

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Whole-of-Government Response

Saturday, March 28, 2020

**"I CAN TELL YOU THIS WEEKEND, WE WILL BE REPORTING ON AGGRESSIVE EFFORTS THAT OUR SUPPLY STABILIZATION TASK FORCE AT FEMA IS TAKING TO IMPORT MEDICAL SUPPLIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD.
– VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE**

Topline Briefing Points and Messages

- The federal government continues taking aggressive and proactive steps to address the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The health and safety of the American people is our top priority.
- The American people play a key role in the nation's [15 Days to Slow the Spread](#) campaign to help slow the virus' spread and keep our most high-risk populations safe.
 - For the latest updates and information on how to protect yourself and what to do if you think you are sick is available at www.coronavirus.gov.
 - Apple and CDC, together with the White House and FEMA, launched a [new website](#) and app with a COVID-19 screening tool and resources to help people protect their health.
- Under the direction of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, FEMA, HHS and our federal partners are working with state, local, tribal and territorial governments to execute a whole of government response to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and protect the public.
- As of March 28, FEMA, via the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), has delivered, or is shipping: 11.6 million N-95 respirators, 26 million surgical masks, 5.2 million face shields, 4.3 million surgical gowns, 22 million gloves, 132, 000 coveralls and 8,100 ventilators. We are sending more every day, and we are working nonstop to acquire or produce even more.
- Today, the US-NS *Comfort* will be underway today from Norfolk, VA to New York, NY.
 - The *Comfort* will arrive at Pier 90 in Manhattan on Monday – only approximately a mile away from the Javits Convention Center where the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are actively constructing a 2,910-bed alternate care facility.
 - The *Comfort* is equipped with 12 operating rooms, 1,000 hospital beds, a medical laboratory, a pharmacy, an optometry lab, digital radiology services, a CAT-scan, two oxygen producing plants, a helicopter deck and a crew of nearly 1,200 U.S. military personnel.
 - The crew onboard the *Comfort* will provide critically needed medical surge capacity for New York Metropolitan area. Their mission will be to care for New Yorkers who do not have COVID-19, but who require urgent medical care.
- Seventeen states and four tribes have issued stay at home orders.

- On March 22, President Trump directed the Secretary of Defense to allow the states of California, New York and Washington use of the National Guard in a Title 32 status to support state and local emergency assistance efforts.
 - This allows the governors to activate the National Guard to support their disaster response efforts, on a fully reimbursable basis and under their respective command and control, if that becomes necessary.
 - Additional states can request this assistance and those requests will be considered.
- On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a nationwide emergency pursuant to Sec. 501(b) of Stafford Act to avoid governors needing to request individual emergency declarations.
- In addition, the states of California, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, the commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the territory of Guam were approved for major disaster declarations to assist with additional needs identified in these states.

Medical Hotspots

New York/New York City

- FEMA and HHS are working with the Governor of New York, and New York City officials to set up a 1,000-bed medical station at the Javits Center in Manhattan to increase local healthcare capabilities. Once all phases of construction are complete, the Javits Convention Center will have a capacity of 2,910 beds.
 - The station will care for patients with non-COVID-19 healthcare needs.
 - Additional temporary hospital sites are being worked, including a 600-bed capacity nursing home facility in Brooklyn, and numerous floors of a high-rise building on Wall Street.
- FEMA issued a \$350 million Mission Assignment to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for construction of alternate care facilities in New York. Four sites have been selected.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded contracts three New York state priorities for alternate care facility conversions at State University (SUNY) Stony Brook, SUNY Old Westbury, and for the Westchester Community Center.
 - In total, the alternative care facilities in New York will expand hospital capacity by approximately 6,000 beds.
- At the request of New York state, FEMA issued a \$6 million Mission Assignment to HHS to provide round the clock medical staff to care for non-critical patients in the state.
- The U.S. Navy hospital ship Comfort will depart today from Norfolk, Virginia, for New York City, providing critically needed medical surge capacity for the New York Metropolitan area.
- Supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile have arrived in New York and are being distributed to medical facilities in the most impacted areas. Supplies delivered include 2,000 ventilators for the State and 2,400 ventilators for New York City.

California

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed the assessment of eight state-selected facilities to develop large-scale, supplemental hospital space as the state works to expand existing hospital capacity by up to 50,000 beds.
 - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are scoping sites provided by the State of California for potential use as Alternate Care Facilities.
- The Department of Defense USNS Mercy hospital ship arrived in Los Angeles Friday and will care for patients with non-COVID-19 health needs to relieve strains on local hospital systems.
 - The Mercy expects to be operational within less than a week.
- Supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile have arrived in California and are being distributed to medical facilities throughout the state.
- FEMA completed the sale of 105 travel trailers to the state to support a State COVID-19 housing initiative for impacted individuals.
- On March 22, FEMA obligated \$32 million to the state of California to reimburse costs related to the COVID-19 response.

Washington

- Department of Defense sourced the 627th Hospital Center/10th Field Hospital to support COVID-19 response in Washington. The field hospital includes 148 bed capacity with ability to increase to 250 beds and 366 trained medical personnel
- Field hospital/alternate medical facility assessments are underway in Washington. Assessment teams will evaluate four potential sites for alternate medical facilities. Teams are comprised of members from DOD, USACE, FEMA, HHS, and state, county, and local officials.

Louisiana/New Orleans

- Three Community Based Testing Sites are open and operational in New Orleans.
- An epidemiology team from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) arrived at the Louisiana Emergency Operations Center on March 26.
- Additional support being sent to the state to increase state hospital capacity includes two 250-bed Federal Medical Stations and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers support for assessment and evaluation of alternative care facilities.
- On March 23, FEMA obligated \$31 million to the state of Louisiana to reimburse expenses for the response to COVID-19.

FEMA and HHS Response

- All 50 states, the District of Columbia, five territories and 13 tribes are working directly with FEMA under the nationwide emergency declaration for COVID-19.
 - States, tribal and territorial governments do not need to request separate emergency declarations to receive FEMA assistance under this nationwide declaration. A tribal government may choose to be a subrecipient under a state that has chosen to be a recipient of FEMA assistance, or choose to be a direct recipient of FEMA.

DAILY BRIEFING POINTS: COVID-19 WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

- FEMA activated all 10 Regional Response Coordination Centers to support ongoing response efforts across the country. Emergency operations centers in all states and territories are activated.
- It is important that requests for assistance, especially for critical supplies, get routed through the proper channels as soon as possible. The most efficient way to identify critical gaps and get results:
 - Consistent with the principle of locally executed, state managed, and federally supported response, requests for assistance at the local and county levels should first be routed to their respective state.
 - Any needs that cannot be met by the state or tribe should then be sent to the respective FEMA regional office. FEMA regions will direct requests to FEMA NRCC in Washington, D.C. for fulfillment.
- Federal agencies are working to meet demands for personal protective equipment (PPE) through new acquisition, DOD allocation and the Strategic National Stockpile.
 - The Centers for Disease Control released [personal protective equipment optimization strategies](#) for healthcare providers to optimize resources, deal with limited resources and make contingency plans or alternative strategies when supplies are limited.
- FEMA is working with HHS to deliver additional supplies and ventilators using its Logistics Supply Chain Management System to procure and track commodities to supplement state and tribal purchases.
 - On March 21, HHS awarded contracts to five companies to purchase approximately 600 million N95 respirators over the next 18 months. This purchase will encourage manufacturers to increase production of N95 respirators now, with a guarantee that companies will not be left with excess supplies if private sector orders are cancelled once the COVID-19 response subsides.
 - Additionally, a Request for Information has been issued to the private sector for ventilators.
 - FEMA issued a [request for quotation](#) on March 26, 2020, for vendors who have medical equipment and supplies to sell to the agency. The RFQ can be found on www.sam.gov.
 - FEMA is also expediting critical supplies from overseas to various locations within the U.S. Movement of supplies is expected to begin on Saturday, March 28.
- In response to concerns of undue financial hardships, FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program is extending the 30-day grace period for policies with expiration dates between February 13 and June 15 to 120 days.
 - Specifically, the grace period extension means that policyholders will be allowed to renew their policies up to 120 days after the expiration date without facing a lapse in coverage.
- As of March 27, 15 states, the District of Columbia, one tribe and one U.S. territory have sent a total of 61 text messages to cell phones containing information on COVID-19 via the Wireless Emergency Alert system, and 24 messages to broadcast stations via the Emergency Alert System.
- On March 24, HHS announced \$250 million in grants from the Administration for Community Living to help states, territories and tribes provide meals to older adults. Additionally, HHS awarded \$100 million to support HHS health resources and services administration-funded health centers across the country to address screening and testing needs, acquire medical supplies and boost telehealth capacity.

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- HHS also has funding available, including \$80 million dollars specifically identified for tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal health service providers.
- National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases mobilized a rapid research response to quickly develop effective countermeasures for COVID-19, including diagnostics, vaccines and treatments.

Community-Based Testing Sites

- To date, more than 685,000 tests have been performed for COVID-19 in state and local public health and commercial laboratories throughout the U.S.
- Federal officials and the U.S. Public Health Service are working closely with state, local and private sector partners to bolster testing capabilities and supplies. We're working to make testing more easily accessible to high risk populations: healthcare facility workers, and first responders. There are currently 92 sites open in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico.
- Community-based Testing Sites (CBTSs) are focused on testing our nation's frontline heroes, healthcare facility workers and first responders, who are working around the clock to provide care, compassion, and safety to Americans.
- It is critical to test healthcare facility workers and first responders who are concerned that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, because they need to know their status as soon as possible in order to prevent infecting individuals in their care.
- People without symptoms who have not been exposed to COVID-19 should not be tested.
- CBTSs are another tool for states, local public health systems and healthcare systems to use as they work together to stop the spread of COVID-19 in their communities.

Strategic National Stockpile

- The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) continues to ship medical equipment nationwide.
- FEMA is beginning to process another allocation of personal protective equipment (PPE) from the SNS and we expect it to arrive to the states over the course of the next week. These shipments will be sent across the country with prioritization given to areas in greatest need
- As of March 28, the SNS has delivered or is currently shipping the following personal protective equipment and supplies to support public health authorities across the U.S. and its territories:
 - 11.6 million N-95 respirators, 26 million surgical masks, 5.2 million face shields, 4.3 million surgical gowns, 22 million gloves, 132,000 coveralls and 8,100 ventilators.

Ventilator Guidance

- On March 24, the FDA issued an [Emergency Use Authorization \(EUA\) for Ventilators](#).
 - The EUA allows anesthesia gas machines and positive pressure breathing devices to be modified for use as ventilators.
- The new guidance will also assist health care personnel on how to use other ventilators like CPAP devices for sleep apnea, with COVID-19 patients in respiratory distress, as well as on shelf life of existing ventilators.

- Additionally, the FDA is providing information for manufacturers on adding production lines or alternative sites, like automobile manufacturers, for making more ventilators during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Defense Production Act

- On March 18, President Trump issued an [Executive Order](#) outlining use of the Defense Production Act (DPA) in response to COVID-19 and supplementing Executive Order 13603, which delegates DPA authority to federal agencies.
 - The order provides federal departments with the authority to take actions implementing the DPA, if and as necessary. This includes the ability to prioritize acceptance and fulfillment of contracts, allocate limited supplies, incentivize investment in additional production capacity, and enter voluntary agreements with industry partners that might otherwise be subject to antitrust laws.
- On March 27, President Trump directed the Secretary of Health and Human Services to use Defense Production Act authorities to require General Motors to accept, perform and prioritize federal contracts for ventilators.
 - The invocation of the DPA demonstrates that the President will not hesitate to use the full authority of the federal government to combat this crisis.
 - There continues to be an outpouring of support from the private sector, which has limited the need to use DPA.
- The President also signed an [Executive Order](#) on March 27 which clarifies and updates Presidential delegations to federal agencies under the Defense Production Act (DPA).
 - For the purposes of COVID-19 response, the EO delegates a number of DPA authorities jointly to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Secretary of Homeland Security (DHS).
 - The EO also assigns the Assistant to the President for Trade and Manufacturing Policy (Peter Navarro) as the National Defense Production Act Policy Coordinator.

Other Federal Agencies

- On March 24, the Department of Justice created [a national task force](#), designating a lead prosecutor in each of the 93 Offices of United States Attorneys across the nation to actively look for and act on hoarding and price gouging.
 - The task force is a result of the [March 23 Executive Order](#) and HHS determination under the Defense Production Act that certain personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical supplies are scarce.
- The National Guard is activated in 26 states, providing medical testing, assessments, logistics, planning and liaison support.
 - To date, more than 12,000 National Guard troops have activated to help with testing and other response efforts.
- The US Coast Guard is tracking eight cruise ships scheduled to arrive in the U.S. with approximately 11,000 passengers and crew in total.
- The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has published [guidance on essential critical infrastructure workers](#) during COVID-19 response.

DAILY BRIEFING POINTS: COVID-19 WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed 14 reconnaissance missions. More than 730 USACE personnel are activated to support the COVID-19 mission.
- The Small Business Administration is providing low-interest loans to small businesses and nonprofits severely impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The SBA also announced deferments on all SBA disaster loans from previous disasters, effective through Dec. 31.
- The U.S. Department of Labor announced the availability of up to \$100 million for Dislocated Worker Grants to help address the workforce-related impacts related to COVID-19.
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions for single family homeowners with FHA-insured mortgages for the next 60 days.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is delivering one million meals per week to children in rural areas who are out of school.
- The U.S. Department of Education announced all borrowers with federally held student loans will have zero interest rates for at least 60 days. Additionally, these borrowers will have the option to suspend their payments for at least two months to allow them greater flexibility.
- The Food and Drug Administration approved a Phase-3 clinical trial using a rheumatoid arthritis drug for treatment of severe COVID-19 pneumonia.
- The Department of Homeland Security has extended the REAL ID enforcement deadline to Oct. 1, 2021

Coping with Stress

- Stress during an infectious disease outbreak, like the COVID-19 pandemic, can cause fear and worry. You may feel overwhelmed by strong emotions.
- Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress.
- It's essential that during this time, as we make sure we are physically distancing ourselves from others, we keep up the social connection. This includes staying connected by phone, email, or chat in order to remain connected to family and friends.
- Helping others cope with their stress makes your community stronger.
- CDC has [recommendations](#) for things you can do to support yourself by managing your anxiety and stress.

Combating Disinformation and Rumors

- To help the American public distinguish between rumors and facts regarding the response to COVID-19, FEMA has created a Rumor Control page on FEMA.gov. The public can help control the spread of rumors by sharing our page: [fema.gov/coronavirus](https://www.fema.gov/coronavirus).
- Check the sources of information you see about COVID-19 by seeking out trusted, verified sources like www.coronavirus.gov or your state and local government's official accounts.
- Everyone can do their part to stop the spread of disinformation by doing three things; don't believe rumors, don't pass them along, and go to trusted sources of information to get the facts.

How to Help

- Following state, tribal and local officials' instructions to stay at home is an important way to help. Social distancing not only protects you, but it protects the people you care about.
 - Data show that older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
 - Staying home and limiting your interactions with people can break the chain of transmission and halt the spread of this new virus.
- Cash donations to the nonprofit of your choice IS THE BEST donation. Do not collect or distribute donations of supplies without understanding community needs.
- Businesses that have medical supplies or equipment to donate are asked to go to www.fema.gov and provide of the offer through our online medical supplies and equipment form.
- To sell medical supplies or equipment to the federal government, please submit a price quote under the [COVID-19 PPE and Medical Supplies Request for Quotation](#). Full details can be found in the solicitation ([Notice ID 70FA2020R00000011](#)).
- Licensed medical volunteers can offer their services by registering with [the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals](#). You can access a direct link to do so through fema.gov.

One thing people can do to help is to donate blood. Many blood drives have been cancelled, impacting the supply. Blood donation centers have the highest standards of safety and infection control. To find where you can donate blood, visit redcross.org.