



FROM:	Bose Public Affairs Group
DATE:	April 24, 2020
RE:	Weekly COVID-19 Update

BIG PICTURE

The number of confirmed coronavirus infections has increased to more than 2.7 million people worldwide. The highest death toll remains in the United States, with more than 50,000. For the last several weeks, Italy had the highest death toll until around the world, but the U.S. death rate has at least doubled every week since the outbreak began and now is double that of Italy's death total. The number of cases in the United States is nearly 870,500.

After a week of back and forth negotiations on what to include in a fourth relief package, Congress did pass the *Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act*, providing additional relief to small businesses and hospitals and funds a nation-wide testing program to scale the availability and capacity of testing for the coronavirus.

[Here is where all 50 states stand on reopening](#)

[CDC COVID-19 Forecasts](#)

[List of federal agency resources in response to COVID-19](#)

[Institutional and Agency Guidance Specific to Federal Award Impact on COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 School Closure Map](#)



ADMINISTRATION

President Trump Halts Immigration for Those Seeking Legal Entry During Pandemic

President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed [an executive order](#) halting immigration admittances for those seeking to legally migrate to the US amid the coronavirus pandemic. While the final order falls short of the outright ban the President suggested via Twitter on Monday evening, it is estimated to block the issuance of 26,000 green cards a month while the policy remains in place [according to](#) the non-partisan Migration Policy Institute.

The order does exempt spouses and minor children of US citizens; health care professionals; any member of the US Armed Forces and their spouses and children; and anyone entering for law enforcement or national security reasons.

Coronavirus Relief Fund Guidance Published

On Wednesday, the Treasury Department published [much anticipated guidance](#) for state, local, and tribal governments on how funds under the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) created by Congress in the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act* (CARES Act), can be used to support operations for these entities in responding to the pandemic.

Department of Education Publishes Guidance on CARES Act Relief

The Department of Education this week [announced](#) the disbursement of \$13 billion in emergency funding and accompanying guidance to support K-12 schools and also [announced](#) an additional \$6 billion in funding for higher education students and institutions. The higher education guidance notably excludes undocumented students from being eligible to access these funds. Both programs are funded by the CARES Act Congress passed last month.

CONGRESS

Phase 4 Package

On Thursday, Congress passed the [Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act](#), a \$500 billion relief package that delivers emergency aid to small businesses and hospitals after two weeks of negotiations between congressional leaders and the White House.

The bill will provide an immediate \$321 billion infusion for the Paycheck Protection Program, the small business rescue fund that ran out of money last week. The package also provides another \$60 billion in economic disaster loans for small businesses; \$75 billion in emergency relief for hospitals; and \$25 billion to ramp up coronavirus testing. Notably, the package does not include any relief for state, local or tribal governments, a sticking point during the negotiations. Democrats had pushed for additional funding with many states, cities and



towns across the country seeing huge shares of their revenue — payroll and income taxes — dry up amid the national economic lockdown.

The measure, approved 388-5, is the fourth in a series of coronavirus relief bills muscled through Congress in less than two months, totaling \$2.7 trillion in federal funds to fight the pandemic. President Donald Trump offered a strong endorsement of the legislation earlier this week and signed the bill into law on Friday.

Phase 5 Package

As the fourth interim relief bill moved through Congress this week, Democratic lawmakers were already turning their focus on the next relief bill. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) on Tuesday called for Congress to begin thinking about a fifth package, deemed “CARES 2,” that will expand upon the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act passed last month. Democratic priorities for the next round include more state, local and tribal aid funding; payments to households and businesses; resources to support voting by mail for 2020 elections; increased broadband access; and workplace-safety standards. Schumer said, “we will need a big, strong and active bill. It’ll have to come very soon. The needs are large and great.” However, Republican leaders continue to express concerns about the need and deficit impact of any additional legislation. “The future of our country in terms of the amount of debt that we’re adding up is a matter of genuine concern,” Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) stated.

Oversight

The House on Thursday also considered a resolution to create a select committee to oversee the federal coronavirus response. The panel will be led by House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-SC) and is set up to include seven Democrats and five Republicans. A resolution to formally establish the select committee passed on a vote of 212-182 along party lines.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Unemployment rates continue to rise, with another 4.4 million workers filing for employment this week, bringing the total unemployment number to more than 26 million.

After two weeks’ worth of gains, all three major stock market indexes finished in the red over the 5 day period, much attributed to the free-fall in oil prices that at one point earlier this week had a negative dollar value per barrel. The price per barrel closed around \$20 to end the tumultuous week with global demand tanking and storage facilities at capacity.

Analysts are now paying close attention to consumer sentiment figures as states begin to lift restrictions on businesses and give consumers more opportunities to spend. Consumer reaction will be a strong factor on state leaders and the amount of pressure they feel to either reopen



their economies more quickly or to extend restrictions based on how negative economic outputs remain.

Agreements Reached on Payroll Support for Airlines

The U.S. Department of the Treasury this week announced agreements of Payroll Support Programs with American Airlines, Delta Airlines, and United Airlines, the three major legacy passenger air carriers in the United States. Allegiant Airlines, Alaska Airlines, Frontier Airlines, Hawaiian Airlines, JetBlue Airways, SkyWest Airlines, Southwest Airlines, and Spirit Airlines have also indicated plans to participate in the Payroll Support Program, covering 95% of the US passenger air carrier market. The agreements will provide direct support to airline employees and help ensure the industry's financial survival, while ensuring that taxpayers are appropriately compensated for any federal stimulus dollars that go to support the private corporations. More information [here](#).

HEALTH CARE

Hardest Hit Hospitals and Providers for Additional Funding

On Wednesday, the Trump Administration announced that health care providers hit hardest by coronavirus will [receive](#) \$10 billion in federal funds beginning next week. The funds were authorized under the relief package Congress passed last month through a hospital rescue fund. Hospitals in hotspot areas can apply for their share of \$10 billion and an additional \$10 billion will be sent to rural hospitals and health clinics. The full allocation breakdown can be found [here](#).

Eli Lilly Announces to Human Testing Plans on Experimental Treatment

Eli Lilly [announced](#) this week plans to begin human testing as soon as next month for an experimental COVID-19 treatment that uses antibodies derived from the blood of people who have recovered from the virus. The treatment has the potential to “dramatically reduce viral load in people either about to get sick, or who are sick or even hospitalized,” CEO David Ricks said. “That could be available, if we’re expecting a fall surge, to help really knock down the disease in the fall.” Meanwhile, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, and other drug companies are scaling up so they could make coronavirus pills and vaccines as quickly as possible if their trials prove to be effective.

First COVID-19 Home Test Approved by FDA

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Thursday gave emergency approval for the first coronavirus test that allows people to collect their own samples at home and mail it to a lab for analysis. The FDA also announced that priority for distribution of the at-home collection kits, made by LabCorp, will be on healthcare and first responders who are most likely to have been in contact with the virus or an infected patient.



The full production capacity of the test remains unclear.

FDA Cautions Against Anti-Malaria Drugs Touted by President

The FDA on Friday issued a [Drug Safety Communication](#) cautioning the public on the “potentially life-threatening” side effects of antimalarial drugs that have been touted by President Trump as an effective method for combatting COVID-19.

The announcement comes after new [study](#) published this week found that hydroxychloroquine had no benefit in treating coronavirus patients and the two primary outcomes for coronavirus patients treated with hydroxychloroquine were death and the need for mechanical ventilation.

CONCLUSION

The Bose Public Affairs Group team will continue to monitor all relevant developments over the weekend and will be providing ongoing updates as they develop.

