

U.S. NEWS

# Cities, States Move To Tighten Rules, As U.S. Cases Surge

By ALLISON PRANG AND JENNIFER CALFAS

States and cities grappled with how to contain the coronavirus while trying to reopen their economies as the number of infections in the U.S. climbed to more than 3.8 million.

Amid a “steady increase in new cases,” Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot on Monday said the city is tightening restrictions on some businesses. Starting Friday, bars must stop indoor operations, restaurants and bars must limit table sizes to six people and gyms must cap indoor classes.

Chicago’s seven-day rolling average of cases a day was 233 on Sunday. Similar to many areas across the country, the city said infections have been rising among people between 18 and 29 years old, as social activity has increased.

“No one relishes making this move but it’s the right thing to do as we work to prevent a resurgence of Covid-19,” said Chicago Department of Health Commissioner Allison Arwady. “This virus has had a disproportionate impact on Black and Latinx individuals, many of whom are essential workers who have continued to go to work, and we can’t afford to see a resurgence.”

Chicago’s moves came one day after Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said his city is on the brink of returning to shutdown mode, as Los Angeles County saw its highest hospitalization rate since the outbreak occurred. California added San Francisco County to its watch list, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Monday. Cases and coronavirus-related hospitalizations have roughly doubled in San Francisco since mid-June, according to health-department data.

California’s watch list has grown to 33 counties, and includes the majority of the

state’s population. Mr. Newsom said last week that counties on the watch list would be starting the school year virtually.

California on Monday reported 6,846 new cases. Its seven-day average of new cases was 8,911 and the percentage of positive tests in the state during the past 14 days held at 74% from a week ago.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said Monday the city was stepping up enforcement after a weekend in which crowds of unmasked people gathered closely together in Queens. The city entered phase four Monday, but the mayor said the city is holding back on allowing museums, malls and indoor dining to reopen.

Educators in hard-hit Florida moved to halt the state’s school reopening plans. The Florida Education Association, the state’s largest teachers union, filed a lawsuit against Gov. Ron DeSantis and other state officials Monday, calling the reopening plans unsafe and warning of the potential health risks. A representative for Mr. DeSantis didn’t respond to a request to comment.

Mississippi State Health Officer Thomas Dobbs painted a dire picture of the situation in the state’s capital of Jackson. He said Monday that 31 legislators have contracted the virus and that there is only a single bed available in the intensive-care units of the metro area’s four biggest medical centers. Nine hospitals statewide are out of beds, Dr. Dobbs said.

Confirmed global deaths from the pandemic climbed to more than 606,000. The U.S. topped the chart with more than 140,000, according to Johns Hopkins University data. The number of confirmed infections surpassed 14.5 million, including 3.77 million in the U.S. and more than two million in Brazil.



Two kinds of immune response against Covid-19 were seen in a vaccine candidate from University of Oxford researchers and AstraZeneca.

AMANDA PEROBELLI/REUTERS

# Three Leading Vaccine Candidates Show Promise in Fresh Trial Data

By STU WOO AND PETER LOFTUS

The prospects of successfully developing a coronavirus vaccine as soon as this year were buoyed Monday when positive early trial data were reported for three of the world’s leading candidates.

Vaccines being developed by University of Oxford researchers and AstraZeneca PLC; Pfizer Inc. and German partner BioNTech SE; and China’s CanSino Biologics Inc. all reported fresh updates showing their shots generated immune responses and were safe to use.

The results cement the trio’s position among a handful of drugmakers and institutions at the vanguard of the race to develop a Covid-19 vaccine. About 160 vaccines are in development, including about 20 that have started human testing, according to the World Health Organization.

With a clutch of front-runners now having reported positive early results, attention is rapidly turning to larger, later-stage trials that would prove the efficacy of the shots in tens of thousands of volunteers and potentially lead to the treat-

ments’ approval for use.

For the Oxford vaccine, a study of 1,077 healthy adults showed the shot produced two kinds of immune response that could defend a body against Covid-19, according to results published in the Lancet, a British medical journal. The vaccine caused no serious side effects, the study found.

The early but promising Phase 1-2 results mean researchers remain on their schedule to have the shot—described by the WHO’s chief scientist last month as the world’s most-advanced vaccine candidate—ready for mass production as soon as September.

Separately, Pfizer together with BioNTech on Monday announced early positive results from a trial in Germany, which supported results from a corresponding U.S. trial. The pair said the small study of 60 patients showed their lead vaccine candidate led to high levels of antibodies for coronavirus, although some study subjects had flulike symptoms and injection-site reactions.

The most advanced results to date for an experimental coronavirus vaccine were published Monday in the Lancet,

for the second study of a shot codeveloped by CanSino Biologics and the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology. It was the first time a stand-alone Phase 2 study for a coronavirus vaccine had been published in a peer-reviewed journal.

The study of more than 500 volunteers found the vaccine was safe and induced significant immune responses in the majority of people after a single shot. Some people receiving the vaccine experienced fever, fatigue and injection-site pain, most of which were mild or moderate, the researcher said.

All three vaccine candidates remain unproven. They are poised to enter large-scale clinical trials designed to show whether the shots safely protect people from Covid-19, which could begin to yield answers in a few months. Positive results could support the availability of initial doses by the end of this year.

Researchers for Oxford are already conducting much wider Phase 3 trials of several thousand volunteers in the U.K., Brazil and South Africa, with a trial for 30,000 people in the U.S. scheduled to begin in August.

“There is still much work to be done before we can confirm if our vaccine will help manage the Covid-19 pandemic, but these early results hold promise,” Oxford researcher Sarah Gilbert said.

The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is scheduled to begin a major U.S.-based clinical trial by the end of this month, as is another candidate co-designed by Moderna Inc. and the National Institutes of Health.

CanSino researchers also have said, alongside Monday’s data, that they plan to start a Phase 3 study as soon as possible. One potential issue with the CanSino vaccine, however, is that it incorporates a different virus, an adenovirus, that serves as a sort of carrier for the portion of the vaccine that is intended to trigger an immune response against the coronavirus.

Some participants in the study had pre-existing immunity to the adenovirus, which seemed to mute the immune responses against the coronavirus. Researchers said it might be necessary to provide an additional dose to people with pre-existing immunity to the adenovirus.

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