

WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

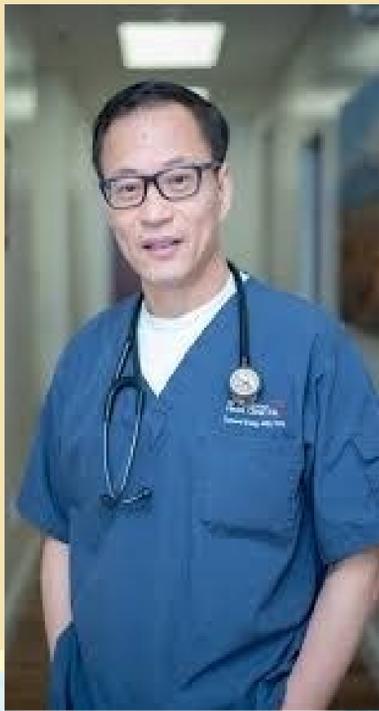
07/30/2020

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

Dr. Feng's Advice

In a meeting last weekend with Asian-American leaders, Dr. Fauci praised Asian-American medical doctors' contributions to our medical service, especially in this coronavirus pandemic time. Many of them risk their lives every day trying to save the lives of others.

Dr. Jian Wei Feng, a cardiovascular disease specialist from Houston Memorial Herman Hospital, is one of them. Dr. Feng is not only an



outstanding medical physician, his warm heart and kindness make him an Asian community leader who leads a lot of local organizations.

In the past few years, at almost all the community events we sponsored, Dr. Feng was always the one who gave us his full support.

When Dr. Feng was invited to our STV talk show, again he gave our audiences very practical and very useful advice for this difficult pandemic time.

He said that physically we need to do more exercise, eat healthy, get some sunshine and get enough sleep. He also suggested that we drink ginger, garlic and red carrots juice daily.

Psychologically we need to stay relaxed and not worry too much about the virus and don't watch too much negative news. Dr. Feng believes that America has the very top medical resources, especially in Houston, Texas. We have the largest medical center in the world here and we are able to handle all medical emergency cases.

A lot of Asian families have encouraged their kids to work in the medical field. But they still all worry about their safety, but their sacrifice and contributions are always highly appreciated by our community. Dr. Feng is one great model for us all.



We firmly believe that the worst will be over after all this tragic time.

Dr. Feng, we will be united again to celebrate your great work.

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Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Stay Home!

BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

World Coronavirus Updates 07/31/20

Confirmed cases of COVID-19

As of July 27, 11pm EDT

Confirmed cases 16,481,230
 +228,689 from yesterday

Deaths 654,052
 +5,415

Recoveries 9,572,619
 +175,114



Top countries by confirmed case count

1. U.S.	4.29m	6. Mexico	395k	11. Pakistan	274k
2. Brazil	2.44m	7. Peru	389k	12. Spain	272k
3. India	1.48m	8. Chile	347k	13. Saudi Arabia	268k
4. Russia	816k	9. U.K.	301k	14. Colombia	257k
5. South Africa	452k	10. Iran	293k	15. Italy	246k

Data: The Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins; Map: Axios Visuals

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

- Global:** Total confirmed cases as of 11:30 a.m. ET: 16,783,622 — Total deaths: 661,349 — Total recoveries — 9,799,417 .
- U.S.:** Total confirmed cases as of 11:30 a.m. ET: 4,363,511 — Total deaths: 149,407 — Total recoveries: 1,355,363 — Total tested: 52,985,577 .
- Politics:** GOP Rep. Louis Gohmert, who has pushed against masks, tests positive.
- Education:** Parents and teachers stressed over back-to-school plans — Reopening schools is a lose-lose dilemma for many families of color.
- Business:** PPP may have only saved about 13.6 million jobs, not 51 million. Italy extended its state of emergency declared over the coronavirus outbreak until October 15, per Reuters, as the WHO warned Tuesday that the world is still in the "first wave" of the pandemic.



Illustration: Annelise Capossela/Axios
The big picture: The declaration gives authorities more powers to respond to flare-ups by declaring "red zone" and boost hospital resources across Italy, an early European epicenter that's seen COVID-19 cases numbers plunge, Reuters notes. U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson and a German infectious diseases chief both said Tuesday that they've seen possible signs of a second wave in some European countries, NPR reports. • The World Health Organization's Margaret Harris said at a briefing in Geneva that people were still thinking of COVID-19 as seasonal, but this new vi-

rus "is behaving differently." "Summer is a problem," she said. "This virus likes all weather."

By the numbers: More than 659,000 people have died from the virus worldwide, per Johns Hopkins data. Almost 16.7 million have tested positive for the virus and over 9.7 million have recovered globally. • Brazil has the world's second-highest number of deaths from COVID-19 (over 88,500) and infections (more than 2.4 million) after the U.S., which has reported more than 149,200 deaths and over 4.3



million cases. **What's happening:** Belgium is increasing social distancing requirements due to a recent infection spike and Spain has closed gyms in Barcelona, the Washington Post reports.

• **The Brazilian Union Network** UNISAúde filed a lawsuit to the International Criminal Court Monday to accuse President Jair Bolsonaro of committing a crime against humanity in his response to the coronavirus pandemic.

• **WHO:** Covid-19 is "easily the most severe" global health emergency the World Health Organization has seen in its 72 years of operation, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a press briefing Monday. **India** announced Monday 49,931 new novel coronavirus cases in 24 hours — its highest single-day spike. Over 1.4 million million people have tested positive for COVID-19 and there are more than 485,000 active cases in India, according to the government. (Courtesy axios.com)

Related
Midwest Could See Surge In COVID-19 Cases Unless States

Are More Careful, Fauci Warns



Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, prepares to testify before a Senate panel in June. Coronavirus cases could be on the rise in the Midwest, Fauci said Tuesday. (K. Dietsch/AP)

The Midwest could be the next area to see a big surge in coronavirus cases, the top U.S. infectious disease specialist warned Tuesday. But there's still time to stop the upswing, he said, if states follow the national guidelines on reopening safely. While the Southern United States has been seeing the fastest rise in cases, that now appears to be on the downswing, Fauci told George Stephanopoulos on ABC's Good Morning America. Fauci's concern is that states including Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky are showing signs of impending danger. Based on the number of positive coronavirus tests in those states, they "are starting to have that very early indication" of a surge, he said. "That's a surefire sign that you've got to be really careful."

Farther south, Fauci noted, Tennessee is also at risk. The state is seeing one of the fastest per-capita increases in COVID-19 cases, with an average of 2,391 cases per day — up about 26% from the average two weeks ago. The numbers in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky aren't as dire, but that could quickly change, Fauci warned.



Fauci reiterated the health suggestions

he's been making for months, including the importance of hand-washing, wearing masks and keeping social distance. He also said states should continue to follow the guidelines laid out by the federal government in the spring, in which states open up the economy in stages, only after infections are down and show no signs of rebound.

If states follow that national strategy, "I think we can prevent the surges we've seen in other states," Fauci said. "Because we just can't afford, yet again, another surge."

On Monday, Tennessee's Republican Gov. Bill Lee said he wouldn't close bars or limit indoor dining options, despite a warning from White House coronavirus response coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx that Tennessee could be on the brink of a major uptick in new cases. "Tennessee is at that inflection point," Birx said Monday at a press conference with Lee. "The virus is there. You may not see it today because it may still be in young people. But it's spreading." Lee said he appreciated a recommendation by Birx to close bars and public dining but said the state wouldn't be following it. "We are not going to close the economy back down," he said.

But sticking to the national guidelines works, Fauci said.

"Some states are not doing that," he said. "We would hope that they all now rethink what happens when you don't adhere to that. We've seen it in plain sight in the Southern states that surged. So we've got to get back to a very prudent advance from one stage to another."

Fauci also responded to recent retweets by the president of claims accusing him of misleading the public.



"I don't know how to address that," Fauci said. "I'm just going to certainly continue doing my job. I don't tweet. I don't even read them. So I don't really want to go there. This is what I do."

Fauci added. "This is what I've been trained for my entire professional life, and I'll continue to do it. I have not been misleading the American public under any circumstances." (Courtesy npr.org)

Editor's Choice



A protester standing on barriers near the fence is shot with pepper balls by federal law enforcement officers during a demonstration against police violence and racial inequality in Portland, Oregon, July 29. REUTERS/Caitlin Ochs



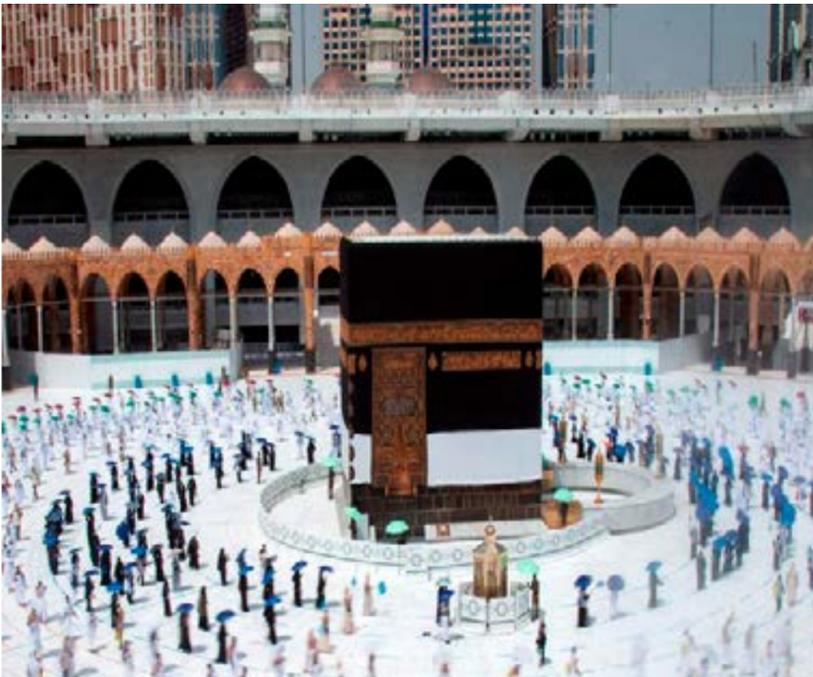
Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg speaks via video conference during a hearing of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial and Administrative Law on "Online Platforms and Market Power", in the Rayburn House office Building



Boys from the Muhamasheen (marginalized) community hold weapons as they attend a pro-Houthi gathering at their neighborhood in Sanaa, Yemen 15. REUTERS/Khaled Abdullah



Dr. Joseph Varon, 58, the chief medical officer at United Memorial Medical Center, hugs Christina Mathers, 43, a nurse from his team who became infected with COVID-19, at United Memorial Medical Center (UMMC), during the coronavirus disease...



Muslim pilgrims maintain social distancing as they circle the Kaaba at the Grand mosque during the annual Hajj pilgrimage amid the coronavirus pandemic, in the holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia July 29. Saudi Ministry of Media/Handout via REUTERS



Michael Collins, Representative Lewis's long time chief of staff, and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi embrace after the casket with the remains of Rep. John Lewis was carried from the U.S. Capitol building, in Washington, July 29. Brenda



Visitors walk inside a crop circle in a wheat field near Pahl am Ammersee, Germany, July 29. REUTERS/Ayhan Uyanik



A customer washes his hair amid the coronavirus pandemic at public bathhouse "Daikoku-yu" in Tokyo, Japan July 1. REUTERS/Kim Kyung-Hoon

Trump Signs Executive Orders Aimed At Lowering Prescription Drug Costs



Americans have waited decades for Washington to keep its promise to fix soaring prescription drug prices. Now, thanks to President Trump, that long wait is over.

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

(Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday signed four sweeping executive orders designed to significantly lower drug costs for consumers, while increasing access to life-saving medications such as insulin. The orders, which range from relaxing drug importation rules to cutting Medicare payments to drugmakers, are far reaching but experts say they are unlikely to take effect in the near term and in some cases lack specifics. The executive orders have for the most part been proposed by the Trump administration in various forms in the past, but stalled amid industry pushback.

The first order directs federally qualified health centers to pass along massive discounts on insulin and epinephrine from drug companies to low-income Americans. The second order will allow the safe, legal importation of prescription drugs from Canada and other countries where the price for identical drugs is lower. The third order will prohibit secret deals between drug manufacturers and pharmacy "benefit manager" middlemen, ensuring patients directly benefit from available discounts at the pharmacy counter.



The fourth order ensures the United

States pays the lowest price available among economically advanced countries for Medicare Part B drugs. The United States often pays 80 percent more for these drugs than other developed nations.

"The four orders that I'm signing today will completely restructure the prescription drug market, in terms of pricing and everything else, to make these medications affordable and accessible for all Americans," President Trump said.

PASSING ON REBATES TO PATIENTS

Trump signed an executive order requiring that the pharmaceutical benefits managers (PBMs) that negotiate on behalf of government health plans pass the discounts they receive directly to consumers. The rule applies to Medicare Part D, a government health plan primarily for seniors. It would reverse the longstanding practice of PBMs passing a portion of savings back to the health plan itself and pocketing the remainder as profit. The administration said the order could reduce drug costs to seniors by as much as \$30 billion per year. But industry analysts say it will be difficult to implement without falling afoul of the orders' commitment to keep Medicare premiums flat.



DRUG IMPORTATION This executive

order instructs the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to permit individuals to import lower cost drugs from abroad. It also allows for re-importation of insulin and orders HHS to complete an ongoing effort begun in 2019 to let U.S. states import drugs from Canada. Industry analysts have been skeptical that importation will greatly reduce drug prices, in part because there is a limited supply of drugs in foreign markets that can be diverted to the United States.

DISCOUNTS ON INSULIN Trump ordered certain healthcare providers to sell insulin and injectable epinephrine at greatly reduced prices to patients who have no health insurance or scant coverage. Insulin and epinephrine are life-saving drugs for people with diabetes and severe allergies, respectively. More than 30 million Americans have diabetes. The average price of insulin in the United States nearly tripled between 2002 and 2013, according to the American diabetes association. Reuters previously reported that the cost of insulin in the United States per vial was \$320, while in Canada the same medication under a different name was \$30.



MOST FAVORED NATION RULE This rule, if implemented, would require Medicare to tie the prices it pays for drugs to those paid by other countries. Specifically, it would only pay a price for a drug that matches the lowest price paid among foreign governments. Medicare is currently prohibited from negotiating the prices it pays to drugmakers. The order, which has been discussed as a possibility by the administration for more than a year, could potentially slash Medicare payments by billions of dollars. However, Trump has delayed implementation of this proposed rule until late August to give drugmakers a chance to propose an alternative solution. If it is implemented, the rule would likely face legal challenges from drugmakers.

There could also be challenges in determining what price other countries pay, given that many negotiations between governments and drugmakers are kept confidential. In 2018, prescription drugs saw their largest annual price decrease in more than half a century. Average basic premiums for Medicare Part D prescription drug plans have fallen by 13.5 percent since 2017, saving beneficiaries \$1.9 billion in premium costs. Friday's four executive orders build on this crucial progress.



The Trump administration first released a proposal to import inexpensive drugs in July 2019. The proposal, the Safe Importation Action Plan, called for rulemaking to authorize state, wholesaler, or pharmacy plans to try to set up drug importation programs that abide by Food and Drug Administration safety standards. The FDA would also work with manufacturers to assure that drugs sold to foreign countries abide by FDA regulations to be sold in the United States. The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, a powerful drug lobbying group, has opposed drug importation, citing potential health risks to American consumers. The Canadian government has also rejected importation proposals, saying importation would deplete the country's own supply of prescription drugs. Trump also revived a 2019 rule that never came to fruition after pushback from pharmacy benefit managers, which negotiate drug prices with insurers. The proposed rule would require PBMs in Medicare Part D to pass discounts negotiated with insurers directly to the patients using those drugs, allowing Medicare beneficiaries to save money on medications. Trump said Friday that his new executive order would cut out the "middlemen" and "middlewomen" and directed Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar to "complete the rule-making process he commenced."

Just as they did in 2019, pharmacy benefit managers are expected to retaliate. The PBM sector has planned an ad campaign to oppose any effort to eliminate rebates and play it as a political mistake that could raise drug costs for the elderly in swing states ahead of the November election, *Politico* reported.



"The middlemen are making a fortune, and pharmacy benefit managers and people are just bilking Medicare patients with these high drug prices while they pocket gigantic discounts, gigantic discounts," he said. The president will also implement a mandate that pharmaceutical companies sell prescription drugs in the U.S. at the same prices as in other countries, called the international drug-pricing index or the "favored nations clause." Trump has long decried what he calls a "global freeloading" system in which drug companies are able to offer their products at a lower cost to other countries by charging the U.S. more. He first proposed the initiative in July 2019. "It also means that the U.S. taxpayers are effectively subsidizing the socialist healthcare systems of foreign welfare states and many other countries," Trump said. "We will end that abuse and restore the principles of free enterprise. ... This has to do with common sense and courage, to be honest."

Trump said he'll be meeting with executives from the pharmaceutical industry Tuesday to discuss ways to lower drug prices and out-of-pocket expenses. He added that if the talks are "successful," the fourth executive order could be scrapped. (Courtesy <https://www.whitehouse.gov/> and <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/>)

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