

THE CLAREMONT COLLEGES

CORONAVIRUS MEDIA RECAP - DAILY UPDATE

Wednesday, July 8, 2020

This is a summary of today's events based on various media briefings by federal, state, county and city officials.

Cases – Reported as of Summary Time

Location	Confirmed/ Reported Cases	Deaths	Total Tests
United States	3,145,913	134,696	39,250,165
California	291,737 3.34% increase over 7/7	6,653	4,896,370
Los Angeles County	123,004 2.04% increase over 7/7	3,642	1,229,000
LA County Hospitalizations	2,000+ 1.57% increase over 7/7		
Claremont	142		
Current Case Leaders by State			
New York	424,247	32,304	4,402,452
California	291,737	6,653	4,896,370
Texas*	224,355	2,890	2,526,940
Florida*	223,783	3,890	2,322,389

* - These numbers do not appear to be completely updated.

International Coverage/Federal Government/National Coverage

- Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology sued the Trump administration in federal court on Wednesday, seeking to block a directive that would strip foreign college students of their visas if the courses they take this fall are entirely online.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is revising its guidance on reopening schools after President Donald Trump tweeted his disagreement with them, Vice President Mike Pence said Wednesday.
- "The president said today we just don't want the guidance to be too tough," Pence said at a news conference at the U.S. Department of Education. "That's the reason why, next week, CDC is going to be issuing a new set of tools, five different documents that will be giving even more clarity on the guidance going forward."
- Previously, the [World Health Organization said in May](#) that maintaining a positivity rate of less than 5 percent for at least two weeks — with comprehensive testing — would indicate that the virus was under control — many states are exceeding this rate giving concern that the virus is trending in the wrong direction.

State of California/Governor Gavin Newsom/State Coverage

- California reported 9,500 infections — the most new cases reported in a single day since the pandemic began — and triple-digit fatalities that sent the statewide death toll past 6,500.
- California cases are on pace to double every 24.8 days, a number that is used by experts to measure how quickly the virus is spreading.
- Over the last week, there have been an average of 7,403 new coronavirus infections and 69.6 new deaths per day, according to data from The Times' tracker.
- The seven-day average is 8,116 cases each day this past week, which Newsom said was more of a key number to watch.
- The state's **positivity rate is up to 7.1%** over the past two weeks. That's a **39% increase** over that time period. The governor warned that this number could quickly spike, noting that other states have had numbers recently even above 20%.
- A new [projection](#) by the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation said California could see a cumulative death toll of about 16,800 by Nov. 1 — an increase of more than 150% over the state's current fatalities.
- However, the projection notes that death numbers could be dramatically lower if 95% of California residents always wore a mask in public. In a universal masking scenario, California may see only about 12,000 deaths, the data show.
- The state has capacity to treat 50,000 COVID-19 patients, alternate care sites, established new hospital capacity, and deployed federal medical to help in areas vulnerable to spikes in COVID-19.
- So far, the state has distributed 201 million procedure masks and 79 million N95 masks. The state has 232 million procedure masks in its current inventory, as well as 46 million N95 masks. California has also given masks to four other states to help with their needs, in partnership with FEMA — those masks are only given to other states when California's own needs are met at certain thresholds, Newsom said.
- There are now **26** of the state's 58 counties on the state's monitoring list. That includes L.A., Orange, and other Southern California counties. Three counties were added today; a week ago, there were 19 counties on the list. Being on the list requires those counties to make modifications to their stay-at-home orders.
- Newsom said that on either Friday or Monday, he will be providing an update on testing, including on how the state will be doing more targeted testing. A new testing task force, including new strategies, will be announced soon, Newsom said. The state will be working to change how it does testing to help avoid delays, moving away from relying on national labs that cause those delays.

L.A. Department of Public Health/County of Los Angeles

- 65 new deaths and 2,496 new cases reported today.
- There are more than 2,000 people currently hospitalized, 26% of these people are confirmed cases in the ICU and 17% are confirmed cases on ventilators. This remains substantially higher than the 1,350 to 1,450 daily hospitalizations seen four weeks ago.
- Testing results are available for over 1,229,000 individuals with 9% of all people testing positive.

- With the rate of COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations climbing, local health officials are bracing for an increase in deaths as the region enters "a critical juncture in our pandemic," per L.A. County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer.
- Ferrer also reported that the vast majority of the businesses surveyed by health officials over the holiday weekend were complying with public health guidance on social distancing and face coverings. In total, about 1,100 restaurants, 80 bars, 70 hotels and eight breweries and wineries were visited.
- Once again, LA County public health officials say priority for testing is being placed on those who are showing symptoms, work in a high-risk environment or have come in contact with a person known to have been exposed to the virus. (As revealed in the Higher Education briefing, there is again a supply chain issue).
- In addition to the shift in testing protocol, health officials are also recommending that individuals quarantine for 14 days after a possible exposure to the virus, even if they have received a negative test result during that time. False negatives typically occur when a person gets tested too soon after a possible exposure, when a viral load would be unable to be detected, health officials said. But there is no clear guidance on how long a person should wait to get tested.

L.A. Department of Public Health - Higher Education Briefing

- Dr. Ferrer, Dr. Gilcheck, Dr. Terashita participated in today's briefing call.
- Focus for today's call: situational awareness and review framework for protocols for higher education (caveat reopening is determined by data and consultations with state and board of supervisors – if situation continues to worsen by the end of August will need further discussions on reopening)
- Significant concern today over two weeks ago: highest positivity rate (close to 11%) and highest hospitalization rate (over 2,000). This means that community transmission is in full effect.
- Could manage current numbers but not a doubling of numbers; even increasing in the same rate results in trouble for available ICU beds.
- Masking remains the most critical current response.
- If we can get on track could proceed with reopening.
- Dr. Ferrer emphasized the need for very solid plans if reopening schools – expect cases if students return.
- Dr. Gilcheck provided an overview of higher education protocols. Still awaiting on guidance from the State of California.
- Plan to release protocols following the state's release. Recognized that County's protocols may need to be adjusted to align with what the state ultimately issues. The original plan was to wait for the state, but LA DPH acknowledges that that may be too late for many institutions and there is no timetable for State guidelines.
- Important for all schools to maintain plans for distance learning.
- This is an update of the draft released a few weeks ago.
- Physical distancing for classrooms, offices, dorms – will need to reduce density and limit the size and numbers of gatherings.
- Even if a lecture hall could accommodate normally 300 students and you reduce it to 100 students, that is really still too much. Should be looking at 30 or so. Not called out in guidelines but this is a good principal.
- Face coverings are critical, especially if social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Regarding alternatives (asked previously on this) – faculty could use a face shield with bottom covering.

- Disinfection control needs to be emphasized.
- Residential settings – risk of transmission is very high here. Acknowledged the styles and set ups of dorms vary greatly. Shared bathroom scenarios vary greatly as well. The application of a percentage capacity does not work so County is backing away from this idea (included in previous draft). Important principals: have reserved capacity for isolation and quarantine. Should have expectation that cases will occur. Try as much as possible to eliminate shared bathrooms.
- Regarding sports – waiting for state guidance on this. Unlike professional sports, there has been no clearance to proceed with these activities. Need to see state’s responses for guidance.
- No school should be conducting practices with teams right now.
- Gyms and fitness centers can operate with restrictions and students could participate in this activity. Cannot bring together a team for group practices. Need to sanitize equipment in between use (i.e. not every needs their own ball, but the individual use of the ball, then sanitize and hand off for other’s use).
- Bringing back teams for practice is a “very bad” idea.
- In response to a question about practice guidance, a participate said “...you mentioned that can bring back students for...” Dr. Ferrer quickly jumped in and stated please do not bring people back right now, hold off as long as you can – dire situation and bring students back won’t help... (paraphrased).
- Regarding exposures and contact tracing. LA DPH has built a robust department of tracers. “Every case is contacted and close contacts identified.” The role of colleges/universities is to provide quick response of confirmed cases. The information that colleges gather is essential. Outbreaks are 3 or more cases within 14 days that are epidemiological linked. Public health will determine if there are outbreaks. Before there is an outbreaks, still available to provide assistance to institutions. Key elements for institutions to plan: identify contacts; how to quarantine; how to communicate cases; ability to test close contacts (not specifically testing). Do not count on community mobile sites for testing use. Make arrangements with a lab and provider for testing.

Questions and Answers

- Regarding skills labs (science) – when will there be guidance? Directed to use State guidance. LA DPH will work to get something out. Most protocols on website (social distancing, face coverings, if 6’ distance isn’t possible, then use partitions, very strict infection control – if doing things in lab look at manufacturing guidelines). Institutions are invited to submit their protocols for review LA DPH until something is formally posted. LA DPH clarified they don’t approve plans, they review, ask questions and help institutions to strengthen plans – simply not enough time to review and approve plans.
- For the ICE situation (was asked about if international students can stay if hybrid is offered), trying to rush guidelines so that institutions can develop hybrid programs as needed to respond to ICE order.
- Clarified that we are in Phase 3 but awaiting state guidance on reopening for this sector. Never officially closed institutions. Will issue protocols absent State guidance in the next few days.
- For on-site dining, we need to follow restaurant guidelines currently (currently no indoor dining). LA DPH will provide some guidelines for how this can be addressed going into the fall.
- Regarding performing arts, could we place individuals in 12’ boxes for practices and could this be permissible? Not now, but possibly in the fall. Having distancing would be critical.
- Strongly encourage continued remote working for office employees. There is absolutely no need to be rushing people back if they can work remotely. Need to keep low density. (This was in response to a question about timing and approval to bring back staff to campuses).

- Not encouraging any institution to bring anyone back for at least the next several weeks. Please delay and hold back from sending staff, students, etc. back.
- Laura Troendle – regarding testing there was limited access last week, is there a supply change issue or are we looking at an issue with testing? Yes, there are supply change issues – need to have a relationship with a lab to ensure our ability to test.