

3 April 2020

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



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As a workaround, opening the Update using **Chrome** will enable the links.

We're sorry for the inconvenience.

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## U.S. MILITARY

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### Army delays ACFT start date over COVID-19

30 March- The Army is suspending the start date for its new fitness test due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) shutting down gyms, and bringing about new social distancing standards. The Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) was scheduled to become the test of record on October 1 this year, but Lt. Col. Robin Ochoa, an Army spokeswoman, confirmed to Task & Purpose that training for the test was being suspended "until further notice." The news was first reported by Military.com. Ochoa added that Army Physical Fitness Test testing frequency standards are also being suspended. "All current and valid passing APFT scores are extended so that soldiers who are going before a promotion board are still within compliance," Ochoa said. "As for the ACFT, the diagnostic testing requirements are suspended until further notice. "This applies to the timeline for the ACFT to become the test of record on 1 October. This timeline remains open as well due to the current uncertain environment. Col. Robert Bockholt, spokesman for Army Materiel Command, told Task & Purpose last week that there were "no delays" to the delivery of ACFT equipment, and all equipment was expected to be fielded by "early June 2020." The problem is, of course, that gyms where the equipment is held are being shut down in order to help stop the spread of COVID-19, and units are being told to abide by social distancing rules when training. While some parts of the ACFT can be trained for anywhere — like the two mile run or hand release pushups — things like the sprint-drag-carry, or medicine ball throw, are difficult to properly train for without equipment. [Task & Purpose](#)

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### Coast Guard: Cruise ships must stay at sea with sick onboard

1 April- The U.S. Coast Guard has directed all cruise ships to prepare to treat any sick passengers and crew on board while being sequestered "indefinitely" offshore during the coronavirus pandemic. The new rules require daily updates on each ship's coronavirus caseload for vessels in U.S. waters, and come with a stiff warning: Any foreign-flagged vessels "that loiter beyond U.S. territorial seas" should try first to medically evacuate the very sick to those countries instead. Many of South Florida's cruise ships are registered in the Bahamas, where hospital capacity is limited and people are still recovering from last year's Hurricane Dorian. The rules, which apply to any vessel carrying more than 50 people, were issued in a March 29 safety bulletin signed by Coast Guard Rear Admiral E.C. Jones, whose district includes Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Puerto Rico. Dozens of cruise ships are either lined up at Port Miami and Port Everglades or waiting offshore due to the coronavirus pandemic. Most have only crew aboard, but the Carnival Corp., which owns nine cruise lines with a total of 105 ships, notified the SEC Tuesday that it has more than 6,000 passengers still at sea. [Navy Times](#)

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**APHC COVID-19  
Products**

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SHIPMENTS HAVE  
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You can still place an order  
but it will not ship until we  
are able to return to the  
office. Please make full use  
of our product downloads.



## **DOD needs stronger oversight of privatized military housing, report says**

28 March- The Department of Defense needs better oversight of privatized military housing to make sure residents' complaints about issues like mold, rodents and pests are addressed, according to a Congressional watchdog report. Private companies are responsible for the construction, renovation and maintenance of about 99% of military housing in the United States. But military families have complained for years that their landlords aren't responsive -- and that could put their health in jeopardy. Focus groups conducted by the Government Accountability Office showed that some troops will no longer live in privatized housing because of their experiences and that some people's decision whether to re-enlist will be impacted by housing problems. After reviewing leases and other documents, and interviewing officials at Naval Station Norfolk, Langley Air Force Base in Hampton and eight other bases around the country, the GAO determined that the Defense Department needs to ensure it is collecting information that accurately reflects housing conditions and is clearly communicating the role of military housing offices to residents. U.S. Sen. Mark Warner said in a statement that the report, issued Thursday, is evidence the Defense Department needs to quickly implement a residents "Bill of Rights" that Congress has passed into law. The 18 "rights" include the right to live in housing and a community that meets applicable health and environmental standards, the right to have access to an electronic work order system that tenants can request maintenance and track their progress through, and the right to receive advice from military legal assistance on procedures for resolving disputes with property managers. The Defense Department has said it would implement those "rights" by May, but others will take longer, such as the right to withhold rent until disputes are resolved, to get access to maintenance history and to have a process for dispute resolution. "This GAO study, the result of a year-long investigation of privatized military housing, shows what many military families already know -- that the DoD has not done enough to protect service members and their families, who have been forced to put up with unacceptable living conditions in private military housing for far too long," Warner said. [Military.com](http://Military.com)

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## **NICoE Social Work: Helping service members, families navigate life after TBI**

30 March- Although social workers assisted service members during World War I as American Red Cross employees, the social work profession within the military community would not be solidified until July of 1945 when the Army commissioned its first officers into the social work field. Today social workers remain an integral part of the Department of Defense, helping service members and their families address and manage social, emotional, physiological and familial challenges brought on by military service. The Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's National Intrepid Center of Excellence in Bethesda, Maryland, employs 10 social workers who continue to uphold this mantle. The NICoE works

## COVID-19 Screening Tool

This tool can help you understand what to do next about COVID-19. Let's all look out for each other by knowing our status, trying not to infect others, and reserving care for those in need.

This site was developed in partnership with The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It is not meant as an endorsement of any Apple products.

to advance the clinical care, diagnosis, research and education of military service members with traumatic brain injuries and psychological health conditions. U.S. Public Health Service Cdr. Wendy Pettit, who has served as a social worker for 22 years, was instrumental in building NICoE's social work program and remains an important part of its progress and success. [DVIDS](#)

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## The military's cult of readiness is sabotaging its efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19

29 March- One word explains all the B.S. that commanders have pulled during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak: Readiness. To most people in the universe, "readiness" is a non-word. But for the military, "readiness" encapsulates an obsession with finding new ways to make service member's lives suck at all times – because somehow, this will make them prepared to fight China and Russia. In the minds of many officers and senior enlisted leaders, there is no way they can cancel training exercises to stop troops from getting sick or forgo work parties to make sure empty military installations have their garbage cans emptied and their lawns cut. And God help Pvt. Schmuckatelli, who believes the fact that all barber shops are closed means his command is not going to worry if his hair is a little longer than usual. No, the cult of readiness demands that commanders and senior noncommissioned officers laugh in the face of the greatest public health crisis since the 1918 flu pandemic. Damn it, if troops cannot do a simple 30-mile ruck march in arctic conditions and then pass a snap inspection conducted by an anal retentive first sergeant, how the hell are they going to survive the coming Russo-Chinese invasion of the homeland? This isn't just your jaded friend and humble narrator speaking. Here is what top leaders said during a recent live-streamed town hall when asked why the military was still conducting formations during the coronavirus outbreak. "We cannot forget that there's a mission requirement for a lot of these units, and we expect those sergeants, the gunnies, the first sergeants, the commanders, the captains, to be able to make those decisions on the field to be able to maintain our combat effectiveness," said Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Ramón Colón-López, senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Defense Secretary Mark Esper quickly added that he wanted to "foot-stomp" on Lopez's comments. "We have a mission, and that is maintaining that mission, maintaining that mission readiness, and that includes physical fitness," Esper said during the March 24 event. [Task & Purpose](#)

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## Apple releases new COVID-19 app and website based on CDC guidance

27 March- Apple today released a new screening tool and set of resources to help people stay informed and take the proper steps to protect their health during the spread of COVID-19, based on the latest CDC guidance. The new COVID-19 website, and COVID-19 app available on the App Store, were created in partnership with the CDC, the White House Coronavirus Task Force and FEMA to make it easy for people across the country to get trusted information and guidance at a time when the US is feeling the heavy burden of COVID-19. The COVID-19 app and website allow users to answer a series of questions around risk factors, recent exposure and symptoms for themselves or a loved one. In turn, they will receive CDC recommendations on next steps, including guidance on social distancing and self-isolating, how to closely monitor symptoms, whether or not a test is recommended at this time, and when to contact a medical provider. This new screening tool is designed to be a resource for individuals and does not replace instructions from healthcare providers or guidance from state and local health authorities. The app and website also offer access to resources to help people stay informed and get the support they need. Users will receive answers to frequently asked questions about COVID-19, including who is most at risk and how to recognize symptoms. In addition, they will learn the most up-to-date information from the CDC like best practices for washing hands, disinfecting surfaces and monitoring symptoms. [Apple Newsroom](#)

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## Clear messages about quarantine are key to success, research finds

31 March- Clear and consistent messaging about lockdown measures, why they are needed, and about the practicalities of social distancing such as food and finances, are crucial to their potential for slowing outbreaks of disease, researchers said on Tuesday. With hundreds of cities worldwide already using isolation and quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic caused by the new coronavirus - and more likely to follow - a study of previous disease outbreaks found that quarantine adherence rates range from 0% to more than 92%, and that clarity is key. If instructions or language are unclear, then people tend to make up their own rules, the research found, and social pressure from others to comply with quarantine is also important. "The effectiveness of quarantine depends on how many people do it, so it is important to know what makes people more likely to comply," said Simon Wessely, a professor of psychological medicine at King's College London's Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, who worked on the research. "In the era of 'fake news', consistent messaging is difficult, but leaving the information needs of the public unmet can be dangerous. Public health teams should provide clear, authoritative information...and then

### The Surgeon General Weekly Read Book

The Surgeon General Weekly Read Book is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level on the APHC SIPRNet site:

<https://intelshare.intelink.sgov.gov/sites/medcom-g2/SitePages/Home.aspx>

To access this version, you will need a **SECRET** clearance and a SIPRNet account.

check the messages are getting through." [Reuters](#)

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## COVID-19 update: Formula One engineers developed new ventilator device for patients who are too frail to undergo invasive ventilation procedures

30 March- Formula One engineers focused their efforts on creating a new ventilator or a breathing apparatus for coronavirus patients that would take only days to complete and, best of all, be available in just days to come. The team over at Mercedes teamed up with the academics in the University College London in which they were able to produce in just four days. The very first of its kind aptly named CPAP device or "continuous positive airway pressure." About 100 of these devices are now going to be tested in clinical trials in a hospital in north London where patients who suffer from the coronavirus will be tested out. The CPAP device works like this; it pushes air and much-needed oxygen into a mask to inflate the patient's lungs, which can be an alternative for people who are all too frail to undergo invasive ventilation procedures. A positive note as well is that it has already been approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency or the MHRA. It will complete its clinical trial only to prove that it helps patients by the end of the week at the University College London Hospital, after this, it will soon be distributed to all corners of the globe if and when possible. The technique is not new but has been used in Italy already where the ventilators are in dire supply. Ventilator rationing as they call it has already begun at one of London's hospitals, with the management ruling out that only patients who have a "reasonable chance of survival" should be allowed to have them. [Tech Times](#)

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## COVID-19 vaccine candidate to launch study by September

30 March- New Jersey based Johnson & Johnson (J&J) announced it expects to initiate human clinical studies of its lead vaccine candidate targeted against the COVID-19 disease by September 2020. Furthermore, J&J said in a press release issued on March 30, 2020, that it anticipates the first batches of a COVID-19 vaccine could be available for the US Food and Drug Administration to grant an Emergency Use Authorization in early 2021. J&J said this vaccine candidate is from constructs it has been working on since January 2020. And, it will use its previously validated vaccine development platform of Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies to focus on this effort. [Precision Vaccinations](#)

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## **Johnson & Johnson wants to start testing its coronavirus vaccine by September**

30 March- Pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson plans to begin human clinical trials of its Covid-19 vaccine by September with a goal of the first batches being made available for emergency use authorization by early next year, according to a company announcement released Monday. Johnson & Johnson says it has been working on a vaccine since January and is partnering on the venture with the Biomedical Advance Research and Development Authority (BARDA), a division of the Department of Health and Human Services. Johnson & Johnson and BARDA will commit \$1 billion to fund vaccine research, development and clinical testing, the company said. "The world is facing an urgent public health crisis and we are committed to doing our part to make a COVID-19 vaccine available and affordable globally as quickly as possible," Johnson & Johnson Chairman and CEO Alex Gorsky said in a news release. Johnson & Johnson will also expand its global manufacturing capacity so it can quickly produce the vaccine if it is approved, the company said. [CNN](#)

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## **Scientists search for ways to impede, treat COVID-19**

30 March- Nursing homes must identify and bar staff and visitors who may be infected with COVID-19, monitor patients for infection, and take stringent infection-control measures to prevent outbreaks such as the deadly one in King County, Washington, experts said in an epidemiologic study published Mar 27 in The New England Journal of Medicine. Meanwhile, preliminary research from China involving five patients suggests that transfusion with the plasma of recovered coronavirus patients that contains neutralizing antibody could benefit patients critically ill with the pandemic coronavirus and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). In the nursing home study, public health officials in Seattle–King County and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention performed a case investigation, contact tracing, quarantine of potentially infected people, isolation of confirmed and possible cases, and enhanced infection prevention and control. In that outbreak, which involved the Life Care facility in the Seattle suburb of Kirkland, 167 people were sickened from Feb 28 to Mar 18, including 101 of 130 residents, 50 of 170 staff, and 16 visitors. The outbreak threatened the health of residents and strained the ability of hospitals to care for them. [CIDRAP](#)

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## **Should we all be wearing masks in public? Health experts revisit the question**

31 March- A few months ago, it may have seemed silly to wear a face mask during a trip to the grocery store. And in fact, the mainline public health message in the U.S. from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been that most people don't need to wear masks. But as cases of the coronavirus have skyrocketed, there's new thinking about the benefits that masks could offer in slowing the spread. The CDC says it is now reviewing its



policy and may be considering a recommendation to encourage broader use. At the moment, the CDC website says the only people who need to wear a face mask are those who are sick or are caring for someone who is sick and unable to wear a mask. But in an interview with NPR on Monday, CDC Director Robert Redfield said that the agency is taking another look at the data around mask use by the general public. [NPR](#)

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## The medical news site that saw the coronavirus coming months ago

31 March- On New Year's Eve, Helen Branswell, a reporter at the science and medical news website Stat, was finishing an article about the development of an elusive Ebola vaccine when she got an inkling of her next big story. "Hopefully this is nothing out of the ordinary," she wrote on Twitter, adding a link to a report of an "unexplained pneumonia" in central China. Two days later, she tweeted a South China Morning Post article about the outbreak and wrote, "Not liking the look of this." Stat published Ms. Branswell's first article on the "growing cluster of unexplained pneumonia cases" on Jan. 4. There was some indication, she reported, of "a new virus, and perhaps even a new coronavirus." Stat, a digital publication in Boston founded in 2015, was early to a story that would dominate the news. In January, a month before the first confirmed case of unknown origin in the United States, the site published articles on the coronavirus's ability to be spread by asymptomatic carriers; how it could test President Trump's penchant for undermining established science; and the determination by experts that containing it "may not be feasible." "We have realized this was big and have thrown a lot of resources at it, in Stat terms," Ms. Branswell said. [The New York Times](#)

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### INFLUENZA

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## AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

Week 12 (15 March 2020— 21 March 2020):

NORTHCOM- ILI activity remained high. Influenza A accounted for over half of the positive influenza specimens. Among subtyped influenza A specimens, A(H1N1) has predominated.

EUCOM- ILI activity remained high. Among positive influenza specimens, the majority continued to be influenza A.

INDOPACOM- ILI activity remained high. The majority of positive influenza specimens continued to be influenza A. Among subtyped influenza A specimens, the majority were A(H1N1).

SOUTHCOM- ILI activity increased to low. The majority of influenza specimens continued to be influenza A (not subtyped).

CENTCOM- ILI activity increased to high. [DHA -Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch top of page...](#)

## **APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report**

Week ending 21 March 2020 (week 12): During week 12, there were 5,787 specimens submitted for testing, which represents a 4% decrease from week 11. Influenza A represented the majority (55%) of positive specimens submitted for testing. At 5%, PHC-A had the highest percent-positive value for specimens tested for influenza A compared to other regions. Additionally, PHC-A accounted for the greatest number of positive influenza A specimens (n=66). Fifty-nine percent of positive influenza A specimens were from non-AD beneficiaries. Beneficiaries younger than 18 years old comprised the majority (n=96) of total positive respiratory specimens, and was followed by individuals 18 to 29 years of age (n=55). Ten influenza-associated hospitalizations were reported in week 12. [APHC](#)

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## **CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report**

Key Updates for Week 12, ending March 21, 2020: Laboratory confirmed flu activity as reported by clinical laboratories continues to decrease; however, influenza-like illness activity is increasing. Influenza severity indicators remain moderate to low overall, but hospitalization rates differ by age group, with high rates among children and young adults. [CDC](#)

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## **WHO: Influenza Update**

30 March 2020 - Update number 364, based on data up to 15 March 2020:

- In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, influenza activity appeared to decrease overall.
- In North America, influenza activity continued to decline but influenza-like illness (ILI) levels remained elevated.
- In Europe, influenza activity decreased in most countries, but increased ILI activity was reported in some countries.
- In Central Asia, influenza activity was low.
- In Northern Africa, decreasing influenza activity was reported in Tunisia.
- In Western Asia, influenza activity was low in most reporting countries.
- In East Asia, ILI and influenza activity returned to baseline levels.
- In the Caribbean and Central American countries, influenza activity was reported in some countries. In Mexico, influenza activity continued to decrease, with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09

and B-Victoria lineage viruses co-circulating.

-In tropical South American countries, influenza activity decreased from the previous reporting period.

-In tropical Africa, influenza detections were low in most reporting countries.

-In Southern Asia, increased ILI activity was reported in Bhutan.

-In South East Asia, influenza activity decreased across reporting countries.

-In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels.

-Worldwide, seasonal influenza A viruses accounted for the majority of detections. [WHO top of page...](#)

#### **VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY**

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### **First recorded EIEC outbreak in Sweden linked to leafy greens**

1 April- Researchers have shed more light on the first recorded enteroinvasive E. coli (EIEC) outbreak in Sweden. The outbreak in the county of Halland in 2017 had 83 self-reported infections and one secondary case attributed to household transmission, based on a study published in the journal Eurosurveillance. Leafy greens were suspected to be behind the outbreak as this item was in a number of dishes associated with illnesses. There was no microbiological evidence to identify the source or vehicle of infection, but contaminated salad greens have been linked to previous EIEC outbreaks. All five staff members at the conference and hotel venue that met the case definition had symptom onset at least one day after the first reported case among venue visitors. The outbreak was identified because of the high number of people ill during a short time and as they all could quickly be linked to the same venue. Two cases and one household contact were laboratory-confirmed. [Food Safety News](#)

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### **Le Napoléon firm cheese recalled because of Listeria risk**

27 March- The Canadian company Fromagerie Blackburn is recalling "Le Napoléon – Firm Cheese" from the marketplace because of possible Listeria monocytogenes contamination...This recall of these products was triggered by the company. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is conducting a food safety investigation, which may lead to the recall of additional products. If other high-risk products are recalled, the CFIA will notify the public through updated Food Recall Warnings. The CFIA is verifying that the industry is removing the recalled products from the marketplace. There have been no reported illnesses associated with the consumption of these products. Anyone who thinks they might be sick from consuming a recalled product should seek medical attention. According

to CFIA consumers should check to see if you have the recalled products in their home. Recalled products should be thrown out or returned to the store where they were purchased. [Food Safety News](#)

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## WELLNESS

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### How does the coronavirus pandemic affect children's mental health?

25 March- With an increasing number of states issuing shelter-in-place ordinances in response to the coronavirus pandemic, more and more Americans are following self-isolation and social distancing practices in an attempt to help flatten the curve. As a result, some may notice an impact on their mental health, with one psychotherapist saying, "The unprecedented stress of what we're all going through right now is felt by all." And that stress can be felt by children, too. Fox News spoke with Dr. Tali Raviv, the associate director of the Center for Childhood Resilience at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, about how the pandemic could affect children's mental health. [Fox News](#)

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### How you can make your home safer

27 March- As cases of the coronavirus increase across the country, many states are advising people to stay at home as much as possible and abide by social distancing measures. Though mandates vary from state to state, millions of Americans are minimizing their exposure to other people and preventing the spread of the virus across communities by not leaving the house, other than for necessities like grocery shopping. So, now that you're at home, what should you be doing to safeguard your residence against coronavirus? There are some simple practices you can follow to help reduce the risk of being exposed to or spreading the virus. [The New York Times](#)

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### Mental health and coping during COVID-19

31 March- As an increasingly larger number of people are home due to telework and other COVID-19 restrictions, how does one focus on their mental health during a worldwide pandemic? "People are social animals and we're used to being around others," said Lt. Col. Emile Wijnans, the director of psychological health for Regional Health Command Europe. "If you're feeling isolated, do what you can to reach out to people on a regular basis. This is also an opportunity to reach out to folks that you haven't touched base with in a long time." According to the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, stressors during a period of social distancing/quarantine can include: frustration and boredom related to the isolation, inadequate supplies and access to regular medical care, insufficient information, and fears

about becoming infected and/or infecting others. "It's very easy to have a misperception of things," said Wijnans. "I recommend you limit your exposure to social media and the news. You can alleviate stress by focusing on the things that are positive and what you can control." The CSTS also recommends that people take time to take care of themselves. "It's important to get what rest you can, eat well and exercise when possible," said Wijnans. "These are normal things we tell people, but they really do in fact help." Wijnans also has recommendations on how to support children during this time. "Maintain a structured schedule that they would be having at school," he said. "Make sure to talk to you kids about coronavirus using fact-based, science-based sources. Try to model for them a healthy response to what are uncertain circumstances." [Army.mil](#)

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## **USAFRICOM**

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### **Ebola in the DRC: 'Outbreak would appear to be coming under control'**

30 March- The World Health Organization (WHO) says the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) continues to remain stable, with no new cases and deaths recorded during the reporting week. This is the 40th consecutive day without reporting new confirmed EVD cases. During the last 21 days (from 8 to 28 March 2020), there have been no confirmed cases of EVD reported. Among the 29 affected health zones, 28 have not reported confirmed cases in the past 42 days. With no confirmed reported cases in the past 21 days, this outbreak of EVD would appear to be coming under control, WHO notes. However, due to challenges related to continued insecurity and population displacement in previous hotspots, limited access to some affected communities, and potential shortages of resources amidst other local and global emergencies, there remains a high risk of re-emergence of the virus. Therefore, it is critical to maintain surveillance and response operations in the period leading up to the declaration of the end of the outbreak, as well as after the declaration. A total of 3,453 EVD cases, including 3,310 confirmed and 143 probable cases have been reported since the outbreak began in August 2018. As of 28 March 2020, a total of 2,273 deaths were recorded, including 2,130 among confirmed cases, resulting in a case fatality ratio among confirmed cases of 64% (2 130/3 310). [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Pakistan COVID-19 update: Cases near 1,500, UNICEF ships PPE

28 March- The Pakistan Ministry of Health is reporting 1,495 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country through Saturday. The bulk of the cases have been reported in Punjab (557) and Sindh (469) provinces. Nationally, 12 deaths have been reported. This week, UNICEF successfully shipped 14 metric tons of PPE items to Pakistan to protect frontline health workers including 114,300 surgical masks, 12,681 gowns and 449,868 gloves. In addition, a Chinese medical team & supplies arrived at Islamabad today. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Pakistan records two additional polio cases

28 March- Pakistan reported two additional cases of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in Sindh province this past week. This brings the number of 2020 cases in Pakistan to 32 and globally to 34 (2 cases in Afghanistan). In addition to the new WPV1 cases, a number of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) cases were reported in Africa: Angola (2), Cameroon (1), Chad (5) and Ethiopia (3). The COVID-19 emergency means that many aspects of the polio eradication program will be affected. In light of the situation, the Polio Oversight Board (POB) has come up with a set of recommendations. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Italy sees 812 more coronavirus deaths, but new cases fall steeply

30 March- The death toll from an outbreak of coronavirus in Italy has risen by 812 in the last 24 hours, the Civil Protection Agency said on Monday, reversing two days of declines. Italy, the world's hardest hit country which accounts for more than a third of all global fatalities, saw its total death tally rise to 11,591 since the outbreak emerged in northern regions on Feb. 21. More positively, the number of new cases rose by just 4,050, the lowest amount since March 17, reaching a total of 101,739. However, the decline in new infections may be partly explained by a reduction in the number of tests, which were the fewest for six days. Italians have been under nationwide lockdown for three weeks and officials said the restrictions, which were due to end on Friday, look certain for at least two more weeks. "We have to agree on this with other regions, but I think we are talking about (maintaining the block) until at least mid-April," Attilio Fontana, head of the worst-affected Lombardy region, told reporters. The governor of the southern region of Puglia said on Saturday the restrictions should stay until May. [Reuters](#)

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## Sweden health officials propose increased restrictions on public gatherings as COVID-19 case count rises

29 March- Sweden's Public Health Authority, or Folkhalsomyndigheten reported that the number of COVID-19 cases in the country has risen to 3,700 as of Sunday. This includes over 2,000 cases reported in the Stockholm Region. 110 fatalities have been reported in the country. The increase in cases has prompted health officials to propose that the government should further limit the permitted number of participants at public gatherings and public events, from 500 to 50. The spread of infection has now reached such a level that the Public Health Authority considers that further restrictions may be justified. The Public Health Authority therefore proposes that the government lower the permitted limit for the number of participants from 500 to 50 people. For events not covered by the regulation, the Public Health Authority also intends to prepare general advice, that is, general recommendations, to protect against the spread of infection. These are new measures that, together with those we already have in place, can further slow the rate of increase in the spread of infection in society. The purpose is to protect the fragile groups and to reduce the burden on healthcare, says Director General Johan Carlson. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Coronavirus cradle Wuhan partly reopens after lockdown

28 March- The city in China where the coronavirus pandemic began, Wuhan, has partially re-opened after more than two months of isolation. Crowds of passengers were pictured arriving at Wuhan train station on Saturday. People are being allowed to enter but not leave, according to reports. Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, saw more than 50,000 coronavirus cases. At least 3,000 people in Hubei died from the disease. But numbers have fallen dramatically, according to China's figures. On Saturday the province reported 54 new cases emerging the previous day - which it said were all imported. As it battles to control cases coming from abroad, China has announced a temporary ban on all foreign visitors, even if they have visas or residence permits. It is also limiting Chinese and foreign airlines to one flight per week, and flights must not be more than 75% full. [BBC News](#)

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## India: 4th death due to 'monkey fever' reported in Shivamogga, Karnataka

31 March- Health officials in India are reporting the fourth death in 2020 from Kyasanur Forest disease (KFD), or monkey fever, in Shivamogga district in Karnataka state. The individual, a 65-year-old farmer suffered from high fever, ache in joints, and bleeding in noses and gums. KFD was laboratory confirmed. The victim contracted KFD though he was vaccinated. The vaccine for Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD) has a 62% effectiveness rate for individuals who receive two doses. As many as 124 positive cases of KFD have been reported in Shivamogga district since the beginning of the year, including 101 cases from Tirthahalli taluk and 23 cases from Sagar taluk. KFD was first reported from the Kyasanur Forest in the eastern foothills of the Western Ghats in the then-named Mysore State in southern India. The virus was first isolated from the blood of a monkey found dead in the forest and was later determined to be spread by the bite of a type of tick called *Haemaphysalis spingera*. This tick is widely distributed in the tropical forests of peninsular India and neighboring Sri Lanka. The disease is endemic in several of the southwestern states of India, including Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Goa, but since 2012, it has been reported in new areas beyond this core endemic region. On average, there have been 400-500 cases of KFD in India every year since 1957. Infected individuals experience high fever, chills, severe headache, sensitivity to light, and often diarrhea, vomiting, and bleeding of the gums, nose, and gastrointestinal bleeding. In this regard, KFD is considered a "hemorrhagic fever," similar to its more famous relative, Ebola. Because there is no specific treatment for KFD, the mortality rate has been reported to be 4-15%, greatly depending on the level of supportive care the patients receive. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Malaysia: Sarawak reports 1st rabies death of 2020

30 March- Malaysia health officials have reported the first human rabies case and death in Sarawak in 2020. The case is a 5-year-old girl from Bandar Sibul, Sarawak who was attacked by dogs and bitten on the face earlier this month. The bite wound was not washed with running water and soap immediately after the incident. She was taken to the hospital the same day and received anti-tetanus vaccine injections, Rabies Immunoglobulin (RIG) injections and two (2) anti-rabies vaccine injection dosages while being treated at Sibul Hospital. She was soon released and received her 3rd rabies vaccine on Mar. 16. On March 24, 2020, she was taken to receive treatment at a Community Clinic in Bandar Sibul due to fever and so on to Sibul Hospital on March 25, 2020 due to pharyngitis and difficulty swallowing water and hallucinating. She died on March 25 from rabies encephalitis. It is the first rabies case reported this year and is the 23rd case for Sarawak rabies outbreaks since July 31, 2017. The last rabies case reported in Sarawak is November 8, 2019. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Philippines COVID-19 cases nearly double in 48 hours

29 March- In a follow-up on the COVID-19 outbreak in the Philippines, the Department of Health (DOH) is reporting 1,418 total cases, nearly double the cases reported on Friday. Municipalities reporting the most cases include Quezon City, San Juan City, Manila, Pasig City and Makati City, according to DOH data. The death toll in the country has risen to 71, for a 5 percent case fatality rate. However, officials with Malacañang say the implementation of month-long enhanced community quarantine in Luzon has helped the government prevent the further transmission of COVID-19. Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo believed that COVID-19 cases in the country would have increased further had President Rodrigo failed to impose a Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine. Panelo issued the statement after he learned that some critics claimed that the latest number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the country shows that enhanced community quarantine is "ineffective in flattening the curve." [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Canada: Toronto- Reports 118 new COVID-19 cases as total reaches 457, Quebec is hardest hit province

28 March- Officials with Toronto Public Health reported 118 additional confirmed COVID-19 cases on Friday, bringing the city's total to 457. Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health said, "These numbers are a significant increase and I expect that we will continue to see similar patterns in the coming days ahead". There are 29 cases hospitalized, 15 in ICU. Approximately 25% are attributed to community spread and 18 people have recovered.

Toronto has seen four deaths to date. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## **U.S.: Map- Tracking the spread of the coronavirus**

30 March- Since the first U.S. case of the coronavirus was identified in Washington state on Jan. 21, health officials have identified more than 140,000 cases across the United States and more than 2,500 deaths. By March 17, the virus had expanded its presence from several isolated clusters in Washington, New York and California to all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Social distancing is widely seen as the best available means to "flatten the curve of the pandemic," a phrase that epidemiologists use to describe slowing down the spread of infection. This approach can save lives by keeping local health care systems from being overwhelmed. In response to mounting cases, states are closing schools, banning large gatherings and urging people to stay home when possible. On March 16, President Trump announced new guidelines urging Americans to avoid discretionary travel, going out to eat and gathering in groups of more than 10 people. [NPR](#)

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## **U.S.: New Orleans- COVID-19 cases near 1500, City launches PPE drive**

30 March- The City of New Orleans Health Department has reported 1480 coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19 cases to date, including 86 deaths. On Saturday, the City of New Orleans launched a week-long personal protective equipment (PPE) drive for first responders, who are in desperate need of additional PPE. "Our firefighters, police, and especially Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel are on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis in New Orleans," said New Orleans Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness Director Collin Arnold. "Like many places around the world, orders of PPE equipment made back in November 2019 have yet to be filled and our supply is running low. Any additional equipment the public can donate at this time will help keep our first responders safe and out on the streets." Individuals or businesses in the New Orleans region who have PPE and are willing to spare it for a first responder are asked to drop items at one of three re-purposed Salvation Army drop boxes adjacent to New Orleans Fire Department (NOFD) firehouses. Businesses that may have these items in their inventory include construction companies, non-emergency medical providers like dentist offices, tattoo parlors, nail salons and spas, restaurants, and housekeeping companies. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## **U.S.: New York- Launches online portal for volunteer health worker deployment, COVID-19 case count reaches 75,000**

31 March- Today, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the State is launching an online portal that will help connect hospitals and healthcare facilities across the state with the nearly 80,000 healthcare workers who have volunteered to work on a temporary basis during the COVID-19 pandemic. The portal will prioritize the deployment of workers to hospitals with the greatest need; volunteers are expected to be deployed as early as this Thursday. He also said a new hospital network Central Coordinating Team that will help facilitate a more coordinated and strategic approach among the state's healthcare system in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. The coordinating team will help implement the statewide public-private hospital plan to share information, supplies, staff and patients among hospitals across the State. The team will be responsible for organizing upstate to downstate staffing; assisting Elmhurst Hospital and other stressed hospitals; setting patient thresholds for hospitals; organizing patient transfers to other hospitals and the USNS Comfort; coordinating State-City stockpiles and individual hospital stockpiles; and facilitating staffing recruitment. New York officials confirmed 9,298 additional cases of novel coronavirus, bringing the statewide total to 75,795 confirmed cases, of which more than 43,000 are reported in New York City. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## **Jamaica reports two additional COVID-19 cases, both with travel history to New York**

30 March- Jamaica health authorities reported two additional COVID-19 cases Sunday, bringing the island's total to 34. The new cases include:

- a 34 year-old female from St. James with a travel history from New York and
- a 74-year-old female from St. Catherine with a travel history from the New York.

The island has so far tested 292 samples, including tests for Severe Acute Respiratory Infections. Thirty-four (34) of the 292 tested positive and 253 tested negative. This represents a positivity yield of 11.6 percent. Five (5) results are pending and the results will be made available. In the meantime, the Ministry is making headway with increasing its capacity to test for COVID-19. The extraction process of testing at the National Influenza Centre is being automated for greater efficiency and this will increase the capacity of the number of samples tested to more than 100 daily. At the National Public Health Laboratory, a COBAS 6800 machine is being installed. In the next three weeks, equipment installation and training of staff will be completed and the facility will be able to complement the work done at the National Influenza Centre with the capacity to test approximately 380 samples

per eight hour day. The Ministry is also to receive additional PCR testing machines from the International Atomic Energy Agency that will further increase the island's testing capacity.

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