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Mr. Lee's Commentary and Dairy



Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

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## U.S. faces half a million COVID-19 deaths by end-February, study finds



FILE PHOTO: People wearing protective masks queue to enter a polling site at the Milwaukee Public Library's Washington Park location in Milwaukee, on the first day of in-person voting in Wisconsin, U.S., October 20, 2020. REUTERS/Bing Guan

LONDON (Reuters) - More than a half million people in the United States could die from COVID-19 by the end of February, but around 130,000 of those lives could be saved if everybody were to wear masks, according to estimates from a modelling study on Friday.

The estimates by researchers at the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation showed that with few effective COVID-19 treatment options and no vaccines yet available, the United States faces "a continued COVID-19 public health challenge through the winter."

"We are heading into a very substantial fall/winter surge," said IHME Director Chris Murray, who co-led the research.

He said the projections, as well as currently rising infection rates and deaths, showed there is no basis to "the idea that the pandemic is going away," adding: "We do not believe that is true."

President Donald Trump said in Thursday's election debate of the pandemic: "It's going away." The Friday update was the first time the IHME has projected deaths beyond Feb. 1. Its current forecast on its website is for 386,000 deaths as of Feb 1.

Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 221,000 Americans so far, has become

the top issue for him and Democratic candidate Joe Biden in the Nov. 3 election. Polls have shown that Americans trust Biden more than Trump to handle the crisis.

The IHME study forecast that large, populous states such as California, Texas and Florida will likely face particularly high levels of illness, deaths and demands on hospital resources.

"We expect the surge to steadily grow across different states and at the national level, and to continue to increase as we head towards high levels of daily deaths in late December and in January," Murray said

The modelling study, which mapped out various scenarios and their projected impact on the spread of the COVID-19 epidem-

ic in the United States, found that universal mask-wearing could have a major impact on death rates, potentially saving 130,000 lives.

Current mask use in the United States varies widely. While some states, like New York, set strict rules on when to wear masks, others have no requirements. The issue has become political, in which some supporters have taken their cues from

Trump, who is often seen without a mask and has repeatedly questioned their usefulness.

"Expanding mask use is one of the easy wins for the United States ... and can save many lives," Murray said.

He added that, just as parts of Europe and some local U.S. areas of high transmission are doing now, many U.S. states would need to re-introduce social distancing measures to curb the winter surge.



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# WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

10/23/2020

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

## Whole World Watched The Final Presidential Debate

Only eleven days to go. President Trump and challenger Joe Biden took the stage tonight at the final presidential debate. Topics included, "Fighting COVID-19," "the American family," "climate control," "national security" and "leadership."

Both candidates attacked each other on racial justice and immigration.

Biden accused Trump of pouring fuel on every single racist fire – every single one. Trump said that, "with the exception of Abraham Lincoln, nobody has done what I've done for black Americans."

Biden noted that the Obama administration had commuted over 1,000 sentences -- more commutation than



any president before him.

Trump accused former Vice President Joe Biden of allowing murderers and rapists to come into the country and released them into the population. He argued that it's ridiculous to expect migrants to return to court for deportation proceedings.

On the Paris Accord climate issue, Trump said, "I took us out because we were going to have to spend a trillion dollars and we were treated very unfairly."

Joe Biden said he will rejoin the Paris Climate agreement if he's elected President.

On the immigration policy, the cages in question are enclosures where migrant children have been held. Trump said the cages were built by the Obama administration, but the difference was that the Obama administration detained apprehended immigrant children with their parents, while the Trump administration separated children from their parents.

On the coronavirus pandemic, Biden attacked Trump on a comment he made over disinfectants and the coronavirus. "What did the president say? He said,



don't worry it's going to go away and be gone by Easter. Don't worry. Maybe inject bleach."

Trump replied that he was only kidding on that.

Trump tried to raise an allegation made against Joe Biden's son saying that he received \$3.5 million dollars from a Russian businesswoman.

Generally speaking, tonight's debate was peaceful. Both sides controlled their time and manner.

Today, most Americans are still seriously concerned about the economy and the pandemic.

Who can solve the problems and lead the country and the world? We just need to wait eleven more days.

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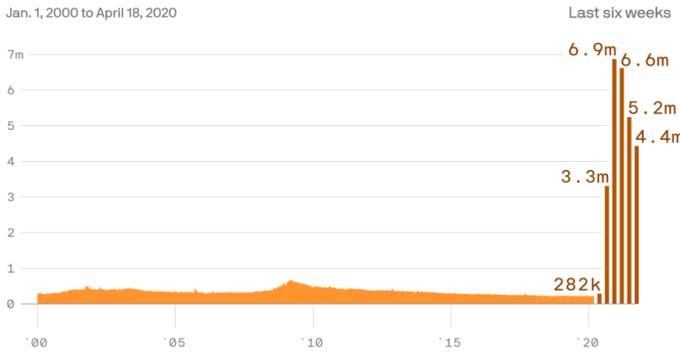
# BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

## Another 4.4 Million Filed For Unemployment Last Week Amid Coronavirus Crisis

Weekly U.S. jobless claims

Jan. 1, 2000 to April 18, 2020



Data: U.S. Employment and Training Administration via FRED; Chart: Andrew Witherspoon/Axios

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

Another 4.4 million Americans filed for unemployment last week, according to Labor Department data released Thursday.

**Why it matters:** While the pace of layoffs is easing, more than 26 million Americans have filed jobless claims in recent weeks as the coronavirus pandemic takes a never-before-seen toll on the job market.

**Between the lines:** The labor market wreck is likely worse than the government's figures suggest.

• Unemployment offices across the country have been overwhelmed by the deluge of filings and processing has been delayed. Additionally, they're racing to catch up to the adjusted requirements for unemployment laid out in the federal coronavirus stimulus.

• California, Florida, Texas and Georgia saw the biggest surge in new unemployment claims.

**The bottom line:** The official unemployment rate for April won't be released until next month, but economists predict the figure could rival that seen during the Great Depression.

**Related**

**High Unemployment Could**

### Be With Us For A While

Unemployment is likely to hit levels not seen since the Great Depression and remain elevated, economists warn, weakening the U.S. economy and making a V-shaped recovery increasingly doubtful.

**Why it matters:** That will be true even if states allow businesses to reopen sooner than expected, as surveys show most Americans aren't ready to go back to their normal routines.



**Illustration: Eniola Odetunde/Axios**

**The big picture:** Many are looking to China's return from its coronavirus outbreak as a model, but the U.S. economy is "a different ball of wax," S&P Global chief U.S. economist Beth Ann Bovino tells Axios.

• The U.S. is a democracy and far more reliant on the services sector, which pro-

vides 80% of American jobs.

• "China was locked down for a month and it was specific to one region, whereas [in] the U.S., we're approaching two months and 90% of the population is under lockdown," she adds.

• "That's a big difference in terms of the impact on the labor market."

**Driving the news:** Analysts expect today's initial jobless claims report to show another 4.5 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week, taking the total number of filings to more than 26 million in just the past five weeks.

**Between the lines:** While unprecedented government spending has helped boost sentiment on both Wall Street and Main Street, it is unlikely to accomplish its goal of keeping most workers tied to their employers, Bovino says.

**By the numbers:** The Small Business Administration recorded 30.2 million small businesses in the U.S. as of 2018. So, even with the expected Paycheck Protection Program funding of \$322 billion being added to the initial \$350 billion tranche, that would equal only around \$22,250 per firm.



• "That might help some mom and pop stores that only have one part-time worker, but it's not going to help those companies that have many more," Bovino says.

• "I just don't see the incentive for businesses to hold onto workers. And that's why we're seeing all these businesses shed jobs."

So, of the roughly 60 million Americans employed by a small businesses, only one-third work at companies with 20 employees or less, SBA data show.

• And PPP loans are only forgiven if 75% of funds are used to cover employee salaries.

• That leaves little for rent, utilities, supplies and other costs incurred by business

owners, who are seeing significantly decreased or zero revenue.

**Where it stands:** Ratings agency Fitch said Wednesday it expects global GDP to decline by 3.9% this year, "twice as large as the decline" it predicted just weeks ago and "twice as severe as the 2009 recession."

• Bovino and S&P Global senior U.S. economist Satyam Panday expect U.S. GDP will shrink by 5.2% this year — about four times their March forecast of a 1.3% contraction — and unemployment will hit 19%.

• "The current recession has likely reduced economic activity by 11.8% peak to trough, which is roughly three times the decline seen during the Great Recession in one-third of the time," they wrote in a recent note to clients.



### Global Unemployment

Global unemployment has been roughly stable for the last nine years but slowing global economic growth means that, as the global labor force increases, not enough new jobs are being generated to absorb new entrants to the labor market.

**UN Report: The number of people unemployed around the world stands at some 188 million. In addition, 165 million people do not have enough paid work, and 120 million have either given up actively searching for work or otherwise lack access to the labour market. In total, more than 470 million people worldwide are affected**

Global unemployment is projected to increase by around 2.5 million in 2020 and almost half a billion people are working fewer paid hours than they would like or lack adequate access to paid work, according to UN's International Labour Organi-

zation report.

The World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020 (WESO) report, released last Monday, states that global unemployment has been roughly stable for the last nine years but slowing global economic growth means that, as the global labor force increases, not enough new jobs are being generated to absorb new entrants to the labor market.



The International Labor Organization (ILO) forecasts that unemployment will rise by about 2.5 million this year. The ILO is a UN agency whose mandate. The number of people unemployed around the world now stands at about 188 million.

"For millions of ordinary people, it's increasingly difficult to build better lives through work," ILO Director-General Guy Ryder said. (Courtesy <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/>)

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# Editor's Choice



A man carries geese on top of his car as he drives on a highway that leads to the city of Ganja, Azerbaijan. REUTERS/Umit Bektaş



A boy gets food donation from a volunteer at a flooded area in Quang Binh province, Vietnam. Thanh Dat/VNA via REUTERS



Thailand's Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana takes pictures after a religious ceremony to commemorate the death of King Chulalongkorn, known as King Rama V, at The Grand Palace in Bangkok, Thailand. REUTERS/Athit Perawongmetha



Police block a street near the house of Law and Justice leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski during a protest against imposing further restrictions on abortion law in Warsaw, Poland. Jędrzej Nowicki/Agencja Gazeta



Belgian healthcare workers, nurses and doctors release balloons at the end of a flash mob to protest against the Belgian authorities' management of the coronavirus crisis, at the CHIREC St Anne-St Remi Clinic in Brussels. REUTERS/Yves Herman



President Trump speaks during the final 2020 U.S. presidential campaign debate with Joe Biden at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst



The Soyuz MS-16 capsule, carrying the International Space Station crew members Christopher Cassidy of NASA, Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner of the Russian space agency Roscosmos, descends beneath a parachute just before landing in a remote area.



Golfer John Daly and musician Lee Greenwood look on ahead of the final 2020 presidential campaign debate between President Trump and Joe Biden at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst

Covid & Cholesterol: Statins May Reduce Coronavirus Severity And Help Patients Recover Faster



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

SAN DIEGO — Statins, a common cholesterol-lowering medication, appear to be linked to a lower risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms and faster recovery time in general.

used records from 5,281 COVID-negative patients as a control. For patients with COVID, the data encompasses the severity of their symptoms, how long they were hospitalized, the ultimate outcome of their hospital stay, any use of statins, and the use of any ACE or ARB inhibitors within the 30 days prior to being admitted.



Among COVID-positive subjects, 27% were taking statins when they were admitted. Another 21% were on an ACE inhibitor and 12% were on an ARB. Incredibly, the study shows that use of a statin before coming to the hospital is linked to more than a 50% drop in one's risk of experiencing severe COVID-19 symptoms.

"I tell my patients who are on statins, ACE inhibitors or other ARBs to keep taking them," she adds. "Fears of COVID-19 should not be a reason to stop, if anything our research findings should be incentive to continue with their medication."

How cholesterol plays a role in COVID infections

In a related study, researchers explain that by removing cholesterol from cell membranes, statins essentially block SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, from entering. Co-author Tariq Rana, PhD, professor and chief of the Division of Genetics in the Department of Pediatrics at UC San Diego School of Medicine and Moores Cancer Center, says he wasn't focusing on statins at all initially.



"The difference between untreated cells and those treated with 25HC was like day and night," Rana explains. These findings, published in The EMBO Journal, strongly suggest that SARS-CoV-2 needs some cholesterol, in addition to the ACE2 receptor, to bond with a host cell.

a boost, with statins or by other means, to better resist some viruses," Rana says. "It's not unlike cancer immunotherapy — the idea that sometimes instead of attacking a tumor directly, it's better to arm a patient's immune system to do a better job of clearing away tumors on its own."

Related Statin Usage is Linked to a Lower Death Rate in Hospitalized COVID-19 Patients

By Dr. Hongliang Li and corresponding author, Dr. Yibin Wang A new study led by Chinese researchers in collaboration with UCLA's Dr. Yibin Wang, PhD, has shown that people hospitalized with COVID-19 who took statin drugs were less likely to die and less likely to need mechanical ventilation than those who did not take the cholesterol-lowering drugs.



Wang, professor in the Division of Molecular Medicine in the Departments of Anesthesiology, Medicine and Physiology, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, says this is the first time a link has been observed between statin use and COVID-19 mortality based on a large-scale retrospective group analysis.

BACKGROUND The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected the lives of millions of people. To date, there is no vaccine or specific drug to prevent or treat severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection, which causes COVID-19.



Widely used statin drugs.

Earlier this year, the same group of researchers reported that people with COVID-19 taking ACE inhibitors and ARBs were at a lower risk of mortality than those not treated. Despite this, there were some concerns about the benefits of these drugs in COVID-19 patients because animal studies had shown that statins, ACE inhibitors and ARBs increase the expression of angiotensin-converting enzyme II (ACE2), the receptor that SARS-CoV-2 uses to infect host cells.

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