defending women who allege wrongdoing against conservatives. They're digging in despite the possibility of renewed attention on the multiple sexual assault allegations lodged against Trump, who denies the accusations.

In light of his own situation, Trump is stepping delicately around the Biden controversy.

"He's going to have to make his own decision," Trump said in a podcast interview Friday with Dan Bongino. "I'm not going to be telling him what to do." The president added that it would be a "great thing" if Biden had records that could "dispose" of Reade's allegation.

Democrats, meanwhile, are in an awkward position of validating women who come forward with their stories while defending their standard-bearer ahead of an expected competitive election.

Former Democratic Party chairwoman Donna Brazile said before Biden's interview that his silence was "damaging," but afterward said he handled the matter well.

"He responded, he denied it, and there's nothing more to be added," Brazile said, before alluding to Reade's repeated public statements. "If you add to the story the way Tara Reade has, it only brings more confusion."

Karen Finney, who worked for Hillary Clinton in 2016, described Biden as "very clear and consistent" and "sincere," but said it should have come "a little bit sooner."

The November presidential election will be the first of the #MeToo era, during which numerous women have publicly disclosed experiences of sexual harassment and assault.

Women are a core constituency for Democrats. Biden wrote the Violence Against Women Act as a senator but came under criticism for his handling of Anita Hill's 1991 Senate testimony against now-Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.

Just before he launched his 2020 campaign, Biden apologized after several women said he'd made them uncomfortable with unwanted touching.

He has pledged to pick a woman as a running mate, and the Reade allegation has left those thought to be in contention in a tough spot.

Some of them have echoed talking points the Biden campaign issued to surrogates last week that were obtained by The Associated Press. The campaign pointed to investigations by The New York Times, The Washington Post and the AP that found no other allegation of sexual assault against Biden and no pattern of sexual misconduct.

Some Democratic donors say the matter hasn't come up in recent strategy calls. Others worry it'll be used against Biden, much as Republicans harped in 2016 on Clinton's private email server and Clinton Foundation activities.

"We know they're going to try elements of the same playbook," said Finney, pointing to calls for Biden to release his Senate papers.

Other Democratic operatives expressed concern the allegation complicates a central Biden pitch: that he provides a moral counter to Trump.

"I think we have to apply a consistent standard for how we treat allegations of sexual assault, and also be clear-eyed about how Donald Trump will use these allegations," said Claire Sandberg, who worked as Bernie Sanders' organizing director.

Republicans have seized on the prospects of scouring Biden's records, showing aggressiveness that was harder for them four years ago while Trump was having to deny varying levels of sexual assault and harassment.

Trump joined fellow Republicans in arguing Friday that Democrats aren't being consistent, pointing again to the aggressive questioning of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh when he faced a sexual assault allegation.

Biden pushed back on those notions Friday during the interview and, later, during a virtual campaign fundraiser. He told 2,200 donors, many of them veterans of the Obama administration, that his position has always been to take women's claims seriously. "It isn't enough just to simply take my word for it and dismiss it out of hand," he said, because "that sort of approach is how the culture of abuse has been allowed to fester for so long."

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Trump's reelection campaign quickly released a digital ad featuring prominent Democrats, including Biden and Clinton, saying, "Believe women" and similar sentiments.

"Ladies and gentleman, we just can't have it both ways," White House counselor Kellyanne Conway said. "We cannot decide which women were included in 'believe all women.'"

Hill, long critical of how Biden handled her accusations against Thomas, issued a statement highlighting the complexities across the political spectrum. Noting Reade, Kavanaugh's accuser, Christine Blasey Ford, and Trump's many accusers, Hill called for an investigation of "outstanding claims of sexual misconduct" against Trump and Biden, warning that otherwise "the public is left to figure out the truth on its own."

After COVID-19 recovery, first responders get back to work

By STEFANIE DAZIO, MICHAEL R. SISAK and JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

The new coronavirus doesn't care about a blue uniform or a shiny badge. Police, firefighters, paramedics and corrections officers are just a 911 call away from contracting COVID-19 and spreading it.

With N95 masks hanging off their duty belts and disposable blue gloves stuffed in their back pockets, they respond to radio calls, make arrests and manage prisoners. But their training never covered something quite like this — what has been called an "invisible bullet."

It's sickened thousands of America's first responders and killed dozens more.

But many have recovered, and they're going back to work — back to the crime scene, back into the ambulance, back to the jail. Going back to this deadly pandemic's front lines.

They go with a lingering cough and lost weight. They toss and turn at night, wondering if the claims of immunity are true. They fear that picking up extra overtime shifts may expose them, and their families, to additional risks.

And then they pull on their uniforms and go back to work.

Some of their stories:

THE RISK

HOUSTON — In Deputy Ravin Washington's squad car, risk rides shotgun. The threats she faces on her solo patrols are usually more immediate than reports of some new unseen virus.

On the beat in northwest Houston, Washington, 28, has been in fights and drawn her gun. In 2017, three months after she finished the police academy, her partner at the time was shot in the leg.

But last month, she was following up on a robbery call when it suddenly felt like someone was sitting on her chest. By the time she navigated her cruiser to her sister's apartment, she could barely keep her hands on the wheel. She had no idea what was wrong.

Certainty came a few days later after a nasal swab that felt like it poked her brain. On March 25, Washington tested positive — one of the first of about 180 Harris County Sheriff's Office employees to be sickened.

In lonely isolation, her temperature spiked. Her stomach roiled. She lost her sense of taste and could barely rise from bed for days.

"People don't want to be around you," she said. "People don't want to touch you."

When she finally healed, she worried about getting sick again — about whether her colleagues would want her back.

She returned to patrol this month and found the situation suddenly reversed. Her colleagues gave her hugs. "People feel like, 'Hey, you have the antibodies. You're the cure,'" she said.

Back on patrol, Washington has the familiar weight on her hips of a Taser, handcuffs and gun. But her safety also depends on gloves and a mask.

"It's like you're risking your life even more now."

GUILT

NEW YORK — Paramedic Alex Tull of the New York Fire Department feels out of breath after walking up a few flights of stairs and has a cough that just won't quit. After some recent chest pains, an X-ray

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showed lingering inflammation in his lungs.

As he goes about his days treating coronavirus patients in the Bronx, he thinks about his own battle with the disease and his rush to return to duty late last month before he was fully healed.

At the height, about a quarter of the city's 4,300 EMS workers were out sick. Nearly 700 fire department employees have tested positive for the coronavirus and eight have died, including three EMS workers.

Tull, 38, says he felt guilty convalescing at home for two weeks, flipping through Netflix and Hulu between naps as his colleagues risked their lives. He wondered: "Why did this have to happen to me? I want to be out there. I want to get out there and help."

But it wasn't just a matter of loyalty for the 10-year fire department veteran. A policy put in place as the virus ravaged the ranks mandated that personnel who no longer showed symptoms return to work as soon as possible.

"I definitely went back to work earlier than maybe I should have," Tull said.

Without definitive proof that he's immune from spreading or contracting the disease, Tull fears his nagging cough might infect his partner or their patients. And with little more than a face mask and gloves for protection, he worries he'll come down with the virus again.

"Is my body ready for round two? I don't know. It is scary," Tull said.

THE HOTBOX

AURORA, Ill. — Chief Kristen Ziman spent hours in a cramped conference room strategizing on ways to keep her 306 police officers safe from the coronavirus.

Digital roll calls, solo squad cars, detectives running cases remotely — anything to keep them out of headquarters and away from each other.

Turns out, they needed to stay away from the chief.

Ziman, a patrol commander, her wife — a detective on the force -- and Aurora's mayor all contracted COVID-19 around the same time. They most likely passed the virus during those planning meetings.

The rank-and-file, however, is fine.

"If we had to be the sacrificial lambs," Ziman said, "putting these plans in place to keep our officers safe, then I will gladly take it any day."

The chief recorded videos from her home, sending them to the officers as part of routine operations plans. She wanted them to comprehend the pandemic's reality on the streets of Illinois' second-largest city.

"This wasn't one of those abstract concepts that's happening to someone else," she said. It was happening to some of their own.

The officers responded with text messages of well-wishes, and a new nickname for the station's third floor — the home of her office and the infamous conference room — that makes Ziman laugh even through all this.

They're calling it "The Hotbox" — and avoiding it altogether.

ON THE SIDELINES

NEW YORK — Sgt. Cary Oliva was frustrated watching the news of his coronavirus-stricken city from his sick bed. The 31-year-old New York Police Department officer longed to be back at work helping with what was fast becoming one of the deadliest disasters in its history.

"I felt like I was on the sidelines," he said. "I was pretty eager to come back as soon as possible, as long as it was safe."

In all, more than 4,600 employees at the nation's largest police department have tested positive for the coronavirus. Nearly 2,900 have recovered and returned to full duty. At least three dozen died.

Oliva went back April 6 and immersed himself in a new police mission: educating the public about social distancing measures that experts say are vital to reducing the spread of infection. Protective mask on his face and hand sanitizer nearby, Oliva spends his afternoons cruising by takeout restaurants and other businesses looking for gaps in social distancing protocols.

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"I dove right back into it," he said.

THE LINE

LOS ANGELES — In jail-speak, it's called "the line."

For correction officers, it means any duty that requires working directly with inmates. Custody assistant Sonia Munoz's line is a 184-bed inmate hospital ward at the Twin Towers jail, with its beige walls and powder blue doors. It's where she most likely contracted the coronavirus. And passed it along to her younger sister and her father.

Right now, Munoz, 38, is safe. She's 10 pounds lighter, her thick uniform belt is tightened to the last notch, but she's been transferred to an office gig, where she can line up three bottles of hand sanitizer on her desk and work alone.

Still, the line is there.

Any overtime shift could bring Munoz back. Her mother, 3-year-old nephew and 94-year-old grandmother escaped illness last time, but they may not be so lucky again.

It's something her 27-year-old partner, Christopher Lumpkin, worries about.

On March 18, he became the first member of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, which oversees the nation's largest jail system, to test positive for COVID-19. He likely passed it to Munoz and three other custody assistants. More than 60 sheriff's personnel county-wide and at least 28 inmates have tested positive for the virus.

Using Facebook Messenger, Lumpkin and Munoz traded stories and symptoms, bedridden in their quarantined homes as the virus spread outside.

"I will pray for you guys as well," Lumpkin wrote.

Now, Lumpkin is recovered and back on the line. He changes his gloves and sanitizes his hands each time he works with an inmate and keeps an extra mask hanging off his duty belt.

Munoz takes similar precautions in her office, separate from the inmates.

But she can't avoid the line forever.

"I have to go back to the lion's mouth."

Michigan militia puts armed protest in the spotlight

By SARA BURNETT Associated Press

Gun-carrying protesters have been a common sight at some demonstrations calling for coronavirus-related restrictions to be lifted. But an armed militia's involvement in an angry protest in the Michigan statehouse Thursday marked an escalation that drew condemnation and shone a spotlight on the practice of bringing weapons to protest.

The "American Patriot Rally" started on the statehouse steps, where members of the Michigan Liberty Militia stood guard with weapons and tactical gear, their faces partially covered. They later moved inside the Capitol along with several hundred protesters, who demanded to be let onto the House floor, which is prohibited. Some protesters with guns — which are allowed in the statehouse — went to the Senate gallery, where a senator said some armed men shouted at her, and some senators wore bulletproof vests.

For some observers, the images of armed men in tactical gear at a state Capitol were an unsettling symbol of rising tensions in a nation grappling with crisis. Others saw evidence of racial bias in the way the protesters were treated by police.

For some politicians, there was fresh evidence of the risk of aligning with a movement with clear ties to far-right groups.

Prominent Michigan Republicans on Friday criticized the showing, with the GOP leader of the state Senate referring to some protesters as "a bunch of jackasses" who "used intimidation and the threat of physical harm to stir up fear and feed rancor."

President Donald Trump, who has been criticized in the past for condoning extremist views, called the protesters "very good people" and urged Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to "make a deal."

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Michigan has been the epicenter of the political showdown over how to contain the spread of the deadly virus without decimating the economy. About a quarter of the state's workforce has filed for unemployment and nearly 4,000 people have died.

Rally organizer Ryan Kelley said the event was intended to pressure Republicans to reject Whitmer's plan to continue restrictions on work and travel. He called the protest a "huge win," noting the Republican-controlled Senate refused to extend Whitmer's coronavirus emergency declaration — though she said Friday her stay-at-home order remains in effect.

Kelley, a 38-year-old real estate broker, said he and other organizers are not part of a formal group but represent people who have been harmed by the stay-home order. He said he invited the Michigan Liberty Militia, which is listed as an anti-government group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, to serve as "security." He suggested anyone who had a problem with their presence should read the Constitution and "live life without fear."

Gun-carrying protesters outside state capitols are a regular occurrence in many states, especially in Republican-leaning ones. But rarely do such protests converge at the same time around the country like they have during the coronavirus pandemic.

In Wisconsin, about a dozen men, several wearing camouflage, carried what appeared to be assault rifles and other long guns and stood around a makeshift guillotine at a protest attended by about 1,500 people. In Arizona, a group of men armed with rifles were among hundreds of protesters who demonstrated at the Capitol last month demanding Republican Gov. Doug Ducey lift his stay-home order. Many in the crowd also carried holstered pistols.

Gun groups have been involved in organizing several of these protests — which drew activists from a range of conservative causes. Gun rights advocates believe the restrictions on some businesses and closure of government offices are a threat to their right to own a gun, said Michael Hammond, legislative counsel for Gun Owners of America, a group that bills itself as the "no compromise" gun lobby.

Hammond said he routinely gets messages and emails from people around the country, complaining that authorities are making it impossible to exercise their Second Amendment rights. In some cases, that has meant orders closing gun shops or gun ranges or offices shutting down that process permits.

But Shannon Watts, the founder of Moms Demand Action, a gun-control group, considers these protests organized by the ultra-right and not necessarily reflective of most gun owners.

While it's legal to openly carry firearms inside some state capitols, Watts called it "dangerous to normalize this. Armed intimidation has no place in our political debate." She said those carrying guns at protests are almost always white men, and are "a vocal minority of the country" that opposes the stay-at-home orders.

An overwhelming majority of Americans support stay-at-home orders and other efforts to slow the spread of the virus, according to a recent survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The visual of heavily armed protesters, mostly white men, occupying a government building to a measured response by law enforcement is a particularly jarring one for many African Americans.

It draws a stark contrast to the images that emerged from Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, when crowds of unarmed, mostly black men, women and children took to the streets in protest after a white police officer shot and killed an unarmed black teenager named Michael Brown. Then, National Guardsmen mounted on military vehicles shot tear gas indiscriminately to disperse the crowds, further flaring tensions between the predominantly black community and law enforcement.

"Systemically, blackness is treated like a more dangerous weapon than a white man's gun ever will, while whiteness is the greatest shield of safety," said Brittany Packnett, a prominent national activist who protested in Ferguson.

The Michigan demonstrators, she added, "are what happens when people of racial privilege confuse oppression with inconvenience. No one is treading on their rights. We're all just trying to live."

Trump, meanwhile, suggested it was Whitmer who should be moved to action.

"The Governor of Michigan should give a little, and put out the fire," the president tweeted Friday. "These are very good people, but they are angry. They want their lives back again, safely! See them, talk to them,

make a deal.”

End of lockdown to uncork pent-up mourning for the lost

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — As body after body has passed through his rubber-gloved hands, sealed in double-layered bags for disposal, Paris undertaker Franck Vasseur has become increasingly concerned about the future after the coronavirus pandemic.

All these people ferried in his hearse to cremations that their loved ones couldn't attend: when will they be mourned?

All these lives cut short: how will they be celebrated?

With lockdowns easing and people thawing out their on-hold lives, Vasseur suspects the enormity of so much loss will now start to sink in, unleashing pent-up grief that couldn't be fully comprehended and expressed when everyone was sealed away.

The homes of the dead will have to be visited. Belongings must be gathered up and heirlooms shared out. Commemorations that couldn't be held when large gatherings were banned need organizing. Ashes await collection in funeral parlors. Held-back tears will be shed.

Mimicking the motion of handing over an urn, Vasseur imagines the shock that awaits those who will have to be told: "Here, this is your mother or father who was in full health, who was watching television or you were chatting with 15 days ago."

"You get handed an urn and you cannot imagine for a single second the transition between when you were told that they had been infected by the virus and their death," he said in an interview at his funeral parlor, L'Autre Rive.

The name translates as "The Other Shore," conjuring up imagery of the River Styx that separated the living from the underworld in Greek mythology. The store has a majestic round wood table where, in better times, Vasseur and his clients would spend hours making funeral arrangements, talking about the departed.

"This is where the process of grieving starts," he said.

In lockdown, Vasseur says his job became "completely different," a procession of death, disposal and paperwork, of days spent shuttling bodies from A to B, of waiting in line with other hearses and dealing by phone and email with locked-down families he could no longer comfort in person.

"For all these families, what impact will this have on the process of mourning?" he wonders.

"There may well be a grey zone in people's minds," he said. "Like a blackout."

Because bodies had to be sealed in coffins, their loved ones couldn't give them a tender last look or caress. And people locked down outside Paris felt that because of the stay-home rules, police patrols and travel permits that had to be shown to them, it wasn't wise to break quarantine.

"They said, 'Send us a photo of mother in her coffin.' So they could visualize the deceased and their departure," Vasseur said.

Some families sent tokens of affection, messages, cuddly toys for Vasseur to put in the coffin. He sent them back photos taken with his mobile phone.

Some are in denial.

"They have already asked me: 'Are you sure that she was cremated? Is she really dead? I don't believe it. It's not true,'" he said.

"All that means that they are going to have huge difficulties moving ahead with the process of grieving," he said. "I think it's going to be complicated for a lot of people."

Alaska book ban vote draws attention of hometown rockers

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Members of the Grammy-winning rock band Portugal. The Man are stepping into a banned book controversy in their Alaska home town.

After the school board at the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District in Palmer voted 5-2 last week

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to remove five classics used for high school English elective courses including F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby," "Joseph Heller's Catch-22" and Maya Angelou's "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," the band announced it would buy the books for any student or parent who wanted them.

The other two books are "Invisible Man" by Ralph Ellison and "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien.

The books are controversial because of sexual references and descriptions of rape and incest, "things that are pretty serious problems, especially in our teenage world," said board member Jeff Taylor, a Wasilla business owner who voted in favor of the ban.

Portugal. The Man guitarist Eric Howk was surprised to learn of the decision in the district north of Anchorage where the band members attended school, he KTVA-TV reported.

"We were all students of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough school district and we have a lot of teachers there that we love," Howk said.

"I think when it comes to stories and to books, we're storytellers. You know, we're songwriters and we're storytellers and we take the situations and the experiences and the people that we meet and we kind of turn those into the stories that we carry on with us to the next place and to the next town. Storytelling is just kind of sacred to us and it just hits really close to home."

District spokeswoman Jillian Morrissey declined to comment on the offer by Portugal. The Man. The books remain in district libraries, she told The Associated Press.

The National Coalition Against Censorship has asked the school board to reverse its decision.

In a letter to the board's president, coalition officials said removing from the curriculum "every book that some member of the community might find controversial would leave education in shreds and students at a disadvantage."

The Anchorage Daily News reported the agenda for the school board's next meeting Wednesday includes a proposal to rescind the vote.

Sarah Welton, one of two board members who voted no last week, told the newspaper she requested the motion to rescind and wanted to give members of the public an opportunity to comment.

Raging Bull delivers outside the ring as classic sports film

By TIM DAHLBERG AP Sports Writer

Jake LaMotta was a straight-ahead brawler, so determined to wreak havoc every time he entered the boxing ring that he handed the great Sugar Ray Robinson his first loss.

He was pretty much the same outside the ring, which is why Hollywood made a movie about his life.

"I was a no-good bastard," LaMotta said when "Raging Bull" came out 40 years ago. "It's not the way I am now, but the way I was then."

LaMotta fought 106 times, winning a middleweight title and meeting Robinson six times — five of them losses. He once threw a fight on mob orders so he could get a title shot, and tasted the canvas only once in 869 rounds.

But it wasn't boxing that drew a young director named Martin Scorsese to make a movie about the former middleweight champion. The ring framed the narrative, but it was LaMotta's violence outside the ring — outlined in his autobiography of the same name — that drove the film.

The boxing scenes brim with an intensity and graphic violence never really captured before on the big screen. LaMotta fought crouched down and moving forward and at times it cost him, including the Feb. 14, 1951 beating at the hands of Robinson that was so brutal it became known as the second St. Valentine's Day massacre.

Still, it was the other beatings — including one of his first wife because she overcooked his steak — that drive the dark narrative of a boxer so full of rage that it consumed every part of his life.

The movie was rated No. 7 on a list of the best sports movie ever made by a panel of Associated Press sports writers.

Robert De Niro won an Oscar playing LaMotta, and Joe Pesci made a breakout performance as his brother. But there wasn't much to feel good about for moviegoers walking out of theaters after seeing

the film in 1980.

“There is only one brief moment in the film— when LaMotta breaks down and cries after he has thrown a fight in order to get a chance at the championship — that the character is even the least bit sympathetic,” the Hollywood Reporter said in its initial review. “Otherwise, he is totally unlikable.”

De Niro boxed hundreds of rounds preparing to play LaMotta in the ring, and he largely succeeded in portraying the fighter like the 160-pounder with fists of fury that he was in the 1940s. De Niro then went on an eating binge in Italy to gain 50 pounds to play the bloated LaMotta after his ring career was over, when he worked, among other jobs, introducing strippers in a nightclub. LaMotta would go to prison for six months in 1957 for convincing a minor to become a prostitute.

Scorsese filmed the movie in black and white, with occasional color depicting LaMotta in what were supposed to be home movies of the time. The boxing scenes were especially jarring, used both to set the scene and to let the audience know where LaMotta was at that point in his career.

But boxing is used mostly to set up the meat of the movie, including LaMotta’s relationship with Vicki, his second wife whom he met when she was 15 and quickly became obsessed with. LaMotta’s jealousy and drinking fueled his many rages, and he was convinced during their 11-year marriage that his wife was always cheating on him.

“Those who think it’s a boxing picture would be out of their minds,” Scorsese said upon LaMotta’s death. “It’s brutal, sure, but it’s a brutality that could take place not only in the boxing ring but in the bedroom or in an office. Jake is an elemental man.”

The film was not a huge box office success, barely generating enough to cover expenses in its initial run. But the publicity generated by eight Academy Award nominations helped fuel a renaissance and there are those in the movie business who believe it is not only one of Scorsese’s finest films but perhaps De Niro’s acting masterpiece.

It was also the big film debut for Pesci, who would later have major mobster roles in “Goodfellas” and “Casino,” both movies directed by Scorsese and featuring De Niro.

LaMotta, who died in 2017 at the age of 95, finished 83-19-4 in a ring career that stretched from 1941 to 1954. A member of the International Boxing Hall of Fame, he briefly held the middleweight title before losing it in 1951 on Valentine’s Day to his nemesis, Robinson.

His career was notable, if not spectacular. But it was not until he penned his autobiography and an actor and filmmaker took notice that more than just hard-core boxing fans knew who he was.

He became the Raging Bull.

Virus surge in Brazil brings a coffin shortage, morgue chaos

By DIANE JEANTET and ALAN CLENDENNING Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — In Brazil’s bustling Amazon city of Manaus, so many people have died within days in the coronavirus pandemic that coffins had to be stacked on top of each other in long, hastily dug trenches in a city cemetery. Some despairing relatives reluctantly chose cremation for loved ones to avoid burying them in those common graves.

Now, with Brazil emerging as Latin America’s coronavirus epicenter with more than 6,000 deaths, even the coffins are running out in Manaus. The national funeral home association has pleaded for an urgent airlift of coffins from Sao Paulo, 2,700 kilometers (1,700 miles) away, because Manaus has no paved roads connecting it to the rest of the country.

The city of about 2 million people carved from the jungle has been overwhelmed by death in part because it’s the main site where those from remote Amazon communities can get medical services, according to Lourival Panhuzzi, president of the Brazilian Association of Funeral Service Providers.

As of April 30, Brazil’s Health Ministry said that there were over 5,200 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Amazonas state and 425 deaths, although there are concerns that inadequate testing for the virus has meant that the numbers may be much higher.

Before the outbreak, the city of Manaus, the capital of the state, was recording an average of 20-35

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deaths a day, according to the mayor. Now, it is recording at least 130 a day, data from the state's health secretary show.

People in the region also have been widely ignoring isolation measures.

There also are signs in the much larger cities of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo that suggest authorities may not be able to handle a huge increase in the death toll. A field of fresh graves that was dismissed in April by President Jair Bolsonaro as excessive has since been filled.

Latin America's grimmest scenes occurred last month in Ecuador's city of Guayaquil, where residents said they had to leave bodies on the street after morgues, cemeteries and funeral homes were overwhelmed.

Many in Brazil fear the rising deaths will hit hardest in the favelas, the vast neighborhoods of the poor that are well-known in Rio and Sao Paulo but which also exist in most big Brazilian cities and even in smaller ones.

"There is a great fear that uncontrolled contamination will happen there," said Panhozzi, whose group represents Brazil's 13,400 private funeral companies.

In Rio's Complexo do Alemao cluster of favelas, the body of Luiz Carlos da Rocha, 36, lay untouched for more than 12 hours Tuesday. Relatives didn't know why he died but said he had epilepsy.

The state's military police, which normally picks up bodies found outside, no longer does so for nonviolent deaths, said an officer at the scene who would not give his name. He said without elaborating that the policy change was due to the coronavirus. The military police press office did not respond to requests for comment.

The next day at Rio's Hospital Salgado Filho in a lower-middle class neighborhood, Clovis de Castro, whose ailing sister Genina had just died, found himself helping out in the hospital's morgue. He waited six hours to sort out death certificate paperwork in what he described as a chaotic scene in the morgue, with grieving relatives arriving to identify bodies and only one worker available to move corpses. At one point, he was asked to lend a hand.

"I had to help a person to put a body in a coffin," de Castro said, adding that the experience made him "realize that people need help, the hospital needs help, the country needs help."

De Castro left with a death certificate saying his sister's cause of death was undetermined. He was angry that no autopsy was conducted that might have confirmed his suspicion she died of COVID-19 or complications from the disease.

"Why hide this stuff?" he asked.

Sao Paulo director of ambulance services Francis Fuji blamed a recent surge of deaths in homes on coronavirus patients who were discharged from hospitals with mild symptoms, only to have their conditions deteriorate rapidly.

Paramedics don't have the training to identify COVID-19 as a cause of death, he said, and many relatives have lied about their loved ones' symptoms to avoid the corpses being handled as though they were contagious.

"They think that if they get that diagnosis, then their loved one will be removed in a sealed plastic bag, they'll never see him or her again, and they won't even have a funeral," Fuji said.

Authorities in Sao Paulo dug hundreds of graves last month in anticipation of a rise in deaths. Bolsonaro has likened the coronavirus to "a little flu" and insists that sweeping state measures to close all but essential business are more damaging than the illness. On April 2, he questioned whether photos by The Associated Press of the new graves were "fake news" or "sensationalism."

By Thursday, all those graves were filled with the dead, as were dozens of other new ones, according to images by the AP photographer who took the original photos and revisited the site on Sao Paulo's eastern region. Refrigerated trucks to hold overflows of bodies are now seen outside hospitals and cemeteries.

In Manaus early Thursday, Raimundo Costa do Nascimento, 86, died of pneumonia in his home. Funeral workers were so swamped that his relatives had to wait 10 hours for someone to retrieve his body.

A week after Panhozzi's association appealed for the coffins for Manaus, he said the request is still being considered.

"That won't work," he said. "I need it now."

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. BIDEN DENIES EX-STAFFER'S SEXUAL ASSAULT ALLEGATION - In his first public comment on the allegation, Biden said the accusation isn't true. "This never happened."
2. 'EVERYONE'S WATCHING' To see who will be Joe Biden's running mate, with Amy Klobuchar, Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, Gretchen Whitmer and Stacey Abrams believed to be potential picks.
3. WATCHDOG: US NIXES TALIBAN ATTACKS DATA Washington is eager for the U.S.-Taliban agreement to be viewed as successful so that Trump can meet his commitments on pulling troops out of Afghanistan.
4. VIRGIN GALACTIC COMPLETES FIRST GLIDE FLIGHT Virgin Galactic's spaceship VSS Unity lands in the New Mexico desert.
5. LAB REPORT Labrador retrievers remain the nation's most popular purebreds for a record-extending 29th year, according to American Kennel Club rankings.

Jobless fret as rent comes due again amid virus outbreak

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Rent and mortgage payments are due again as more than 30 million people around the U.S. have filed for unemployment benefits after losing work in the coronavirus pandemic.

Jason W. Still has been waiting six weeks for his first unemployment check since losing his job as a cook at an upscale restaurant in Spokane, Washington. Out-of-work bartender Luke Blaine in Phoenix got his first check three weeks ago, but now has to pay his landlord again.

And Eli Oderberg in Denver has his mortgage due after being swept up in a later wave of layoffs as the pandemic's effects spread from restaurants to corners of the economy, like the oil company where he had worked on apps to track spills and leaks.

Federal data released this week show the U.S. economy contracted at a 4.8% annual rate last quarter as the pandemic put the nation into a recession. Economists expect January-March to be just a taste of the widespread pain being recorded for April-June. And while a record number of people have applied for unemployment insurance payments, there are many other out-of-work people who don't qualify or couldn't get through the states' overwhelmed systems.

More than three dozen cities and states, including San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York state, have put in place their own policies to halt evictions, foreclosures and utility shutoffs out of concern that the economic fallout from massive job losses will push many people to the brink of homelessness at a time when they need to stay in their houses and apartments.

But all this really means is that deputies won't be knocking at their doors, for now. The money is still due, and delaying the payments just puts off the pain.

Still said he's filed for unemployment every week, with nothing yet to show for it, since he was first interviewed by The Associated Press a month ago, just before he paid April rent. His wife still has her job in the legal marijuana industry, and his \$1,200 stimulus check helped pay an assortment of bills. "But I'm about to hit my savings and I really don't want to do that," he said.

"I've made about 900 calls over the last month trying to find out what's going on," Still said. On April 24, he finally got into an on-hold queue behind 83 other callers to Washington state's unemployment office, and after hours of waiting, he was transferred to a claims specialist, but then the call was dropped.

It took him until this week to reach a human, who said there seemed to be a minor glitch in his file that needs to be worked out.

"It seems to be getting closer, but it's not clear to me what's going on at that end," said Still. "I think I'm the last person who was laid off at my restaurant who hasn't gotten an unemployment payment yet."

The restaurant, Clover, remains in limbo. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee this week announced a partial opening May 5 of some recreational offerings like state parks, fishing and golf courses, but restaurant dining rooms and most other businesses will remain closed for now.

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Blaine counts himself lucky: He started receiving unemployment checks three weeks after being laid off on March 17. Several coworkers are still waiting for their money after losing their jobs at Fez, a popular restaurant in Phoenix.

"I feel very fortunate based on what I've heard from my friends here and around the country," said Blaine, who also was interviewed by the AP a month ago. His boyfriend, Kyle Schomer, still has his job in the tech industry, and is working from their home in a trendy neighborhood of adobe homes. They have a huge vegetable and flower garden out back.

Blaine also said that he and everyone else he knows have received their stimulus money. With that and the unemployment checks, which through July include an additional \$600 per payment, Blaine has made ends meet, for now.

"We will be back," Fez management promised on the restaurant's Facebook page. "We hope sooner rather than later."

Anything but an opening soon is unlikely resolve the anxieties of people whose savings are running out as the initial wave of service-industry layoffs sweeps up other hard-hit sectors, like energy.

Oderberg lost his job in Denver on April 19, as global oil futures plunged into negative territory following the shutdowns of air travel, factories and commuting around the world.

He said his wife got her first unemployment check after losing her job in retail, but he's still waiting for his. The Colorado website for benefits has confirmed he is eligible, "but I haven't been able to get through to talk to anyone after making about 100 calls each time," he said.

In the meantime, Oderberg has been lining up job interviews in information technology, including at least four this week, and hopes to land something quickly, before he has to scramble for their next mortgage payment for the house he shares with his wife, who is pregnant, and their 4-year-old daughter.

"From my job, I'm accustomed to planning everything six months in advance," said Oderberg. "So we're going to be OK, for now at least."

For sports, coronavirus testing remains a major hurdle

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

MIAMI (AP) — Politicians, players and owners are trying to figure out a way to get baseball, basketball and hockey going again, not only for economic reasons but as a welcome diversion for a social distancing nation facing uncertain times.

But to do so would require commandeering thousands of test kits each week for millionaire pro athletes and support staff, something many view as unseemly, especially when ordinary Americans are waiting in line.

Leagues know it would be a terrible look for them to jump the testing line. Acutely aware of the potential backlash, commissioners and owners are saying that, until the public has more access to testing, they don't want to secure tests for players. The NBA even told teams in a memo Thursday that it would be inappropriate to test asymptomatic players and coaches for now — but the league does expect to have testing available when it's time to return to practices and games.

The NBA plans to allow teams to reopen some facilities May 8, but only for voluntary workouts and in cities where local governments allow. And there is no timetable yet for a return to practices and games, in large part because the testing issue remains unsolved.

"We would have to ensure that testing is widely available and front-line health care workers have access before we begin talking about regular testing in the context of professional sports," NBA spokesman Mike Bass said.

The economic impact of sports not happening is beyond enormous: From athletes — NBA players alone stand to lose roughly \$850 million in salaries if this season doesn't resume — to the thousands of part-time workers around stadiums. Broadcasters have lost millions and furloughed thousands of workers, and sports books saw nearly 80% less action this March than they did in March 2019. All of the above reduces tax revenue to local governments.

President Donald Trump wants sports back for both economic and morale reasons, knowing that once games start getting played again, Americans will have something to cheer for — whether fans are in the

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stands or not. Sports leaders have met with the White House multiple times to discuss that goal. Trump has been told testing availability is critical to any restart plans, a person with direct knowledge of those talks told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because few details of the conversations were to be publicly shared.

"I don't want people to get used to this because this virus is going to be gone," Trump said in a White House coronavirus briefing. "And when it's gone, you want to get back to normal."

Harvard researchers say the U.S. should be testing at least a half-million people daily, while the White House estimates about 200,000 tests are being administered each day.

Some teams were sharply criticized for getting their players tested when the pandemic was beginning to take hold in March. The leagues want to avoid a similar blowback.

"The threshold question is the health question. That's where we're spending the most time," MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred said. "The ones that are the most worrisome are the ones that are beyond their control."

According to Major League Baseball, 3,000 kits would need to be available for players, staff, broadcasters and others for every round of testing to get its season going and keep it going. Even if the NHL and NBA return with just 16 postseason teams on the ice and courts, those leagues would likely require tests for a minimum of 1,000 players and staff. And there's no telling how often — Daily? Every few days? Weekly? — the tests would be required to be administered.

With tests still in short supply, that's not a great look.

"We know that 50% of people are asymptomatic and we need to catch them before they spread the disease," Dr. Vincent DeGennaro, the CEO of rapid-test maker Abacus Pharma International, told Miami television station WFOR this week. "And by testing everybody and having those tests here, we should be able to start to get back to some semblance of normalcy and talk about opening up."

Some health care officials have said an equally problematic issue is a shortfall of personal protective equipment — masks, gowns, gloves and the like — that are needed by the people tasked with administering the tests.

"We don't want to use a disproportionate number of testing resources if it's limited," NFL lead counsel Jeff Pash said. "We want to make sure that we're testing people in an appropriate way if we do it and have clear and consistent standards. I think that we very much would take our guidance on that from the medical and public health experts."

Dr. Rebekah Gee, Louisiana's former health secretary and CEO of Louisiana State University's health services division, said reopening of sports should not be considered until the country gets a handle on the sickest people through testing and contact tracing.

"I'm a huge (New Orleans) Saints fan and I want to go to the Superdome too," Gee said. "But am I willing to risk my life for this? No, I'm not. We've got to be smart and shouldn't be giving people false reassurances."

The PGA Tour said it is reviewing what it will need from a testing standpoint before its scheduled return to play without fans in June. NASCAR is returning later this month, also without fans — and without COVID-19 testing. Temperatures of everyone accessing the track will be taken and other strict precautions will be in place, but for now coronavirus tests are not part of the restart plans.

The NBA, NHL and MLB likely won't have that luxury, for the simple fact that athletes in those sports are often in extremely close contact with one another during play.

"Those tests remain in short supply," NASCAR vice president of racing operations John Bobo said. "Getting results can take two to three days. Really, those tests should be targeted for people most in need."

NASCAR will be watched closely when it returns to racing

By JENNA FRYER AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — NASCAR is preparing to be the first major U.S. sport to restart its season during the coronavirus pandemic — a welcomed return to racing and one that will be closely watched by

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the public and other professional leagues for missteps.

More than 700 people — no fans — are expected to be at the track when the stock cars return in front of a national television audience on May 17 in Darlington, South Carolina.

It is NASCAR's moment to shine. A mistake could be a setback for other sports eager to get going and start earning revenue that has been on hold for the past month.

"We realize up front it's a huge responsibility for us as a sport," said Steve O'Donnell, NASCAR executive vice president. "We're certainly going to learn as we go, but the process we put in place, I think gives the industry the confidence that we can be first."

Darlington Raceway will host the first of seven races over 11 days, using both Darlington and Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord, North Carolina. NASCAR worked with health professionals on a plan to meet federal guidelines and presented it to public health officials in the Carolinas. Suggestions were returned to NASCAR.

For at least the first seven races, O'Donnell said, NASCAR wants to use venues located within driving distance of teams based in the Charlotte area to eliminate air travel and hotel use.

Team rosters are limited to 16 participants, which includes the driver, the spotter and the owner. NASCAR has recommended those who travel to the tracks do not also go back to work in the race shops, a potential challenge for low-budget teams that might not even have 16 full-time employees.

NASCAR's Cup Series runs 40-car fields, which would mean at least 640 participants entering the track for race day. That does not include officials and inspectors and members of the media, including the broadcast team.

For now, the days of working shoulder-to-shoulder in the 70-year-old Darlington garage with fans crowded outside the stalls are over. Spectators won't be permitted for now at NASCAR races, which are scheduled only through May.

Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb on Friday raised the possibility of allowing fans for the July 4-5 weekend at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, when it hosts both NASCAR and IndyCar races. Social distancing guidelines would be in place.

"We can do it. We're prepared for fans and we're prepared for without fans," Mark Miles, who oversees both IndyCar and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, told The Associated Press. "Just based on the size of our facility we can do it. And we've got time to figure it out. Things change on a daily basis and where we are today may be different July Fourth weekend. We've got time to get this right."

For now, all eyes will be on Darlington. Drivers have been told they must self-isolate in their motorhomes, which will be spread all over the facility. Social distancing for teams will likely mean using both Cup and Xfinity series garages.

When Jimmie Johnson, Kyle Busch and the stars head to their cars, they will be required to wear face masks. The champagne spray for the winner in victory lane? Well, it's not entirely clear what sort of celebration will be appropriate in these strange times of sports.

But it will be different.

"The way we travel to the event, the way we enter the event, move about in the event, the way we leave an event is going to be different," said John Bobo, NASCAR vice president of racing operations. "Our two big things are social distancing and the other is compartmentalization.

"We're going to have one-way walkways for people, our rules strictly enforced," he added. "If people aren't complying with our rules for masks and social distancing, they will be removed from the premises."

It will be strange times for a sport that became popular in part because fans can watch teams work, walk next to a driver in a pack of autograph seekers and even stand behind a pit stall as cars speed by on the track.

Other sports have soldiered on without fans, including bull riding and horse racing, and UFC has events planned beginning May 9 in Florida. But NASCAR, with its sprawling 36-race schedule from coast to coast and TV exposure, is drawing far more attention as it sets plans.

If NASCAR has any sort of setback, the ripple effect could harm IndyCar as it attempts to start its season June 6 at Texas Motor Speedway. Miles said the onus isn't only on NASCAR to get it right but every

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aspect of the reopening must be safe.

"On any front, it's a setback to everything if things don't go well, and for us, we think (NASCAR returning) is a great learning opportunity," Miles said. "Anything we learn, they are going to know. Anything they learn, we are going to learn. It's a great opportunity for all of us to be smarter."

Bigger questions loom nearly every weekend for motorsports. For IndyCar, the Indianapolis 500 won't be run on Memorial Day weekend for the first time since since 1945 and no one knows if the usual 300,000-thousand plus spectators will be allowed in August.

Roger Penske now owns IndyCar and is also owner of a prominent three-car NASCAR team. The 83-year-old Penske will have seen NASCAR run at least four elite Cup Series races before IndyCar is scheduled at Texas.

"Mr. Penske obviously is now kind of in charge of what's happening," said Indianapolis 500 winner Alexander Rossi. "I think he'll implement the good things and kind of learn from the things that don't work, come up with a plan that is suitable for us."

Make-A-Wish trying to make dreams come true during pandemic

By GARY GERARD HAMILTON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Three-year-old Audrey, who is fighting cancer, had a big wish — to visit Disney World. And thanks to the Make-A-Wish foundation, her dream was set to come true in April.

But then the coronavirus pandemic hit, travel came to a standstill, and Disney World was closed. So now, Audrey and her family are waiting — along with thousands of other Make-A-Wish kids — for the storm to pass so Audrey can eventually make it to see Mickey Mouse and the rest of the Disney universe.

"There's a lot of parts of a cancer battle anyway, so we've learned to adjust expectations and adjust to new news and new realities quickly, so this was just sort of like that" her father Shane told The Associated Press in an interview this week (the Make-A-Wish foundation does not provide last names of its families for privacy concerns).

"We're obviously very excited for whenever we do get to go on the trip."

Make-a-Wish helps ailing kids and teens have a wish granted, such as meeting a celebrity, becoming a VIP at theme parks or traveling to a dream destination. It celebrated its 40th anniversary this week amid perhaps the most challenging time in its history.

"We have now 5,000 of this year's wishes already indefinitely on hold," said Make-A-Wish CEO Richard Davis. "So our kids are patiently waiting, sweet as they are, wondering when their wish will come about. And our job right now is to keep them inspired and excited for when the wish comes, in the meantime, going out and continue to raise funds and support in a window of time when we need the most."

Stay-at-home orders, traveling fears and the cancellation of sporting events, concerts and theme parks have forced the organization to come to a stand-still, leaving young people's requests in holding patterns. Normally, about 16,000 wishes are granted a year, and the 5,000 that are already on hold is expected to increase as the pandemic continues to rage.

With more than 3.8 million laid-off workers applying for unemployment benefits last week, the U.S. economy slid further into a crisis that is becoming the most devastating since the 1930s. Because MAW has corporate partners like Macy's, which has temporarily closed many of its stores and the WWE, which isn't holding live events, the organization is learning to navigate through this new, uncertain reality.

While a strong 2019 holiday season and consistent fundraising the first couple of months of the year have left the non-profit in stable shape, Davis worries what will happen after August when its fiscal year ends. He acknowledges that there may be more pressing organizations dealing with health, food and security that need to be funded now, but he doesn't want his group to be forgotten.

"My biggest concern for Make-A-Wish is we're not the first thing you think about in a situation like the virus," he said. "We want to be the next thing you think about when this starts to settle and people are back to, 'How can I change the world?'"

While the perception may be that the organization is for terminally ill children, nearly 70% of the children

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make it to adulthood. To date, Make-A-Wish says more than 330,000 wishes have been granted.

Davis says the current wishes are not canceled, but on pause. But some who may not have the luxury of time may have to change their wish.

To keep spirits up, the charity has introduced "Messages of Hope," encouraging the public to record inspiring messages and upload them to social media while tagging Make-A-Wish. They're also relying heavily on celebrities to post, and so far, stars like The Jonas Brothers, Gordon Ramsay, Jojo Siwa, Terry Crews and more have already participated.

Other big names like Ryan Reynolds and DJ Khaled have already personally video called some young people whose wishes were to meet them as part of a "wish enhancement" as they wait, something the charity hadn't explored before. The enhancement for Audrey, who lives in San Diego, included a car-themed parade with her favorite things for her birthday.

"The encouragement really does lift us up, it really does make us feel so loved and encouraged and stronger and ready to fight the next battle, ready to get through the horrible treatment," said Audrey's dad, Shane. "It really does make a difference. It helps the healing process. It helps our souls. It helps our hearts be encouraged."

Although Davis says he has no idea when wish-granting can be resumed, the organization will continue to consult with their advisory board, comprised of many of the nation's top pediatric medical officials, and will be diligent and extra cautious even after local and the federal government says Americans can resume their normal way of life. Until then, he doesn't want anyone forgetting about the magic Make-A-Wish spreads all over the world.

"We're trying to expose our mission as a whole, and the mission of hope we think is essential — it is certainly to those kids."

Trump's new press secretary pledges not to lie from podium

By JILL COLVIN and DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's new spokeswoman, Kayleigh McEnany, vowed Friday not to lie to reporters from the podium as she made her debut at the first White House briefing by a press secretary in more than a year.

"I will never lie to you," McEnany told reporters. "You have my word on that." But the briefing that followed included several misstatements and mischaracterizations nonetheless.

McEnany, who joined the White House last month, took the stage behind a podium that had quite literally been collecting cobwebs before the president began the practice of holding his own daily briefings because of the coronavirus.

McEnany said she spends most of the day with the president and is "constantly with him, absorbing his thinking." She said she sees it as her "mission to bring you the mindset of the president, deliver those facts, so this president gets fair and accurate reporting and the American people get fair and accurate information."

During past administrations, a formal briefing by a White House press secretary would hardly be news. But it was the first such briefing since March 11, 2019, when Sarah Sanders took to the podium for the first time in more than a month and was pressed on comments Trump reportedly made at a fundraiser claiming that Democrats hated Jewish people. Sanders left her post that summer, and her successor, Stephanie Grisham, never held a briefing during her entire nine-month tenure.

The briefings were must-see TV during the early days of the Trump administration, when viewers would tune in to see Trump's first press secretary, Sean Spicer, spar with the press. But the media-obsessed Trump, who sees himself as his best spokesman, communications director and strategist, came to the conclusion last year that the spectacle had diminishing returns, people close to him said at the time.

The White House has long made the case that the briefings are less important in the Trump administration because the president is so accessible, answering reporters' questions on an often-daily basis. Trump had been holding his own daily briefings through much of the pandemic, but scaled back this week amid

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concerns that he was doing himself political damage and as the White House tries to pivot toward a focus on reopening.

Spicer got off to a contentious early start with reporters when he used his first press briefing to falsely claim that Trump's inauguration had drawn the biggest crowd ever. Sanders' briefings were also heated, and she drew criticism for her own false statements, despite once telling reporters, "I don't think it's appropriate to lie from the podium or any other place."

McEnany took a more genial approach at her debut, calling on every reporter in the room at least once and avoiding personal attacks. Still, she made clear she was there to defend the president and grew more adamant as she brought up newly released documents related to former national security adviser Michael Flynn that she said should "scare every American citizen." Flynn pleaded guilty in December 2017 to lying to the FBI.

"We have a handwritten FBI note that says, quote, 'We need to get Flynn to lie,' quote, 'And get him fired,'" she claimed. But that's not what it said.

The message, included on a page of handwritten notes that appeared to recap an internal debate about how best to approach Flynn, reads: "What's our goal? Truth/admission or to get him to lie, so we can prosecute him or get him fired?"

The notes also say: "If we're seen as playing games, WH will be furious. Protect our institution by not playing games."

McEnany also deflected questions about the numerous sexual misconduct allegations leveled at Trump over the years after his likely Democratic challenger, former Vice President Joe Biden, on Friday emphatically denied allegations from a former Senate staffer that he sexually assaulted her in the early 1990s.

"The president has swiftly denied all of these allegations that were raised four years ago," McEnany said. "He has always told the truth on these issues. He's denied them immediately," she said, adding that "the American people had their say in the matter when they elected President Trump as president of the United States."

At least one new allegation, however, has surfaced since then.

McEnany's performance drew praise from other Republicans who have held the job, including Spicer, who called it a "Great debut."

Ari Fleischer, press secretary for President George W. Bush, said being a successful presidential spokesperson requires both substance and style.

"It matters how you come across on TV," Fleischer said on Fox News Channel after the briefing. "On the substance, she had facts. She had statistics. Oh boy, is she articulate."

He added: "On the style, I mean she was just comfortable. You always listen for: Is there a hiccup in the voice? Is she nervous? Is there something about being in that room where you think the pressure might get to her? She was cool and calm throughout it all."

Trump and his new chief of staff, Mark Meadows, shook up the White House communications team in early April, at the height of the coronavirus crisis. Grisham, who had held the titles of both press secretary and White House communications director, rejoined the first lady's office in a new role as Melania Trump's chief of staff.

Grisham, who succeeded Sanders and Spicer, was arguably the nation's least visible press secretary in modern history. While she made occasional appearances on Fox News Channel, she preferred to tape her interviews in a studio to avoid having to speak to reporters who gather on the White House driveway to interview officials after they appear on TV via cameras set up outside the executive mansion.

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

U.S. regulators say they will allow emergency use of an experimental drug that appears to help some coronavirus patients recover faster. President Donald Trump announced the news Friday alongside the head of the Food and Drug Administration.

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As America tentatively emerges from weeks of lockdowns, the pandemic has taken its toll on workers who have been on the front lines all along. Women and minorities in particular have been packing and delivering supplies, caring for the sick and elderly, and keeping streets and buildings clean.

Around the world, millions of workers worldwide are marking international labor day worried about pay checks and hunger as more countries and states reopen for business even though the coronavirus pandemic is far from vanquished.

Here are some of AP's top stories Monday 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:

— President Donald Trump says he's hoping the total number of COVID-19 deaths in the United States will be below 100,000, which he acknowledged Friday is a "horrible number." But he said at a White House event that "maybe millions of lives" have been saved by shutting down the economy.

— In Washington state, where the nation's first COVID-19 case was confirmed in January, Gov. Jay Inslee said Friday he is extending the state's coronavirus stay-at-home order through at least May 31 and that he will ease the restrictions in four stages.

— Essential workers are striking nationwide on May Day to demand safer conditions during the coronavirus outbreak, while other groups plan rallies against tight stay-at-home orders they say are crippling the U.S. economy.

— Employee safety is a priority as small and midsize businesses rehire laid-off employees and get back to work and many owners realize that supplying masks and gloves won't be enough. Business owners are staggering work hours and shifts to cut the number of people onsite and redoing floor plans and operations to minimize contact.

— In Brazil's bustling Amazon city of Manaus, so many people have died within days in the coronavirus pandemic that coffins had to be stacked on top of each other in long, hastily dug trenches in a city cemetery. With Brazil emerging as Latin America's coronavirus epicenter with more than 6,000 deaths, even the coffins in Manaus are running out.

— A U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent and a telecommunications specialist are accused of stealing personal protective equipment, toilet paper and other supplies from an agency warehouse in Florida amid shortages caused by the coronavirus pandemic, law enforcement officials told The Associated Press.

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:

— 850. The number of garment factories that have reopened in Bangladesh after nearly one month of closures to fight the pandemic. Critics say the move risks igniting a sharp increase in infections among workers.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— COMICS CONUNDRUM — The comic book shop has long been a wall-to-wall repository for tales of world-threatening cataclysms and doomsday dystopias. But it has never before been drawn into a fight for survival like the coronavirus pandemic.

— PEDIATRIC PATIENT — The parents of a 12-year-old girl from the New Orleans area are overjoyed that their daughter has recovered from a near-death coronavirus infection.

Healthy pigs being killed as meatpacking backlog hits farms

By DAVID PITT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — After spending two decades raising pigs to send to slaughterhouses, Dean Meyer now faces the mentally draining, physically difficult task of killing them even before they leave his northwest Iowa farm.

Meyer said he and other farmers across the Midwest have been devastated by the prospect of euthanizing hundreds of thousands of hogs after the temporary closure of giant pork production plants due to the coronavirus.

The unprecedented dilemma for the U.S. pork industry has forced farmers to figure out how to kill healthy hogs and dispose of carcasses weighing up to 300 pounds (136 kilograms) in landfills, or by composting them on farms for fertilizer.

Meyer, who has already killed baby pigs to reduce his herd size, said it's awful but necessary.

"Believe me, we're double-stocking barns. We're putting pigs in pens that we never had pigs in before just trying to hold them. We're feeding them diets that have low energy just to try to stall their growth and just to maintain," said Meyer, who also grows corn and soybeans on his family's farm near Rock Rapids.

It's all a result of colliding forces as plants that normally process up to 20,000 hogs a day are closing because of ill workers, leaving few options for farmers raising millions of hogs. Experts describe the pork industry as similar to an escalator that efficiently supplies the nation with food only as long as it never stops.

More than 60,000 farmers normally send about 115 million pigs a year to slaughter in the U.S. A little less than a quarter of those hogs are raised in Iowa, by far the biggest pork-producing state.

Officials estimate that about 700,000 pigs across the nation can't be processed each week and must be euthanized. Most of the hogs are being killed at farms, but up to 13,000 a day also may be euthanized at the JBS pork plant in Worthington, Minnesota.

U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson, a Minnesota Democrat who chairs the House Agriculture Committee, went to the plant Wednesday, in part to thank JBS officials for agreeing to kill the hogs at his request.

"The only thing they wanted out of me was for me to come down here and say I'm the one who asked for this, not them. ... Blame me if you don't like it," he said.

It all means that meat can't be delivered to grocery stores, restaurants that now are beginning to reopen or food banks that are seeing record demand from people suddenly out of work. Some of that demand is being met by high levels of meat in cold storage, but analysts say that supply will quickly dwindle, likely causing people to soon see higher prices and less selection.

To help farmers, the USDA already has set up a center that can supply the tools needed to euthanize hogs. That includes captive bolt guns and cartridges that can be shot into the heads of larger animals as well as chutes, trailers and personal protective equipment.

Iowa officials have asked that federal aid include funding for mental health services available to farmers and the veterinarians who help them.

Meyer said euthanizing healthy animals is a difficult decision for a farmer.

"It is a tough one," he said. "We got keep our heads up and try to be resourceful and if we can make it through this cloud, I think there will be good opportunities if we're left standing yet."

The USDA has a program designed to connect farmers with local meat lockers and small processors that can slaughter some hogs and donate the meat to food banks. However, that effort has been hindered by the fact that small processors already were overwhelmed with customers who have turned away from mass-produced meat and instead bought a hog or cow to be processed locally.

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Chuck Ryherd, owner of State Center Locker in State Center, Iowa, said he's almost completely booked through the end of the year and has been turning away customers.

Chris Young, the executive director for the American Association of Meat Processors, a trade group for about 1,500 smaller meat lockers, said that while some local processors in Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin have been able to take a few extra hogs, the shortage is being felt nationwide.

"When the pandemic started, all across the country, a lot of these small processing plants with a retail store in the front were just overrun," he said. "They're still crazy busy. It hasn't really backed off."

On Wednesday, President Donald Trump used the Defense Production Act to order that large meat processors remain open, giving hog farmers hope the situation could improve.

However, Howard Roth, a Wisconsin farmer and president of the National Pork Producers Council, said farmers will need to keep euthanizing pigs as the slaughterhouses struggle to resume their full production. Farmers will definitely need federal help to keep them afloat.

"We are going to need indemnity money for these farmers," he said. "This situation is unprecedented."

Peterson also said he'll seek a change in the law so that the USDA can retroactively compensate farmers for euthanizing healthy animals in such emergencies. He said the USDA told him it doesn't have the authority at the moment to do that for healthy animals, just diseased animals, as it did during for chickens and turkeys in the bird flu outbreak.

"It's going to be in there, I'll guarantee you," he said.

Back to work, owners make changes so workers feel safe

By **JOYCE M. ROSENBERG AP Business Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — Before the coronavirus outbreak, furniture deliveries at Sunnyland Outdoor Living meant two employees sitting side-by-side in a truck. Now, one will be driving the truck while the second follows in a car.

And when Sunnyland's workers reach a customer's home, "we'll deliver outside — we won't go inside people's houses," says Brad Schweig, the retailer's vice president for operations.

Employee safety is a priority as small and midsize businesses rehire laid-off employees and get back to work and many owners realize that supplying masks and gloves won't be enough.

Many staffers are anxious about increased contact with others that could make them more vulnerable to catching the virus — feelings owners understand they need to consider. They're staggering work hours and shifts to cut the number of people onsite. They're also redoing floor plans and operations to minimize contact — a step that also helps keep customers safe.

Georgia has already allowed businesses like hair and nail salons, restaurants and gyms to open with social distancing restrictions. Alabama has allowed some limited openings, and Texas and Colorado permitted many companies to reopen on Friday. Around the country owners are recalling laid-off workers although they can't resume full operations yet; with government loan money arriving, companies can pay their workers again.

The steps businesses are taking are in line with recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Some of it is common sense that we should have been doing long before this," says Louise McCullough, who hopes to soon reopen her dog care company, Paws Chateau in Huntington Beach, California.

Before the virus struck, clients would walk their dogs into Paws Chateau and hand the leashes over to staffers. Now McCullough is creating a safe space where dogs will be unleashed by owners outside the building, and then staffers will wipe the dogs down with pet-safe antiseptic soap and take them inside.

Wolf's Ridge Brewing, a restaurant and bar in Columbus, Ohio, is a large establishment, with three kitchens. Co-owner Bob Szuter is using all three even though his business right now is limited to takeout and delivery. On a busy Friday or Saturday night, this allows for just four to five staffers in each kitchen instead of the usual 15 or 20.

Szuter recalled about 25 staffers after the company received government loan money, bringing the work

force to about 50. As he plans for how Wolf's Ridge will operate safely when the state allows restaurants to resume table service, Szuter is including staffers in the process.

"It's going to be a negotiation with them. We're asking them, 'hey, what do you guys feel comfortable doing?'" Szuter says.

Atrend, an audio equipment manufacturer that's now producing protective gear for health workers, has spread its 22 employees across its 50,000-foot warehouse in Chicago — they're no longer working side by side. And while they used to take coffee and lunch breaks together, those traditions are on hold.

"They're in the break room by themselves — their breaks are all staggered," CEO Kevin Hundal says.

Staffers are also now getting more than a "good morning" as they arrive. Hundal is taking staffers' temperatures, and if someone has a reading of 100.4 degrees or higher, he'll send them home.

Monitoring employees' symptoms, which can include taking temperatures, is something the CDC is encouraging employers to do. But as owners take on that new routine, they may find themselves dealing with confidentiality issues, says Hagood Tighe, a labor law attorney with Fisher Phillips in Columbia, South Carolina.

"If employers are doing that, they need to be doing it in such a way that an employee's privacy is protected," Tighe said. That means testing in a private area, something that may be difficult in a business with close quarters.

Staffers' anxiety is as important a concern for owners as their physical safety. As Front Burner Group's 20 Texas restaurants serve sit-down diners again, in addition to the masks and gloves employees will wear, one staffer will be sanitizing surfaces throughout the establishments — and wearing a white coat so everyone can see the disinfecting process.

CEO Randy DeWitt and his managers learned how anxious staffers are when they started recalling laid-off workers. Some don't want to come back, including one with a child with respiratory problems.

"When we contacted people, I would say one out of 10 said, I'm too nervous," DeWitt says.

Schweig, the Sunnyland Outdoor vice president, was himself nervous about one staffer who wanted to come back to work; she's in her late 70s, the age group believed to be most vulnerable to the virus. Schweig told her he will pay her to stay home.

"It's not worth risking her health to come back now," he says.

With virus, US higher education may face existential moment

By SHARON COHEN and ALAN CLENDENNING Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — When Jamie Bolker started teaching composition at MacMurray College in January, she felt she'd won the lottery. After sending out more than 140 resumes, she had a tenure-track position in English.

Last month, though, Bolker delivered a dire Twitter announcement: "Welp. MacMurray College is permanently closing ... They were already on the edge and coronavirus was the final nail."

While the Jacksonville, Illinois, school's financial troubles were years in the making — fueled by declining enrollment, an inadequate endowment and competition — MacMurray spokesman James Prescott said the challenge of securing funding during or after the economically crippling pandemic helped seal its fate.

The dramatic and widespread fallout from the COVID-19 virus has thrown the U.S. higher education system into a state of turmoil with fears that it could transform into an existential moment for the time-honored American tradition of high school graduates heading off to college.

"What every college and university is facing is an immediate cash flow crisis," says Terry Hartle, senior vice president of the American Council on Education. "We're dealing with something completely unprecedented in modern history. There is just so much ambiguity how this will continue to evolve."

Across America, campuses have become ghost towns, graduation ceremonies have been canceled and school administrators watch as the pandemic rips through budgets, costing billions of dollars in refunded room and board. Some students are seeking partial repayment of their tuition, arguing that online classes can't compare to campus learning. Hiring freezes have been imposed at some schools, and laid-off profes-

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sors such as Bolker face difficult job prospects.

Colleges, Hartle says, operate very much like businesses: "If there are no customers, there's no revenue and layoffs become inevitable."

School budgets will inevitably be slashed, with painful ripples. The University of Arizona, which could lose more than \$250 million, recently announced plans for furloughs and pay cuts for almost all its 15,000 employees to save \$93 million from mid-May through June 2021.

Endowments have crashed in value with the stock market, and there are worries fall enrollment could plummet. Predictions abound that smaller universities already on the financial brink could permanently close. Even larger universities considered financially healthy worry about potential state budget cuts and don't know when they will be able to reopen campuses to new and returning students.

Boston University recently warned that students might not return to campus until January and many colleges — including Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley — have already moved summer courses online. Purdue University, meanwhile, hopes to reopen on campus this fall; the Indiana school has a task force exploring strategies, including pre-testing students before they arrive and spreading out classes over times and days to reduce their size.

Writing in The New York Times, Brown University President Christina Paxson said reopening campuses this fall "should be a national priority." She noted that higher education employs about 3 million people and the 2017-18 school year poured more than \$600 billion into the national gross domestic product.

Schools already are facing staggering losses. They'll have to refund \$7.8 billion in room and board for the current school year, according to Hartle's group, which made its estimate based on Department Education statistics. For the University of Wisconsin, which has 11 campuses, he says that will mean returning \$78 million.

That doesn't include losses that can be easily overlooked. One giant urban university, Hartle says, routinely collects \$4 million a month in parking lot revenues.

How the schools rebound is about more than money. Before they reopen, administrators must be confident students will be safe in dormitories, close-quarter settings that Hartle likens to "land-locked cruise ships." Timing is critical.

Some prospective students have already decided on gap years starting this fall. Colleges worry that enrolled students will forgo returning if the virus prevents reopening classrooms, because students may not want to pay for online education after deciding to shell out heavy costs and rack up debt for on-campus experiences.

And with millions out of work, parents who have lost jobs or seen savings evaporate may reduce the number of families who can afford college.

Some students have seen opportunities simply disappear. Savion Johnson was set to transfer this fall from a junior college in California to Notre Dame de Namur University in the San Francisco Bay Area as a Division 2 basketball recruit.

As the virus spread, Johnson received a text from the basketball coach rescinding his offer. The school, immersed in deep financial problems amid dwindling enrollment, decided to cancel the incoming freshman class and competitive sports as it tries to avert total closure.

"I was more shocked than anything. Blindsided," said Johnson, who started a new college search in March and tweeted this week that he was "blessed to receive an offer from Benedictine University at Mesa" in suburban Phoenix.

The San Francisco Art Institute, the oldest art college west of the Mississippi, announced in March it won't accept students for the fall, encouraged students not graduating this year to transfer and warned of staff layoffs. Merger talks with other institutions hit an impasse "in no small measure due to the unanticipated hardships and uncertainty" from COVID-19, President Gordon Knox said.

These developments happened shortly after Moody's Investor's Service downgraded its outlook for higher education from stable to negative. It said the financial chaos from the outbreak "could drive states to reallocate funding to other high-need impacted areas, such as health care, reducing available support

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for public higher education.”

States are “trying to plan in an environment that almost defies planning,” says Joni Finney, director of the University of Pennsylvania’s Institute for Research on Higher Education.

After the Great Recession ended in 2009, colleges and universities shifted more costs to students and their families. Public higher education in 27 states gets more revenue from tuition than from state funding, according to a 2019 report from the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association. “My concern is we do it in a way that doesn’t multiply the hurt on low- and middle-income families as we’ve already been doing since 2008,” Finney says.

Robert Zemksy, a professor of education at the University of Pennsylvania, says schools will be working on a tight deadline as critical decisions have to be made by August.

Colleges at greatest risk for closure, he says, tend to be small, rural schools in the Midwest, Great Plains and the Northeast with enrollments of less than 1,000 and without an excess number of applicants. They represent about 10 percent of schools but just about 2 percent of enrollment nationwide.

The colleges that might fare best and even increase enrollment if classes resume, he says, are state schools such as the University of Illinois and Michigan State University. “People will be looking for security,” Zemsky said. “They think that no matter what happens, the schools will stay in business.”

The worst-case scenario: Conditions become so bleak that public colleges shut their doors, leaving students and parents to wonder “if any place could go under at any time,” says Brendan Cantwell, an educational administration professor at Michigan State University

“If we see sudden public closures,” he says, “that will be a sign that this is really an event, a time period that is existential.”

AP: DEA agent accused of stealing PPE from agency warehouse

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — A U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent and a telecommunications specialist are accused of stealing personal protective equipment, toilet paper and other supplies from an agency warehouse in Florida amid shortages caused by the coronavirus pandemic, law enforcement officials told The Associated Press.

The officials, who were not authorized to discuss the case and spoke to AP on condition of anonymity, say it was not clear exactly how much of the supplies the men took or what they intended to do with them but the matter was serious enough that both were suspended and the agent was asked to hand over his gun pending an internal review.

Special Agent Javier Hernandez and the telecommunications specialist whose name was not disclosed are just the latest employees of the DEA’s high-profile Miami field division to be accused of misconduct.

Hernandez is suspected of swiping an array of items including PPE, toilet paper and batteries from storage in the early weeks of the pandemic, the officials said, and the telecommunications specialist also took materials from the warehouse but returned them after a supervisor confronted him about a missing supply of toilet paper. It’s not clear whether the men are accused of acting together. The incident raises questions about security measures at the DEA facility in Weston, about 20 miles west of Fort Lauderdale, and how the case was handled. The Broward County Sheriff’s Office said it had no record of the allegations, which federal authorities instead referred to the DEA’s Office of Professional Responsibility for an internal investigation.

The DEA declined to comment on the allegations. Asked about the case in a recent interview, Acting DEA Administrator Uttam Dhillon told the AP he couldn’t talk about “specific situations” but that the “DEA has the highest standards for its personnel and we intend to maintain those standards.”

Hernandez declined to comment. His attorney, Louis Robbio, said it’s possible Hernandez had been retaliated against for filing an Equal Employment Opportunity complaint involving his earlier transfer from Puerto Rico to the DEA’s tech division in Miami.

“Mr. Hernandez emphatically denies any wrongdoing at any time in his entire career with DEA or as an

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officer in the Army," Robbio said in a statement. "Any allegations you may have been told about are rumors and innuendo and not based on facts."

The DEA's Miami field office has been rocked by two major scandals in the last few months alone.

Federal prosecutors recently charged former standout DEA agent Jose Irizarry with conspiring to launder money with a Colombian drug cartel he was supposed to be fighting. Irizarry is scheduled to stand trial in August in Tampa.

Investigators also wiretapped a retired DEA supervisor from the same office last year as part of an investigation into whether sensitive case information was leaked to attorneys for suspected drug traffickers in Colombia.

Drummer Tony Allen, driver of Afrobeat sound, dies at 79

By ANDREW MELDRUM Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Pioneering drummer Tony Allen, the driver of the Afrobeat sound, has died in Paris at age 79.

Allen died Thursday night at the Pompidou Hospital of an aortic aneurysm, his manager Eric Trosset confirmed to The Associated Press.

In an influential career that spanned decades and continents, Allen started drumming in Nigeria's Lagos in the 1960s and formed a partnership with Fela Kuti, composer, singer, bandleader and saxophonist. They are credited with launching the catchy Afrobeat dance music featuring prominent guitars, complex brass harmonies and poly-rhythmic drumming.

With a prolific output throughout the 1970s, Allen and Kuti gained sales and fame throughout Africa, Europe and North America.

Kuti's outspoken criticism of corruption and human rights abuses got him and his band into repeated trouble with Nigerian authorities and in 1978 Allen left to concentrate on his own music.

He collaborated with many of the world's top musicians including Brian Eno, Damon Albarn of Blur and Gorrillaz, Paul Simonon of the Clash and Flea of the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

This year Allen released Rejoice, a CD of music he created with late South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela.

Egypt's dynasty of big cat trainers takes the show home

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — At his Cairo apartment, located just off a busy road along the Nile River, Ashraf el-Helw, a third-generation Egyptian lion trainer, prepares for a show with his big cats.

Instead of a circus ring, his living room is his stage. He has already posted one online video of the lions performing tricks inside his home since Egypt imposed restrictions to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus, including a nightly curfew.

He is now getting ready to film the second one and says more are in the works, claiming he wants to encourage people to stay at home amid the pandemic. The first video received rave responses from Egyptians on social media — but also raised questions over how the country's most famous lion-training family treats its animals.

The family's big cats are kept on their farm an hour outside of Cairo, and el-Helw says he brings them into the city for the shoots. After filming is over, they go back to the farm, with the some 40 other animals who live there, including monkeys and other large cats.

During a recent visit by The Associated Press to his apartment, el-Helw showed off Joumana, one of the family's female lions. He prompted her to put her paws on his shoulders and the two moved as in a dance. In another trick, the lioness obeyed a command, a light prod with a stick, to walk across a plank, stepping over el-Helw's sister Bushra, also a lion trainer.

The show's climax comes when el-Helw places a piece of meat hanging from a stick into his mouth, and

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Joumana jumps to grab it.

"Since I opened my eyes to the world, I found lions around me," said the 26-year-old Ashraf. He said he started working with the animals — alongside his older siblings — when he was 6 years old. By age 16, he was doing performances.

The el-Helws have been doing circus shows with the big cats for over a century. Ashraf's grandmother was a renowned circus performer, Mahassen el-Helw, the Arab world's first female lion trainer. She was known as "the iron woman" for her stern stage demeanor.

There has also been tragedy.

Ashraf's grandfather, Mohammed el-Helw, was killed in 1972 during one of his shows by Sultan, a lion who tore him to pieces before the eyes of a horrified, helpless public. There have also been reported incidents of several other family members being attacked during shows in recent years.

Ashraf's older sisters — Luba, 38; Ousa, 35, and Bushra, 28 — are also professional lion trainers at Egypt's National Circus. Founded in 1966, the circus is housed in a tent beside the Nile, drawing mostly school groups and working-class families for its evening shows.

Some have criticized the el-Helws for their treatment of the animals.

Dina Zulfikar, an animal rights activist who sits on the board of the country's largest zoo, said that bringing wild animals into private homes is against the law. Also, Ashraf el-Helw's social media videos give a skewed picture of the danger big cats pose, she said.

"This is an irresponsible and foolish behavior," she said. "They are not pets, they are wild animals."

But for the el-Helw family, the lions are both a livelihood and a family constant.

"They are like my children," said Bushra, giving Joumana a loving pat on the back.

'Everyone's watching': Biden's VP audition process begins

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer wore a T-shirt on television emblazoned with the words "that woman from Michigan," a cheeky reference to President Donald Trump's dismissal of her. Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar joined her onetime nemesis, Pete Buttigieg, for a friendly virtual chat on a late-night show. And Stacey Abrams speaks of her political ambition to almost anyone who will listen.

The audition to become the next vice president has begun.

And while the coronavirus has upended virtually every aspect of American life, there's one constant: The veepstakes competition that unfolds every four years is one of the most unpredictable, often awkward, rituals of politics. That's especially true this time as the pandemic has overtaken the presidential campaign, forcing those thought to be in the running for the No. 2 spot to be even more creative in getting noticed.

Presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden began the process of selecting a running mate in earnest on Thursday by announcing a committee to vet potential candidates. The panel's work will likely last through July, he said, meaning months in which some candidates will appear up one day only to fade and potentially be replaced with someone who isn't on anyone's radar the next.

Scott Reed, who managed Bob Dole's 1996 presidential campaign, said the search for a running mate often takes twists and turns because it's one of the few things a nominee can control after a primary spent largely reacting to surrounding political forces. He said reverberations from the choice can last for years.

"This is the first time in the campaign that the candidate is back in charge of something," he said. "Everyone's watching. Everyone in the party, world leaders, business leaders and congressional leaders, because, in a way, it lays out the nominee's decision-making process, and it answers the question, Does he have one or not?"

Biden has limited some of the mystery by promising to pick a woman, a potentially important move as he faces scrutiny after a former Senate staffer alleged he sexually assaulted her in the 1990s. Biden has denied the assault accusation, telling MSNBC on Friday that it "never happened."

Those thought to be under consideration for the vice presidency typically go to great lengths to avoid talking about it — much less audition for it. But that tradition is fading away this year.

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Abrams, the former Democratic Georgia governor candidate, has been vocal about wanting the job, framing her lack of subtlety as the type of honesty her parents instilled in her growing up. Whitmer insists she won't be intimidated by Trump, and Klobuchar has positioned herself as a friendly Midwesterner who can overcome old rivalries.

Others, including Sens. Kamala Harris of California and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, have said they'd accept the vice presidency if Biden offered it.

Final selections can hinge on gut feelings or political calculation. They sometimes are built on personal relationships. Often it's about arrangements of simple accommodation.

Jimmy Carter, the former Georgia governor and political outsider, in 1976 picked Walter Mondale, a Senate stalwart who boosted the nominee's credibility with Washington power brokers. That same year, Gerald Ford was seen as sometimes overly accommodating politically, which made the take-no-prisoners Senate style of his friend Dole appealing.

By selecting Mike Pence in 2016, Donald Trump helped solidify his standing with religious conservatives. That was crucial when Pence stood by Trump after a tape emerged of him bragging of grabbing women by their genitals, nearly sinking the campaign.

An important part of the modern process is visibility. Most of Biden's possible choices have been on media blitzes. When a decision appears imminent, reporters will scrutinize online flight information, attempting to decipher who is traveling where and when, often camping outside the homes of presumptive choices, hoping to glean clues by their comings and goings.

It wasn't always that way.

Mondale first injected a dose of reality television by winning the 1984 Democratic presidential nomination and summoning potential running mates to his home in suburban St. Paul, Minnesota — attracting a great deal of media attention each time.

"Vice presidents had always been picked in secret and were standby equipment, and it wasn't considered important, which was stupid," Mondale said in an interview. "Until we got into it ... and the public started to see that, 'Yes the vice presidency is important.'"

Like Biden now, Mondale saw the process from both sides, as the chooser and the chosen.

"I had some ideas of what it involved and what I needed to do," he said. "But I don't think anybody's really ready for this."

Another key factor weighing on Biden's choice is age since, at 77, he would be the oldest American president in history, should he win. Age was thought to have swayed the then-73-year-old Dole in 1996. He selected former Buffalo Bills quarterback Jack Kemp, who was more than a decade younger, despite the pair being longtime adversaries. But Reed said it was more about the element of surprise than making the ticket feel younger.

Indeed, final choice is sometimes an intentional shocker — with mixed results.

George H.W. Bush selected the young and photogenic Dan Quayle over more experienced choices like former Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker in 1988. Al Gore surprised many by picking Joe Lieberman, the first Jewish person on a major party presidential ticket, while George W. Bush tasked Dick Cheney with overseeing the running mate selection process in 2000, only to have Cheney recommend himself.

Perhaps the biggest stunner came in 2008, when John McCain chose Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, who was little known to most of the country, including McCain himself. The decision initially energized conservatives, but Palin proved uneven on the national stage and, perhaps predictably, a poor personal fit for McCain.

Rep. Cedric Richmond, a Louisiana congressman and a co-chairman of Biden's campaign, said for all the behind-the-scenes vetting, the decision ultimately lies with Biden.

"You lay out candidates, you articulate the pros and cons of each," Richmond said. "But then he's got a decision to make."

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, May 2, the 123rd day of 2020. There are 243 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 2, 1994, Nelson Mandela claimed victory in the wake of South Africa's first democratic elections; President F.W. de Klerk acknowledged defeat.

On this date:

In 1863, during the Civil War, Confederate Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson was accidentally wounded by his own men at Chancellorsville, Virginia; he died eight days later.

In 1890, the Oklahoma Territory was organized.

In 1908, the original version of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," with music by Albert Von Tilzer and lyrics by Jack Norworth, was published by Von Tilzer's York Music Co.

In 1927, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Buck v. Bell*, upheld 8-1 a Virginia law allowing the forced sterilization of people to promote the "health of the patient and the welfare of society."

In 1957, Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., died at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland.

In 1968, "The Odd Couple," the movie version of the Neil Simon comedy starring Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau, opened in New York.

In 1970, jockey Diane Crump became the first woman to ride in the Kentucky Derby; she finished in 15th place aboard Fathom. (The winning horse was Dust Commander.)

In 1972, a fire at the Sunshine silver mine in Kellogg, Idaho, claimed the lives of 91 workers who succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning. Longtime FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover died in Washington at age 77.

In 1982, the Weather Channel made its debut.

In 2005, Pfc. Lynndie England, the young woman pictured in some of the most notorious Abu Ghraib photos, pleaded guilty at Fort Hood, Texas, to mistreating prisoners. (However, a judge later threw out the plea agreement; England was later convicted in a court-martial and received a three-year sentence, of which she served half.)

In 2011, Osama bin Laden was killed by elite American forces at his Pakistan compound, then quickly buried at sea after a decade on the run.

In 2018, two black men who'd been arrested for sitting at a Philadelphia Starbucks without ordering anything settled with the company for an undisclosed sum and an offer of a free college education; they settled separately with the city for a symbolic \$1 each and a promise to set up a \$200,000 program for young entrepreneurs.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama traveled to Louisiana to view the response to the BP oil spill, pledging that the government "will do whatever it takes for as long as it takes to stop this crisis." Record rains and flash floods in Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee caused more than 30 deaths and submerged the Grand Ole Opry House stage. European governments and the International Monetary Fund committed to pulling Greece back from the brink of default, agreeing on nearly \$1 trillion in emergency loans. Actress Lynn Redgrave died in Kent, Connecticut, at age 67.

Five years ago: Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, gave birth in London to a daughter, later named Charlotte, who became fourth in the line of succession to the throne and the fifth great-grandchild of Queen Elizabeth II. En route to a Triple Crown sweep, American Pharoah rallied in the stretch to beat Firing Line by a length and delivered trainer Bob Baffert's first Kentucky Derby since 2002.

One year ago: North Carolina lawyer Cheslie Kryst won the Miss USA crown; for the first time, black women held the titles of Miss USA, Miss Teen USA and Miss America. The Trump administration issued revised rules aimed at giving oil and gas companies more flexibility in meeting safety standards imposed after the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon explosion, which killed nearly a dozen people. Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh resigned under pressure, amid investigations into whether she had arranged bulk sales of her self-published children's books to disguise hundreds of thousands of dollars in kickbacks. (Pugh would later

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be sentenced to three years in federal prison after pleading guilty to federal conspiracy and tax evasion charges.) Escalating a battle between Democrats and the Justice Department, Attorney General William Barr skipped a House hearing on special counsel Robert Mueller's Trump-Russia report.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Engelbert Humperdinck is 84. Former International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge is 78. Actress-activist Bianca Jagger is 75. Country singer R.C. Bannon is 75. Actor David Suchet (SOO'-shay) is 74. Singer-songwriter Larry Gatlin is 72. Rock singer Lou Gramm (Foreigner) is 70. Actress Christine Baranski is 68. Singer Angela Bofill is 66. Fashion designer Donatella Versace is 65. Actor Brian Tochi is 61. Movie director Stephen Daldry is 60. Actress Elizabeth Berridge is 58. Country singer Ty Herndon is 58. Actress Mitzi Kapture is 58. Commentator Mika Brzezinski is 53. Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb is 52. Rock musician Todd Sucherman (Styx) is 51. Wrestler-turned-actor Dwayne Johnson (AKA The Rock) is 48. Former soccer player David Beckham is 45. Rock singer Jeff Gutt (goot) (Stone Temple Pilots) is 44. Actress Jenna Von Oy is 43. Actor Kumail Nanijani is 42. Actress Ellie Kemper is 40. Actor Robert Buckley is 39. Actor Gaius (GY'-ehs) Charles is 37. Pop singer Lily Rose Cooper is 35. Olympic gold medal figure skater Sarah Hughes is 35. Rock musician Jim Almgren (Carolina Liar) is 34. Actor Thomas McDonell is 34. Actress Kay Panabaker is 30. NBA All-Star Paul George is 30. Princess Charlotte of Cambridge is five.

Thought for Today: "What experience and history teach is this: that people and governments have never learned anything from history." — Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (HAY'-guhl), German philosopher (1770-1831).

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