

Coronavirus Situation Report: America Braces for a New Week of Uncharted Waters

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Sunday, March 22, 2020's editorial will forgo normal reporting and instead be a situation report.

The coronavirus outbreak has dominated another week of the planet's news cycle. Several outcomes, beyond the health aspect (which is concerning enough), are beginning to flash warning signals. Many people have expressed a feeling of information overload. We've attempted a succinct overview of key points about coronavirus, and ask questions which may be yet unanswerable but need asking.

COMMUNITY

Italy, [France](#), and [Morocco](#) now all require citizens fill out forms stating the purpose for leaving their homes or being out in public. The military in both Morocco and [Italy](#) have been called to enforce their respective lockdowns.

President Trump has continually denied the need to announce a country-wide shutdown (popularly called 'stay-at-home' orders) at the federal level. In his absence, several states acted on their own in rapid succession at the end of last week. California, New York, Illinois and New Jersey all announced versions of 'stay-at-home,' 'shelter-in-place,' and 'self-quarantine' orders prompting some to ask if the moves were

tantamount to [medical martial law](#).

At the time of this writing [Saturday, 3/21/20, 5pm EST], roughly 80 million Americans are under mandatory self-quarantine, and nearly [1 billion people across the globe](#). New York imposed its statewide orders after rapidly rising coronavirus cases. California activated its shutdown after astonishing claims by its governor that 25 million of its residents risk infection despite only 256K cases worldwide at the time.

According to [Johns Hopkins virus tracking system](#), Florida, Michigan, Washington, Louisiana and Georgia are all reporting over 500 cases. From past orders out of New Jersey, Illinois, New York and California, the 'over 500 states' appear to be the next candidates in line for statewide mandatory 'stay-at-home' orders moving into this week.

MEDICAL

Last week President Trump and his task force announced that after much delay, public-private partnerships with LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics were struck to provide rapid production of testing kits. The White House task force blamed the inheritance of "an obsolete and broken [testing] system," for the delays. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that it fast-tracked a testing kit under emergency use authorization from Roche, which reportedly began shipping 400,000 last week.

Saturday, Vice President Mike Pence stated more than 195,000 Americans have been tested, and 19,343 were positive. The task force's talking point has been that if you don't have symptoms, don't get tested.

In a race to repurpose drugs as the first line defense against the reported virus, one of the oldest and best-known anti-malarial drugs [Chloroquine](#) and separately Remdesivir were discussed by Trump and his task force during a press

conference. FDA Commissioner Stephan Hahn mentioned the agency was also looking at [convalescent plasma therapy](#).

The day after Trump said chloroquine had shown “very encouraging early results” treating the virus, and would be rolled out to patients “[almost immediately](#),” director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr. Anthony Fauci [rebuked him](#), calling it “anecdotal evidence.”

[Studies](#) have shown that Chloroquine acts as a zinc ionophore. That means Chloroquine drives zinc into cells (among other biological effects). The result of those higher intracellular zinc concentrations inhibit functions essential for the virus to transition to different phases of its life cycles.

Meanwhile, Korean physicians treating coronavirus patients established treatment protocols last week. [KoreaBioMed.com](#) reports:

“The key guidelines are as follows: Healthy patients with no existing disease do not need an administration of an antiviral drug, and, once physicians decide on the use of antiviral treatment, they should do so as quickly as possible.”

For the antiviral treatment, the Korean doctors recommended lopinavir 400mg/ritonavir 100mg (Kaletra two tablets, twice a day) or chloroquine 500mg orally per day.

President Trump announced at [Saturday’s press conference](#) that New York was getting 10,000 units of Chloroquine.

ECONOMIC

President Trump has moved the date for filing taxes for citizens to July 15.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that foreclosures and eviction proceedings are suspended for the next 60 days.

The Department of Education is waiving interest on federally-held student loans as well as suspending payments for at least 60 days.

[A new Senate bill](#) proposes the government send \$1200 to individuals and \$2,400 to couples.

Trump said during Saturday's press conference that a [\\$2 trillion relief plan](#) will likely go before the Senate and House of Representatives on Monday. The package would be dramatically higher than the 2008 economic rescue plan that was designed to address the banking-based financial crisis.

Will all of these efforts be enough?

The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board recently warned [in their article](#) titled *Rethinking the Coronavirus Shutdown—No society can safeguard public health for long at the cost of its economic health:*

"...the costs of this national shutdown are growing by the hour, and we don't mean federal spending. We mean a tsunami of economic destruction that will cause tens of millions to lose their jobs as commerce and production simply cease. Many large companies can withstand a few weeks without revenue but that isn't true of millions of small and mid-sized firms."

New U.S. economic data appears to support WSJ's claims. Jobless claims [surged 70,000 to 281,000](#) last week, the highest level in 2.5 years.

On the monetary front, The New York Federal Reserve Bank is offering \$1 trillion of loans per day through the end of March for large banks. That is in addition to \$1 trillion in 14-day loans it is offering every week. Wall Street analysts say the huge number is intended to calm markets.

The Fed is also buying Treasury bonds at a furious pace, and will soon run through the \$500 billion in purchases it

announced last week. It is also accelerating its purchases of mortgage-backed securities.

All of this is uncharted territory.

Will this week bring more announcements of statewide shutdowns and stay-at-home orders? How long can America sustain statewide shutdowns without clear ending dates before unfixable damage is done to the economy?

And, perhaps biggest of all: Assuming vaccine trials are claimed to be 'safe and effective,' will the federal government demand the vaccine necessary for all citizens?