



## COVID-19 UPDATE September 8, 2020

### *Global*

Total cases – 27,431,255

Total deaths – 894,306

### *United States*

Total cases – 6,321,054

Total deaths – 189,487

Total # tests – 91,760,416

### *Trump Administration*

- **President Trump** said Congress should authorize sending taxpayers checks from about \$300 billion left over in a pandemic lending program. “We have \$300 billion sitting in an account that we didn’t need,” Trump said at a news conference on Friday. “It would be a very appropriate thing to release that to the American people and I am willing to do it.”
- **White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow** said that another coronavirus stimulus package is not necessary for an economic recovery, but that it could help. He argued for a narrow approach to stimulus that would provide funds to a few “targeted areas” of the economy.
- **President Trump**, speaking at the White House, hinted the U.S. could approve a coronavirus vaccine in October, ahead of the November election. Many public health officials and scientists expressed concern the FDA is under pressure from the White House to approve a vaccine before Trump faces re-election on Nov. 3.
- **Education Secretary Betsy DeVos** announced last week that the Trump administration will enforce federal standardized testing requirements for K-12 schools despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Though the Education Department waived federal testing requirements this past spring, DeVos informed state school chiefs in a [letter](#) that they are expected to administer tests this fall.
- **Anthony Fauci**, the U.S.’s top infectious disease expert, said that seven states that have seen upticks in Covid-19 cases should be particularly vigilant over the Labor Day holiday, and warned that if Americans are “careless” there could be another jump in cases this fall.

### *Congress*

- **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY)** announced today that the Senate would vote on a pared-back stimulus proposal as soon as this week. This new measure is expected to be blocked by Democrats, who said they would not consider any stimulus bill costing less than \$2 trillion.
  - The measure would restore some of the extra unemployment benefits that expired in July. Weekly supplemental unemployment aid would resume at \$300, down from \$600 in

the CARES Act approved in spring. The legislation doesn't include a second round of \$1,200 payments for lower- and middle-income individuals.

- The bill would provide another round of relief for small businesses hit by the Covid-19 crisis. An extension of the Paycheck Protection Program for small businesses will cost \$258 billion. Small businesses could get loans equal to 2.5 times their average monthly payroll costs, with a loan maximum of \$2 million, the legislation showed.
  - The bill would reduce liabilities for businesses stemming from the pandemic as well as provisions meant to boost rare earth minerals mining in the U.S. It would convert a \$10 billion loan to the U.S. Postal Service approved in the spring to a grant and fund COVID testing. The \$105 billion for education is complemented by funding for private-school students.
  - A new tax break for charitable donations would be expanded to \$600 for all taxpayers in 2020. The CARES Act included a \$300 deduction for individuals, even if they don't itemize their tax returns, which is typically a requirement. The bill would also create a two-year tax break for donors who contribute to scholarship funds that offer money for homeschooling.
  - It would also give the federal government and states \$31 billion for vaccine development and to strengthen the federal stockpile of medical supplies as well as allow states to build their own. It would also appropriate \$16 billion for contract tracing and disease surveillance in states, and extend liability protections to hospital workers.
  - Farmers struggling during the coronavirus pandemic could receive a \$20 billion boost under the bill. Dairy, poultry, livestock, specialty, and non-specialty crop producers are among the farmers and ranchers who stand to benefit from the extra assistance.
  - Education Secretary Betsy DeVos's signature school-choice policy would be included in the legislation. It would provide \$5 billion annually over the next two years in federal tax credits for contributions to state programs that award scholarships to attend private schools.
- In a joint statement, **Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)** and **Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY)** said the scaled-down stimulus proposal "doesn't come close to addressing the problems and is headed nowhere," and that the bill "is only intended to help vulnerable Republican Senators by giving them a 'check-the-box' vote."
  - The **House Committee on Oversight and Reform Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis** will hold a remote hearing on Wednesday afternoon with civil rights advocates and public health experts to examine the steps that must be taken to ensure a free, fair, and safe general election during the coronavirus pandemic.
  - **Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer** says "too much of the evidence points to the Trump administration pressuring the FDA to approve a vaccine by Election Day."
    - "All Americans want a safe and effective vaccine as soon as possible, but if these important life and death decisions appear political, it will only undermine Americans' confidence in a vaccine and prolong the pandemic," Schumer says in statement
  - **Senate Democrats** are pushing for a vote to overturn President Donald Trump's payroll tax deferral. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) are requesting the Government Accountability Office conduct an expedited review under the Congressional Review Act, a law that could allow Congress to overturn administration regulations.

- The **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** has told states to prepare for a Covid-19 vaccine to be ready by Nov. 1 and asked them to remove obstacles that would prevent distribution sites from opening.
  - The CDC in early August told states to assume for planning that “limited doses” of a vaccine could be available in fall.
  - The date suggests the federal government is preparing for a vaccine to become available just days before President Donald Trump stands for reelection Nov. 3, a goal that would depend on shots being tested and reviewed by then.
  - The new letter said the Department of Health and Human Services and CDC “are rapidly making preparations to implement large-scale distribution of Covid-19 vaccines in the fall of 2020.”
- In [documents](#) sent to public health officials in all 50 states and five large cities, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** outlined plans to distribute a coronavirus vaccine to health care workers and other high-risk groups by late October or early November.
- The CEOs of **nine drug companies** issued a [pledge](#) that any potential coronavirus vaccine would undergo a thorough vetting process before being approved for public use. The statement promised that “large, high quality clinical trials” would determine the safety and efficacy of experimental vaccines, and that the companies would follow the guidelines set by the Food and Drug Administration.
- The first doses of a vaccine against Covid-19 will probably start becoming available in the second or third quarter of next year, **World Health Organization Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan** said at a briefing in Geneva. Countries initially won’t have enough for everyone and will need to prioritize high-risk populations.
  - “It’s a very optimistic scenario,” she said, because there are more than 30 in clinical trials and more than nine are in the third phase of clinical tests. Typically vaccine candidates have a 1-in-10 chance of working, she added. Phase-3 tests take several months because thousands of people need to be enrolled and they get two doses; while some steps can be accelerated, others can’t.
- Five locations were selected for the Phase 3 trial of the vaccine under development by **AstraZeneca** as part of Operation Warp Speed, according to a Pentagon statement.

