

17 April 2020

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



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Avoid insecticide-treated uniform fabric for DIY coronavirus masks, Marine Corps and Air Force say

14 April- The Marines and Air Force have warned do-it-yourself mask makers to avoid using military uniforms treated with insect repellent or fire retardant due to possible health risks. Protective face coverings are mandatory in many closed settings across the U.S. military as one measure aimed at curbing the spread of coronavirus. Manufactured masks are in short supply and the military has approved versions of the homemade variety. The use of uniform materials to make custom masks has been popular among service members after photos and instructions on how to create the masks were shared on military-oriented social media sites. However, Marines face possible “toxicological exposure to permethrin via inhalation,” if they wear face protection made from camouflage uniforms treated with the potent insecticide, according to an April 8 post on the III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, official Facebook page. III MEF posted the warning based on a Defense Department safety bulletin, according to the message. Permethrin protects troops from diseases such as mosquito-borne malaria and West Nile virus and tick-borne Lyme disease, while in garrison, training and in non-combat deployed environments worldwide, according to the Army Public Health Center. [Stars & Stripes](#)

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Military hospital dials in virtual healthcare to combat COVID-19

13 April- Deb Deja’s follow-up visit with her provider at Brooke Army Medical Center was fast approaching when COVID-19 hit the news and the city. With a citywide stay-home order in place but pressing questions for her doctor, Deja became concerned by the thought of holding off on the appointment until a later date. When the call came to offer her a virtual appointment instead, Deja jumped at the opportunity. “I was very happy to do it,” she said. “My trip each way is 30 to 45 minutes so it was very convenient.” Her three-month follow up took place last week via phone. “The initial contact person asked all the questions just as if I was there in person and my doctor answered all of my questions completely,” Deja said. “I wouldn’t hesitate to participate in a virtual appointment again.” Virtual medicine is a globally burgeoning field that’s exploded in recent weeks due to COVID-19 spread concerns and stay-at-home city and state orders. At BAMC, traditional face-to-face appointments for most routine care have increasingly shifted to virtual care to ensure social distancing as well as patient and provider safety. Reducing COVID Exposure BAMC has been leveraging every virtual asset to its fullest extent over the past month, starting with the San Antonio Military Health System COVID-19 Nurse Information Line, where nurses administer an initial COVID screening, and the Central Appointment Management Office, which offers telemedicine appointments for primary care needs. [DVIDS](#)

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APHC 2019 Novel Coronavirus Updates

This site provides Army-specific information and communication resources related to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The resources and tools available on this site may be shared with, tailored for, and/or used to create informational and educational materials for Army beneficiaries.



Troops with hardships, essential positions will receive priority once military moves restart

12 April- Priority for military moves will go to personnel with hardships and essential positions once the Defense Department's travel restrictions are lifted, the military's senior enlisted adviser said Friday. "Every single service right now is developing plans of actions to make sure that we properly prioritize and move people," Ramon Colon-Lopez, the senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Friday during a Facebook town hall. The two 60-day, stop-movement orders put in place by Defense Secretary Mark Esper in March halted military moves and nonessential travel for service members, their families and other Defense Department personnel due to the worldwide coronavirus outbreak. The travel restriction order for the United States ends May 11 and the one for overseas travel ends May 23. The stop-movement orders have affected thousands of families who were preparing to move. Stories about military families who had already shipped their household goods or had signed contracts for a home at their new duty station have highlighted the unanticipated financial strains on service members. [Stars & Stripes](#)

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Veterans' remote mental health appointments skyrocket amid coronavirus outbreak

13 April- Remote mental health care use among Veterans Affairs patients jumped dramatically last month as normal medical care appointments were disrupted and veterans forced into self-isolation because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Most significant were mental health care check-ins and consultations conducted over the phone. In February, those totaled about 40,000 appointments. In March, they topped 154,000, a nearly four-fold increase. Department officials also said the number of mental health appointments conducted through online video chats with physicians rose from about 20,000 in February to 34,000 in March, an increase of 70 percent. Another 2,700 online video group therapy appointments were conducted in March, a nearly 200-percent increase from the previous month. VA officials have already reported significant increases in use of the Veterans Crisis Line, although they said many of the additional callers are not facing suicidal thoughts. Instead, numerous veterans and family members have called for information on existing resources, or for help obtaining alternative mental health care programs. In a statement, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said that the department's "early embrace of new technology" is helping veterans. [Military Times](#)

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Abortion clinics: Pandemic boosts demand, heightens stress

13 April- The coronavirus outbreak has fueled attempts to ban abortions in some states, but providers where the procedure remains available report increased demand, often from women distraught over economic stress and health concerns linked to the pandemic. Some clinics are seeing patients who traveled hundreds of miles from states such as Texas, which has banned abortions during much of the pandemic on grounds they are nonessential. Dr. Allison Cowett of Family Planning Associates in Chicago said one recent patient was a teen who drove from Texas with her mother. In Atlanta, Dr. Marissa Lapedis said her clinic accommodated a woman who received her initial abortion consultation in Texas but flew to Georgia when the Texas ban postponed a second visit to receive the abortion pill. An influx of women from Texas contributed to the upsurge of abortions at Burkhart's clinic in Wichita. She said it performed 252 abortions in March, up from 90 in March 2019. Dr. Jen Villavicencio, an abortion provider in Michigan, predicts that demand for abortions will continue to increase during the pandemic. The pandemic has prompted Planned Parenthood, the national's largest abortion provider, to make adjustments. In New York City, the epicenter of the outbreak in the U.S., Planned Parenthood has modified medication abortion procedures to minimize travel and potential COVID-19 exposure for patients and staff. [Fox News](#)

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CDC report says people in four key cities are listening to stay at home orders

13 April- People in four key cities are listening to orders to stay home, according to a report issued Monday by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "When you put in these social distancing measures, they do seem to work," said study coauthor Kathleen Ethier, leader of the CDC's community mitigation task force for the Covid-19 response. While there are early indications that social distancing has helped slow the spread of the coronavirus, experts warn that if people don't continue to adhere to the orders, the virus could surge again in some areas. The CDC report looked at data in New York City, Seattle, New Orleans and San Francisco, four cities with substantial numbers of coronavirus patients early in the outbreak that mandated stay at home orders in mid- to late-March. It found that, in all four places, close to 80% of people were leaving home on February 26. And by April 1, that declined between 20 percentage points and 40 percentage points in each city, with mobility decreasing each time a new social distancing order was issued, starting with bans on mass gatherings, and then later restaurant and school closures and finally stay at home orders. "They didn't leave their home at any point for any reason. They didn't go outside. That's significant," Ethier said. The CDC tracked mobility by looking at whether devices such as cell phones were brought more than 500 feet from the places they usually

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.

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spend the night. Using anonymized publicly available data from a company called SafeGraph, the CDC looked at phones, tablets and watches belonging to between 3.6% and 6.4% of the population in each city. That means anyone who just took a walk during the day would be counted as not staying at home. [CNN](#)

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Coronavirus pandemic sets up potential breakout moment for virtual mental health care

13 April- With the coronavirus pandemic causing unprecedented levels of stress and grief, companies offering virtual mental health care say they're seeing a massive surge in interest — and are scrambling to meet that demand by introducing new services, accelerating launch timelines, and bringing more staff on board. Covid-19 could prove to be a breakout moment for these businesses, which had been trying to address the shortage of in-person mental health care by providing virtual coaching, monitoring, and educational content long before the coronavirus outbreak. If the companies can bring in more users and corporate customers now, they might convince them to stick around after the pandemic is over. But that depends on whether the companies — whose mental health offerings have been relatively small in scale up until now — can handle the uptick in demand. Most of these companies make money by charging employers and health plans to provide mental health services to their workers and members. Other startups charge individual users an out-of-pocket fee. Many are offering some of their services and content for free during the pandemic. Take Ginger, a San Francisco startup that uses messaging and video to connect people with its army of hundreds of behavioral health coaches, therapists, and psychiatrists. The company mostly sells its services to large employers who pay for their workers to get access to Ginger. [STAT News](#)

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COVID-19 testing: FDA approves saliva collection test from Rutgers

13 April- The FDA has granted emergency use authorization (EUA) to Rutgers' RUCDR Infinite Biologics and its collaborators for a new collection approach that utilizes saliva as the primary test biomaterial for the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, the first such approval granted by the federal agency. The new saliva collection method, which RUCDR developed in partnership with Spectrum Solutions and Accurate Diagnostic Labs (ADL), will allow for broader population screening than the current method of nose and throat swabs. "The impact of this approval is significant," said Andrew Brooks, chief operating officer and director of technology development at RUCDR, who also is a professor in the School of Arts and Sciences Department of Genetics at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. "It means we no longer have to put health care professionals at risk for infection by performing nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal collections. We can preserve precious personal protective equipment for use in patient care instead of testing. We can significantly increase the

number of people tested each and every day as self-collection of saliva is more quick and scalable than swab collections. All of this combined will have a tremendous impact on testing in New Jersey and across the United States." Soon after the Rutgers-ADL team received notification from the FDA on Saturday, the White House's COVID-19 testing task force called Brooks to offer congratulations and support and to ask about any specific hurdles to expanding testing and enabling other laboratories to benefit from the accomplishment. Shortly after the White House call, the research team was contacted by chief executive officers of some of the world's largest life sciences companies that are involved in COVID-19 testing. "I have spoken with these companies' leadership to not only share knowledge but to create opportunities for continuing to help innovate during this crisis," Brooks said. "We will work closely with these new partners, the FDA and the White House task force to leverage everything Rutgers has to offer to not only help our community but also make a global impact." Rutgers University President Robert Barchi called the new saliva test a "herculean effort that is great for the country and the world and by reflection great for our university." [Outbreak News Today](#)

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FDA OKs decontamination system that cleans 4 million N95 respirators a day

13 April- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provided an emergency use authorization (EUA) to Advanced Sterilization Products (ASP) for sanitizing four million N95 masks per day to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. This decontamination system would allow the reuse of single-use N95 masks. The company makes use of vaporized hydrogen peroxide gasoline to smooth the respirators. ASP's STERRAD series sterilization machines, which can be covered under the EUA, are in use in around 6,300 hospitals already. There are also around 9,930 in operation throughout the United States that are capable of processing around 480 masks per day. The sterilization machine is typically used for sterilizing other portions of scientific equipment, but have not formerly been supposed for use with N95 masks. [Tech Times](#)

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In New York, obesity appears to raise COVID-19 risk

10 April- A new letter from researchers at New York University shows that obesity is a risk factor for COVID-19 hospitalization in patients under the age of 60. The letter was published yesterday in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. In other research news, scientists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) highlight geographic COVID-19 differences, and Johns Hopkins experts lay out the upcoming need for personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers. For the obesity study, researchers looked at 3,615 patients admitted to their hospital from Mar 4 to Apr 4. The authors analyzed the body mass index (BMI) of the patients with confirmed COVID-19. A person with a BMI of 18 to 25 is considered normal weight, 25 to 30 is considered overweight, and over 30 is obese. Patients aged less than 60 years with a BMI from 30 to 34 were 2.0 times (95% confidence interval [CI], 1.6 to

2.6, $P < 0.0001$) and 1.8 times (95% CI, 1.2 to 2.7, $P = 0.006$) more likely to be admitted to acute and critical care, respectively, the authors said, compared with individuals with a BMI under 30. For patients in the same age-group with a BMI over 35, the risk was 2.2 and 3.6 times higher, respectively. Nearly 40% of American adults under the age of 60 have a BMI of 30 or higher, the authors said, which makes obesity a significant risk factor for COVID-19 hospitalizations. "Though patients aged <60 years are generally considered a lower risk group of Covid-19 disease severity, based on data from our institution, obesity appears to be a previously unrecognized risk factor for hospital admission and need for critical care," the authors concluded. [CIDRAP](#)

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Social distancing may increase suicide risk: Study

14 April- STRESS CAUSED BY widespread social distancing to blunt the spread of the coronavirus may be creating the unintended consequence of increasing the risk of suicide in the general population, according to new research published in JAMA Psychiatry. The study – "Suicide Mortality and Coronavirus Disease 2019 – A Perfect Storm?" – identifies a raft of reasons why social distancing may be increasing the risk of suicide even as it helps stop the spread of coronavirus. More than 95% of the U.S. population is under a state or local order to stay at home except for necessary errands, like going to the grocery store or to an urgent medical appointment. "Secondary consequences of social distancing may increase the risk of suicide," researchers wrote. "It is important to consider changes in a variety of economic, psycho-social, and health-associated risk factors." The study noted that the possible increased risk of suicide is occurring at a time when the suicide rate in the U.S. is already on the rise. Since 1999, the suicide rate in the U.S. has risen by 35%, according to a recent analysis by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. Researchers for the JAMA Psychiatry study identified these increased risk factors for suicide during the coronavirus crisis:

- Economic stress.
- Social isolation.
- Decreased access to community and religious support.
- Barriers to mental health treatment.
- Illness and medical problems.
- National anxiety.
- Firearm sales. [U.S. News](#)

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The worst of the global crisis is ahead

14 April- In some places in the United States and other developed countries hit hard by Covid-19, the question is when it might become possible to start getting back to work. For much of the rest of the world, the nightmare is yet to start. And part of the horror is that many poorer countries won't have the means to do much about it. Nor, given the international community's lack of organization and leadership in the face of a global crisis, can they count on richer nations to help them. With the exception of Iran, the countries hardest hit up till now are among those with the world's most advanced economies, scientific establishments and medical services -- and even Iran has a relatively functional medical system. What probably lies ahead is the spread of the coronavirus through countries ravaged by conflict, through packed refugee camps and detention centers in places like Syria or Bangladesh, through teeming cities like Mumbai, Rio de Janeiro or Monrovia, where social distancing is impossible and government is not trusted, through countries without the fiscal capacity or health services to mount a viable response. That would be disastrous not only for them but also for the rest of the world as supplies of raw materials are disrupted, fragile economies collapse, strongmen grow stronger and the virus doubles back to reinfect northern regions. So far, the most vulnerable regions have reported comparatively few cases -- one in Yemen, a smattering across Africa and the Middle East. But that may be partly a function of unreliable reporting or deliberate denial. The numbers are growing, and as the world has learned, they are likely to swell radically and swiftly. [The New York Times](#)

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INFLUENZA

APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report

Week ending 04 April 2020 (week 14): During week 14, 2,837 specimens were submitted for testing, which represents a 42% decrease from week 13. Influenza A represented the majority (39%) of positive specimens submitted for testing. Public Health Command (RHC)-C accounted for the greatest number of positive influenza A specimens (n=6). Eighty-six percent of positive influenza A specimens were from non-AD beneficiaries. Beneficiaries younger than 18 years old comprised the majority (n=9) of total positive respiratory specimens and was followed by individuals 18 to 29 years of age (n=5). No influenza-associated hospitalizations were reported. [APHC](#)

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

Key Updates for Week 14, ending April 4, 2020: Laboratory confirmed flu activity as reported by clinical laboratories continues to decrease sharply and is now low. Influenza-like illness

activity, while lower than last week, is still elevated. 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

13 April 2020 - Update number 365, based on data up to 29 March 2020:

-The current influenza epidemiological and virological data should be interpreted with caution as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic might have influenced to different extents health seeking behaviors, staffing/routines in sentinel sites, as well as testing capacities in Member States. The various COVID-19 response measures to reduce SARS-CoV2 virus transmission in place across Member States might also have had an impact on influenza virus transmission.

-In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, influenza activity decreased overall though influenza like illness (ILI) activity remained elevated in some reporting countries.

-In the Caribbean and Central American countries, influenza activity was reported in some countries. Severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) activity increased in Costa Rica and Jamaica.

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

-In tropical Africa, there were no or low influenza detections reported.

-In Southern Asia, ILI and SARI activity increased in Bhutan.

-In South East Asia, influenza activity was reported in Lao People's Democratic Republic.

-In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels overall, though influenza detections appeared to increase in Brazil and South Africa. Increased SARI activity was reported in Chile and Paraguay.

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

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Company recalls sausage and brats from retailers in two states

13 April- Jowett Farms Corp. in Blumenort, Canada is recalling more than 42,500 pounds of raw pork trimmings that were not presented for import re-inspection into the United States, according to the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). "The problem was discovered during routine FSIS surveillance activities of imported products," according to the recall notice. "There have been no confirmed reports of adverse reactions due to consumption of these products. "FSIS is concerned that some product may be in consumers' freezers. Consumers who have purchased these products are urged not to consume them. These products should be thrown away." The raw pork trimmings were imported on April 2 and further processed into sausage products. Consumers can determine whether they have the products by looking for the following label information. The following products are subject to recall:

-20-oz. plastic-wrapped tray packages containing sausage links of "Jewel-Osco Sheboygan Brand Bratwurst – Made in Illinois" with a sell-by date of 4/17/20.

-20-oz. plastic-wrapped tray packages containing sausage links of "Jewel-Osco Mild Italian Sausage" with a sell-by date of 4/17/20.

-20-oz. plastic-wrapped tray packages containing sausage links of "Jewel-Osco Hot Italian Sausage" with a sell-by date of 4/17/20.

The products subject to recall have the establishment number "EST. 7779" printed inside the USDA mark of inspection. The implicated sausages and brats were shipped to retail locations in Illinois and Wisconsin. [Food Safety News](#)

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Coronavirus can infect cats, study finds

9 April- Heads up, cat lovers: Your feline friend may be susceptible to the novel coronavirus after all. A new study conducted by researchers in China found that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes a COVID-19 infection, does not appear to infect dogs, pigs, chickens, and ducks, but can infect ferrets and cats. And not unlike humans, cats can likely catch the virus via respiratory droplets. For the study — which was aimed at finding animals susceptible to the virus so they can be used in testing potential coronavirus vaccines, according to Reuters — researchers infected dogs, pigs, chickens, ducks, ferrets and cats with a high dose of SARS-CoV-2. In cats, the virus was detected in the felines' noses, mouths and small intestines. The researchers also tested kittens, concluding that they, too, are susceptible to the virus, discovering what they described as "massive lesions" in their noses, throats and lungs. [Fox News](#)

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Dutch Salmonella illnesses linked to Brazilian poultry

9 April- Chicken meat from Brazil is being investigated as the source of Salmonella illnesses in the Netherlands. Between the end of 2019 and mid-February 2020, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) identified a cluster of six Salmonella Virchow infections distributed across the country using whole genome sequencing (WGS) but no epidemiological link among them was reported. An outbreak investigation by RIVM and the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) identified six food isolates as genetically closely related to cases and associated with the source of the infection. These isolates came from poultry meat, including frozen poultry imported from Brazil. Core genome multilocus sequence typing (cgMLST) showed five isolates were obtained in 2019 and one from Brazil in 2018. Origin and distribution of the other five poultry meat isolates is not clear but are thought to be within the Netherlands. A NVWA spokeswoman said the investigation of the source was still ongoing. [Food Safety News](#)

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Food worker advocates say lack of PPE endangering nation's food supply

15 April- Latino food workers are at risk of contracting coronavirus at their jobs, which is not only a risk to their health but also to the nation's food supply, according to a Hispanic civil rights organization. During an online news conference yesterday leaders of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) discussed the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on Hispanic workers in the food supply chain. They said virtually no personal protective equipment (PPE) is available to workers along the food continuum, from field workers in the fresh produce industry to grocery store workers who stock shelves. The meat and poultry sectors are being particularly hard hit with plant closures in place because of clusters of infected workers. The LULAC officials reported a dozen food plants closed in the past week. Domingo Garcia, national president of the civil rights group, said failure to provide protective gear to food workers in fields and production plants will end up with more coronavirus infections and a disruption of food supplies. He cited "fighting over toilet paper and paper towels" in recent weeks and said such shortages of food would hit the shelves two to three weeks after supply chain failure. Dolores Huerta, president of the Dolores Huerta Foundation and co-founder of United Farm Workers, also stressed the desperate need for masks and gloves for workers, as well as employer education about social distancing. Field workers and workers in food processing plants generally work shoulder to shoulder. She said even transportation to and from fields is dangerous for farm workers because of the close quarters on buses and the lack of masks. Problems at a JBS meat packing plant in Greeley, CO, served as a case in point for the news conference. The plant is closed until through next week after hundreds of its thousands of employees tested positive for COVID-19, also referred to as the coronavirus. The daughter of Saul Sanchez, a worker with 30-plus years at the plant and who died April 7, said JBS officials at the Greeley plant were not sharing information about sick and dying workers. As of April 14 there have

been three employees from the plant die from COVID-19. Beatriz Range, the daughter of Sanchez, said she called the plant offices to report her father's death and no one would talk to her. She still has not been contacted by anyone from JBS, she said. Kim Cordova, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7 of Colorado, represents the workers at the JBS meat plant in Greeley, CO, said company officials are not answering questions. The U.S./Canada membership of the union includes 1.9 million food processing and grocery workers, according to Cordova. [Food Safety News](#)

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WELLNESS

Things that can weaken the immune system

9 April- It's unclear why two similar people who become infected with COVID-19 can have very different outcomes: One may develop severe disease while the other becomes only mildly ill. "It's a very difficult question to answer," says David Topham, a professor of microbiology and immunology at the University of Rochester Medical Center. But for some people, a weakened immune system can leave them more vulnerable to infections ranging from the new coronavirus to the common cold (which is often caused by less deadly types of coronavirus). And there are a number of factors known to undermine immune function. Understanding and addressing those can help fortify your body's defenses. Your health status can make a big difference in how well you can fend off viruses and other infections. "Certain underlying conditions are well-known to result in an overall weakened immune system," notes Dr. Ingrid Mayer, a professor of medicine and cancer research at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Those pre-existing conditions include diabetes, malnutrition and untreated HIV, according to Mayer, as well as some cancers such as leukemia or multiple myeloma. Separately, autoimmune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and multiple sclerosis actually cause the immune system to attack healthy cells, and weaken the body's response to real threats. And although there's buzz around the drug hydroxychloroquine (used for lupus, arthritis and malaria) as a possible treatment for COVID-19, it remains unproven for this purpose. [U.S. News](#)

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USAFRICOM

Ebola case reported in DRC, 2 days before calling end to epidemic

10 April- Today, the Ministry of Health in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) announced a new Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) case. The new confirmed case was reported in a 26-year-old man in the city of Beni in the north eastern province of Nord-Kivu. The case occurred two days before the long-awaited end of the epidemic. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Yellow fever outbreak in South Sudan

14 April- The Ministry of Health of South Sudan reported two confirmed yellow fever cases in Kajo Keni county, Central Equatoria State. The cases were identified through a cross-border rapid response team investigation mounted in response to the recently declared outbreak in bordering Moyo district, Uganda... The World Health Organization says Yellow fever is an acute viral hemorrhagic disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes and has the potential to spread rapidly and cause serious public health impact. Vaccination is the most important means of preventing the infection, which provides immunity for life. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USCENTCOM

Pakistan COVID-19 cases top 5,000

12 April- Pakistan health officials reported an additional 250 new cases in the last 24 hours. This brings the country total to 5,038 as of 10 April. The most affected province due to COVID-19 virus is Punjab 2,425, followed by Sindh 1,318. 86 deaths have been reported. A number of developments have occurred recently in Pakistan to include:

-The National Disaster Management Authority is dispatching additional Personal Protection Equipment for doctors and health workers of 202 hospitals of Sindh.

-The public sector hospitals of the Islamabad city are again considering extending the closure of Outdoor Patient Departments for one month due to possible high risk of novel coronavirus spread from the facilities

-The district administration of Rawalpindi has established a 120-bed quarantine facility at Shahbaz Sharif Sports Complex located on Sixth Road.

-Minister for Aviation Ghulam Sarwar Khan on Saturday said the government would bring back 4,000 Pakistanis stranded across the world following Covid-19 outbreak through special flights. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Yemen reports 1st COVID-19 case, temporary ceasefire announced

11 April- Yemen reported its first case of COVID-19 this week. The case was confirmed on 10 April in Hadhramout Governorate, a region under the control of Internationally Recognized Government. The World Health Organization is providing support to Yemen's Ministry of Public Health and Population in the response. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen, announced a temporary cessation of hostilities in Yemen. Over five years of brutal war in Yemen have left millions of Yemenis

weakened by malnutrition and disease, and decimated Yemen's health system, according to a Joint statement by 59 Nongovernmental Organizations. The imminent threat of COVID-19 will exacerbate an already dire humanitarian situation: 80 percent of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance, the majority of whom are women and children; two-thirds of the country lacks adequate access to clean water and sanitation; millions are living on the brink of starvation; nearly 20 million people lack access to adequate healthcare; and cholera, dengue, and other preventable diseases are already rife. These factors create an environment dangerously conducive to the severe and rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus, threatening countless civilian lives. A ceasefire alone cannot stop the spread of COVID-19 in Yemen. All parties must immediately lift restrictions and end interference with vital humanitarian operations; ensure immediate access to populations in need; facilitate the movement of humanitarian workers and goods and of commercial imports; and end blockades and other actions and policies that prevent or restrict essential commercial imports into Yemen, to maintain the humanitarian response for the millions of Yemenis who need aid to survive, and to support Yemenis' economic livelihood. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USEUCOM

Iceland reports a slowing of COVID-19, 'we anticipate being able to slowly ease the social distancing measures'

9 April- Health officials in Iceland say that data suggests that the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country is showing clear signs of deceleration, reporting 295 cases in the past week and 363 recoveries. Mr. Thorolfur Gudnason, Chief Epidemiologist in Iceland advises that the apparent success is precarious, and minor setbacks can change the outlook dramatically. "We anticipate being able to slowly ease the social distancing measure we have put in place, but we will have to continue to exercise extreme caution in the foreseeable future in order to minimize the risk of a renewed outbreak", he stated. Furthermore, it is assumed that despite the peak in active infections having been reached, it is likely that we are still a few days from the peak in hospitalizations. "Our healthcare workers and hospitals have shown admirable foresight and perseverance in the fight against Covid-19. We are now bracing ourselves for the period of peak intensity in terms of the need for intensive care possible and ventilator support," says Alma Möller, Iceland's Surgeon General.

Iceland's strategy has been based on:

- social distancing measures, focused on vulnerable populations first and then society at-large,
- a very high level of testing, in collaboration with deCode Genetics,
- diligent tracing efforts of each known infection
- a policy of self-quarantining for individuals considered at-risk of having been infected

- innovative treatment and monitoring options with an emphasis on remote care.

It needs to be emphasized that the situation in Iceland is unusual in many ways. The population is small, cohesive and mostly homogenous. "We are an island with one major point of entry from abroad. Many other peculiarities make Iceland's position different from most other nations. That being said, we have a very sincere hope that our efforts, both in terms of policy and data generation will prove to be valuable for academics and policy makers in the future. The world is all in this together and it is vital that every country draws learnings both internally and externally to improve our readiness for any similar events in the future, or the continuation of this event in the upcoming months and years," says Gudnason. The number of infections detected in Iceland so far is 1648, including six deaths. This is a very high number of infections in relation to its small population (4 489 on a per million basis). This high number is largely attributable to the fact that significantly more testing has been done in Iceland than in any other country (except for the Faroe Islands).

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USINDOPACOM

Philippines COVID-19 cases top 4,000, update on PPE delivery

9 April- The Philippines Department of Health (DOH) reported an additional 206 coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19 cases Thursday, bringing the country total to 4,076. In addition, 21 more deaths were reported today putting the number of fatalities to 203. Also on Thursday, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) has started distributing the Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) that were inspected and cleared by the Procurement Services-Department of Budget Management. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Louisiana COVID-19- 5600 cases in New Orleans, Health Equity Task Force created

12 April- Louisiana health officials are today reporting 20,595 COVID-19 cases and 840 deaths. In the City of New Orleans, 5600 residents have tested positive, with 235 deaths recorded. On Friday, Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards announced the creation of the Louisiana COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, which will look at how health inequities are affecting communities that are most impacted by the coronavirus. "We know that right now 70 percent of our deaths in Louisiana from coronavirus are African Americans. This is a disturbing trend and one that deserves our attention, which is why we are engaging a group of leaders right now while the crisis is still ongoing," Gov. Edwards said. "When we talk

about health equity, we mean everyone has the opportunity to attain their highest level of health. The great thing is that the findings and recommendations made by this Task Force will help everyone better access quality care and improve health outcomes. It will also leverage our research capabilities and intellectual brainpower in a collective manner to tackle this daunting issue. I am asking our universities and research institutions to lead this effort.” [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Cuba: 56 additional COVID-19 cases reported, ‘It is a disease that can be stopped’

12 April- The national director of Epidemiology of the Ministry of Public Health (Minsap), Dr. Francisco Durán García, reported that of the 56 people confirmed this April 10 with COVID-19, 31 were asymptomatic, further denoting the importance of isolation social to avoid contagion and reduce its transmission. He pointed out that the number of tests carried out daily, in excess of a thousand, will be maintained with the effort of the 24-hour laboratories, in order to find those who in the community have the virus and transmit it. Since the last update, 13,162 tests had been analyzed in Cuba to detect SARS-CoV-2, 1,139 of them the day before. In total there are 620 positive cases throughout the country. 16 deaths have been reported. Dr. Durán García reiterated that no one should neglect this disease, which no age is immune and anyone can become infected. He explained that children are susceptible to it, which does not go into a serious or critical state. In the case of Cuba, all the confirmed minors have recovered satisfactorily. “This does not mean that cannot be severe with children,” he stressed, “to continue limiting their outings, to share, because they are not exempt from suffering from the disease.” [Outbreak News Today](#)

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