



Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for June 29, 2020

Health secretary: 'Window is closing' to stop coronavirus as US cases pass 2.5 million

(The Guardian) US health secretary Alex Azar has warned that "the window is closing" on the country's chance to take action to effectively curb the coronavirus, as the number of confirmed cases surpassed 2.5m.

The Health and Human Services secretary pointed to a recent surge in infections, particularly in the south and said people have "to act responsibly" by social distancing and wearing face masks especially "in these hot zones".

For a third consecutive day on Saturday, the [number of confirmed US cases rose](#) by more than 40,000. In Arizona, cases have risen by 267% so far in June and jumped by a record 3,857 cases on Sunday, the eighth record-breaking increase this month. Overall, US deaths from Covid-19 have passed 125,000 with more than 2.5m confirmed cases, according to compiled by Johns Hopkins University, far more than any other country in the world.

The fresh surge in Covid-19 cases has been most pronounced in a handful of southern and western states that reopened earlier and more aggressively, with the support of the [Trump administration](#), despite warnings by health officials to wait to see a steady decline in cases. Texas and Florida were among the states that reversed course on parts of their reopening plans last week as cases continue to increase.

Azar argued that the US is in a better position than two months ago in fighting the virus because it is conducting more testing and has therapeutics available to treat Covid-19. But he acknowledged that hospitalizations and deaths could increase in the next few weeks, because it is a lagging indicator.

Full story: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/28/us-health-secretary-window-closing-stop-coronavirus-cases-pass-25m>

KY COVID-19 Numbers as of 4 PM June 28th 67 new cases; Total: 15,232 4 new deaths; Total 558

Press release: <https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prld=235>

KDPH Daily Summary: <https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/covid19/COVID19DailyReport.pdf>

Texas Medical Center hospitals hit 100% base ICU capacity. Then they stopped reporting data.

Learn more: <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Houston-hospitals-hit-100-base-ICU-capacity-15372256.php>

'Mask Exempt' Cards Are Going Viral. The DOJ Says They're Fake

(TIME) Recently, "face mask exempt" cards have appeared on social media, claiming the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has cleared certain individuals from wearing protective face coverings to stem the spread of COVID-19. This week, the DOJ [declared](#) that it has not issued and does not endorse any such identification.

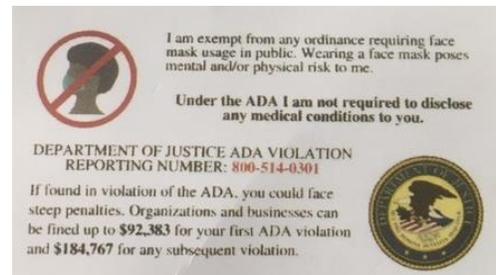
"The Department of Justice has been made aware of postings or flyers on the internet regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the use of face masks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of which include the Department of Justice's seal," The DOJ [said in a statement](#). "These postings were not issued by the Department and are not endorsed by the Department." "The Department urges the public not to rely on the information contained in these

postings and to visit ADA.gov for ADA information issued by the Department," the statement continued. [\[https://www.ada.gov/covid-19_flyer_alert.html\]](https://www.ada.gov/covid-19_flyer_alert.html)

Several of the cards appear to have been created by a group called the Freedom to Breathe Agency (FTBA), [a Facebook group](#) that aims to resist government orders that promote or dictate the wearing of protective face coverings.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [recommends](#) that all people, regardless of if they're experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, wear protective masks in public settings, especially in areas where there's significant community transmission, [to limit the spread of the virus](#).

Full story: <https://time.com/5860715/face-mask-exempt-cards-fake-coronavirus/>



Schumer urges Trump admin to renew coronavirus emergency declaration

(NY Post) Sen. Chuck Schumer on Sunday urged the Trump administration to [renew the coronavirus emergency declaration](#) before it expires at the end of next month, in order to preserve billions of dollars in healthcare funds for New York to fight the pandemic.

“If we have learned anything from COVID-19 it is that a ‘stitch in time saves nine,’ and the more we can do to be proactive, the better off the public will be,” the New York Democrat said.

“This past winter there was delay and dismissal towards those urging HHS to officially declare a public health emergency as it relates to the coronavirus. Well, we cannot — and we must not — have that kind of inaction and uncertainty now, especially with what we know and with the sustaining needs of New York,” Schumer said, referring to Health and Human Services.

“The clock is ticking as July dawns, so we need this action now,” he added.

Full story: <https://nypost.com/2020/06/28/schumer-urges-trump-to-renew-coronavirus-emergency-declaration/>

HHS Secures New Supplies of Remdesivir for the United States

(HHS - June 29) The Department of Health and Human Services announced an agreement to secure large supplies of the drug remdesivir for the United States from Gilead Sciences through September, allowing American hospitals to purchase the drug in amounts allocated by HHS and state health departments.

HHS has secured more than 500,000 treatment courses of the drug for American hospitals through September. This represents 100 percent of Gilead’s projected production for July (94,200 treatment courses), 90 percent of production in August (174,900 treatment courses), and 90 percent of production in September (232,800 treatment courses), in addition to an allocation for clinical trials. A treatment course of remdesivir is, on average, 6.25 vials.

Hospitals will receive the product shipped by AmerisourceBergen and will pay no more than Gilead’s Wholesale Acquisition Price (WAC), which amounts to approximately \$3,200 per treatment course. Generally, patients do not pay directly for hospital-administered drugs like remdesivir; rather, for Medicare and most private insurers, the drug’s cost is incorporated into payments made by the insurer, such as Medicare paying for the drug through a diagnostic-related group.

These supplies will be allocated in the same way that Gilead’s donation of approximately 120,000 treatment courses of remdesivir were allocated: HHS allocates product to state and territorial health departments based on COVID-19 hospital burden, and health departments allocate it to hospitals. The delivery of the purchased remdesivir will be streamlined, going directly to the hospital, per the state’s allocation decision, rather than going first to the state health departments for subsequent delivery to hospitals.

Shipments will likely occur every two weeks, as they have with the donated product. The final allocation of Gilead’s approximately 120,000 donated treatment courses is being shipped today, June 29.

Press release: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/06/29/trump-administration-secures-new-supplies-remdesivir-united-states.html>

Ensuring Uptake of Vaccines Against SARS-CoV-2

(*NEJM*) As Covid-19 continues to exact a heavy toll, development of a vaccine appears the most promising means of restoring normalcy to civil life. Perhaps no scientific breakthrough is more eagerly anticipated. But bringing a vaccine to market is only half the challenge; also critical is ensuring a high enough vaccination rate to achieve herd immunity. Concerningly, **a recent poll found that only 49% of Americans planned to get vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2.**

One option for increasing vaccine uptake is to require it. Mandatory vaccination has proven effective in ensuring high childhood immunization rates in many high-income countries. However, except for influenza vaccination of health care workers, mandates have not been widely used for adults.

Six substantive criteria should be met before a state imposes a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine mandate:

1. Covid-19 is not adequately contained in the state.
2. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended vaccination for the groups for which a mandate is being considered.
3. The supply of vaccine is sufficient to cover the population groups for which a mandate is being considered.
4. Available evidence about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine has been transparently communicated.
5. The state has created infrastructure to provide access to vaccination without financial or logistic barriers, compensation to workers who have adverse effects from a required vaccine, and real-time surveillance of vaccine side effects.
6. In a time-limited evaluation, voluntary uptake of the vaccine among high-priority groups has fallen short of the level required to prevent epidemic spread.

If the proposed trigger criteria were met, what might a vaccination mandate look like? Because the constitutional power to protect public health rests primarily with states, each state will need to adopt its own legislation.

Read the details: https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2020926?query=featured_home

**BARDA funds two first-in-human studies for
Regeneron's COVID-19 antibody cocktail**

One of [BARDA](#)'s first private sector partners in the COVID-19 response, Regeneron, has begun the first clinical trials of REGN-COV2, its therapeutic two-antibody "cocktail" for COVID-19 patients. This treatment, developed with [BARDA](#) support, has the potential to be one of the first therapeutics specifically designed to inhibit SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The therapeutic contains two neutralizing monoclonal antibodies. Neutralizing monoclonal antibodies were initially identified from Regeneron's proprietary genetically-humanized VelocImmune® mice and from COVID-19 convalescent patient blood and then expanded and manufactured in large quantities. The investigational antibody cocktail may help COVID-19 patients recover from the disease more quickly, while simultaneously giving the patients more time to develop their own antibodies to fight the infection. Regeneron is also planning to explore REGN-COV2's potential for preventing SARS-CoV-2 infection in people who have not yet been infected by the virus. Full story:

<https://www.medicalcountermeasures.gov/newsroom/2020/regeneron-study/>

[Early treatment with baloxavir marboxil in high-risk adolescent and adult outpatients with uncomplicated influenza \(CAPSTONE-2\)](#) View at [Lancet](#)

Johns Hopkins: Health Security Headlines - Extracts from [June 29, 2020](#)

[Experts Are Calling for a 9/11-style Commission on U.S. Coronavirus Response. Here's Where it Could Start](#) (STAT) By the most basic of measurements — rates of illness and death — the U.S. response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been catastrophic. So it seems inevitable that there will be an independent, bipartisan commission to evaluate the nation's preparedness and response to the pandemic, in the style of the famous 9/11 commission empaneled in 2002. Already, many experts are calling for such a panel.

[U.S. Withdrawal from WHO Threatens to Leave it 'Flying Blind' on Flu Vaccines](#) (STAT) Twice a year, influenza experts from 10 institutions around the world meet at the World Health Organization's Geneva headquarters to pore over mounds of data. At the end of the weeklong meetings, they make decisions that affect people around the world: namely, which variants of the flu virus should be used for vaccinations the following season.

[How to Forecast Outbreaks and Pandemics](#) (Foreign Affairs) Despite some successes, serious gaps remain in the ability of infectious disease models to inform public health policy. That is because the country has no centralized system for disease forecasting; there exists no epidemiological equivalent of the National Weather Service. That is precisely what the country needs to succeed in the fight against COVID-19 and to avoid future failures and missteps of the sort that has marred the U.S. response to the current pandemic.

[U.S. Customs seizes largest-ever shipment of synthetic drugs at Port of Cincinnati, Erlanger](#) (N-KY Tribune) U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers seized an air shipment at a local cargo examination station in Erlanger, which has turned out to be the largest synthetic drug seizure in the history of the Port of Cincinnati, as well as other items.

This shipment came from China and was headed to a single importer in Aurora, Colorado. When officers examined the shipment, they found more than 160 smaller packages addressed to individuals and businesses across the nation.

These smaller shipments contained various items including regulated medications, agricultural and food products, counterfeit handbags and shoes and over a quarter of a ton of synthetic drugs and controlled substances.

They also discovered counterfeit products from multiple large brand name manufacturers such as Apple, Air Jordan, Louis Vuitton, Samsung, Tory Burch, Yeezy and fake COVID-19 test kits. The total manufacturer's suggested retail price would have been \$1,256,787 had the products been genuine.

Read more: <https://www.nkytribune.com/2020/06/u-s-customs-seizes-largest-ever-shipment-of-synthetic-drugs-at-port-of-cincinnati-erlanger/>

US Attorney General Forms Task Force to Counter "Anti-Government Extremism"

[Reuters](#) (6/27, Lewis) reports that US Attorney General William Barr on Friday "ordered the establishment of a task force to counter what he called 'anti-government extremists' committing violence as protests against police brutality convulse the United States." Reuters adds, "In a memo to law enforcement and prosecutors released by the Department of Justice, Barr said alleged extremists had 'engaged in indefensible acts of violence designed to undermine public order,' including attacking police officers, damaging property and threatening

innocent people. Barr said the extremists 'profess a variety of ideologies.' 'Some pretend to profess a message of freedom and progress, but they are in fact forces of anarchy, destruction, and coercion,' Barr said." Barr "named the militant anti-government movement known as the 'boogaloo,' as well as the left-wing Antifa as among those posing 'continuing threats of lawlessness'."

Related stories: [Washington Post](#) - [Fox News](#) -
FBI Highlights Lone Actors In Protest-Linked Violence. The [Wall Street Journal](#)

FDA Webinars and Calls

Immediately in Effect Guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Diagnostic Tests

Wednesday, July 1, at 12:15 pm ET [Click here for connection information](#)

The FDA will host a virtual Town Hall for clinical laboratories and commercial manufacturers that are developing or have developed diagnostic tests for SARS-CoV-2. The purpose of this Town Hall is to help answer technical questions about the development and validation of tests for SARS-CoV-2.

Upcoming Sessions:

Tuesday, July 7, 12:00 pm ET- Topic Focus: *Respirators for Health Care Personnel Use during COVID-19 Pandemic*

HHS/ASPR COVID-19 Clinical Rounds

Emergency Department: Patient Care and Clinical Operations

Thursday, July 2, at 12:00 - 1:00 pm ET [Click here for registration](#)

Join presenters to discuss emergency management resources and information that can be utilized to improve effective hospital and emergency department function during the COVID-19 pandemic.

HHS Webinars

Trauma Informed Care Through the Lens of COVID-19

Tuesday, June 30th and Wednesday, July 1, 12:00 p.m. EDT, Register [here](#).

This two-part webinar series will address the traumatic impact of COVID-19 on communities. The first webinar will look at some of the basics of trauma and some of the effects of COVID-19 on trauma. It will also look at ways to strengthen trauma-informed settings while avoiding re-traumatization in service delivery.

The KHREF Emergency Preparedness Update is assembled several times a week. When events make it necessary, the Update may be sent out several times a day to keep our hospital and the healthcare community advised on preparedness news and information. Most of this information is compiled from open sources, and where possible reference links will be provided. There is an archive of [Emergency Preparedness Updates available here](#). If you would like to add or delete, or have something you would like to contribute to a future edition of the Emergency Preparedness Update, please contact rbartlett@kyha.com (include your current email address). The preparedness program for the Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA) and KHREF are supported by US DHHS ASPR HPP funds through a contract with Kentucky Public Health.