



HEALTH

Coronavirus live updates: US death toll hits 21; Grand Princess to dock Monday; Sen. Ted Cruz to self-quarantine

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The coronavirus continued its deadly reach across the U.S. on Sunday as the number of fatalities climbed to 21, with 554 confirmed cases across 34 states and the District of Columbia.

All but three of the deaths have been in Washington state; two were in Florida and one in California. The virus has surged in the U.S. in the last week: The second American died March 1, just hours after the World Health Organization had reported 62 confirmed U.S. cases. There were 117 new cases announced on Saturday alone.

Iowa on Sunday was the latest state to report its first encounter with coronavirus, with Gov. Kim Reynolds announced three presumptive positive cases. All three people were on a cruise through Egypt, Reynolds said during an evening news conference, and are now isolated at home.

In Milan, Italy, streets and shops were empty, public weddings and funerals were banned, and vast swaths of northern Italy were essentially locked down Sunday as the government dug in against an advance of the global coronavirus sweeping across the nation at an alarming rate.

Italy's death toll rose to 366 on Sunday, and more than 7,300 infections have been confirmed. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte signed the decree affecting the at least 15 provinces that are home to more than a quarter of Italy's 60 million people.

The impact reached even deeper into the country. In Rome, the Vatican announced Sunday that it will shut down its museums and the Sistine Chapel until April 3.

"To date, a single case of positivity to COVID-19 has been confirmed by an external subject who had gone ... for a pre-employment medical examination," the Vatican said.

"Five people who had had close contact with this are in precautionary quarantine."

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Hotel in China collapses: Hotel was being used for coronavirus quarantine

Grand Princess still in limbo: 21 coronavirus cases detected on board

Coronavirus myths, debunked: A cattle vaccine, bioweapons and a \$3,000 test

100 years ago: Seattle was under siege by the deadliest flu in history. Here's what life was like.

Here's the latest on the outbreak of COVID-19:

Grand Princess cruise ship will dock Monday with 21 infected people

American passengers from the Grand Princess cruise ship will be quarantined for two weeks at military bases when they disembark in the port of Oakland at some point Monday, California Gov. Gavin Newsom said at a Sunday news conference.

The process of getting all 2,421 passengers off the vessel, routing them to their destination in a secure fashion and sending the Grand Princess back to sea with its crew of 1,113 is expected to take 2-3 days, illustrating the intricacy of the task, which is further complicated by the size of the ship.

Newsom emphasized that nobody currently on board would come in contact with the general public. Tests performed Thursday revealed 21 persons on the ship, 19 of them crew members, have contracted the virus.

The Grand Princess has been floating off the California coast since that day, waiting for authorities to grant it approval to dock as it returned from what was supposed to be a roundtrip from San Francisco to Hawaii.

Most of the 962 passengers from California will be sent to Travis Air Force Base in the East Bay city of Fairfield, and the rest to Miramar Air Station in San Diego. The other U.S.

passengers will be flown by charter to bases in Texas and Georgia. Non-American travelers will be routed back to their home countries in charters, which will be located in a part of the Oakland airport not accessible to the public.

“For those passengers that may be watching this, we are not able to tell you exactly when the cruise ship will come into the port as we are still working out the enormity of complexity of making sure we prepare the site and, moreover, prepare for a quick turnaround and quick boarding of individuals to respective locations,” Newsom said in Oakland.

John Redd, a medical epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said no new cases of coronavirus have been detected on the ship since the results of Thursday’s tests, but more would be known later in the day when mobile medical teams went on board to do an assessment.

– *Jorge Ortiz*

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, Arizona Rep. Paul Gosar announce self-imposed quarantines

Sen. Ted Cruz said Sunday he would self-quarantine after interacting with a person at a conservative conference who has tested positive for the coronavirus — making the Texas Republican the first known member of Congress to have possibly come into contact with the rapidly spreading virus.

Hours later via Twitter, Republican Rep. Paul Gosar of Arizona announced his own self-quarantine, saying he was "with the individual for an extended period of time, and we shook hands several times."

The interactions happened at the Conservative Political Action Conference at Maryland's National Harbor at the end of February. President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence also attended the same, but organizers have said the infected New Jersey man did not interact with them.

Like Gosar, Cruz said he shook hands with the individual.

"I am not experiencing any symptoms and I feel fine and healthy," Cruz said, explaining that the interaction lasted "less than a minute" and medical professionals he's consulted have told him the "odds of transmission from the other individual to me were extremely

low.

– *Christal Hayes*

New York state to CDC: Let private labs test

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo called out and called on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, asking approval for private labs to conduct coronavirus testing. "The testing capacity is now more than the state lab can handle," Cuomo said. Sixteen additional cases brought the New York state total to 105, Cuomo said Sunday. Twelve of them were in New York City, 82 in suburban Westchester.

"We're testing aggressively and we are seeing the number of confirmed cases go up as expected," Cuomo said. New York Mayor Bill de Blasio warned the city would have "zero tolerance for anyone taking advantage of an epidemic to gouge prices."

– *Isabel Keane, Rockland/Westchester Journal News*

Oregon declares state of emergency, joining five other states

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown declared a state of emergency on Sunday to slow the spread of coronavirus after the number of confirmed cases there doubled to 14.

The emergency declaration came a day after New York did the same, joining California, Florida, Maryland and Washington.

"We will do everything in our power to keep Oregonians safe," Brown said at a news conference.

Marine infected; Army issues travel restrictions

A Marine has tested positive for the coronavirus and the Army has issued travel restrictions to Italy and South Korea as the military joined the struggle to halt the outbreak. The Marine, assigned to Fort Belvoir in Virginia, had recently returned from overseas and was being treated at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said.

The Army, meanwhile, restricted travel to Italy and South Korea and banned foreign troops

from participating in U.S. exercises and visits in countries deemed "level alert 2" and higher. Those countries currently include China, Iran, South Korea, Italy and Japan .

10 dead in collapse of China isolation building

At least 10 people were dead and 23 missing as first responders in Beijing sifted through the debris of a collapsed building used to isolate arrivals from other parts of the country. State media said about 80 people had been inside the converted hotel when tragedy struck. The Health Ministry said at least 38 people were being treated at hospitals; the hotel's owner was detained for questioning. Authorities said the building was undergoing renovations when the collapse occurred.

South Korea encouraged by latest numbers

South Korea reported an additional 179 cases Sunday, the lowest one-day total in almost two weeks and giving authorities hope the crisis there was abating. Still, the total number of cases across the nation rose to more than 7,300, about the same as Italy and behind only China. Health and Welfare Minister Park Neunghoo said his country, which has reported 50 deaths, can test 17,000 people daily. The southeastern city of Daegu and neighboring North Gyeongsang Province have been the epicenter of the outbreak there.

"The spreading pace of the respiratory illness in Daegu and the North Gyeongsang Province appears to be at an initial stage of slowing down," Park said.

Virus is boom to some companies

Some companies are experiencing a boom in business from the coronavirus, even if there's no guarantee their products will curb the outbreak. Disinfectant room sprayers, commercial cleaning companies, online learning programs and even re-hydration beverages are drawing increase interest, experts say. Lawrence Muscarella, president of LFM Healthcare Solutions, said customers should ask manufacturers if their products have been proven to kill COVID-19, the current strain of the virus under scrutiny.

"You'd want a label claim from the manufacturer that says: 'Kills COVID-19,'" Muscarella said. "If it just says 'kills coronavirus,' ask if that includes COVID-19."

– *Erin Richards*

Florida reports first East Coast deaths: 'Let us not panic'

State health officials said two people in their 70s who had traveled overseas died in Santa Rosa County in Florida's Panhandle and in the Fort Myers area. Gov. Ron DeSantis ordered the state's Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee to "Level 2" to coordinate response to the outbreak. Level 2 activation is a preparatory, intermediate-level response. "Let us not panic," Broward County Mayor Dale Holness said. "Let us not allow fear to take over our lives."

– *John Pacenti, The Palm Beach Post*

How many are sick, how many have died

As of Sunday, more than 3,800 deaths have been reported worldwide, along with more than 110,000 infections. About 3,000 deaths and 80,000 illnesses have taken place on mainland China, according to a Johns Hopkins data dashboard. South Korea, Italy and Iran all have confirmed more than 5,000 cases. Italy has reported more than 366 deaths, Iran almost 200. South Korea has reported 50 deaths so far.

Contributing: Barbara Rodriguez, Des Moines Register; Katie Sobko, NorthJersey.com; The Associated Press