



COVID-19 UPDATE October 26, 2020

Global

Total cases – 43,373,449

Total deaths – 1,157,465

United States

Total cases – 8,690,143

Total deaths – 225,588

The global total of coronavirus cases has surpassed 43 million, and the death toll has exceeded 1.1 million. More than 225,000 people in the United States have died of the virus, and the past week was the worst 7-day period of the pandemic so far. Nineteen states announced more cases in the past seven days than any other week of the pandemic. On Friday alone, more than 85,000 cases were reported across the country, breaking the single-day record set in July by 10,000 cases.

Trump Administration

- **Vice President Mike Pence’s Chief of Staff** and at least four other aides have tested positive for the coronavirus. Pence, who leads the White House’s coronavirus task force, tested negative twice over the weekend and will continue to campaign.
- The **Department of Homeland Security** announced last week that the U.S. borders with Mexico and Canada will remain closed to all nonessential travel until November 21 to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- The **Department of Health and Human Services** will deliver 125 million cloth masks to schools as in-person instruction resumes. The delivery of adult-sized masks has already been completed, and HHS also plans to distribute masks in child sizes. Priority will be given to low-income and high-needs students.
- **White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows** told CNN Sunday that "We are not going to control the pandemic. We are going to control the fact that we get vaccines, therapeutics and other mitigation areas."
- **U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams** says Thanksgiving celebrations “aren’t looking up” in 12 “red states” because of the spread of the coronavirus.
 - “A note of caution if you live in IA, ID, KS, MO, MT, ND, NE, OK, SD, TN, UT, or WI- things aren’t looking up for thanksgiving dinner, but there’s still plenty of time to turn it around,” he says in a [tweet](#)
 - In a separate [tweet](#), he mentions so-called orange states: “AL, IN, KY, MS, NV, SC, and TX, don’t let #COVID19 knock the stuffing out of you and your holiday!”
 - A third [tweet](#) lists dark green states

- “DC DE, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI, VT- don’t become complacent heading into the holidays. The best offense for the Turkey Day game is a great defense.”
- Among health care workers, nurses in particular have been at significant risk of contracting Covid-19, according to [a new analysis of hospitalized patients](#) by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**.
 - The findings were released Monday as a [surge of new hospitalizations](#) sweeps the country, with several states hitting record levels of cases.
- **Anthony Fauci** tells CNN he’s worried the U.S. is headed for a massive surge in Covid-19 cases if smart public health measures aren’t ratcheted up.
 - The country needs to double down now on health safeguards, Fauci says while stressing that he isn’t talking about shutting down the country
 - More than 30 U.S. states are having upticks in test positivity, which is a “pretty good predictor that you are going to have a surge in cases” that lead to spike in hospitalizations: Fauci
 - Fauci says he’s hopeful at least two vaccines will emerge that are “safe and effective” by the end of November or early December

Congress

- **Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.)** and **Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin** today failed again to close major differences on a fresh stimulus for an economy facing a renewed spike in Covid cases. In their first call since Wednesday, the two negotiators still have not resolved language for a national testing and tracing program for the virus, Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill said.
 - “We continue to eagerly await the Administration’s acceptance of our health language,” said Hammill, including the testing strategy. He said Pelosi and Mnuchin spoke for 52 minutes.
 - Pelosi remains “optimistic” about reaching a deal before Election Day, Hammill said. But with eight days to go until then and the Senate scheduled to leave town later today, the lack of an imminent agreement largely extinguished chances of any legislation being written, voted on, and signed into law by Trump by Nov. 3.
- In a [letter](#) to the House Democrats, **Speaker Pelosi** said the White House made “unacceptable changes” to language concerning the national strategic testing plan. The edits offer the Trump administration greater flexibility in distributing funding for testing efforts and eliminate measures to address the coronavirus’ disproportionate impact on communities of color.
- In a 51-44 vote on Wednesday, **Senate Republicans** failed to pass a \$500 billion relief bill. The legislation, which included money for schools and health care, liability protections, small-business spending, and enhanced unemployment insurance, was nearly identical to the legislation Democrats blocked last month. The bill does not include new stimulus checks for Americans.

Vaccines and Treatment

- **Johnson & Johnson’s** first batches of its Covid-19 vaccine could be available for emergency use as soon as January, Ruxandra Draghia-Akli, the company’s head of public health research and development, said in a presentation at the World Health Summit.
- **AstraZeneca Plc** and **Johnson & Johnson** plan to [resume](#) Covid-19 vaccine clinical trials that had been halted by U.S. regulators, putting research into two of the leading candidates for a coronavirus inoculation back on track.

- Johnson & Johnson said in a statement Friday it is preparing to resume recruitment in a late-stage trial of its vaccine after consultation with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. An independent data safety monitoring board recommended the trial continue. The study was paused earlier this month after a patient became sick, but the company said no clear cause of the illness had been identified.
- Earlier, AstraZeneca said it had been cleared by the FDA to restart a trial that had been halted in the U.S. after a volunteer participating in a U.K. trial of the shot had fallen ill. The company said the agency had reviewed data from global studies and decided it was safe to proceed.
- **UNICEF** issued a [press release](#) last Monday announcing that it will stockpile 520 million single-dose syringes in anticipation of a COVID-19 vaccine. The U.N. agency, which is the world's largest single buyer of vaccines, plans to collect 1 billion syringes by 2021 to guarantee that countries will have the necessary equipment to administer coronavirus vaccines once one is approved.
- **Pfizer** began testing its experimental coronavirus vaccine on volunteers as young as 12 to study how children respond to the treatment.
- **Dr. Anthony Fauci** told BBC Sunday that experts will likely know whether a potential vaccine is safe and effective by early December, but doses will not be widely available until several months into 2021.
- **The Food and Drug Administration** said Thursday that it had formally approved remdesivir as the first drug to treat Covid-19, a move that indicated the government's confidence in its safe and effective use for hospitalized patients.
 - The F.D.A. said the antiviral drug had been approved for adults and pediatric patients 12 years of age and older and weighing at least 40 kilograms (about 88 pounds) who require hospitalization for Covid-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, which has killed more than [220,000 people](#) in the United States.

Other

- **CVS Health** announced last week that it will hire 15,000 workers to prepare for a surge in coronavirus and flu cases in the United States this winter.
- **China's Xinjiang province** is conducting a mass testing program for more than 4.7 million people after an asymptomatic case was reported. The program had identified 137 cases, all of which were asymptomatic, as of Sunday afternoon.
- **Fox News president Jay Wallace** and several of the network's top anchors were exposed to COVID-19 on Thursday after traveling on a private plane from Nashville to New York with an individual who later tested positive for the virus.
- **El Paso, Texas** imposed a new curfew on residents Sunday after a surge in coronavirus cases brought the city's intensive care units to full capacity.
- **In Italy, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte** approved a plan to limit opening hours for bars and restaurants, and shut entertainment, gambling venues, and gyms. Italians will also be urged not to travel. The measures will begin on Monday and remain in effect until Nov. 24.
- **Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's Cabinet** Sunday approved a new state of emergency that will give the central government more powers and he announced the government planned a national curfew from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m., except in the Canary Islands, where the infection rate is low.

MONUMENT ADVOCACY

- **France** will extend its nightly curfew to cover a total of 46 million people, more than two-thirds of its population, Prime Minister Jean Castex announced on Thursday. Thirty-eight additional areas in France, as well as French Polynesia, will be affected by the change, which takes effect Saturday.
- **Newark, New Jersey's largest city**, on Monday announced an 8 p.m. daily closing time for all nonessential businesses citywide, beginning Tuesday. Sports practices and games are being canceled in a section of the city where a recent seven-day average rate of positive coronavirus tests had reached 25.3 percent.
 - Hair and nail salons — and City Hall — will be open by appointment only, and no one may wait indoors, Mayor Ras Baraka said. Health clubs and gyms must close for 30 minutes every hour for thorough cleaning.
- A new study by economists at the **University of Kansas** has found that counties in the state where residents are obliged to wear masks in public [have seen about half](#) as many new coronavirus infections as counties that do not have a mask mandate in force.
 - The [study by the university's Institute for Policy & Social Research](#) is part of a nationwide trend, experts said. Localities that impose mask mandates often see fewer cases, fewer hospitalizations, fewer deaths, or lower test-positivity rates than nearby localities that do not.
 - The same trend has been seen in Alabama, Kansas, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas, according to [a report](#) from Prevent Pandemics, a nonprofit group advocating pandemic-fighting measures.

