



COVID-19 4/26 UPDATE

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Global

Total cases – 2,962,914

Total deaths – 205,724

United States

Positive tests – 957,016 (9% increase from Friday)

% Positive tests – 18%

Total # tests – 5,184,635 (10% increase from Friday)

Total deaths – 54,435 (9% increase from Friday)

Administration

- The **White House** denied a Dow Jones report that it's in talks to replace **Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar** amid criticism of his handling of the early response to the coronavirus outbreak.
 - "The Department of Health and Human Services, under the leadership of Secretary Azar, continues to lead on a number of the President's priorities," White House spokesman Judd Deere said. "Any speculation about personnel is irresponsible and a distraction from our whole-of-government response to COVID-19."
- **President Trump** announced the **Food and Drug Administration** has approved the first at-home COVID-19 test kit this week during the White House press briefing.
 - FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn said the at-home test was developed by LabCorp.
 - Hahn said the test would require a doctor's referral.
 - "This is a test where under certain circumstances with the doctor's supervision, a test can be mailed to a patient and they can perform the self-swab and then mail it back and get the results after that time, all under the guidance of a licensed physician," Hahn said.
- The **Department of Veterans Affairs** said it is continuing to use hydroxychloroquine to treat coronavirus cases after the Food and Drug Administration made clear Friday that the drug has not been shown to be "safe and effective for treating or preventing Covid-19," and carries "known risks" of potentially deadly heart complications.
 - The VA said it would the drug in a manner "consistent with current FDA guidance."

- "While clinical trials are ongoing to determine the safety and effectiveness of these drugs for COVID-19," the FDA said on Friday, "there are known side effects of these medications that should be considered."
- Trump said the **U.S. Postal Service** is "a joke" and should quadruple the rate it charges major companies to ship a package, but is too frightened of Amazon to do so. Speaking in the White House today, Trump went into a critique of the national mail carrier and hinted he'd block any relief if the service doesn't set higher rates. USPS is "handing out packages for Amazon and other internet companies and every time they send a package, they lose money on it," Trump said.
- **President Trump** later tweeted that he "will never let our Post Office fail" after attacking the US Postal Service earlier Friday.
 - Trump criticized the USPS in his tweet saying, "It has been mismanaged for years, especially since the advent of the internet and modern-day technology" but goes on to praise those who work for the postal service.
 - "The people that work there are great, and we're going to keep them happy, healthy, and well!" Trump tweeted.
- **President Trump** reiterated Friday that he didn't know Dr. Rick Bright, the dismissed director of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), an office leading the charge on a coronavirus vaccine.
 - "Until yesterday, I never heard of the gentleman," Trump said in the Oval Office. "I guess they moved him to a different group."
 - Asked if he had any plans to look into Bright's move to a narrower position at the National Institutes of Health, Trump suggested he will.
- The **Internal Revenue Service** is requesting, but not requiring, several thousand employees to return to work to help open mail, process paper returns and perform several other duties, according to a statement released by the IRS on Saturday.
 - The statement said employees who return to work will be offered "incentive pay" and will be required to wear face coverings. The IRS statement said the agency is working to obtain personal protective equipment and expects many items to be delivered as soon as this weekend.
- Dr. **Anthony Fauci**, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said Saturday that the US should increase testing by twice as much and thinks this will be possible.
 - Appearing on a Covid-19 update webcast by the National Academy of Sciences, Fauci noted he was referring to diagnostic testing of the coronavirus, not antibody testing.
 - Fauci estimated that the US is conducting between 1.5 and 2 million coronavirus tests per week. "We probably should get up to twice that as we get into the next several weeks and I think we will," Fauci said.
- **Trump** suggested that the federal government should buy four to five years' worth of plane tickets in advance at a discount to inject struggling U.S. airlines with new money. "One of the ways we can help the airlines is buying tickets at a very large discount, maybe 50% off or maybe more," Trump said in the Oval Office. "You infuse them with some cash." He added: "In the meantime we're flying the people of our country for a fraction of the cost it would be when the airlines get back."
- The **Health and Human Services Department** is spending about \$256 million to secure drugs and pharmaceutical ingredients needed during the pandemic, according to the General Services

Administration website. Due to the crisis, “the supply chain for such items has been nearly depleted and oftentimes items must be sourced directly from the manufacturer or distributors,” the HHS said in a document. The Food and Drug Administration has only announced one drug in shortage due to the outbreak on Feb. 27, but didn’t specify it

- The **U.S. Treasury’s cash balance** has exceeded \$1 trillion for the first time as the department undertakes funding for stimulus measures aimed at combating the economic effects of the pandemic.
 - The cash pile rose \$56.6 billion to almost \$1.007 trillion on Thursday, according to data released Friday.
 - It has surged from about \$400 billion at the end of March as the Treasury has unleashed a record amount of bill issuance to finance economic-support programs and cover revenue lost by pushing the income-tax filing deadline to July from mid-April.
- **Navy** officials are recommending that the ousted captain of the USS Theodore Roosevelt be returned to command of the aircraft carrier hit hard by the coronavirus, though Defense Secretary Mark Esper hasn’t made a final decision, according to a U.S. official.
- The **US Food and Drug Administration** has authorized three new coronavirus antibody tests, bringing the total number of FDA-authorized tests to seven.
 - The tests were green-lit under emergency-use authorizations, a lower regulatory standard used when the FDA believes a test’s benefits could outweigh any risks.
 - Three companies – DiaSorin, Ortho-Clinical Diagnostics and Autobio Diagnostics – received the authorizations. The tests were restricted to use in authorized laboratories, and the FDA cautioned that all three came with risks of false positives and negatives.
- **Dr. Deborah Birx**, the White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator, said Sunday that the US will need a breakthrough in testing to help screen large numbers of people.
 - The US is continuing to scale coronavirus testing, “but at the same time, we have to realize that we have to have a breakthrough innovation in testing,” she said on NBC.
 - “We have to be able to detect antigen, rather than constantly trying to detect the actual live virus, or the viral particles itself,” Birx added.
- The U.S. will limit how much banks can lend under an emergency loan program designed to keep workers on payrolls during the pandemic, [Reuters reported](#), citing a memo it has seen.
 - The **Small Business Administration** will impose a cap for individual lenders at 10% of Paycheck Protection Program funding authority and pace the applications filed, Reuters reported.
 - The SBA did not immediately respond to requests for comment from Reuters
- **White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett** painted a dire economic picture Sunday for the coming months because of the impact of coronavirus on businesses around the country.
 - Hassett predicted a very negative report on the economic output of the country.
 - Hassett separately said during an interview on ABC that he thought the country is going to see an unemployment rate comparable to the Great Depression.
- **Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin** told reporters Sunday he believes the economy will begin to bounce back sometime this summer because of the economic activity that he hopes will occur in May and June, as some states begin to reopen.
 - “This is an unprecedented situation. This is not a financial crisis, this is — we shut down,” Mnuchin told reporters at the White House. “The traditional economic models may work. They may not work.”

- “What I do think is, as we open up the economy in May and June, you will begin to see the economy bounce back in July, August, September,” Mnuchin added. “And my expectation is that you’ll see an increasing rate of growth in those three months.”
- The **U.S. Treasury** sent \$9.5 billion to airlines, including another eight major carriers and 29 smaller companies, since April 20 under federal payroll support and loan programs. The total so far is \$12.4 billion in initial payments to 93 air carriers, with additional disbursement on a rolling basis, the Treasury said in a [statement](#).
- The **U.S. Department of Agriculture** [announced](#) it will establish a “coordination center” to help livestock and poultry producers hurt by coronavirus-induced meatpacking plant closures.
 - The USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will offer “direct support to producers whose animals cannot move to market” and work with state veterinarians and other public officials “to help identify potential alternative markets” as plant shutdowns increase, according to a release posted on the agency’s website
- **President Donald Trump** was sued over a provision of the coronavirus relief package that could deny \$1,200 stimulus checks to more than 1 million Americans married to immigrants without Social Security Numbers.
 - The suit was filed Friday by an Illinois man using the pseudonym John Doe, who seeks to represent all others in his position. Doe claims a carve-out in the relief package discriminates against him “based solely on whom he chose to marry.”
- **Agricultural producers, farmers, and ranchers** are eligible for small business rescue loans as long as they meet certain requirements, according to new Payroll Protection Program [guidance](#) from the U.S. Treasury Dept and Small Business Administration.
 - Qualifications include having 500 or fewer workers or if the business fits within the revenue-based sized standard, which is average annual receipts of \$1m
 - Producers, farmers, and ranchers can also qualify if their business meets SBA’s “alternative size standard,” which is defined as having maximum net worth not more than \$15m, and average net income after federal income taxes, excluding any carry-over losses, for two full fiscal years before the application date of not more than \$5m
 - Guidance also says agricultural and other forms of cooperatives are eligible to get PPP funds if other requirements are met
- The **US Department of Treasury** and the **Internal Revenue Service** said they've made “significant enhancements to the ‘Get My Payment’ app” to help improve Americans’ ability to receive stimulus checks in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a news release from the Treasury Department.
 - “Some of the key enhancements include: payment status update for closed bank accounts, greater app access for taxpayers who filed in 2018 but not 2019 and did not use direct deposit, and the ability to submit a ‘0’ amount for zero income filers,” a Treasury spokesperson told CNN.
 - “This Administration has already delivered over 88 million payments in less than three weeks, with millions more on their way,” said Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin. “We encourage people who still need to input their information or want to track their payment to use the app.”
- The **U.S. Small Business Administration** will restart a government coronavirus relief loan program for small businesses Monday morning with an additional \$320 billion, after the first round of funding was [exhausted](#) in just 13 days.

- “We encourage all approved lenders to process loan applications previously submitted by eligible borrowers and disburse funds expeditiously,” Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and SBA Administrator Jovita Carranza said in a joint statement.
- **IRS** says that **Social Security, Supplemental Security Income** and **veterans benefits recipients** now have until May 5 to claim for dependents and get the full value of their stimulus payments.
 - Previously said benefits recipients had to [inform the IRS](#) of dependents eligible for the \$500 payments by April 22
 - Lawmakers of both parties had asked the agency to give people more time to claim for children 16 and under to get their full payments
- **President Trump** is planning to reduce his appearances at the daily White House coronavirus task force press briefing, Axios [reports](#), citing four sources familiar with the matter.
 - As soon as next week, Trump may stop appearing daily and make shorter appearances when he does: Axios
- The **U.S. Supreme Court** let **President Donald Trump’s** administration keep using a tough test to screen out green card applicants who might become dependent on government benefits, refusing to halt the policy because of the Covid-19 outbreak.
 - With no published dissents, the justices rejected a request from a New York-led group of state and local governments that said emergency Supreme Court intervention was needed to ensure immigrants weren’t deterred from using publicly funded health-care programs and other benefits. The court also rejected a similar motion filed by Cook County, Illinois.
 - The court left open the possibility that a request could be filed with a federal district court.
- **Homeland Security Dept** in emailed statement says it continues to study the impacts of environmental conditions on the coronavirus and results “are still undergoing a rigorous scientific review.”
 - DHS is working with partners to help answer critical questions about the virus, including how stable it is in different conditions and how effective different decontamination products are on surfaces, according to a [fact sheet](#)
- **Secretary of State Michael Pompeo** has recommended that the U.S. keep funding World Health Organization programs to fight polio and coronavirus in seven countries, a recognition that the group provides key services in some areas despite President Donald Trump’s criticism.
 - State Department officials informed the National Security Council that the WHO is central to the fight against Covid-19 or polio in seven countries: Afghanistan, Egypt, Libya, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria and Turkey, said a person familiar with the discussions. Adhering to the letter of Trump’s order from last week to halt all U.S. funding to WHO for a 60- to 90-day review would therefore be unworkable.
- The **Army** will proceed with this year’s graduation ceremony at the US Military Academy, or West Point, according to a statement from Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy.
 - McCarthy said the Army is "putting the appropriate measures in place to respond to the Covid-19 crisis and to protect our Force, Cadets and Families."
- About 88 million Americans have received aid payments worth nearly \$158 billion, according to the **Treasury Department** and **Internal Revenue Service**, a figure that represents over half of the virus stimulus payments of up to \$1,200 for adults that the IRS will send out to help household budgets as unemployment numbers rise and businesses remain shuttered. The IRS

plans to send more than 150 million payments in total, which congressional scorekeepers estimate will total around \$292 billion([HERE](#))

- As part of its work to support frontline healthcare providers fighting COVID-19, the **Department of Health and Human Services** has extended the deadline for hospitals to submit data that will inform how \$10 billion is distributed to areas of high impact from COVID-19. ([HERE](#))
- **FEMA** recently published a Temporary Final Rule and supplemental notice in the Federal Register to support President Trump's "[Memorandum on Allocating Certain Scarce or Threatened Health and Medical Resources to Domestic Use](#)" issued on April 3. ([HERE](#))
- **Fire service organizations** nationwide with membership on the front lines in the fight against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will soon be able to apply for a share of \$100 million in funding to purchase personal protective equipment and supplies. The funding is part of the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act through **FEMA** Assistance for Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP). ([HERE](#))
- Today, the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** issued a [Drug Safety Communication](#) regarding known side effects of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine, including serious and potentially life-threatening heart rhythm problems, that have been reported with their use for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19, for which they are not approved by the FDA. These risks, which are in the drug labels for their approved uses, may be mitigated when health care professionals closely screen and supervise these patients such as in a hospital setting or a clinical trial, as indicated in the [Emergency Use Authorization \(EUA\)](#) for these drugs to treat COVID-19. [HERE](#)
- **The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** is continuing its efforts to provide critical information on surface disinfectant products that can be used to protect the health of all Americans throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency. ([HERE](#))
- Today, the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** and **U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** announced they have prevented a significant number of shipments of illegal health products from entering the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and the San Francisco International Airport (SFO). ([HERE](#))
- **Defense Department** planners are working on how to resume normal military operations following the coronavirus pandemic, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Rath Hoffman said. ([HERE](#))
- The **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)** has significantly increased hiring in the two weeks ending mid-April — a surge that will continue in the coming weeks as VA works to protect patients from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). ([HERE](#))

Capitol Hill

- **Sen. Bill Cassidy**, a republican from Louisiana, is proposing a \$500 billion bill that would give emergency relief funds to state and local governments as several of the nation's governors say they need federal money to continue daily operations.
 - One-third of the money would be awarded based on population size, one-third based on the number of coronavirus cases in the state and one-third based on the state's revenue loss, Cassidy said.
 - He said supporting local governments means supporting small businesses.
- **Democratic Sen. Tammy Duckworth** is calling on lawmakers to investigate President Trump's decision to help in the transport of personal protective equipment and medical supplies to China in February.

- **Duckworth** in statement says request is in response to a [Politico report](#) that Trump owes tens of millions of dollars to the Bank of China
- **Duckworth** is asking **Democratic Rep. James Clyburn**, tapped to be head of a new select subcommittee focused on federal coronavirus response, to look at whether Trump's reported \$211m outstanding loan from the Bank of China influenced his decision on China
- Link to [letter](#)
- **Congressional Democrats** are seeking a broad review of the U.S. government's implementation of the Paycheck Protection Program. Senate Minority Leader [Chuck Schumer](#) (D-N.Y.) and three others asked **Small Business Administration Inspector General Mike Ware** to investigate reports that some lenders participating in PPP have prioritized applications of their larger, wealthier clients.
 - In a separate letter to both **Ware** and **Treasury Department** acting Inspector General Richard Delmar today, Sen. [Elizabeth Warren](#) (D-Mass.) and House Small Business Chairwoman [Nydia Velazquez](#) (D-N.Y.) urged them to conduct a review of the rulemaking and guidance process of the loans program, [Laura Curtis reports](#).
- **Congressional Democrats** want to repeal a provision in the \$2.2 trillion stimulus package they argue favors wealthy taxpayers like hedge-fund managers and would reduce government revenue by \$160 billion over a decade. The Republican provision, Democrats allege, citing a Joint Committee on Taxation study, would help only 43,000 individual taxpayers in 2020, allowing them to point to losses in certain years to avoid paying taxes in other years. **Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (R.I.)** and **Rep. Lloyd Doggett (Texas)** have proposed legislation to repeal sections 2303 and 2304 of the stimulus, according to a statement.
- Farm groups and their allies in Congress are pressing the Trump administration to lift limits on payments to individual producers under a \$19 billion coronavirus bailout plan.
 - That would reverse the practice of limiting taxpayer assistance to large farms under ordinary federal agricultural subsidies and the administration's \$28 billion trade bailout. Producer groups argue that the economic blow from the pandemic is so severe that large operators will be devastated without full access to aid.
 - **Senator Jerry Moran**, a Kansas Republican, and **Representative Jimmy Panetta**, a California Democrat, led 126 U.S. House members and 28 senators in [letters](#) urging the U.S. Agriculture Department to drop caps on bailout payments that they said would "severely restrict the program's effectiveness."
 - An initial USDA proposal for the rescue package included an individual payment limit of \$125,000 per product category or \$250,000 overall per person.
- The **Congressional Budget Office** said the federal budget deficit [may more than triple](#) to a record \$3.7 trillion during this fiscal year because of massive stimulus and economic shutdowns to combat the coronavirus pandemic.
 - The shortfall may be \$2.1 trillion in the following fiscal year, which ends September 2021, Phillip Swagel, director of the nonpartisan agency, said in a blog post Friday. The economy is forecast to shrink at a 39.6% annualized rate in the second quarter.
- **Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer** is calling on the Food and Drug Administration to crack down on companies who are selling fake at-home coronavirus test kits online.

- Schumer said at a press conference on Sunday that he is sending a letter to the FDA to increase policing of online tests, make public which tests have been approved by the FDA and issue cease and resist orders to every company found to be selling false tests.
- Schumer warned that the spread of non-FDA approved at-home tests would make the recovery from coronavirus much longer, if people falsely believe that they do not have the virus, or that they have already had it.

State/Local

- **Colorado Gov. Jared Polis** may withhold emergency funding from Weld County after a local leader said any business would be allowed to reopen on Monday.
 - “If any county is not treating this like the emergency that it is, they risk losing emergency funds,” Polis said Friday at a news conference when asked about Weld County.
 - The state is moving to what it calls a “Safer at Home” plan on Monday that involves loosening some restrictions, but the plan promoted by Weld County Commission Chairman Mike Freeman would allow all businesses to open with only suggested social distancing guidelines.
- **Colorado Gov. Jared Polis** is allowing offices to reopen with a reduced workforce on May 4 — a decision he is confident in regardless of the possibility of a spike in coronavirus cases in the coming weeks.
 - “We expect we’ll have to adjust the degree of social distancing in real time...we’re going to look at a number of different proxies and as we need to adjust in real time,” Polis told CNN on Sunday.
 - Polis said he is worried about a potential for a second spike in the fall, but his administration has been focused on how to implement and create enduring social distancing measures.
- The 2020 **California State Fair and Food Festival** has been cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic, event organizers announced in a press release Friday.
 - This year’s event, which was scheduled for July 17-August 2 at Cal Expo in Sacramento, would have been the 166th year of the award-winning fair. This is the first time the annual California State Fair has been canceled since WWII, Cal Expo said.
- **Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis** has not set a deadline for when to reopen the state.
 - “I’m not concerned about specific dates as much as I’m concerned about getting it right,” DeSantis said at a news conference Friday.
 - The governor’s Reopen Task Force was scheduled to deliver their recommendations to DeSantis today.
 - DeSantis said he plans to take a look at the task force’s recommendations through the weekend and then roll out the plan in the “next many days.”
- **Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis** has instructed his surgeon general to give licensed pharmacists the power to order and administer Covid-19 tests.
 - The governor made the announcement during a news conference Friday.
 - DeSantis said the effort is a step towards making testing more “simple” and “accessible” in Florida.
- **Washington Gov. Jay Inslee**, speaking about the shortages of personal protective equipment in his state, slammed Trump for delaying his use of the Defense Production Act.

- "As you also know, I have been very robust in urging the President to get off the dime and start producing some PPE with the Defense Production Act," Insee said. "Unfortunately he waited weeks before he did that and so we've been delayed."
- **Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam** does not anticipate reopening the state before May 8, he said in a news conference Friday.
 - Northam outlined his "Forward Virginia" plan and explained that phase one of reopening will require downward trends in new cases and hospitalizations for 14 days; increased testing and contact tracing and a sustainable supply of hospital beds and personal protective equipment.
- **Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam** issues plan for easing public health restrictions that includes a goal of testing at least 10,000 people a day for Covid-19, [statement](#) from the Democratic governor's office says.
 - The expanded testing to include hiring contact tracers
 - First phase of easing restrictions to begin no sooner than two weeks from today to allow for a 14-day downward trend in confirmed Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations: statement
- **New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo** outlined a phased plan to re-open New York Sunday, according to a news release from his office.
 - "The State is closely monitoring the hospitalization rate, the infection rate and the number of positive antibody tests, as well as the overall public health impact, and will make adjustments to the plan and other decisions based on these indicators," the release said.
 - The phased plan will go as follows:
 - Phase one will include opening construction and manufacturing functions with low risk.
 - Phase two will open certain industries based on priority and risk level. Businesses considered "more essential" with inherent low risks of infection in the workplace and to customers will be prioritized.
 - There will be two weeks between each phase to monitor infection rates, the release said
- **New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo** said to increase the capacity of labs, the state needs more collection mechanisms, and he will sign an executive order to authorize all independent pharmacist in the state to be collection sites for testing
 - There are roughly 5,000 pharmacies in New York and some larger chains have already been doing it, he said.
- **Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan** said on Friday he was "disturbed" to hear that grocery stores are not making a greater effort to get all employees tested for Covid-19.
 - Speaking at today's news briefing, Duggan warned that he will "crackdown" on them if they fail to get all their workers tested by May 11.
 - "We will take appropriate legal action to ensure that the residents of Detroit are safe," he said, adding that two weeks is plenty of time for grocery stores to get everyone tested.
- **Missouri** will begin loosening restrictions on businesses and some public gatherings beginning on May 4, **Gov. Mike Parson** said at a news conference Friday.
 - "Since Missouri's first case nearly 50 days ago, we have accomplished a tremendous amount of work together," the governor said.

- He said the “reopening” will include restaurants, salons, gyms and houses of worship. Details outlining social distancing measures will be released next week, the governor said.
- Parson said he is extending the state’s coronavirus emergency declaration through June 15.
- **Indiana Department of Health Commissioner Kristina Box** acknowledged that she has received questions about the wisdom of ingesting disinfectant and has told these people it is not something she recommends.
 - Sen. Mike Braun was more critical, saying, “sometimes when you’re not clear with how you say things, and especially when you’re at a high level where people watch, it’s best probably not to venture into areas that you may not know a lot about.”
 - Gov. Eric Holcomb followed Box, repeating the President’s explanation today that he was being sarcastic but also added the state will give sound medical counsel if anyone asks.
- **California** is unveiling a new program focused on caring for seniors while also getting farmers, restaurant workers and delivery people back to work.
 - Touted as the first of its kind in the nation, Gov. Gavin Newsom said the program will focus on seniors who are particularly vulnerable and dealing with isolation.
 - The program will allow for restaurants to reopen in order to prepare and deliver meals to seniors.
 - Elderly people meeting eligibility requirements, including financial means and vulnerability to coronavirus, will receive three meals a day, seven days a week. The meals will be made with an eye on locally-produced ingredients in an effort to put farmers back to work, and will follow nutritional guidelines, the governor said.
- **New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy** will sign an executive order to support renters, the governor announced during a Covid-19 news conference today.
 - The order will allow renters to use their security deposit to pay their rent, the governor said.
 - There will be a question and answer portal for tenants and landlords about their rights and responsibilities.
- **Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson** announced on Friday that elective dental procedures will be allowed to proceed on May 18.
 - The state’s Department of Health will be working with industry associations on proper guidelines so consumers have confidence that protective measures are in place before May 18, the governor said.
- **Delaware** schools will remain closed through the end of the academic year, Gov. John Carney announced on Friday.
 - “Today we’re making it official that the schools will remain closed for students through the end of this school year,” Carney said. “There’s obviously no replacement for in person instruction in classrooms in terms of the relationships and the services. But obviously doing what we can between now and the end of what would have been the school year, we want to get as much benefit for our students as possible.”
- **Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds** announced plans to start reopening some sectors of the economy on Monday during the Covid-19 pandemic.

- During Friday's news conference, Reynolds said the proclamation she is signing will allow for hospitals to resume elective surgeries in a phased approach. Farmers Markets will also be able to reopen with limited operations on Monday as well.
- The statewide stay at home order for **Hawaii** set to expire April 30 has been extended until May 31, **Gov. David Ige** announced during a press conference Saturday.
 - **Ige** said he has extended the order that travelers quarantine for 14 days after their arrival to the state until May 31.
- **Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont** announced on Saturday a new program that would help to get face masks to eligible, essential small businesses in Connecticut with fewer than 50 employees.
 - "The more proactive measures we can take to prevent the spread of this virus and keep everyone healthy, the sooner we'll be able to reopen operations," Lamont said in a news release. "We were able to secure over 4 million masks this week that have replenished our supplies and put us in a position to support small businesses. I appreciate our partners at (Connecticut Business and Industry Association) and CONNSTEP for partnering with us on this effort to get those needed face coverings out to essential employees."
 - Eligible businesses must apply online and are allowed to request a maximum of two free masks per employee, according to the release.
- **Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez** told CNN's Ana Cabrera on Saturday that officials plan to enforce new social distancing guidelines in "open spaces" once Miami begins to ease lockdown restrictions.
 - These new guidelines include hiring 400 people to "have eyes on the basketball court on the tennis courts" and violators will get citations if they do not follow the guidelines.
- **Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam** issued an executive order postponing the state's local elections until May 19, he announced today.
 - The two-week postponement is the maximum that Northam is constitutionally allowed after the state Senate declined to delay the elections further.
- **Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker** says that the state is currently experiencing a "surge" of Covid-19 cases, but medical facilities are prepared.
 - Yesterday, Baker said 55% of the total 18,200 hospital beds in the state were available.
 - "People did a lot of work to make sure we would have the hospital capacity and the health care capacity that we would need to not just serve people who are dealing with Covid-19, but also to be able to take care of all the other maladies, illnesses, diseases, and issues that people face," Baker said at a news conference today.

International

- **Belgium** will start relaxing the lockdown measures on its citizens and companies, now in their sixth week, with a plan to progressively reopen businesses in the first half of May as Prime Minister Sophie Wilmes warned the timing will be fully dependent on the strength of the epidemic.
 - Companies with business-to-business operations and industrial activities reopen May 4, to be followed a week later by retailers and all companies with a business-to-consumer focus, except those that can't possibly avoid physical contact such as hairdressers. Schools will progressively open for students ages 6 to 18 from May 18, split by age groups, and masks will be mandatory age 12 and up, as well as in public transportation

starting May 4. Bars and restaurants will have to remain closed until at least June 8, and leisurely cross-border travel will stay banned before that date.

- **U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson** will return to work on Monday and will take charge of the nation's response to the pandemic, a month after he was struck down by the coronavirus.
 - The government has been without a leader since Johnson went to the hospital on April 5. Since his release, he's been slowly easing his way back, holding daily video calls with Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab and his team, and speaking to medical advisers Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance.
- The **World Health Organization** is warning that people who have had coronavirus are not necessarily immune by the presence of antibodies from getting the virus again.
 - "There is no evidence yet that people who have had Covid-19 will not get a second infection," the WHO said in a new scientific brief.
 - The WHO is warning against governments issuing "immunity passports" to people who have had Covid-19, assuming they are safe to resume normal life.
 - "At this point in the pandemic, there is not enough evidence about the effectiveness of antibody-mediated immunity to guarantee the accuracy of an 'immunity passport' or 'risk-free certificate,'" the brief said.
- The government of **India's** most populated state, Uttar Pradesh, has announced a ban on gatherings until June 30.
 - It is the first state to have issued a ban on gatherings beyond the end of the nationwide lockdown, which is May 3.
 - Its Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath issued strict instructions to officials about the extended gathering ban, according [to a tweet by state media](#) advisor Mrityunjay Kumar. The decision has been taken to combat the spread of coronavirus, he added.
- **Pakistan** will remain in a nationwide lockdown until May 9 to curb the spread of coronavirus, Planning Minister Asad Umar announced.
 - The decision was made after consultation with all the provincial governments, Umar said
- The **United Kingdom** will host a summit on June 4 to encourage the international community to "come together" to support the development of a Covid-19 vaccine, Britain's Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab announced Friday.
 - Mobile testing units will travel around the UK to increase access to coronavirus testing, the government announced in a statement on Sunday.
 - The network of testing units will be operated by the military and target vulnerable sites such as care homes, police stations and prisons.
- In a speech on Saturday evening, **Spain Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez** announced he will present his plan for the "de-escalation phase" in his country next Tuesday.
 - Sánchez also announced that if Spain continues to show a favorable evolution of the pandemic, citizens will be allowed to go outside to play sports and walk with family members in early May. The country's health minister will oversee the arrangements and guidance, he said.
- **French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe** will present the government's plan to ease the country's confinement measure to the French National Assembly on Tuesday, a spokesperson for the Prime Minister told CNN on Saturday.

- Philippe's announcement will be followed by a debate and a vote, the spokesperson said.
- French confinement measures implemented on the March 17 are scheduled to be lifted on the May 11.
- The **Canadian government** says that despite some success in flattening the curve, and a slower growth rate in new coronavirus cases nearly everywhere in the country, the economy can't reopen until supplies of personal protective equipment are in place for businesses.
 - "I don't think we should be talking about reopening any parts of the economy if we do not have a strong plan to protect people working," said Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during a press conference Saturday.
 - Some Canadian jurisdictions are set to open in the coming weeks but a competitive market for personal protection equipment, described by some government ministers as the "wild west," may slow the return of some economic sectors.
- **Ecuador** announced that it will go into a "social distancing phase" starting on May 4.
 - In a televised statement Friday, President Lenin Moreno said that to face the crisis "successfully" the country "needs a balance between sanitary measures and an ordered economic reactivation."
 - "The indicators on the progress of the pandemic give us encouragement," Moreno said.
- The **British Government** says it is working on an approach to "encourage" workers who have been placed on furlough as a result of the coronavirus pandemic to help with the harvest of British crops which is expected to start in June.
 - "We estimate that probably only about a third of the migrant labour that would normally come to the UK is here, and was probably here before lockdown," the British secretary for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, George Eustice, said during a news briefing on Sunday. "We are working with industry to identify an approach that will encourage those millions of furloughed workers to in some cases consider taking a second job helping get the harvest in in June."
- Hair salons, beauty parlors and other shops and services were allowed to open in **Israel** Sunday after the government agreed on loosening coronavirus restrictions.
 - Restaurants were allowed to sell food for take-away, though restrictions on seated guests remain in place.
 - All businesses permitted to re-open are required to follow lengthy regulations concerning the behavior of staff and customers, with a fine of 2,000 shekels, roughly \$570, for any violations.
 - Shops in malls are to remain closed.
 - The wearing of masks in public remains mandatory, with authorities free to issue fines to anyone flouting the requirement "from the first offense."
- **Lebanon** is relaxing some of its coronavirus restrictions, known as the "general mobilization," by increasing the opening hours for some commercial and industrial enterprises in the country starting Monday.
 - The decree, issued by the Minister of Interior, Mohammed Fahmi, has amended the opening and closing times for factories, wholesale and retail shops, supermarkets, dairies, bakeries, free trade shops such as mechanics' shops, carpenters, TV production companies, and other establishments.
 - Other measures include:

- People over 65 years old have been asked to stay at home, and only to leave if there is “an extreme necessity,” the decree added.
- Public transportation vehicles will also be allowed to operate with limited passengers onboard depending on the size of the vehicle.
- All institutions need to adhere to public safety and social distancing measures.
- The "general mobilization" measures that were originally announced on March 15 included a ban on public and private gatherings and called for people to remain at home.
- **Spain's** children are finally allowed to leave their homes for the first time in over six weeks after the government announced a relaxation [of the strictest confinement measures](#) in Europe.
 - In the capital Madrid, parents were seen by CNN venturing out with their children in tow on Sunday morning.
 - Kids up to the age of 14-years-old will now be able to play outside for one hour a day while accompanied by an adult, according to a decree by Spain’s Official State Gazette (BOE).
 - The guidelines also stressed that children should be in groups no larger than three alongside one adult, and should not venture further than one kilometer (0.62 miles) from their home. They are also allowed to bring their toys.
- **Ontario** will boost the hourly pay of workers fighting the outbreak at hospitals, long-term care centers, emergency shelters, prisons and other provincial facilities by C\$4 (\$2.84), Premier Doug Ford said Saturday. Employees working more than 100 hours per month will also get lump-sum payments of C\$250 monthly for next 16 weeks.
- **Kenya’s** President Uhuru Kenyatta extended a nationwide night-time curfew by 21 days and said people won’t be able to enter or exit the capital and some coastal areas for a similar period. The East African nation has 343 confirmed cases.
 - The government decided to allow some restaurants and eateries to reopen after mapping out economic sectors and activities on the basis of infection risk, he said. Kenyatta also assented to tax law amendments designed to cushion businesses and households from the impact of the pandemic, according to a statement.

Other

- The **NBA** plans to reopen team practice facilities on Friday in areas where local government officials have relaxed stay-at-home restrictions, [according to a report from ESPN](#).
 - Sources tell the network that players will be allowed to voluntarily work out individually but not as a team.
 - The NBA also plans to find alternative arrangements for players in states with full stay-at-home orders to be able to practice.
- **AutoNation** Executive VP Marc Cannon tells Washington Post that the company’s board voted Thursday to return federal small-business funds it received from the Paycheck Protection Program.
 - The company received almost \$95m in PPP money, the [newspaper](#) says, citing internal company documents and two company employees
 - Cannon says the company intended to use the money only to pay employees
- The **UFC** has scheduled three fight nights that will be closed to the public starting May in Jacksonville, Florida.

- The mixed martial arts organization said all three of the events will take place in the VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena "with only essential personnel in attendance."
- In a statement released by the UFC, Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry said, "As we move step-by-step on the path toward economic recovery, we are proud to host these UFC events at the VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena."
- **US airlines** are moving forward with plans to carry cargo in [otherwise empty passenger planes](#).
 - Airlines for America, the industry group that represents airlines, on Friday formally asked the Federal Aviation Administration to allow all carriers to transport cargo on airplane seats.
 - Delta Air Lines said it has received federal government approval to carry cargo in empty overhead bins on cargo-only, wide-body charter flights. Since early April, it has been using passenger planes for those flights, but the passenger compartment is empty.
- **Three class action lawsuits** have been filed against **New York-area universities** by students who argue the schools' have failed to adequately refund or reimburse students for tuition and other fees they paid to attend in-person, on-campus classes.
 - The lawsuits are against Columbia University, Pace University and Long Island University. The students argue that online-only instruction is less valuable and should cost students less.
- The annual summer action sports and music festival **X Games** has been canceled.
 - Originally set to take place July 17-19 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, X Games organizers blamed the ongoing concerns of Covid-19 for the cancellation.
 - X Games host Jack Mitrani announced the news via a video on Twitter.
- A meat-processing company is being forced to close its doors over coronavirus concerns.
 - The Kane County Health Department issued an order for **Smithfield Foods** in St. Charles, Illinois, to temporarily close so the company can work with the health department to implement mitigation efforts against Covid-19, according to a press release.
 - The Health Department will provide social distancing education and employee safety training relating to personal protective equipment, the press release said.
- **Sandwich shop operator Potbelly Corp.** said it's returning the payroll protection loan it received as part of the federal program, amid criticism that national chains won the aid at the expense of mom-and-pop firms.
 - The Chicago-based company said it was "surprised and disappointed" when the fund was quickly exhausted, shutting out many companies. It will seek alternative means to support its furloughed staff, the company said in a statement Saturday
- **Apple Inc.** and **Google** said they are putting stronger privacy protections in their upcoming contact-tracing tool for Covid-19 and that an early version will launch for developers next week.
 - The companies said the system's tracking keys -- a string of characters linked to a user's device -- will be generated in more random ways, and that Bluetooth data will now be encrypted, making it more difficult for individuals to be identified by hackers. Apps using the tool will also now limit the recording of the time people are exposed to an infected person to a maximum of 30 minutes.