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Trump: It's my decision when to reopen U.S. economy



Inside C2

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Publisher: Wea H. Lee
President: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins, Jun Gai
Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072
E-mail: News@scdaily.com

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U.S. sets record for new COVID cases third day in a row at over 69,000



Sun seekers gather at Clearwater Beach, which remains open despite high numbers of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) infections in the state, on Independence Day in Clearwater, Florida, U.S. July 4, 2020. REUTERS/Drone Base

(Reuters) - New cases of COVID-19 rose by over 69,000 across the United States on Friday, according to a Reuters tally, setting a record for the third consecutive day as Walt Disney Co stuck to its plans to reopen its flagship theme park in hard-hit Florida.

A total of nine U.S. states - Alaska, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Louisiana, Montana, Ohio, Utah and Wisconsin - also reached records for single-day infections.

In Texas, another hot zone, Governor Greg Abbott warned on Friday he may have to impose new clampdowns if the state cannot stem its record-setting caseloads and hospitalizations through masks and social distancing.

"If we don't adopt this best practice it could lead to a shutdown of business," the Republican governor told local KLBK-TV in Lubbock, adding it was the last thing he wanted.

California announced on Friday the state will release up to 8,000 inmates early from prisons to slow the spread of COVID-19 inside the facilities. At San Quentin State Prison, outside San Francisco, half of the facility's roughly 3,300 prisoners have tested positive for the virus.

The Walt Disney Co (DIS.N) said the theme parks in Orlando would open on Saturday to a limited number of

guests who along with employees would be required to wear masks and undergo temperature checks. The park also cancelled parades, firework displays and events that typically draw crowds.

Disney's chief medical officer said earlier this week she believed the rules would allow guests to visit the park safely.

Roughly 19,000 people, including some theme park workers, have signed a petition asking Disney to delay the reopening. The union representing 750 Walt Disney World performers has filed a grievance against the company, claiming retaliation against members over a union demand that they be tested for COVID-19.

Sun seekers gather at Clearwater Beach, which remains open despite high numbers of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) infections in the state, on Independence Day in Clearwater, Florida, U.S. July 4, 2020. REUTERS/Drone Base Other theme parks opened in Orlando in June, including Comcast Corp's (CMCSA.O) Universal Studios Orlando and SeaWorld Entertainment Inc's (SEAS.N) SeaWorld.

Florida remains one of the worst hotspots for the virus in the nation and is among a handful of states where deaths are rising, based on a Reuters analysis of fatalities in the last two weeks, compared with the prior two weeks.

On Thursday, the state reported a record 120 deaths and added another 92 on Friday. It recorded 11,433 new coronavirus cases on Friday, just short of the state's record, and nearly 7,000 hospitalizations.

ANTIVIRAL DRUG TO FLORIDA

More than four dozen hospitals in Florida have reported their intensive care units were full.

This month, Florida has repeatedly reported more new daily coronavirus cases than any European country had at the height of their outbreaks. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, a Republican, angered some residents and medical experts by calling the spike a "blip".

On Friday, DeSantis said that the state would receive more than 17,000 vials of the antiviral drug remdesivir from the U.S. government, adding: "That'll be something that will hopefully help to improve patient outcomes."

Scott Burkee, a 43-year-old former Disney employee from Davenport, Florida, said DeSantis "has shown zero effort to control the spread, he only becomes concerned when Trump does. The virus is clearly out of control."

Trump, a Republican, traveled to Florida on Friday for an event at the U.S. military's Southern Command and a campaign fundraiser.



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China's CanSino in talks for COVID vaccine Phase III trial overseas

SUZHOU/BEIJING (Reuters) - Chinese vaccine developer CanSino Biologics is in talks with Russia, Brazil, Chile and Saudi Arabia to launch a Phase III trial of its experimental COVID-19 vaccine, its co-founder said on Saturday.

Co-Founder of CanSino Biologics Qiu Dongxu delivers a speech on the progress of company's coronavirus vaccine candidate at the China Anti-viral Drug Innovation Summit, following the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, China July 11, 2020. REUTERS/Roxanne Liu

China's success in driving down COVID-19 infections has made it harder to conduct large-scale vaccine trials, and so far only a few countries have agreed to work with it.

"We are contacting and Russia, Brazil, Chile and Saudi Arabia (for the Phase III trial) and it's still in discussion," Qiu Dongxu, executive director and co-founder of CanSino, told an anti-viral drug development conference in Suzhou, in eastern China.

He said its Phase III trials were likely to start "pretty soon," and the company plans to recruit 40,000 participants for the tests.

Its COVID-19 candidate Ad5-nCov became the first in China to move into human testing in March but is running behind other potential vaccines in terms of trial progress. Two experimental vaccines developed by Sinovac Biotech and a unit of China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) are already approved for Phase III trials.

Qiu said its Phase II trials involving 508 people have yielded "much better" results than Phase I about the vaccines safety and ability to trigger immune response. He did not disclose specific evidence.



Co-Founder of CanSino Biologics Qiu Dongxu delivers a speech on the progress of company's coronavirus vaccine candidate at the China Anti-viral Drug Innovation Summit, following the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Suzhou, Ji-

He said its new factory under construction in China will allow it to produce 100-200 million doses of coronavirus vaccines per year by early 2021.

China's military, whose research unit is co-developing the vaccine candidate, approved its military use last month, while Sinopharm's two experimental shots are offered to employees at state-owned firms travelling overseas.

Zeng Guang, former chief epidemiologist at Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, told the conference that Chinese construction groups overseas in particular are keen to take experimental vaccines.

He also said discussion should start whether to launch emergency inoculation of experimental vaccines "right now."

There are no approved vaccines yet for

COVID-19, a respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus, which has killed more than half a million people globally.

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BUSINESS

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Case Growth Outpacing Testing In Coronavirus Hotspots



Photo Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios. Photos: Noam Galai, Jamie McCarthy, Joseph LAGO / AFP, Alfredo Estrella / AFP, and Narayan Maharjan/NurPhoto, all via Getty Images

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Why it matters: The U.S. doesn't yet know what it looks like when a pandemic rages on relatively unchecked after the health system has become overwhelmed. It may be about to find out.

The big picture: The number of tests completed in the United States is going up, which is a good thing. But the number of new cases is increasing faster.

The situation varies state by state, but the gap between testing and cases is generally largest in the cases with the fastest-growing coronavirus outbreaks, like Florida and Texas.

But in some places, like the District of Columbia and New York, testing has grown faster than new cases — a good indicator that these outbreaks are under control.

Even if testing *did* explain why America's official coronavirus caseload has doubled over the last month, that would be little cause for comfort; it'd only indicate that we have a worse problem than we'd thought.

But the reality is that states like Arizona, Florida and Texas are struggling to meet the demand for coronavirus tests, meaning the pandemic is already outpac-

ing those states' ability to respond to it.

Data: The COVID Tracking Project. Note: Vermont and Hawaii were not included because they have fewer than 20 cases per day. Chart: Andrew Witherspoon/Axios

Changes in select states' COVID-19 testing and new cases since June

Percent change in the 7-day average from June 1 to July 5, 2020.

More new cases than testing



More testing than new cases



The United States' alarming rise in coronavirus

Data: The COVID Tracking Project. Note: Vermont and Hawaii were not included because they have fewer than 20 cases per day. Chart: Andrew Witherspoon/Axios

At least 15 states broke their single-day novel coronavirus infection records this week, according to state health department data reviewed by Axios.

The big picture: The number of coronavirus cases increased in the vast majority of states over the last week, and decreased in only two states plus the District of Columbia, Axios' Andrew Witherspoon and Caitlin Owens report.



On Sunday, Alabama broke its daily infections record with 298 new cases.

On Monday, California recorded 9,480 new cases, and South Carolina found 1,738 new cases.

On Tuesday, Oklahoma counted 585 new infections.

On Wednesday, 2,946 new cases were found in Georgia, Arizona had over 4,800 new cases, West Virginia reported 78 confirmed and probable cases, and Montana reported 67 new infections.

On Thursday, Oregon recorded 375 new cases, Arkansas reported nearly 900 new cases, and Tennessee had 1,575 cases.

15 States Broke Single-Day Coronavirus Records Last Week

States that have reported record COVID-19 case numbers in the last week



Data: Compiled from state health departments by Axios; Map: Danielle Alberti/Axios

On Friday, North Carolina broke the record it had set on Wednesday for its highest single-day infections (1,843) with 2,099 new cases. Idaho counted 401 infections on Friday, breaking the record it set on Tuesday (365).

On Saturday, Florida reported 11,445 new infections and broke the record it had set on Thursday (10,109). Texas counted 8,258 cases, breaking its record from Wednesday (8,076).

What they're saying: "Right now, if you look at the number of cases, it's quite disturbing. We're setting records, practically every day, of new cases in the numbers that are reported. That clearly is not the right direction," NIAID director Anthony Fauci told medical journal JAMA on Thursday. (Courtesy axios.com)

Editor's Choice



With the dome of the U.S. Capitol in the background, a homeless man named Damu stretches on the National Mall in Washington. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque



A woman holds her inhaler and leans on another person after being sprayed with mace by police officers during a protest near the Minneapolis Police third precinct after a white police officer was caught on a bystander's video



Deer are seen around the grounds of Raby Castle, Britain. REUTERS/Lee Smith



NASA astronauts Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken greet their families before the launch of a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket and Crew Dragon spacecraft at the Kennedy Space Center, in Cape Canaveral, Florida. REUTERS/Joe Skipper



Demonstrators confront with riot police as they try to cross barricades on a road leading to the UNESCO Palace where Lebanon's parliament is holding a legislative session, during a protest against a controversial amnesty draft law, in Beirut



A police officer aims a gun before firing at protesters gathered near the Minneapolis Police third precinct after a white police officer was caught on a bystander's video pressing his knee into the neck of African-American man George Floyd



A coffin is standing under a plastic cover due to hygiene protection precautions, while undertaker Cassandra Yousef makes final preparations for the funeral service, in Berlin, Germany. REUTERS/Fabrizio Bensch



People wearing protective masks make their way during rush hour at Shinjuku station on the first day after the Japanese government lifted the state of emergency in Tokyo, Japan. REUTERS/Kim Kyung-Hoon

Scientific evidence shows face masks can help to control the spread of the novel coronavirus, but the nuances and changes in messaging about their use are complicating public health efforts.

Why it matters: COVID-19 cases are rising in many parts of the U.S., but politics, distrust in public health advice and science are coming to a head over face masks.

The latest: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will reportedly update its recommendations on masks again after studying whether they help to protect people from the virus.

• Early on in this pandemic, when highly protective N95 masks were in short supply, public health officials in the U.S. said the public did not need to wear masks.

• Their recommendation changed as it became clear that people without symptoms — or who aren't showing them yet — can spread the virus and that even basic cloth face coverings combined with social distance measures may slow transmission.



• **Between the lines:** The mask messaging mishap reflects a "lack of confidence in the public's ability to process nuances and act responsibly, so that rather than be transparent about the limited protection offered by masks and the risks of supply problems, officials and journalists told the public they were useless," David Wallace-Wells writes in *New York* magazine.

What's known: Wearing face masks "could result in a large reduction in risk of infection," according to a recent review of 172 studies looking at the effectiveness of masks in reducing the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and other coronaviruses.

• Mandating of masks in 15 states plus D.C. may have helped to avert at least 230,000 cases of COVID-19 by May 22, according to a study published in *Health Affairs* last week. (The study measured

Where Does The Science Stand On Face Masks Use Against Coronavirus?

the effect of the policies, not mask use directly.)

• And countries that adopted widespread mask wearing sooner had significantly lower death rates and shorter outbreaks, according to another new study.

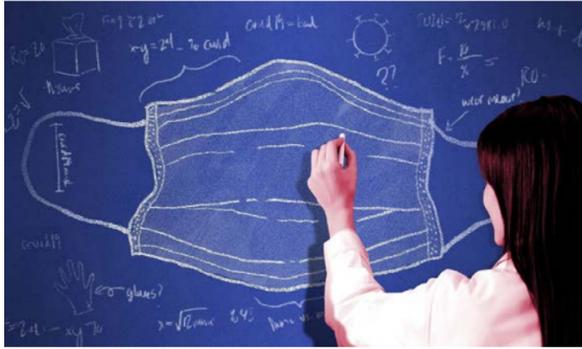
Where it stands: The WHO and the CDC recommend mask use in health care settings, if you or someone you live with is sick, and where social distancing is difficult (for example, in stores or on public transit).



• **N95:** These masks, which block 95% of small particles (0.3 microns or larger) when properly fitted, protect the person wearing it and those around them. But there are ongoing shortages of N95 masks and the CDC says they should still be reserved for health care workers. N95 masks with exhaust valves protect the wearer but should not be used around individuals who are at higher risk for COVID-19 because unfiltered is released.

• **KN95:** These masks are similar to N95 ones but are produced in China under the country's standards. The FDA shortened their list of approved KN95 manufacturers after some were found to be faulty. Unlike N95 masks, KN95 masks are not fitted and droplets may be released from the sides.

• **Surgical masks:** They're meant to stop large droplets of saliva coming from the person wearing the mask but about 75% of droplets may be blocked from entering, too.



(Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



• **Cloth masks:** The many configurations of cloth masks may block 30–60% of particles, according to the same preprint study that assessed surgical masks. (The authors found adding a layer of nylon stocking increased the efficiency by 15–50%.)

• **The WHO recommends** a mask with three layers — an absorbent cotton inside, a filter and a nonabsorbent outer layer.

"Cloth masks protect everyone around you, first and foremost," says Werner Bischoff, a professor of infectious diseases at Wake Forest University School of Medicine.

"They can filter out some of the viruses you breathe but that is not what they are there for.

The epidemiology of how SARS-CoV-2 spreads inside a community points more to the virus being transmitted by large droplets that don't travel far, says Bischoff. "Those large droplets get caught in material very easily."

• **Yes, but:** The virus can be detected more than 6 feet away from someone who is infected, and there is some evidence it is still viable and infectious. But it is unclear how much of the virus someone has to be exposed

to — and for how long — to be infected.

"In an ideal world, N95 masks should be what everyone is having, for when they are exposing other people and for when they are exposed to other people, so this way you will prevent both infecting others and being infected," says

Sangwei Lu, an adjunct professor of infectious diseases and vaccinology at University of California, Berkeley's School of Public Health.

• But Lu says she encourages people to wear whatever masks they can find.

• Even if wearing a cloth mask reduces transmission by 10%, that percentage of 2 million cases ends up being a large number, Lu points out.



The big picture: Masks aren't the pandemic silver bullet. Social distancing and shutdown policies are also key. By one estimate, such policies prevented or delayed about 530 million infections across China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, France and the U.S.

• A study published last week in *PNAS* that claimed masks alone — not social distancing and other measures — are the most effective way to reduce the virus transmission is facing calls to be retracted.

The bottom line: The changes in mask recommendations have fueled distrust in public health experts as evidence grows of their effectiveness in fighting the coronavirus.

• "The most potent weapons in the public arsenal against the pandemic all require buy-in from the public, and this muddled and erratic messaging has already undermined the trust on which such buy-in is transacted," Wallace-Wells writes. (Courtesy axios.com)



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