



## COVID-19 UPDATE August 3, 2020

### *Global*

Total cases – 18,149,860

Total deaths – 690,624

### *United States*

Total cases – 4,690,404

Total deaths – 155,124

Total # tests – 56,812,162

### *Administration*

- **President Trump** says he is looking at what he can do via executive order regarding a new virus stimulus.
  - Trump speaks at White House event as negotiations continue between admin. officials and congressional leaders
- **President Trump** is expected to sign an executive order Monday aimed at boosting health care in rural areas, Politico [reports](#).
  - The order will focus on ways to finance rural health care and propose a permanent extension for some telehealth policies: Politico
- Staff in the **White House’s Executive Office of the President** will now be subject to mandatory, random coronavirus tests.
  - Random tests had been occurring over several months and were previously voluntary.
- **CDC** releases [multiple choice questionnaire](#) covering household and community risks for Covid-19, school reopening plans and feasibility of virtual learning for children.
  - “Parents may also want to use the tool to make their views, concerns, and suggestions known to school administrators,” CDC says
- The **U.S. Treasury** said it expects to raise \$947 billion in debt over the three months through September to fund the massive and continuing spending surge to address the coronavirus crisis.
  - The figure, released in Washington Monday, is \$270 billion higher than the Treasury projected in [May](#), when it expected to borrow \$677 billion of net marketable debt in the quarter. Since then, Covid-19 cases have surged to records in many states, disrupting [economic reopening](#) moves and forcing Congress to negotiate on another round of fiscal stimulus.
  - The Treasury said its numbers assume \$1 trillion of “additional borrowing need in anticipation of additional legislation being passed.” That’s roughly the amount Republicans have proposed for a new virus-relief bill. But the Democratic-controlled House previously approved a \$3.5 trillion package, and the two sides remain at loggerheads.

- The **Trump administration** will provide as much as \$2.1 billion to Covid-19 vaccine partners **Sanofi** and **GlaxoSmithKline Plc**, the biggest U.S. investment yet in fast-tracking shots and snapping up supplies.
  - Part of Operation Warp Speed, the funding will support clinical trials and manufacturing while allowing the U.S. to secure 100 million doses of the shot if it's successful, the companies said Friday. The country has an option to receive an additional 500 million doses longer term.
- **White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows** blamed **Democrats** as so far rejecting multiple proposals by the Trump administration to extend lapsing supplemental unemployment benefits, saying they have continued to raise the ante in talks on a pandemic relief measure to bolster a U.S. economy hobbled by the coronavirus pandemic.
  - "We have made no less than four different offers" on unemployment insurance and a moratorium on evictions, Meadows said at a White House briefing. "They've not even been countered with a proposal."
  - Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** (D-Calif.) said that she'll continue negotiations with Meadows and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, but added that there can be no short-term stopgap measures without serious progress on a comprehensive virus-relief plan.
  - Pelosi said at her own briefing today that the only reason to make a short-term accommodation to carve out a separate deal "is if you are on a path" toward an broader agreement. "We anticipate we will have a bill, but we are not there yet," she said.
- Some people having problems accessing their coronavirus payments will soon be able to ask the **IRS's Taxpayer Advocate Service** for assistance. The IRS has distributed hundreds of billions of dollars in economic impact payments under the CARES Act, but millions of people are still waiting to receive aid. Erin Collins, the leader of the agency's independent arm that helps taxpayers resolve issues, said the agency has established procedures to assist taxpayers in five scenarios, including situations where Americans who normally wouldn't file a tax return didn't get the supplemental money they were owed for dependent children.
- **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's** red line for the next stimulus package is a liability provision, "and we support him in that decision," White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows says.
- The April 7 Wisconsin primary election provides preliminary evidence that following the **CDC's** interim guidance for polling locations lowers the risk of Covid-19 transmission during elections, according to a [note](#) in the agency's **Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report**.
  - A further reduction in transmission risk could be achieved by fully implementing the CDC's interim guidance, which includes longer voting periods and increasing polling locations, according to note
  - There was no clear increase in Covid-19 cases, hospitalizations or deaths observed after the April 7 election, "suggesting possible benefit of state efforts to expand absentee and curbside voting," CDC says in [tweet](#)
- **President Donald Trump** urged Americans who have recovered from Covid-19 to donate their plasma at local blood banks to help those who contract the virus potentially get better faster.
  - People who have had the virus "have something very special," Trump said.
  - Plasma is the liquid portion of blood, and when taken from someone who has recovered, it's known as convalescent plasma. It's thought that the antibodies that occur after a person recovers from the coronavirus can help others fight the infection.

- [Dr. Deborah Birx](#) on Sunday said the US is in a new phase in its fight against [the coronavirus pandemic](#), saying that the deadly virus is more widespread than when it first took hold in the US earlier this year.
  - "What we are seeing today is different from March and April. It is extraordinarily widespread. It's into the rural as equal urban areas," Birx, the White House coronavirus task force coordinator, told CNN's Dana Bash on "State of the Union."
  - Birx stressed that Americans need to follow health recommendations, including wearing a mask and practicing social distancing.
  - "To everybody who lives in a rural area, you are not immune or protected from this virus," Birx said. "If you're in multi-generational households, and there's an outbreak in your rural area or in your city, you need to really consider wearing a mask at home, assuming that you're positive, if you have individuals in your households with comorbidities."
- Contact tracing can be very effective during the early or late parts of an outbreak, but when there is widespread outbreak, mitigation measures are more important according to **Adm. Brett Giroir, a member of the White House's coronavirus task force**.
  - "Yes, contact tracing is important," Giroir said on NBC on Sunday, "but it's much less important right now than the public policy mitigation measures."
  - Contact tracing can be very effective, he said, during the very early parts of an outbreak.
  - "When you have a widespread, multi-focal outbreak, where many people are asymptomatic, testing and tracing are of limited utility versus public health policy measures," Giroir said.
  - Once the virus is back to very low levels, he said, testing and contact tracing become much more important.
  - "Where we are right now, with the widespread, multi-focal, across many states, just like many other countries, the solution was the mitigation steps, not the contact tracing," Giroir said.
- Hydroxychloroquine is not recommended as a treatment for Covid-19, **Adm. Brett Giroir**, a member of the White House coronavirus task force said on NBC on Sunday.
  - "At this point in time, there's been five randomized controlled, placebo controlled trials, that do not show any benefit to hydroxychloroquine," Giroir said. "So, at this point in time, we don't recommend that as a treatment."
  - Giroir said that hydroxychloroquine needs to be prescribed by a physician, and there may be circumstances where it is prescribed, in response to a question about the potentially mixed messages that are being sent out about the drug.
- The **US Food and Drug Administration** has issued emergency use authorizations for the first two Covid-19 serology tests that can tell not only whether someone has antibodies to the virus, but can give some idea of how much antibody is there.
  - "Being able to measure a patient's relative level of antibodies in response to a previous SARS-CoV-2 infection may be useful as we continue to learn more about the virus and what the existence of antibodies may mean," Dr. Tim Stenzel, the director of the Office of In Vitro Diagnostics and Radiological Health in the FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health, said in a news release Friday.
  - The tests, the ADVIA Centaur COV2G and Attelica COV2G, are both from Siemens, the FDA said. Like other serology tests, these tests detect the body's immune response to the infection caused by the virus rather than detecting the virus itself.

- An ensemble forecast published by the **US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** now projects more than 173,000 coronavirus deaths in the United States by August 22.
  - The new projections, published Friday, forecast 173,270 deaths by August 22, with a possible range of 167,692 to 182,366 deaths.
  - “State-level ensemble forecasts predict that the number of reported new deaths per week may increase over the next four weeks in: Alabama, Kentucky, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, and Washington,” the CDC says on its forecasting website.
- The **National Institutes of Health** announced Friday that it is investing \$248.7 million in new technologies that should help ease some of the country’s problems with Covid-19 testing.
  - The NIH launched the Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) in April after it received an emergency supplemental appropriation of \$1.4 billion from Congress. There was an “overwhelming response” to the department’s call for new technology, the NIH said. It received more than 650 applications.
  - The initiative gives contracts to seven biomedical testing companies that should significantly increase the number and kinds of tests available as early as September. The demand for tests is estimated to be millions more per day than what is currently available, the NIH said.
  - The seven companies that got the contracts use different approaches to testing. Four of the technologies should speed up and increase the capacity of lab testing, using next generation sequencing methods. Three of the technologies use platforms that should give more rapid results in point-of care-settings like in childcare centers, nursing homes, schools and workplaces. Some of these new tests should also be easier to use than the current nasal swab, and will use saliva instead.
- **President Trump** said shutting down the economy “to achieve a temporary reduction in cases is certainly not a viable long-term strategy for any country” as coronavirus continues to spread across the country.
  - “The scientific path forward is to protect those at highest risk while allowing those at lower risk to carefully return to work and to school with appropriate precautions,” he said at a news briefing on Thursday.
- The **head of Operation Warp Speed** said he’s “optimistic” there will be vaccines for all Americans by the end of next year, but hopefully even sooner.
  - “I am optimistic that we will have vaccines for everybody within the year 2021, ideally within the first half of the year 2021. That’s our objective,” said **Moncef Slaoui**, chief adviser to the federal government’s multi-billion-dollar program to develop a Covid-19 vaccine.
- Cash-strapped Medicaid providers hard hit by the Covid-19 crisis will have an additional month to seek federal relief money, **the Health and Human Services Department** said Friday. HHS in June allocated \$15 billion to health-care providers that primarily serve low-income and uninsured patients and that hadn’t yet received funding. But the original deadline for providers to apply for the relief, July 20, proved to be too difficult for most to meet, the agency said.

### *Capitol Hill*

- **House Speaker Nancy Pelosi** says she is flexible on the \$600-per-week jobless benefit in the next coronavirus relief package being negotiated.

- “I think the \$600 is related more to the unemployment rate,” says Pelosi on CNN, saying that as unemployment goes down, that number can go down
- The benefit is “very important” during this emergency
- **Republicans and Democrats** remain far apart on some of the biggest sticking points, including extending supplemental unemployment insurance, despite claims of some progress on other issues following a weekend meeting between Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#) (D-Calif.), Senate Minority Leader [Chuck Schumer](#) (D-N.Y.), Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trump’s chief of staff, [Mark Meadows](#).
  - Among the biggest differences is whether to extend the \$600 a week in extra unemployment aid that was part of the \$2.2 trillion stimulus passed in March. Republicans have proposed cutting that by as much as two-thirds and creating a formula that would replace about 70% of former wages. Democrats want to keep the previous level of support, at least for now.
  - Mnuchin said on ABC’s “This Week” that the administration had proposed a one-week extension of the \$600 as a bridge to a longer-term solution while talks continue, and that he was “surprised” Democrats didn’t agree to that.
  - Pelosi, speaking separately on the same program, said Democrats are unified on keeping the supplemental aid at \$600 and has said they won’t agree to any short-term extension without more progress toward an agreement for a broader package.
- **House Speaker Nancy Pelosi** said she doesn’t trust information from the coordinator of the White House’s coronavirus task force, the latest political skirmish over the U.S. response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - President Donald Trump has been spreading disinformation about the virus and Deborah Birx “is his appointee, so I don’t have confidence there, no,” Pelosi said on ABC’s “This Week.”
  - Pelosi was asked about a Politico reports that she described Birx as a spreader of disinformation during a closed-door meeting Friday with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and White House Chief of Staff [Mark Meadows](#)
- **Democratic Representative Raul Grijalva** said he’s infected with the coronavirus, days after a Capitol Hill hearing where a Republican House member in attendance later tested positive for Covid-19.
  - “While I cannot blame anyone directly for this, this week has shown that there are some Members of Congress who fail to take this crisis seriously,” said the Arizona Democrat. “Numerous Republican members routinely strut around the Capitol without a mask to selfishly make a political statement at the expense of their colleagues, staff, and their families.”
- **House Democrats** introduced a bill that would require passengers to wear masks on commercial planes and in airports to combat the coronavirus pandemic.
  - The Healthy Flights Act, spearheaded by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman [Peter DeFazio](#) (D-Ore.) and the panel’s Aviation Subcommittee Chairman [Rick Larsen](#) (D-Wash.), would clarify that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has the authority to impose the mask requirements.
- Federal public health officials testifying before a House panel agreed the Trump administration’s response to the pandemic has been hampered by a lack of funding but insisted that they’ve done the most they can within those confines. “Within the context with what we have, what’s available

to us, we are doing everything we possibly can,” **Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases**, told the **House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis**.

- The officials, who also included U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Robert Redfield, inventoried the measures taken to bolster testing and develop therapeutics and vaccines. But their remarks didn’t discuss what many health experts argue is needed and the hearing was called to discuss: A national strategy to slow the virus to replace the current state-by-state piecemeal effort.
- **Majority Whip James Clyburn** (D-S.C.), chairman of the newly formed panel, urged public health officials to “prioritize science over politics,” distribute tests and provide clear guidance to Americans to curtail the spread of Covid-19. He cited the administration’s approach of “deferring to the states” and “rushing to reopen” as prolonging the pandemic.
- **Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.)**, argued that there’s already a national strategy in place. “Let’s not forget the things that have already been done as part of this plan that have saved millions of lives,” Scalise said, talking to health officials at the hearing. “We mourn every loss but let’s also recognize the lives that would have been lost if you weren’t on the job carrying out President Trump’s plan to contain this.”
- The Capitol physician hasn’t yet recommended Covid-19 testing for members, **Pelosi** told reporters today. It doesn’t necessarily make sense for lawmakers alone to have testing, Pelosi said, since there are roughly 20,000 people on Capitol Hill, including staffers and the press. “It is up to the Capitol physician,” she said. Pelosi this week required face masks to be worn on the House floor,
- The **House Select Modernization Committee** unanimously approved a series of recommendations today to allow legislative work to continue safely through the current pandemic and any future emergency. Most of the dozen proposals from the panel focused on technology, like making permanent the option to electronically submit committee reports and expanding the use of digital signatures for a majority of House business.
  - The panel also pitched a bipartisan, bicameral task force to identify the lessons from the public health crisis and recommend more improvements. Chairman **Derek Kilmer** (D-Wash.) said emergencies like the current pandemic make the ability of Congress to function even more important.
- The **House Oversight and Reform Committee** said in a report that the administration overpaid by as much as \$500 million for a ventilator contract with Philips. The report said the Trump administration didn’t build on an existing Obama-era contract with Philips, and that a new deal was negotiated by the office of White House trade adviser Peter Navarro. The report says Philips recommended new “clinician-friendly screens,” but that they were identical to a cheaper model bought under President Barack Obama.
- “We MUST have guidelines for our November elections,” **Democratic Rep. Carolyn Maloney** [says in a Twitter post](#).
  - New York lawmaker says she [asked the National Coronavirus Task Force to come up with safety guidelines](#) for the upcoming general elections and she’s “glad they committed to it”
- **Reps. Billy Long (R-Mo.) and Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.)** are pushing for \$500 million in aid for agricultural fairs. The industry, with more than prize pigs and cotton candy sales at stake, wants federal help as it confronts billions of dollars in losses.

- **Key House Democrats** said they're demanding another increase for the federal contribution to Medicaid as part of the next virus relief bill. Democratic Caucus Chairman [Hakeem Jeffries](#) (D-N.Y.) told reporters Friday enhancing the federal portion is necessary as millions of Americans have lost their jobs and will likely end up on the public health insurance program.

*State/Local*

- **Governors nationwide** are urging the **Trump administration** to extend National Guard deployments to assist with the coronavirus response ahead of another deadline.
  - In late May, President Trump extended federal funding for National Guard deployments until mid-August, saying at the time the extension would help "states succeed in their response and recovery efforts."
  - But in order to meet Covid-19 safety requirements, Air and Army Guard supporting personnel will need to demobilize no later than Friday, according to a Defense official. That's raising alarm among governors who are preparing for the possibility that an extension is not granted.
  - "While we appreciate the Administration's support over the past few months, short-term extensions and last-minute authorizations are adversely impacting and disrupting state plans and operations," the National Governors Association said in a statement Monday.
  - "Governors strongly urge the President to authorize an extension of Title 32 today. Unnecessary delays in extending Title 32 create significant challenges for states and territories, which are amplified in the middle of a crisis," the statement said.
- **New York Governor Andrew Cuomo** said he would make a decision on school reopening in the coming week, based mostly on the overall infection rate. He said New York City missed a Friday deadline to submit reopening plans.
  - "An initial decision at this point is schools should plan on reopening," Cuomo said in a call with reporters Saturday.
  - But he cautioned that one variable will be the comfort level of parents -- and he said not all parents are in favor of opening. "So you open a school, you will have partial attendance, which will serve no one," he said.
- **Ohio Governor Mike DeWine** asked the state Board of Pharmacy to halt an order banning hydroxychloroquine for treating Covid-19, telling regulators to revisit the issue. In March, the pharmacy board approved limiting prescriptions for hydroxychloroquine, which President Donald Trump has promoted for coronavirus, because of concerns it wouldn't be available to treat other conditions like malaria.
  - Large clinical trials have shown hydroxychloroquine to be ineffective against the virus and potentially dangerous. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration in mid-June rescinded its clearance allowing for emergency use of the drug.
- **San Francisco** will open a temporary medical facility at its historic Presidio park to house patients without Covid-19 in case the worsening pandemic fills up local hospitals, officials said Thursday. The facility will accommodate up to 93 people who need low-intensity care and will be staffed by the city's health department as well as the University of California San Francisco.
- **Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers** ordered everyone in the state over age 5 to wear face coverings in public, with some exceptions including private residences and the [outdoors](#).
  - Citing the spread of Covid-19, Evers, a Democrat, said "the sooner we work together to box in this virus, the sooner we can get back to work, school, sports, restaurants, and get our state and our economy back on the right track."

- **Miami-Dade County Public Schools** Superintendent Alberto Carvalho says officials will revisit a possible return to in-class learning at the end of September.
  - M-DCPS announced this week it will be delaying the start of the school year by one week and delaying "the in-school model by a month," Carvalho told [CNN affiliate WPLG's](#) Sunday morning political affairs program, "This Week in South Florida."
- **New York City** submitted its plan to reopen schools on Friday night and what was submitted "looked more like an outline and not a plan," New York State Department of Education spokesperson Jim Malatras said Sunday.
  - The plan was about 30 pages and other plans were more detailed, Malatras said.
  - The New York State Department of Education has not had a chance to fully review the plan submitted by New York City because it was submitted late Friday evening, Malatras said.
- **Georgia Governor Brian Kemp** signed two executive orders extending existing Covid-19 safety measures and extending the Public Health State of Emergency, he said today in a press release.
  - The Public Health State of Emergency now runs through Sept. 10.
  - The executive order extending existing Covid-19 safety measures requires social distancing, bans gatherings of more than 50 people unless there is six feet between each person, requires sheltering in place for those living in long-term care facilities and the medically fragile, and outlines mandatory criteria for businesses, among other provisions. The order runs through Aug. 15.
  - In the release, Kemp encouraged Georgians to wear a mask, wash their hands often and practice social distancing to help flatten the curve.
- **Alabama Department of Public Health** is asking doctors to focus testing on the most vulnerable populations as a surge of coronavirus testing has resulted in a seven-day turnaround time, according to new release from the agency.
  - "The State of Alabama continues to experience increases in the number of COVID-19 cases. While there has been a recent decline in the percentage of persons who test positive, the state is currently facing a surge that has overwhelmed Alabama's ability to provide test results within the 2- to 3-day turnaround time needed to expeditiously make quarantine and care decisions," the release said.
- **New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy** called out Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell for allowing the Senate to go home for a long weekend while the unemployment benefits expire at midnight.
  - "With millions of families literally left hanging to simply go home for a long weekend is the ultimate act of irresponsible behavior and dereliction of duty. Senator McConnell, please get back to Washington and get this done," Murphy said.
  - Murphy said families across the nation are facing "economic meltdown" and this action is "despicable."
- The **Salt Lake City School District** will begin the school year in a remote setting, an announcement on the district's website said.
  - "Remote learning will be in place until the end of the first quarter, OR until health conditions in our city improve and allow us to bring our students back into the classroom," the statement said.
  - The district will begin school on Sept. 8 instead of the usual Aug. 25, the district added.
  - The extra time will be used to learning devices like laptops for students and for teachers to adjust plans and learn new online tools, the statement explained.



- The **Fort Worth Independent School District** in Texas is moving the beginning of its school year back by three weeks.
  - Classes will now begin on Sept. 8, and at least the first four weeks of the year will be all-digital.
- **Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds** released guidance Thursday on plans to return to in-person learning at schools across the state. She encouraged in-person learning, and added that in order to request online-only learning, schools must have a positivity rate of at least 15% in their county.
  - “The CDC stated schools are an important part of the infrastructure of our communities. They provide a safe supportive learning environment for students. They employ teachers and other staff and enable parents, guardians and caregivers to work in Iowa,” she said.
  - Reynolds said 93 of Iowa’s 99 counties meet the less than 10% positivity threshold that the
- **New York Governor Andrew Cuomo** said parents and teachers have to be comfortable with school reopening plans and he won’t force teachers to work.
  - “If the union and the teachers aren’t comfortable and they’re not going to show up, that’s a problem.” Cuomo said on a call Sunday morning with reporters. “No one wants to force teachers against their will to work.”
  - The state will make a decision next week on school reopening after reviewing plans submitted by school districts. Cuomo had said yesterday that the initial decision is to plan on reopening. He cautioned that he will shut down schools again if regional infection rates rise over 9% over a seven-day rolling average.
- **New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy** announced Monday that indoor gatherings will be reduced to 25% capacity with a maximum number of 25 people, due to the “upward climb” in the Covid-19 transmission rate.
  - Citing a rise in indoor house parties that have been seen all across the state, the governor said, “We cannot be any clearer that indoor gatherings and especially large crowded ones where social distancing isn’t practiced and face masks aren’t worn, they are just not safe.”
- **Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan** issued an amended emergency order to ensure that local schools and school systems can decide “to initially determine when to safely reopen” for in-person instruction based on public health guidance, his office said Monday.
  - Under the initial order, issued on April 5, local health departments continue to have the authority to close any individual facility deemed to be unsafe.
  - “The recovery plan for Maryland public schools stresses local flexibility within the parameters set by state officials. Over the last several weeks, school boards and superintendents made their own decisions about how and when to reopen public schools, after consultation with state and local health officials,” Hogan said in a statement.
- Public schools in **Columbus, Ohio**, will start the school year completely remotely for grades K-12 until at least Oct. 27, the end of the first quarter.
  - The district initially had planned to for pre-K-8 students to start the year in a hybrid learning model, with high school students in an all virtual mode.
  - For the district’s one year-round school, Woodcrest Elementary, virtual classes will begin on July 29 and go until Oct. 26.

- The 2020-2021 school year will begin with remote learning on Aug. 24, according to **Mexico's** Education Minister Esteban Moctezuma at Monday's presidential briefing.
- **Peru** will extend its state of emergency and localized quarantine measures for another month as the number of coronavirus infections continues to rise.
  - Carlos Lozada, the minister of housing, construction and sanitation, told TVPeru on Friday that the Council of Ministers had made the decision after receiving the latest epidemiological data, which had shown an increase in the level of infections in some regions.
- **Prime Minister Boris Johnson** is considering sealing off Greater London and ordering at-risk members of the population to stay at home under a potential scenario designed to avert a second national lockdown, according to news reports.
  - Possible measures include locking down the capital if infection rates spike and tightening quarantine rules on those flying into the U.K., The Sunday Telegraph reported. There would be travel curbs in and out of the M25 highway encircling Greater London and a ban on overnight stays, according to the Sunday Times.
  - Elderly people and those considered to have an increased risk from Covid-19 could be asked to stay at home, and "harder" local lockdowns could be ordered than the restrictions already imposed on parts of northern England.
- An emergency committee of the **World Health Organization** said it expects the Covid-19 pandemic to be of "lengthy duration" and that it remains "a public health emergency of international concern," the WHO said in a statement Saturday.
  - "The pandemic is a once-in-a-century health crisis, the effects of which will be felt for decades to come," WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was quoted as telling panel on Friday. "Many countries that believed they were past the worst are now grappling with new outbreaks."
  - The committee recommended a sustained attack on the virus on all fronts, from testing and tracing to developing treatments to vaccines
- **Russia** plans to start [mass vaccinations](#) against Covid-19 in October, with health workers and teachers first in line to get the inoculation against the disease, Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said.
  - A drug developed by Moscow's Gamaleya Institute and the Russian Direct Investment Fund has completed clinical trials and the authorities are preparing to register it with regulators, Murashko was quoted as saying by the state-run Tass news service.
- **France's** coronavirus infection rate has almost doubled over the past three weeks, requiring "quick and sizable efforts" to contain the surge, according to the nation's public health agency.
  - The number of new cases in France is increasing by more than 1,000 a day and the spread accelerated this week, the agency said in a statement. The average weekly infection rate has jumped to 10.2 cases per 100,000 people, an increase of 78% compared with three weeks ago that tops the "vigilance threshold" of 10 cases per 100,000.
- **Amsterdam** will require face masks in busy parts of the city, including the red-light district and shopping streets, starting Aug. 5. The measure doesn't replace the 1.5-meter (5-foot) rule on social distancing. People in the Netherlands previously were required to don a face mask only when traveling on public transport.

- **Kuwait** suspended flights from 31 countries Saturday due to the coronavirus pandemic, just as the country reopened its airport for operations, the state-run Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) reported Saturday.
- Starting Saturday, all travelers coming to **Germany** will be able to get free coronavirus polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests up to 72 hours after entering the country, the German health ministry announced in a statement.
  - “The rise in cases is a clear warning. The virus does not take days off. Therefore: whoever returns from a trip should get a test — voluntarily and free of charge,” said German health minister Jens Spahn in the statement.
  - Germany is currently dealing with a new rise in coronavirus infections and believes travelers returning from abroad and carrying the virus are partially responsible.
- **Argentine** President Alberto Fernández said the current quarantine measures will be extended until August 16 for the metro area of the capital city Buenos Aires.
  - "Until August 16, things will remain as they are today," Fernández said today, adding that Covid-19 is "not just another flu."
  - Ninety percent of Covid-19 cases are reported in the metro area of Buenos Aires, "but [the virus] has begun to radiate to other places," Fernández said.
- The **British government** has procured "millions" of two separate coronavirus tests that will be able to detect the virus in 90 minutes, the UK department of health said Monday.
  - Both tests will be able to detect Covid-19 and other winter viruses such as flu and respiratory syncytial virus in 90 minutes and will not require a clinical setting, the department said in a statement.
  - The tests will be rolled out in hospitals, care homes and labs across the UK next week.

*Other*

- A group of U.S. corporate leaders led by **Starbucks** Corp.’s former head, Howard Schultz, pressed lawmakers for additional, longer-term support for small businesses, including federally guaranteed loans that could be turned into grants, at least partially, for those hardest-hit by the pandemic.
  - “By Labor Day, we foresee a wave of permanent closures if the right steps are not taken soon,” Schultz said in [a letter](#) to Congress signed by almost 100 leaders, including the chief executive officers of Walt Disney Co., Merck & Co., Alphabet Inc. and Walmart Inc.
  - The Paycheck Protection Program, the centerpiece of federal aid to small businesses, has provided a short-term relief to many, but small firms need help to sustain themselves through 2020 and well into 2021, the executives said in their letter to the four congressional leaders.
  - Their proposed new loans should be delivered fast, building on the existing infrastructure of the PPP, whose loans are distributed by approved lenders. Borrowers should have flexibility in how they use the funds, and the new loans should flow to businesses that need it most, particularly those owned by minorities, the CEOs said in their letter. A portion of the money should be directed to financial groups that cater to low-income areas, known as community development financial institutions and minority depository institutions, according to the letter.
- The **University System of Maryland** (USM), which includes 12 institutions and three regional higher education centers, is making Covid-19 testing mandatory for all on-campus students and employees.

- Anyone returning in-person to a USM institution now has to be tested for Covid-19 within 14 days prior to arriving and will need to provide university officials with confirmation of a negative test result, according to a release from the university system.
- Some of the universities will be conducting this testing on their own as students and employees arrive on campus, while others are beginning the fall semester imminently, within 14 days of the new guidance issued today.
- Anyone who tests positive for Covid-19 prior to arrival will not be allowed on campus, and will only be allowed back after a required period of isolation has been met, per public health guidelines, the release said.
- The **Southeastern Conference** announced teams will play conference games in the fall, according to a statement on [Twitter](#).
  - The new football season will kick off on Sept. 26 "to allow its universities to focus on the healthy return of their campus communities and the gradual re-introduction of athletics," SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey said Thursday.
- **Johnson & Johnson** [wants](#) to start Phase 3 Trials of its Covid-19 vaccine in September, the company said in a statement. The drugmaker's experimental vaccine protected a handful of primates with a single shot in an early study, prompting the company to start trials in humans this month.
  - A study published in Nature showed that its candidate elicits a strong immune response that protects against infection.
- Almost 10,000 people in the U.K. have been [given](#) an experimental vaccine from **AstraZeneca Plc and the University of Oxford**, a key step toward finding a shot that will help control the pandemic.
  - AstraZeneca is also well on its way to administering shots to 5,000 volunteers in a late-stage trial in Brazil and may scale up the size of its studies there, Chief Executive Officer Pascal Soriot said Thursday in an interview with Bloomberg TV. Subjects are being enrolled in South Africa, and a test in the U.S. is about to begin.
- **Eli Lilly and Company** said Monday it is moving into a Phase 3 clinical trial of its antibody treatment for Covid-19.
  - The Indianapolis-based pharmaceutical giant said that it plans to recruit 2,400 residents and staff at long-term care facilities for its trial.
- The dramatically scaled-down **Republican National Convention** in Charlotte, North Carolina, will be closed to the press, a convention spokesperson and Republican official familiar with the plans tell CNN.
  - Reporters will not be allowed on site as RNC delegates vote to formally nominate President Donald Trump as the 2020 Republican presidential nominee, but the vote will be livestreamed, the Republican official said.
  - The restriction is unprecedented in modern American political history, but Republican officials said they were forced to limit attendance due to social distancing restrictions imposed by the governor of North Carolina.
- **Microsoft's** US workforce will have the option of working from home at least through Jan. 19, the company told employees on Thursday.
- **Quidel** and **six other companies** that produce fast Covid-19 tests will receive \$248.7 million in federal grants to ramp up their manufacturing. The Health and Human Services Department already is tapping Quidel tests for nursing homes because they give results in 15 minutes. Other winners include point-of-care test manufacturers Mesa Biotech and Talis Biomedical and lab-based test makers Ginkgo Bioworks, Helix OpCo, Fluidigm, and Mammoth Biosciences.

- **Merck & Co.** plans to begin two large clinical trials in September of an experimental oral antiviral therapy for Covid-19, pushing ahead with efforts to bring another treatment option to market.
- **Dunkin’ Brands Group Inc.** became the latest U.S. chain to require masks inside its establishments, starting Aug. 5. “This simple step to wear a face covering will help to provide a safe environment for guests, franchisees and their restaurant employees,” the company said in a [statement](#).
  - Earlier, Dunkin’ said it expects to close about 800 stores in the U.S. permanently this year, as well as about 350 internationally. The closures are part of a “real estate portfolio rationalization,” and will mostly involve low-volume sales locations, Dunkin’ said.
- The **Philadelphia Phillies** shut down all activities at their ballpark after reporting that a coach and home clubhouse staffer have tested positive for Covid-19. Previously the team reported a staff member who worked in the visiting clubhouse, which the Miami Marlins occupied last week, had tested positive.
  - Meantime, the Marlins reported that a 17th player had tested positive. The Phillies had been the Marlins’ first and only opponent this season.
- **Tailored Brands, the owner of Men Wearhouse and Jos A. Bank**, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, becoming the latest US retail casualty of the pandemic.
  - Tailored Brands said in a statement that it voluntary filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Sunday in the US Bankruptcy Court in Houston due to "the unprecedented impact of COVID-19."
- **NeuroRx and Relief Therapeutics** announced that RLF-100 (aviptadil) showed rapid recovery from respiratory failure in the most critically ill patients with Covid-19.
  - The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration** has given fast-track status to RLF-100. NeuroRx CEO Jonathan Javitt said in a statement the company is “conducting placebo-controlled trials to see whether the observations made in the case-control and open-label studies will be confirmed for less ill patients with Covid-19-related respiratory failure.”

