



## COVID-19 5/21 UPDATE

### ***COVID-19 5/21 Update***

#### ***Global***

Total cases – 5,047,377

Total deaths – 329,819

#### ***United States***

Total cases – 1,562,714

Total deaths – 93,863

Total # tests – 12,647,791

#### ***Administration***

- **President Trump** wants to be slow approaching additional coronavirus relief and not rush into a large amount of government spending, **White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany** says at briefing.
  - “I won’t lay out the president’s conditions or lack thereof,” McEnany says, when asked about whether Trump would sign a virus relief bill without employer liability protections
- The **Federal Emergency Management Agency** on Wednesday released guidance for the 2020 hurricane season, taking into account the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - The 59-page document details what the agency — and its partners — will need to consider when responding to hurricanes, given the pandemic, like practicing social distancing at shelters and following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to protect personnel and survivors.
  - For example, the agency — in coordination with state and local partners — will develop “localized mitigation strategies, including temperature and health screenings, increased cleaning and disinfection requirements, and reduced personnel footprints for social distancing,” when considering new disaster facilities.
  - FEMA says it will also address the use of face coverings and guidance for individuals instructed not to enter FEMA facilities, like people who have tested positive for coronavirus.
  - While the document focuses on hurricane season preparedness, the agency notes that “most planning considerations can also be applied to any disaster operation in the COVID-19 environment, including no-notice incidents, spring flooding and wildfire seasons, and typhoon response.”

- **Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin** said Thursday there is a “strong likelihood” that another stimulus bill will be needed to keep the economy afloat.
  - He added, however, that for now, Congress needs to take a step back and allow the \$3 trillion in aid already appropriated to get pumped into the economy.
  - His remarks, which were made at a virtual summit sponsored by The Hill, come as Republicans are pumping the breaks on approving more coronavirus stimulus spending.
- When Nevada moved to make it easier for more voters to cast their ballots by mail ahead of the November election, **President Trump** lashed out in response, [threatening to withhold funding](#) from the state over this.
  - “It’s a piece of political abuse here,” Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford said about the threat.
- **US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Robert Redfield** said the coronavirus could “reground” itself in the northern hemisphere in later this year, and he does not rule out the possibility of new lockdown measures and restrictions.
  - “We’ve seen evidence that the concerns it would go south in the southern hemisphere like flu [are coming true], and you’re seeing what’s happening in Brazil now,” Redfield told the Financial Times in an exclusive interview.
- The **Transportation Security Administration** said it is making some changes to its security screening procedures at airports, but did not include passenger temperature screening in its list — something [a federal official has told CNN](#) the agency is considering.
  - The changes include several ways to prevent officers from handling travelers' belongings and travelers from handling shared X-ray bins.
  - The agency said passengers should hang onto their boarding passes, rather than handing them to TSA officers, to prevent cross contamination. Instead, officers will visually review the boarding pass.
  - The TSA also said that when a bag does not pass X-ray screening, passengers may be responsible for unpacking the bag and sending it through the X-ray machine again, rather than an officer searching through it by hand.
  - The agency is encouraging travelers to pack food items in a clear plastic bag to make it easier for officers to check them. Food items sometimes require further inspection by TSA.
- **Baltimore Mayor Bernard Young** asks **President Trump** not to visit Baltimore on Memorial Day, citing the city’s lockdown order amid the coronavirus pandemic.
  - Trump is sending “the wrong message to our residents” by deciding to undertake non-essential travel, Young says in a [statement](#) posted on Twitter
- U.S policy makers may need to provide the battered economy with additional support beyond the unprecedented actions they’ve already taken, **Federal Reserve Vice Chairman Richard Clarida** said on Thursday.
  - “Depending on the course the virus takes and the depth and duration of the downturn it causes, additional support from both monetary and fiscal policies may be called for,” he said in the text of a speech to be delivered via webcast to New York Association for Business Economics.
  - “We do need to fix the quirk” in the latest stimulus law that gives some people more money in unemployment benefits than they otherwise would make, Treasury Sec. Steven Mnuchin says.

- **Mnuchin**, speaking at a virtual event hosted by The Hill, also says there is bipartisan support for a technical change in the Paycheck Protection Program that says loans are forgiven as long as borrowers spend 75% on payroll within eight weeks of getting the money
  - "That's something we definitely want to fix," he says
  - NOTE: Republican [Mitt Romney](#), Democrat [Ron Wyden](#) and other senators last week unveiled a [bill](#) that would extend the loan forgiveness period from 8 to 16 weeks
- The **U.S. Postal Service** may not need the \$10 billion loan Congress made available in its coronavirus rescue legislation due to an increase in business, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said.
  - "The good news is, as of now, package deliveries are up over 50%," he said Thursday during a virtual event hosted by the Hill. "As of now, they don't need to use the loan."
  - During negotiations for the \$2.2 trillion Cares Act, some lawmakers wanted to give the Postal Service a \$10 billion handout, Mnuchin said, which he called "unfair" and instead created the option for a loan.
- The latest extension of a **Trump administration** order barring entry of unauthorized migrants at the southern and northern border will remain in place indefinitely and includes an expansion that also bans entry from coastal ports.
  - The extension of border restrictions originally announced in March stem from a public health order by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The order will remain in place until the CDC "determines the serious danger from COVID-19 has ceased," acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf said in a statement late Tuesday.
  - "This order has been one of the most critical tools the Department has used to prevent the further spread of the virus and to protect the American people, DHS frontline officers, and those in their care and custody from COVID-19," Wolf said.
- The order, signed by **CDC Director Robert R. Redfield**, amends the original ban to clarify it also applies to migrants coming to coastal ports of entry near the U.S. border with Canada and Mexico. That means it applies to individuals who may have crossed into the country via boat, not just those who approached by land.
  - The order mentions that the circumstances resulting from the coronavirus pandemic would be reviewed every 30 days, but gives no other details on what changes might result in the administration lifting the order.
- **U.S. military** will start preparing for a return to normal operations amid coronavirus pandemic, taking into consideration guidance from the CDC and local authorities, Defense Dept. says in statement.
- **President Trump's top economic adviser Larry Kudlow** said Thursday that extending unemployment benefits to Americans impacted by the coronavirus pandemic might be a disincentive for people to return to work and get the economy reopened.
- "I do not believe more government spending will give us a strong and durable recovery," Kudlow said in an interview with the Washington Post Live. "I think many Americans want to go back to work"
- **Defense Sec. Mark Esper** updated guidance to commanders to allow for the planning and to continue to protect personnel: [statement](#)
  - Guidance enables commanders to "make deliberate, risk-based decisions" as conditions allow
  - Under plans, commanders to ensure processes are in place to monitor illnesses and provide surveillance lab testing

- **President Donald Trump** says the Federal Reserve has “a lot of ammunition left” to provide relief from the coronavirus pandemic.
  - We have “unlimited ammunition if we need it, but we won’t need it,” Trump says of the Fed, while speaking to reporters at Ford Motor Co. plant in Michigan
- **Food and Drug Administration** says it is removing 27 coronavirus antibody tests as part of stricter antibody test oversight.
  - Some of the tests weren’t authorized, some had significant problems, FDA says in [statement](#)
  - See [list](#) of removed tests posted in FAQs
- The **CDC** “will be issuing something today or tomorrow” on churches, says President Donald Trump.
  - “We’re going to open our churches again,” says Trump while at Ford Motor Co. plant in Michigan; Says he spoke to CDC today
- **President Donald Trump’s [executive order](#)** late last month invoking the Defense Production Act to keep meat and poultry plants open got a ton of media attention, but there’s one big thing that was largely missed: The EO could actually grant USDA the same sweeping authority over, well, the rest of the country’s food production.
- The broadness of Trump’s order came to light as the **FDA** and **USDA** late Tuesday announced [a wonky MOU](#) under a vague headline about strengthening food supply protections. The MOU outlined a process for the two agencies, which share jurisdiction over food safety, to make decisions about when USDA’s broad authority under the DPA could be used to keep other food facilities and even farms that grow FDA-regulated products operating.
- The **Federal Reserve Board**, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the National Credit Union Administration, and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency recognize the important role that responsibly offered small-dollar loans can play in helping customers meet their ongoing needs for credit from temporary cash-flow imbalances, unexpected expenses, or income shortfalls, including during periods of economic stress, natural disasters, or other extraordinary circumstances such as the public health emergency created by COVID-19. ([HERE](#))
- Today, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provided \$225 million to Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) for COVID-19 testing. These investments will support over 4,500 RHCs across the country to support COVID-19 testing efforts and expand access to testing in rural communities. ([HERE](#))
- Today, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) is reminding eligible providers that they have until June 3, 2020, to accept the Terms and Conditions and submit their revenue information to support receiving an additional payment from the Provider Relief Fund \$50 billion General Distribution. ([HERE](#))
- As some institutes of higher education (IHE) open in the United States, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** offers the following considerations for ways in which IHEs can help protect students and employees (e.g., faculty, staff, and administrators) and slow the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). ([HERE](#))
- As some communities in the United States begin to start youth sports activities again, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) offers the following considerations for ways in which youth sports organizations can protect players, families, and communities and slow the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). ([HERE](#))
- The **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency** (CISA) released [version 3.1 of its Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce](#). Version 3.1 provides clarity around

many individual worker categories, including expanded language for those workers supporting at-risk communities and the essential nature of health facility workers in communities across the country. ([HERE](#))

- As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Nation is facing unprecedented challenges as we respond to additional disasters, anticipate emergent incidents, and prepare for the 2020 hurricane season. Although the operating environment has changed, the **Federal Emergency Management Agency's** (FEMA) mission of helping people before, during, and after disasters remains the same. ([HERE](#))
- The **U.S. Department of Transportation** today released its May 2020 Air Travel Consumer Report (ATCR) on reporting marketing and operating air carrier data compiled for the month of March 2020. The full consumer report and other aviation consumer matters of interest to the public can be found at <http://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer>. ([HERE](#))
- **U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue** today announced Kentucky, Tennessee, and the District of Columbia have been approved to operate Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), a new program authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), signed by President Trump, which provides assistance to families of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals dealing with school closures. ([HERE](#))
- **U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue** today announced that households in 13 new states – Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia – will soon be able to purchase food online with their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. ([HERE](#))
- As a next step in carrying out Executive Order 13917, the USDA and FDA today announced a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) (PDF, 137 KB) to help prevent interruptions at FDA-regulated food facilities, including fruit and vegetable processing. ([HERE](#))
- FDA Daily Roundup – May 19, 2020 ([HERE](#))
- The **U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division** (WHD) today [announced](#) a final rule that allows employers to offer bonuses or other incentive-based pay to employees whose hours vary from week to week. ([HERE](#))
- Effective today, **Secretary Esper** updated guidance to commanders on changing local Force Health Protection Condition (HPCON) levels to allow bases to begin planning to return to normal operations in the COVID environment. ([HERE](#))

### **Capitol Hill**

- **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell** acknowledged on a private call with House Republicans yesterday that Congress may have to pass further legislation to boost the economy devastated by the coronavirus pandemic, but insisted it would be far different than the [\\$3 trillion bill](#) recently passed by the House, a source familiar tells CNN.
  - “If we do another bill it won’t look anything like the House Democrats’ bill,” said McConnell.
  - He said that the \$600 weekly boost in unemployment benefits “will not be in the next bill,” according to the source.
- **McConnell** said otherwise the federal government would be paying people more to remain unemployed than to work. The House Democratic bill would’ve extended the expanded unemployment benefits through January.

- The Senate Republican leader insisted that liability reform be included to minimize lawsuits, calling trial lawyers “vultures.”
- McConnell also argued that the federal government could not indefinitely borrow and spend to save the economy. He referenced Henry Morgenthau Jr., President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Treasury Secretary, who said before World War II that the New Deal programs didn’t decrease unemployment but gave the United States “an enormous debt to boot!”
- An architect of the small-business Paycheck Protection Program is pushing for a quick Senate vote on extending the program today before the chamber leaves for a Memorial Day recess.
  - **Senate Small Business Chairman [Marco Rubio](#)** (R-Fla.) said today he is “increasingly optimistic” there will be bipartisan support to lengthen the current eight-week time period during which businesses have to use the loan money to pay workers and for other expenses to have the loan forgiven.
  - Senators may vote later today on such a change by unanimous consent, which allows expedited consideration of legislation, according to a person familiar with the plans. The length of the extension hasn’t yet been determined, the person said. Rubio said in a video posted on Twitter yesterday that he had expected an effort in the Senate this week to pass a measure extending the loan-forgiveness period to as many as 16 weeks.
  - Sen. [Joe Manchin](#) (D-W.Va.) said he believes the measure, which he is co-sponsoring alongside Sen. [Mitt Romney](#) (R-Utah) and others from both parties, could pass by unanimous consent. Manchin said the goal of the extension ([S. 3714](#)) is to allow companies to keep people on the payroll.
- **House Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#)** (D-Calif.) said the House will vote next week on a separate PPP measure. Lawmakers are discussing lengthening the period to 24 weeks and making other changes such as relaxing a requirement that at least 75% of proceeds must be spent on payroll. Some companies want to spend more on rent and other expenses. Rubio has said he hoped for a bill just extending the loan-forgiveness period.
  - Republicans and Democrats alike have heard from business owners worried about running out of money to pay their employees. Any individual lawmaker may object to the measure, though, which would prevent it from being passed this week.
- **Senate Democrats** called on **Delta Air Lines** and **JetBlue Airways** to reverse a decision to cut employee hours after collectively taking more than \$6.3 billion in federal money to pay workers during the coronavirus crisis. Senators including former presidential candidates [Elizabeth Warren](#) (Mass.) and [Bernie Sanders](#) (I-Vt.) wrote to the airlines today warning that they could be in legal trouble if they require their employees to work less.
- Seniors must be included in therapeutic and vaccine studies, because they have a weaker immune system and respond differently to medicines, Dr. Mark Mulligan, director of Infectious Diseases and Immunology at the Langone Vaccine Center, told **senators** today.
  - Speaking before **Senate Aging Committee** hearing on “[Caring for Seniors Amid the Covid-19 Crisis](#),” Mulligan said the participation of older adults in studies is already common practice in things like the flu vaccine.
  - “Having a stronger vaccine, one with an adjuvant, one with a higher dose may be necessary for Covid-19 and seniors as well,” Mulligan
  - Adjuvants are ingredients added to vaccines to help them work better, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- **House Speaker Nancy Pelosi** and **Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer** have sent a letter to President Donald Trump requesting that flags be flown half staff "on all public buildings in the country" when the Covid-19 death toll in the US reaches 100,000.
  - "Respectful of them and the loss to our country, we are writing to request that you order flags to be flown at half staff on all public buildings in our country on the sad day of reckoning when we reach 100,000 deaths. It would serve as a national expression of grief so needed by everyone in our country," the letter said.
- **Republican Senator Marco Rubio** of Florida said he wants the Senate to vote on a bill as soon as Thursday to extend the loan-forgiveness period to as much as 16 weeks, and the House is expected to vote next week on separate PPP legislation that would lengthen the period to 24 weeks and make other changes, including relaxing the 75% payroll spending rule.
  - **Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin** said Thursday the administration supports extending the eight-week period, which would require action by Congress. But he defended the 75% payroll spending rule, which the administration could change on its own. Speaking at an online event hosted by the Hill newspaper, Mnuchin said the 75% rule matches the intent of the law.
- **The Justice Dept** should investigate "the activities of dozens of Planned Parenthood affiliates that reportedly applied for and received approximately \$80 million in loans from the Paycheck Protection Program," a group of Republican senators write [in letter](#) to Attorney General William Barr.
  - Letter cites [Fox News report](#) that at least 37 Planned Parenthood affiliates across the country applied for and received millions in loans through the small business program
  - Senators say it "seems clear that Planned Parenthood knew that it was ineligible for the small business loans," and the situation "cannot stand and must be addressed"
  - Letter signed by 27 Republicans, including Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#)
- **Sen. Lamar Alexander** (R-Tenn.) told reporters Thursday that Republican senators won't agree to pass another Covid-19 relief package without addressing liability for reopening colleges and businesses.
  - "Schools, colleges, and businesses will be less likely to reopen if they think they're going to be sued when someone gets sick when they come back to school, back to college, or back into their businesses," the chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee said.
  - College leaders have pressed lawmakers for protection from lawsuits if they reopen.
  - Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) (R-Ky.) has also endorsed passing liability protections.
  - Alexander said it was an "open question" whether more funding would come for states and schools in subsequent legislation
- **Republican Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith** and **Democratic Sen. Bob Menendez** introduce legislation that would eliminate the cost-share payments included in federal disaster declarations to ease the burden from the coronavirus pandemic.
  - Measure [would](#) require FEMA to provide a 100% cost-share for all federal emergency declarations and major disaster declarations during calendar year 2020, according to an emailed statement
  - NOTE: In general, FEMA disaster assistance requires a 75% cost-share commitment from the federal government with 25% provided from non-federal source

- Life will not go right back to normal,” and getting more testing, medicines and a vaccine for the virus will be a national project, **Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#)** says.
  - McConnell, speaking on the Senate floor, says repairing the damage from the pandemic will take creativity
- A bipartisan proposal to create an alternative retirement plan option for struggling pensions gained renewed attention when it was included in **House Democrats’ latest coronavirus response package**.
  - The legislation ([H.R. 6800](#); see [BGOV Bill Summary](#)) would establish a “composite plan” option for multiemployer pension plans, which would have features of both a traditional defined benefit pension plan and a 401(k) plan.
  - Proponents say composite plans would provide employers, plan sponsors, and employees with more certainty, while opponents say they could exacerbate existing funding challenges.
  - The concept was also included in a 2019 multiemployer pension [package](#) from Senate Finance Chairman [Chuck Grassley](#) (R-Iowa) and Senate Health Education, Labor, and Pensions Chairman [Lamar Alexander](#) (R-Tenn.). That package is supported by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, a federal entity that insures a portion of multiemployer pension plan benefits.
- The **Senate Special Committee on Aging** holds a hearing on [caring for seniors](#) during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **The House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis** will [hold a briefing](#) on protecting frontline workers during the pandemic.
- The **House** will vote next week on a bipartisan proposal to make a popular small business loan program more flexible and extend the time limit for using the aid, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said yesterday. Moving ahead on the plan with Republican support would allow Congress to get around a current impasse on whether to approve a new round of coronavirus relief,
- **Sen. [Rob Portman](#)** (R-Ohio) is proposing a back-to-work bonus of \$450 a week for those who return to their jobs before the expiration of a temporary increase in unemployment insurance. The boost in unemployment insurance was granted under a relief package in March. Portman, a negotiator of that bill, said on the Senate floor that he’s drafting a measure to redirect federal subsidies for unemployment insurance toward a temporary work incentive for employees who can return to their jobs before the end of July
- **Former Navy Reserve Lt. Commander and Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs ranking member [Gary Peters](#)** (D-Mich.) asked the Trump administration not to end deployments of National Guard members one day before they’d become eligible for several federal benefits. The National Guard has been called on to assist in the coronavirus pandemic response, but yesterday the administration announced an end to deployment on June 24, one day before the 90 day threshold for benefits for active duty service to kick in, Peters said. [Read the letter here](#).
- The **U.S. Federal Reserve** received a bipartisan critique Wednesday from members of a congressional oversight panel who said the central bank has been slow to launch a key emergency lending program for mid-sized companies.
- **Representative French Hill**, an Arkansas Republican, and **Representative Donna Shalala**, a Florida Democrat, expressed concern that the Main Street Lending Program -- which targets companies too large for small business assistance and too small to qualify for corporate lending facilities -- was not yet operational.

- “I’m disappointed that it’s taken as long as it has,” Hill said in an interview of the program that was announced April 9.
- **Republican Sen. [Susan Collins](#)** says she’s introducing a bill to extend the Paycheck Protection Program and allow businesses 16 weeks to spend the federal funds instead of eight weeks.
  - Legislation would also extend deadline to apply for a loan from June 30 to Dec. 31 and allow PPP funds for purchase of personal protective equipment or other investments to aid in reopening safely, Collins says on Senate floor

### ***State/Local***

- **Ventura** is the latest county to receive the green light to proceed forward into the "expanded phase two" of reopening in California.
- As California counties move one by one further into reopening, **Gov. Gavin Newsom** is warning that Los Angeles is “likely a few weeks behind” the rest of the state. About a quarter of all California residents live in Los Angeles County.
  - Los Angeles is “seeing some good signs which are very encouraging,” Newsom said in a round table discussion with entertainment leaders. He added that Los Angeles “remains a challenging part of the state.”
- The **Test Iowa** program will expand to include all people who feel they should be tested, Gov. Kim Reynolds said during a Thursday press conference.
  - The change should take effect by the end of the day, according to Reynolds.
  - Reynolds said the goal is to continue to test as many lowans as possible so that people will feel more confident and comfortable returning to work.
- **Washington, DC, Mayor Muriel Bowser** announced today that the District can begin stage one of its reopening on Friday, May 29 if there are no spikes in the number of community spread coronavirus cases.
  - Stage one includes outdoor restaurant service and curbside pick-up for non-essential retail. Beauty salons and barbershops will be allowed to operate by appointment only and up to 10 people will be permitted to gather for worship.
  - The ReOpen DC Advisory Group presented a full outline of their recommendations for reopening during a news briefing on Thursday. The recommendations detail a four-phase process.
  - DC businesses will be provided with a checklist from the ReOpen DC Advisory group tomorrow.
  - The District's stay-at-home order is currently in place until June 8, but the mayor is expected to provide an update next Tuesday, May 26.
- **The Colorado State Emergency Operations Center** announced scientists from Colorado State University will conduct eight weeks of Covid-19 tests on workers and residents in up to 30 skilled nursing facilities.
- **Ohio's State Fair**, schedule to take place July 29 through August 9, has been cancelled because of public health concerns, as well as "the financial feasibility of hosting a socially distant fair."
  - “After careful thought and deliberation, we have decided to cancel the Ohio State Fair. Knowing how easily the virus spreads in large groups, we believe it is the safest path forward for the health and safety of all Ohioans,” Andy Doehrel, chair of the Ohio Expositions Commission said in the [statement](#) on Thursday.
- **New York** is now starting [contact tracing operations](#). Gov. Andrew Cuomo said the state will call people who came in contact with someone who tested positive for coronavirus.

- When tracers call, the caller ID will show up as "NYS\_contact\_tracing."
- "Tracers will contact [the person who tested positive] and ask who they may have exposed," Cuomo said. "And you could get a phone call following up on this tracing information, saying you were with John Smith last night. John Smith is now positive, you may want to be tested."
- "You should answer that call. It's not a hoax, it's not a scam, it's not a fraud," Cuomo said.
- "It's for your health, it's for your family's health."
- You can read more about the program [here](#).
- **Michigan** will reopen retail businesses and auto dealerships by appointment beginning Tuesday, May 26, according to a statement from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's office.
  - The state will also allow small gatherings of up to 10 people as well as nonessential medical, dental and veterinary procedures beginning May 29.
- **Texas Gov. Greg Abbott** said Thursday that CVS Health will open 44 new drive-through Covid-19 testing sites across the state that will utilize self-swab tests. Results will be available within three days.
  - "Texas continues to rapidly ramp up Covid-19 testing in our communities, and these new drive-thru testing sites provided by CVS Health will further expand access to these tests throughout the state," Abbott said in a [press release](#) today.
- The federal government took Hologic Inc. diagnostic machines that were scheduled to be shipped to Minnesota, leading to a 20-minute telephone call between **Gov. Tim Walz** and **Vice President Mike Pence**. Walz, a Democrat who has been reluctant to criticize the Trump administration's response to the pandemic, told reporters at a press conference yesterday that the federal government has no national strategy regarding medical supplies that states need to combat the coronavirus
- **West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice** announced today he is deploying the National Guard to the eastern panhandle of the state where an "issue was brewing" as coronavirus cases continue to rise in Jefferson and Berkeley counties.
  - "Those numbers are not good, that's all there is to it," Justice said, adding that there were 20 new cases in Berkeley County and 15 new cases in Jefferson County yesterday.
- **North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper** said dine-in eating, hair and nail salons, barbershops, churches and pools will be open on Friday.
  - "I am lifting the stay-at-home order. We are shifting to a safer-at-home recommendation," he said. "The state's overall indicators remain stable, however, the increases in the Covid-19 cases signal a need to take a more modest step forward in phase two than originally envisioned."
  - Some places will remain closed, including bars, nightclubs, gyms, and indoor fitness facilities, he said. Mass gatherings will be limited to no more than 10 people indoors, and 25 people outdoors.
- **Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear** announced a \$300 million award to city and county governments to help reimburse them for expenses incurred in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - According to the governor, the funds, which are part of the CARES Act funding, will be administered by the state's Department for Local Government (DLG) and can be used for reimbursements of expenses "necessary to comply with public health guidelines and protect Kentuckians."

- The funding will be allocated to city and county governments based on approximate population size as recorded in the most recent census data, Beshear said.
- **Missouri** unveiled a new online coronavirus dashboard Wednesday, as the governor promised it would provide accurate information.
  - “I know there have been some concerns over data reporting and delays, and I just want to point out how important it is for us to make sure this data is accurate,” Gov. Mike Parson said Wednesday in a news conference.
- **Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker** said restaurants in Illinois can offer outdoor seating to patrons with certain additional precautions as part of phase three of reopening.
  - “We are by no means out of the woods, but directionally, things are getting better. And because of these advances, we are able to make some modifications to allow more activity during Phase 3 of our reopening plan Restore Illinois,” he said in a statement from his office.
  - Phase three is expected to begin May 29, and bars and restaurants will be able to resume operations so long as tables are six feet apart and away from sidewalks, and masks and distancing measures for staff continue to be followed, the governor said.
- **New York City** and surrounding counties will, once again, be able to file new nonessential filings electronically, starting May 25.
  - In a [letter](#) to trial court judges Wednesday, chief administrative judge for the state of New York’s Unified Court System Lawrence K. Marks, said the ability to electronically file through the courts system will be restored for all five counties in New York City and Nassau, Suffolk, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester counties.
- Other parts of the state are starting to see court activity slowly return to normal after **New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo** eased restrictions on commercial activity in upstate New York.
  - Courts in designated counties have seen the return of judges and some staff to courthouses, expanded judicial services and court and county clerks there started accepting nonessential filings starting this week.
- **Montgomery, Alabama Mayor Steven Reed** told CNN today he is considering tightening restrictions in his city and may issue a shelter-in-place order, even as his state continues to open up.
  - "I would do it and I would ask for regional cooperation," Reed told CNN in a phone interview today. "I would certainly do it in the city if need be."
  - At a news briefing Wednesday, Reed sounded alarms over an ICU bed shortage in Montgomery saying the health care system is "maxed" and if you need a bed, "you are in trouble."
- More than two-thirds of the counties in **California** are moving ahead with reopening further, including **San Diego, Sacramento, and Santa Barbara** counties.
- More than five million people live in those three counties combined.
- **Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey** announced that she has amended the state's safer-at-home order to allow several new businesses to reopen June 1.
  - The new order will go into effect tomorrow at 5 p.m. and expire July 3 at 5 p.m.
  - Entertainment venues, athletic activities, child care and summer camps can reopen as long as social-distancing and sanitation rules are followed.

- All schools, public and private — including elementary, secondary, postsecondary, technical, and specialty schools, and colleges and universities— will also be allowed to reopen.
- **Ohio's Lt. Gov. Jon Husted** announced today that wedding venues and catering and banquet centers will be allowed to reopen under similar guidelines as restaurants, effective June 1.
  - Crowd sizes will be limited to 300 for the immediate future, and guidelines include 6 feet between tables and no congregating, Husted said.
- **Texas Gov. Greg Abbott** issued an executive order Thursday lifting air travel restrictions, a press release from his office announced.
  - The order immediately stops all restriction that mandated quarantines for travelers coming from several states, according to the release.
  - Separately, the governor also announced a phased reopening of drivers license offices in the state starting on Tuesday.
  - The four-phase plan includes regional reopenings of Northwest and West offices first, with the North and Southeast offices opening in June.
- **Ohio Lt. Gov. Jon Husted** announced today, that skills training for all sports, will be allowed to resume starting May 26, including contact sports like football, basketball, and lacrosse, as safety protocols can be followed.
  - This includes, but is not limited to, weight training, agility skills and other types of conditioning, Husted said.
  - According to the Husted, this decision was a joint effort between the state's working group, that was looking at these issues, and the Ohio High School Athletic Association.
  - "We do know that skills training and conditioning for student athletes is important to start now," Husted said.
  - However, tournaments, games, and competitions for contact sports will still not be allowed.

### ***International***

- **Tedros Adhanom-Ghebreyesus**, director-general of the World Health Organization, on Wednesday said that more cases had been reported to the agency in the last 24 hours than any time since the novel coronavirus outbreak began.
  - "We still have a long way to go in this pandemic," Tedros said at a briefing in Geneva. "In the last 24 hours, there have been 106,000 cases reported to WHO – the most in a single day since the outbreak began. Almost two-thirds of these cases were reported in just four countries."
  - Those four countries, WHO infectious disease epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove confirmed to CNN in an email, are: the United States, Russia, Brazil and India.
- The **European Union's health and aviation bodies** have issued a new set of guidelines for air travel, recommending the use of face masks and the practice "scrupulous and frequent" hand hygiene on flights in order to ensure safety of travelers and aviation personnel amid the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - In a joint statement issued on Wednesday, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) also recommend that social distancing be observed whenever possible.
  - "Passengers have to have confidence that taking to the skies again in a confined space with other people poses the minimum possible risk to their health," European

Commissioner for Transport Adina Valean said in the statement. "The protocol released today will reassure passengers that it is safe for them to fly and so help the industry recover from the effects of this pandemic."

- **Greece** says it is ready to reopen the country to some foreign visitors on June 15.
  - Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Tourism Minister Harry Theoharis announced in televised speeches a roadmap to kickstart the country's tourism sector, which accounts for roughly 20% of Greece's GDP.
  - On June 15, some international flights will resume, but only to and from Athens International Airport.
  - In this first stage, only visitors from specific countries with low infection rates will be allowed in. The Greek tourism minister said the list of countries will be published by the end of this month but cited Germany, Israel, Cyprus and countries in the Balkan and Nordic regions as examples.
  - On July 1, after the first phase has been evaluated, all airports will be open to international travelers from all countries with some potential exceptions for countries with high infection rates.
  - Visitors will not be required to take a compulsory coronavirus test before entering the country and they will not have to remain in quarantine. Greece, however, retains its ability to subject travelers to sample coronavirus testing once they have arrived.
- **Italy** will start reopening all its airports starting June 3, Transport Minister Paola de Micheli announced on Wednesday during a parliamentary session.
  - "It will be possible to proceed to the reopening of all airports starting from June 3, when transfers are again permitted," the minister said.
  - De Micheli added that current interregional and international limitations will also end for public transport within the country.
- **Italy** will open its borders to all European Union countries with no mandatory quarantine required from June 3, as part of the efforts to "relaunch the economy," Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte told the country's lower house of parliament on Thursday.
- On May 13 Conte blasted the EU's proposal to allow "tourist corridors" between nations in the bloc with similar epidemiological conditions **British health care workers** will be the first to be tested for coronavirus antibodies after the government reached a deal with Roche to procure the test kits.
- **Prime Minister Boris Johnson's** spokesman said today that the UK and the giant pharmaceutical company had agreed on deal, a week after the national health agency approved the tests for use.
  - The tests will be free and more details will be released later during a daily government coronavirus briefing, he said.
- **London Heathrow Airport** is implementing thermal screening in one of its arrival terminals in an effort to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.
  - The technology under trial "uses camera detection systems capable of monitoring the temperatures of multiple people moving through the airport," Heathrow's CEO said in a [statement](#).
- The [four-day work week](#) has been touted as a way to improve work-life balance. Now it's getting a boost from **New Zealand's leader**, who recently raised the idea as one that might help the economy in the wake of the [coronavirus pandemic](#).

- In a [Facebook Live video](#) posted earlier this week, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern shared the suggestion while discussing ways to revive domestic tourism in her country. Over the past few months, the coronavirus crisis has forced people around the world to lock down and [decimated global demand for travel](#).
- **China** will never accept lawsuit abuse or unwarranted compensation demands related to the pandemic, the National People's Congress spokesman Zhang Yesui said at a briefing late Thursday in Beijing when asked to comment on some U.S. lawmakers' proposed bills to seek compensation from China.
  - The bills with accusations against China are "groundless," also in violations of international laws and principles of international relations; China firmly opposes such legislation; will respond with countermeasures if needed
  - China will never accept any stigmatization or attacks; it's neither responsible or moral for the U.S. to shift blames to cover up its own problems
  - Virus origin tracing should be left to scientists and medical experts based on facts and evidence

### **Other**

- The **NCAA** has announced that Division I football and men's and women's basketball players can participate in on-campus voluntary athletics activities beginning June 1.
  - The decision was made by the NCAA Division I Council in a virtual meeting Wednesday, as long as all local, state and federal regulations are followed.
  - The status of voluntary athletics activities in all other sports and summer access activities in football and men's and women's basketball will be determined via electronic vote.
- One day after reopening a Chicago assembly plant, **Ford** temporarily shut down the factory because two employees tested positive for Covid-19.
  - The plant — which builds the Ford Explorer, the Lincoln Aviator and the Ford Interceptor police car — resumed production Monday after suspending production for about two months because of health concerns.
  - Ford began screening employees' temperatures when it reopened its plants, and it requires medical tests for workers who exhibit symptoms. The two positive test results came back on Tuesday, prompting an afternoon shutdown.
- **Victoria's Secret** will permanently close 251 of its stores in North America, parent company L Brands announced Wednesday.
  - Victoria's Secret currently has just over 1,000 locations in the US and Canada. L Brands said it also plans to close 51 of its Bath & Body Works stores.
- The **University of California's** 10 campuses — which are considering mixed approaches for fall classes — will make final decisions on their plans by mid-June, according to spokesperson Claire Doan.
  - The plans for what fall will look like for students are developing as administrators are consulting state and local officials and bearing in mind everyone's health.
- **Spotify** is allowing its employees to continue working from home through the end of 2020, making it the latest tech company to institute an extended remote work policy.
  - In a statement, the digital music company's spokesperson said Spotify expects to take a "phased approach" to reopening its offices around the world, but that "no employee

will be required to come into the office and can choose to work from home through the end of the year.”

- Large tech companies such as **Amazon, Facebook, Google** and **Microsoft** have all told office workers they can continue working from home either into the fall or until the end of the year.
- **Facebook** will allow many of its employees to work from home permanently, Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook’s chief executive, announced during a staff meeting that was live-streamed on his Facebook page.
  - The social media giant sent its employees home in March as the coronavirus began to spread in the United States. Mr. Zuckerberg said that the temporary changes caused by the virus spurred the company to re-evaluate its requirement that employees work in a shared office. Within a decade, he said, as many as half of the company’s more than 45,000 employees would work from home.
  - Facebook will begin by allowing new hires who are senior engineers to work remotely, and then allow current employees to apply for permission to work from home if they have positive performance reviews.
- **Twitter** last week became the first company to announce it will support remote work “forever” for eligible employees who desire it.
- Some passengers will arrive at the airport and find their flight is too full to allow for the neighboring seat to remain empty, according to data from a **US airline industry group**.
  - However, the group, Airlines for America, maintains that the vast majority of flights continue to allow for many open seats, even as the average number of passengers on each plane is growing.
  - About 8.5% of flights are more than 70% full, according to the group Airlines for America.
  - That means about 482 daily flights are above the 70% mark. The group said US carriers are currently conducting about 5,670 passenger flights daily — even after slashing thousands of flights from their schedules.
- Most **U.S. small businesses** that applied for the main coronavirus relief aid program have now gotten funding after initial delays, but many report that they are struggling with the narrow criteria to turn the loans into grants, a new [survey](#) shows.
  - Almost three-quarters of those who received a Paycheck Protection Program loan found it very or somewhat difficult to understand the terms and conditions, according to a National Federation of Independent Business poll of its members. Nearly half said it would be hard to spend the funds within the eight-week period required by law for the loan to be forgiven. Almost 40% said it would be difficult to spend 75% of the proceeds on payroll as required.
  - The findings may add pressure on Congress to loosen the rules and make loan forgiveness easier for owners who are struggling to keep their business afloat. Efforts are under way in the House and the Senate to amend those criteria, although for now the proposals don’t align and it’s unclear whether the two chambers will come to an agreement.
- **The Atlantic** will lay off 68 workers across “events, sales, and editorial,” David G. Bradley, the chairman of Atlantic Media, said in a staff email on Thursday, as the publication struggles with the same forces — mostly a drop in digital advertising — that have affected [tens of thousands](#) of jobs in news media during the coronavirus crisis even as it has experienced a sharp rise in subscribers.

- The **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** is backing some aid to state and local governments as part of Washington's next step in responding to economic devastation wrought by the coronavirus pandemic.
  - The call by the powerful business lobbying group, which has historically been allied with the GOP, contrasts with [resistance](#) from congressional Republicans, who fear more aid could delay reopenings. They want to wait and see how states and local governments use the funds that lawmakers have already appropriated.
  - "There is an important role for targeted and temporary assistance to state and local governments," Neil Bradley, the group's chief policy officer, told reporters on Thursday. At the same time, he pushed back on Democratic plans to give state and local governments more than \$1 trillion.
- **Apple** and **Google** released their Covid-19 exposure-notification tools yesterday, along with changes that will help public health authorities gather more information on who has the virus. The system—called Exposure Notification—helps authorities develop apps that notify users if they have come into contact with a person who has tested positive. Users who've downloaded the app for their region will be able to update their status if they test positive. The system will then anonymously notify other users who have come into contact with that person
- **Disney, Comcast's Universal Studios and SeaWorld** are taking another step toward reopening their massive theme parks in Orlando, Florida. The operators will begin submitting their plans to a reopening task force today, a spokesperson for Florida's Orange County said in an email. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) said last week that theme-park operators could begin reopening once they submit plans and win approval from local authorities
- **Trident Seafoods**, the largest seafood company in the U.S., has created a strict quarantine system to protect its workers and keep business humming. The multimillion-dollar effort involves a two-week isolation followed by a coronavirus test prior to the six-month journey out to sea.
- **McDonald's employees** in major U.S. cities, including [Los Angeles, Huston and St. Louis](#), went on strike over wanting more protections from Covid-19. Labor organizers say there have been scores of McDonald's workers who have tested positive for the virus in at least 17 states, [according to USA Today](#).
- **Universal Orlando** has presented a plan to begin a phased reopening of its theme parks on June 1, initially only for its own team members.
  - The presentation was made today at a virtual meeting of the Orange County Economic Recovery Task Force.
  - Here's how the reopening would work:
  - On June 3 and June 4, Universal hopes to invite guests such as annual passholders, with an opening to the public on June 5.
  - John Sprouls, Universal Orlando chief executive officer, and Rich Costales, Universal Orlando executive vice president of resort operations, said all guests will be required to wear face masks and go through temperature screenings to enter the parks.
  - One disposable face mask will be provided for free to guests who did not bring their own.