



FROM:	Bose Public Affairs Group
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RE:	Weekly COVID-19 Update

BIG PICTURE

The number of confirmed coronavirus infections nearly doubled once again over previous weeks' total worldwide, surpassing 1 million confirmed cases of the virus. The highest death toll remains in Italy at more than 14,600 people. The number of cases in the United States has more than quadrupled over the past week from 86,000 to 258,214, more than double than the number of cases in Italy, who has the second most cases. There are 6,600 deaths in the United States due to COVID-19. Most models predict, with some uncertainty, that the peak rate of infection and deaths nationwide is multiple weeks ahead depending on where you live.

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

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

[COVID-19 School Closure Map](#)

ADMINISTRATION

White House Task Force Updates

The White House Coronavirus Task Force this week released initial predictions detailing anticipated outcomes over the next couple months as a result of COVID-19. The task force projects 100,000 to 240,000 deaths from the virus, with mitigation. On Thursday, Dr. Deborah Birx, Coordinator of the White House Task Force, also suggested that testing for the virus is still not being reported to the Centers for Disease Control as required by law. These reports are critical to help inform the federal government's mapping of resources and prediction models. "Well, I'm telling you, I'm still missing 50% of the data from reporting," Brix said. "I have 660 (thousand) tests reported in. We've done 1.3 million. ... -- the bill said you need to report. We are still not receiving 100% of the tests."



DeVos Floats Need for “Microgrants” and Offers New Higher Ed Distance Learning Rules

Late last week during a White House briefing on the Coronavirus, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos stated that she will push for legislation to provide “microgrants” to support students as they continue to shift to online and at-home learning. DeVos suggested that the grants would be targeted towards disadvantaged communities “where their school system has simply shut down.”

On Wednesday, Secretary DeVos also proposed new rules to govern distance learning for institutions of higher education receiving federal assistance through the *Higher Education Act*. “With our support, colleges and universities were among the first to transition to online and distance learning so learning could continue during the coronavirus pandemic,” [said Secretary DeVos](#). “Frankly, though, they are working within the confines of stale rules and regulations that are in desperate need of rethinking. We know there are fewer and fewer ‘traditional’ students in higher education, and this current crisis has made crystal clear the need for more innovation. It’s past time we rethink higher ed to meet the needs of all students.”

Also on Wednesday, Surgeon General Jerome Adams said he believes the federal government’s social distancing guidance may extend past April 30th. “In 30 days, some places may not need to have a shelter in place anymore,” Adams told NBC’s “Today” show. “So, again, we’ll start to ease this in 30 days, I think, in some places. But in other places, we’ll be ramping it up. We’ll follow the data, and we’ll go on based on what the data tells us.”

New Guidance for Business on Securing Relief Funding

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday published new [guides](#) for businesses on securing relief under the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* enacted last week.

The Treasury Department also issued [more resources](#) on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Starting today, small businesses and sole proprietorships can apply for loans. Starting April 10, independent contractors and self-employed individuals can apply for loans.

The Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service on Tuesday [announced details](#) on the Employee Retention Credit to encourage businesses to keep employees on their payroll during the COVID-19 crisis. The refundable tax credit is 50 percent of up to \$10,000 in wages paid by an eligible employer whose business has been financially impacted by COVID-19.



CONGRESS

Congress was in recess this week as lawmakers departed for their home districts following the CARES Act.

Select Committee Established

On Thursday, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) announced the creation of a bipartisan special committee to provide oversight of the federal government's management of funds Congress authorized and appropriated in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. "Congress has taken an important step in meeting this crisis by passing three bills with over \$2 trillion in emergency relief. We need to ensure those dollars are spent carefully and effectively," Pelosi told reporters in a press call Thursday. The committee will be chaired by House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn (D-SC).

House Republicans are not supportive of the panel, citing concerns over the politicization of how the Trump Administration is disbursing relief funds in response to the pandemic and pointing to provisions in the CARES Act that establishes an "oversight commission" that will be appointed by House and Senate leadership.

Phase 4 Package

While Speaker Pelosi initially pushed for a broad list of priorities to include in a fourth coronavirus relief package early in the week, by the week's end the Speaker narrowed her focus, calling for a phase four relief package that has a similar scope to the third package. "Let's do the same bill we just did, make some changes to make it current," Pelosi told reporters in the Capitol Friday. "While I'm very much in favor of doing some things we need to do to meet the needs — clean water, more broadband, the rest of that — that may have to be for a bill beyond that right now," she added during an appearance on CNBC.

The initial outline Speaker Pelosi touted earlier in the week included additional financial assistance to individuals and industries most heavily impacted by the pandemic. The pitch also included these priorities:

- Community health centers
- Clean drinking water infrastructure
- Access to high speed broadband
- Smarter, safer infrastructure and job creation related to the virus
- Education and housing components related to the virus
- Issues related to state and local government
- Unemployment insurance at the state level
- Hospital support
- OSHA regulation



- Expansion and clarification of paid family and medical leave
- Pensions
- SNAP expansion
- Free treatment and free testing

Still, Republican leadership on Capitol Hill has yet to concur with the view that a fourth package is needed any time soon. “We may need a phase four, but we're not even fully into 'phase three yet,” Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) told reporters earlier this week. President Donald Trump has endorsed the idea of a fourth package, calling for a significant focus on infrastructure.

A tracker outlining funding priorities that have been suggested by lawmakers, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders is available [here](#).

Both chambers of Congress are recessed until April 20th.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The stock market experienced another roller coaster week as investors witness a downturn following the [Labor Department's announcement](#) on Friday that 700,000 jobs were lost last month.

Following the enactment of the CARES Act last week, the Small Business Administration and Treasury Department have released more details on how \$349 billion worth of funds directed toward small business relief will be distributed through an “unprecedented public-private mobilization effort.” “This unprecedented public-private partnership is going to assist small businesses with accessing capital quickly. Our goal is to position lenders as the single point-of-contact for small businesses – the application, loan processing, and disbursement of funds will all be administered at the community level,” said Small Business Administrator Jovita Carranza. “Speed is the operative word; applications for the emergency capital can begin as early as this week, with lenders using their own systems and processes to make these loans. We remain committed to supporting our nation's more than 30 million small businesses and their employees, so that they can continue to be the fuel for our nation's economic engine.” More information [here](#).

HEALTH CARE

A \$100 billion relief fund targeted for health care providers most impacted by COVID-19 has sparked intense lobbying from providers and major health care associations, who are urging the administration to disburse the funds as soon as possible. The fund included in the CARES Act comes with few strings attached, giving the Trump Administration wide latitude to



distribute the money. That could result in a battle between big systems and rural hospitals over how funding is prioritized.

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.

