



COVID-19 UPDATE November 23, 2020

Global

Total cases – 59,025,871

Total deaths – 1,393,889

United States

Total cases – 12,369,978

Total deaths – 257,415

On Wednesday, the United States surpassed 250,000 coronavirus deaths. The total number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in the United States has reached new highs every day since November 11, when hospitalizations first surpassed the April peak. One week before the end of the month, the United States has already recorded its highest monthly case total in November, reporting more than 3,075,000 cases. The number of November cases could exceed four million, more than double the total in October.

Trump Administration

- The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** urged Americans against traveling for Thanksgiving and to limit gatherings to people in the same household as Covid-19 rages in the U.S.
 - “Celebrating virtually or with the people you live with is the safest choice this Thanksgiving,” the agency said on its website on Thursday. “Travel may increase your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19.”
 - For people considering traveling for the holiday, the agency offered a checklist of risks and standard advice such as wearing a face covering and staying 6 feet away from people “who don’t live with you.” People hosting Thanksgiving guests at home should observe precautions that could include having an outdoor meal with family and friends, have people bring their own food and drink, and opening windows if the gathering is indoors.
- In a call last week, **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Robert Redfield** and **Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar** encouraged governors to help build confidence in vaccines and stressed the importance of wearing masks.
- The **Internal Revenue Service** released a revenue ruling and a revenue procedure Wednesday clarifying the tax treatment of expenses paid for with Paycheck Protection Program loans. The guidance was released following criticism that businesses seeking forgiveness of PPP loans could not deduct expenses paid for using loan funds.
- On Thursday, **Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin** said he had asked the Federal Reserve to return unused coronavirus stimulus funds to the Treasury and shut down five emergency lending

programs created by the CARES Act. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said the programs, which are set to expire on December 31, remain necessary and requested an extension.

- The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** issued new [recommendations](#) for traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency suggests getting tested before and after travel and advises travelers with a known exposure to COVID-19 to delay travel and quarantine.
- On Sunday, more than one million people were screened at airport security checkpoints by the **Transportation Security Administration** –more than on any other day since March –despite warnings from public health officials that travel could increase the spread of the coronavirus.
- **The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** has escalated its warning for cruise travel to the highest level and continued to recommend avoiding any trips on cruise ships worldwide.
 - The agency raised its warning to Level 4 from Level 3, citing “very high” risk of Covid-19 on cruise ships. Passengers are at increased risk of person-to-person spread of Covid-19 and should get tested and stay home for at least seven days after travel, according to its website.
- **National Institutes of Health Director Francis Collins** tells CNN he hopes to see most Americans immunized against Covid-19 by the summer of 2021 if vaccine candidates receive emergency use authorizations from the Food and Drug Administration.
 - “The goal, the hope would be that by April we really start to see a lot of people getting immunized and certainly by the summer we would hope to have most of America actually immune to this and we could start to think about getting back to life as normal,” he says

Biden Presidential Transition

- The **American Medical Association, American Heart Association, and American Nurses Association** published a [letter](#) Tuesday urging the Trump administration to work with the Biden transition team and share critical information about the COVID-19 pandemic, including data about the supply of therapeutics, testing supplies, personal protective equipment, ventilators, hospital bed capacity, and workforce availability.
- **President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris** held a virtual meeting on Thursday with the National Governors Association’s executive committee to discuss coronavirus vaccine distribution and economic relief for cities.
- **Operation Warp Speed Chief Adviser Dr. Moncef Slaoui** said Sunday that he has had no contact with the incoming Biden administration, but asserted that the presidential transition would not impact the vaccine approval or distribution processes.
- Manufacturers of protective gear for the fight against COVID-19 could face fresh orders to bolster supplies and greater federal oversight of where those goods get sent once **President-elect Joe Biden** takes office in January.
 - Hospitals are clamoring for additional personal protective equipment amid surging new cases even after major increases to domestic production by manufacturers including 3M Co. and Honeywell International Inc. Between now and Inauguration Day, hospitals and industry groups will be watching for signs that Biden plans to follow through on repeated campaign-trail pledges to invoke the Defense Production Act to combat the pandemic.
 - “We need much more testing, we need much more masking, we need gloves,” **Biden** said Thursday in Wilmington, Del. “We’re going to move on day one.”
- **President-elect Joe Biden** threw his weight behind House Democrats’ proposals for a coronavirus relief bill, calling for aid to state and local governments, among other measures.

- Biden called on lawmakers to pass something “like the HEROES Act” in a speech on the economy last week, which largely focused on the recovery from the coronavirus-induced recession. The HEROES Act (H.R. 925) totaled \$2.2 trillion in September, though the original version released in May was \$3.4 trillion. Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has said her stance on Covid-19 relief hasn’t changed since the election.

Congress

- **Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer** on Tuesday asked **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell** to resume talks on a multi-trillion stimulus package for the U.S. economy.
 - “We were encouraged by your comments shortly after the election that you believe the Congress needs to act on another COVID-19 relief package and that ‘it’s a possibility we will do more for state and local governments,’” they wrote in a letter to the Republican leader. “We agree with you.”
 - Pelosi and Schumer asked that McConnell join them at the negotiating table “so that we can work towards a bipartisan, bicameral COVID-19 relief agreement to crush the virus and save American lives.”
- **White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows**, once a lead negotiator on a coronavirus stimulus package, said that it’s up to Congress to proceed with any talks, even though the issue has been a “priority” for Trump.
 - “Obviously those discussions—if they happen—will be dictated by the House and the Senate,” Meadows told reporters when asked about stimulus negotiations after a meeting with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) today. “We haven’t seen a real willingness by our House colleagues to look at that.”
 - **McConnell** reiterated his demand that any package be “targeted” and around \$500 billion. He hasn’t yet replied to the letter from Pelosi and Schumer, a House Democratic aide said. Senate Democrats this morning upped the ante by introducing a new proposal to provide \$10 billion for personal protection equipment in the next package, another sign of how far apart the two sides remain
- **Senate Finance Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Ranking Member Ron Wyden (R-OR)** released a [joint statement](#) Thursday saying that the Treasury Department “missed the mark” in new guidance that limits tax breaks for businesses that get their Paycheck Protection loans forgiven. The statement criticizes the Treasury Department for denying small businesses economic relief by forcing them to choose between getting their PPP loans forgiven or claiming write-offs on expenses they covered with loan money.
- **Republican Senator Rick Scott of Florida** has tested positive for Covid-19 and is quarantining in his home in Naples, he said in a statement. Scott said he came into contact with someone in Florida on Nov. 13 who subsequently tested positive.
- **Senate Majority Leader McConnell** this week backed Mnuchin’s proposal to use \$580 billion that was allocated for Federal Reserve loan guarantees, small business aid and other virus relief programs that is unspent. “Congress should repurpose this money toward the kinds of urgent, important, and targeted relief measures that Republicans have been trying to pass for months, but which Democrats have repeatedly blocked with all-or-nothing demands,” McConnell said in a statement.
- **Senate Finance Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa)**, an 87-year-old in the line of succession to the presidency, announced yesterday he tested positive for the coronavirus. Grassley reported the

test results late in the day, after beginning a quarantine in the morning following notification he was exposed to the virus. On Monday, Grassley gave a speech on the Senate floor, without wearing a mask.

Vaccines and Treatment

- The **Food and Drug Administration** granted emergency use authorization to the antibody cocktail from **Regeneron**, the treatment administered to President Trump. The antibody treatment has been approved to treat mild to moderate COVID-19 in adults and high-risk pediatric patients over 12 years old. Regeneron said that it can produce doses for approximately 80,000 patients by the end of November and enough for 300,000 by the end of January.
- **Dr. Moncef Slaoui**, head of the Trump administration's Operation Warp Speed, said Sunday that after the Food and Drug Administration approves a coronavirus vaccine, doses will be shipped to states within 24 hours and the first injections will be administered within 48 hours.
- **Pfizer** Inc. filed with U.S. regulators for an emergency-use authorization for its Covid-19 vaccine, seeking clearance for an experimental shot that's expected to play an important role in an immunization effort to halt the virus.
 - The vaccine, developed by the U.S. drugmaker with its German partner BioNTech SE, is the first to seek authorization from the Food and Drug Administration. An emergency clearance would allow Americans to access the vaccine before it's granted full approval. It is likely to first be made available on a limited basis to health workers and older Americans.
- Vaccinations against Covid-19 in the U.S. will "hopefully" start in less than three weeks, according to the head of the federal government's program to accelerate a vaccine.
 - "On the 11th or on the 12th of December, hopefully the first people will be immunized across the United States, across all states, in all the areas where the state departments of health will have told us where to deliver the vaccines," **Moncef Slaoui, head of the government's Operation Warp Speed**, said on CNN's "State of the Union."
- **AstraZeneca** announced Monday that its coronavirus vaccine candidate is up to 90% effective. Unlike the vaccines produced by Pfizer and Moderna, AstraZeneca's vaccine can be stored in a standard refrigerator, making it easier to distribute, especially in developing countries. AstraZeneca's vaccine is also cheaper than its competitors—the company pledged that it will not make a profit on the vaccine during the pandemic. AstraZeneca said it will immediately seek emergency use listing from the World Health Organization to make the vaccine available in low-income countries.
- Elderly Americans will be among the first to receive Covid-19 vaccines, and **CVS Health** will lean on processes developed by years of conducting seasonal flu clinics to speed a rollout to care homes across the U.S., the pharmacy chain's CEO said Sunday.
- **Johnson & Johnson** expects to know the efficacy of its Covid-19 vaccine candidate come January or February, Chief Scientific Officer Paul Stoffels said at a Reuters health conference.
 - Johnson & Johnson anticipates it will have all 60,000 participants enrolled in the final-stage study by the year's end. On Wednesday, a J&J spokesperson told Bloomberg it had already enrolled more than 10,000 participants.

Other

MONUMENT ADVOCACY

- On Thursday, **New York City** closed its public schools after the city reached a three percent test positivity rate over seven days.
- **Prime Minister Boris Johnson** will soon announce new restrictions that will take effect after Great Britain's monthlong lockdown ends on December 2.
- **Hong Kong's** government announced Sunday that it will offer cash payments to residents who test positive for COVID-19. The policy aims to incentivize testing and discourage individuals from avoiding getting tested out of fear of the financial consequences from being forced to stay home from work if they test positive.
- On Monday, parts of **Southern Ontario** entered a phase of restrictions that prohibit indoor gatherings, in-person dining, and in-person retail shopping at most businesses.
- The city government in **Seoul, South Korea** will close nightclubs and ban late-night restaurant dining starting Tuesday.
- **Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak** (D) announced a three-week "pause" beginning Tuesday, during which further restrictions will be placed on businesses and mask mandates will be intensified.
- **Governor Gina Raimondo** said Rhode Island will be put on a two-week "pause" starting Nov. 30 to tamp surging infections and near-capacity hospitalizations.
 - The pause would limit in-person high school, close higher education, limit social gatherings to one household, halt group sports and shutter gyms and bars.
- **California** imposed a curfew across the vast majority of the state, ordering residents to stay home late at night as cases soar.
 - People in counties designated as having a widespread outbreak -- areas that encompass 94% of the population -- will have to stop nonessential work and gatherings between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., according to a statement from Newsom's office.
 - The order takes effect Saturday and will be in force at least until Dec. 21, the state health department said in a statement.

