

24 April 2020

Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



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We're sorry for the inconvenience.

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Army resuming basic training with measures against coronavirus exposure

20 April- The Army has announced it is again shipping recruits to basic training, following a two-week pause that was put in place to make sure COVID-19 mitigation measures were operating at all four Army training centers. But in order to make that happen, and protect the health of the new recruits, the Army says it will adhere to social distancing guidelines. Officials said that basic training will operate at "a reduced capacity," but did not offer specifics. And the Army will be focused on where those recruits come from to lower any risk of an outbreak. Officials say recruits from areas considered "low risk" will be allowed to move to the training bases, but those from "high risk areas will be rescheduled for future dates." At the same time, the Army is putting in more safeguards for the recruits. In the two weeks leading up to their scheduled ship dates, they will be screened for symptoms and possible exposure to COVID-19 at various intervals by recruiters and military entrance processing station personnel. The recruits will also be evaluated upon their arrival at the training centers. During the first two weeks at the training centers, recruits will undergo what the Army calls "modified training curriculums" and will be closely monitored with daily health assessments. Much of the classroom training will be shifted to the first 14 days so the recruits can be monitored. Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy recently said there was a cluster of positive cases at one of the training centers before the recruit training pause was put into effect. "One training battalion at Fort Jackson, S.C., had about 50, and had no more since then," McCarthy said. "We've done pretty well overall, all things considered, one location."

[NPR](#)

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Defense department approves ketamine-based antidepressant for some patients

17 April- Spravato, the controversial ketamine-based nasal spray used to treat severe depression, will be available to Tricare beneficiaries on a case-by-case basis beginning May 18, Defense Health Agency officials announced Friday. The medication, a synthetic version of the anesthetic ketamine, will be available to patients with treatment-resistant depression who receive prior authorization from Tricare. The move comes a little over a year after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration fast-tracked approval of the drug, which has a similar makeup as the hallucinogenic club drug known as Special K. Shortly after Spravato received FDA approval, President Donald Trump touted it a potential solution to addressing the problem of veteran's suicide. Trump stumped for the drug as he has recently for hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19, saying Spravato had shown "tremendously positive" effects in early testing and was a miracle drug. "It really takes that horrible anxiety, whatever causes somebody to be so desperate to commit suicide...and its results are incredible," Trump told veterans at the American Legion convention in Louisville, Kentucky, last summer.

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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.



"I've instructed the top officials to go out and get as much of it as you can." [Military.com](#)
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The Civil-Military divide: The role of the military in the U.S. coronavirus response

17 April- In recent weeks, there has been much concern around our nation's preparedness for and ability to respond to the coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic. There has been an understandable desire to see the United States military play a more significant role, along with other parts of the federal government that have resources or expertise to bear, to support a faster and more effective response across all levels of government. With only one percent (1%) of the U.S. population serving in the military, there is a level of confusion among non-military civilians about the capabilities and responsibilities of our military in this situation. The misconceptions and confusion around what our nation's military can and cannot do in this public health crisis is further evidence of a gap in understanding between civilians and the military — sometimes referred to as the civil-military divide. Below are three examples that illustrate this confusion: the role of the U.S. National Guard, the role of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the role of the U.S. Department of Defense medical community. [Medium.com](#)

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Veterans Affairs coronavirus deaths jump 13 percent over the weekend

20 April- The number of coronavirus deaths among Veterans Affairs patients jumped almost 13 percent over the weekend, and the New York City area continues to be the hardest-hit region for veterans dealing with the illness. As of Monday morning, at least 339 patients in VA care have died from the virus, which has killed more than 35,000 individuals nationwide. The VA death total is up from 301 on Friday, although department officials typically have several days lag time before recording all deaths. So far, 68 VA facilities across the country have lost at least one patient to the illness. The New York City area alone accounts for more than one-third of those fatalities. Four VA sites near the metropolitan area — including East Orange, N.J. — have totaled 128 deaths, all in just the last few weeks. The death rate among VA patients who have contracted the virus is more than 6 percent, well above the rate for all of the United States. The latest national data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows about a 4 percent death rate among all Americans who test positive for the illness. [Military Times](#)

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Air pollution linked to raised covid-19 death risk

20 April- High levels of air pollution could raise the risk of dying from Covid-19, two studies suggest. Dr. Maria Neira, of the World Health Organization (WHO), told BBC News countries with high pollution levels, many in Latin America, Africa and Asia, should ramp up their preparations. Those with underlying pollution-related conditions have developed severe Covid-19 in countries with high levels. But medical professionals say it is too early to prove a direct relationship. "We will be doing a map of most polluted cities based on our database to support national authorities in these regions so that they can prepare their epidemic response plan accordingly," Dr. Neira said. A US study suggests Covid-19 death rates rise by about 15% in areas with even a small increase in fine-particle pollution levels in the years before the pandemic. "Patterns in Covid-19 death rates generally mimic patterns in both high population density and high [particulate matter] PM2.5 exposure areas," the Harvard University report says. These particles, one-30th the diameter of a human hair, have previously been linked to health issues including respiratory infections and lung cancer. [BBC News](#)

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Anticipating the next pandemic

21 April- Before COVID-19 brought the world to its knees, the world's top scientists were well aware of the 'known unknown' of a deadly novel disease would eventually reveal itself. The problem was, the powers that be didn't do much about it. How can the world get out in front of the next one? Some promising approaches are already out there, but need more resources. One of them is panviral vaccines—long considered bad business model—that work against a wide variety of viruses, according to The New York Times Magazine. One bright spot: COVID-19 has brought an unprecedented will to invest and collaborate against the next pandemic—that must continue, says Peter Daszak of the pandemic-prevention group EcoHealth Alliance. A Harvard Business Review commentary offers some ideas for the US, including an apolitical and objective Pandemic Review Commission packed with scientists and medical professionals—and improving, not destroying the WHO. [Global Health Now](#)

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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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Coronavirus: Masks for public 'could put NHS supplies at risk'

20 April- NHS supplies of face masks could be put at risk if the government starts advising the public to wear them, hospital bosses have warned. The government's scientific advisers are to meet later to discuss whether the public should be urged to wear masks in a bid to combat coronavirus. But Chris Hopson, chief executive of NHS Providers, warned there should be "clear evidence" to justify their use. He said securing supplies for NHS staff amid huge global demand was "crucial". The World Health Organization (WHO) has said there is no evidence to support the use of face masks by the general population. It says people who are not in health and care facilities should only wear masks if they are sick or caring for those who are ill. But the debate around their use in the UK has been gaining momentum in recent weeks, with proponents arguing they can help reduce the risk of people with the virus passing it on to others. London Mayor Sadiq Khan has called for the wearing of masks while travelling in the city to become compulsory. Meanwhile, official figures show record numbers of deaths in England and Wales in the week up to 10 April, driven by 6,200 fatalities attributed to coronavirus. These figures cover all settings, including care homes and deaths in the community as well as hospitals. [BBC News](#)

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COVID-19 drug: New trial of anti-inflammatory drug colchicine; will it prevent coronavirus complications?

20 April- According to a Fox News report, a new medical trial will be conducted to examine if the anti-inflammatory drug colchicine can prevent the complications brought by COVID-19, and lessen the number of coronavirus patients that need to be hospitalized. The report stated that UC San Francisco is currently recruiting newly diagnosed COVID-19 patients who will be tested for the clinical trial. In a previous report of the University of California San Francisco, the new international trial called the COLCORONA study will be conducted at UCSF and New York University School of Medicine which will serve as the first two US sites for the Colchicine Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 Trial. The study will also have several sites in Canada and additional sites are currently being considered in Europe. The new international trial will be led by the Montreal Heart Institute. [Tech Times](#)

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Regular exercise can help prevent coronavirus complications from worsening, study finds

20 April- A preventative medicine study is claiming, according to reports, the best way to prevent coronavirus complications from worsening is regular exercise. Zhen Yan, the director of the Center for Skeletal Muscle Research at University of Virginia School of Medicine's Robert M. Berne Cardiovascular Research Center, recommends 30 minutes of cardiovascular workouts every day to prevent the respiratory disease. "We cannot live in

isolation forever," he said. "Regular exercise has far more health benefits than we know. The protection against this severe respiratory disease condition is just one of the many examples." Yan told Newsweek biking, rowing or other types of aerobics can help prevent or reduce the severity of the lung disease (ARDS). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated between 20 and 42 percent of all patients hospitalized with COVID-19 will develop ARDS. [Fox News](#)

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Scientists create coronavirus test kits that gives results in 20 minutes

20 April- A coronavirus swab kit that can give results in 20 minutes has been developed by scientists at the University of South Wales in the UK. The rapid test kit costs less than \$125 and is now being evaluated for expanded use. It works by analyzing nasal swabs for traces of COVID-19. The Department of Health and Social Care in the UK recently released figures showing that 19,316 COVID-19 tests were made yesterday, April 19. This means that more than 500,000 coronavirus tests have been performed since Britain began swabbing suspected cases in January. This totals to around 300,000 people since patients need more than one test to confirm if they are have indeed contracted the virus. Data has also shown that the United Kingdom has already carried out a 5.54 test for 1,000 people which is fewer than Turkey's 7.14. This is also at least 20 times lower than Iceland which is swabbing at least 124 people out of 1,000 and is considered to be the highest in the world. The University of South Wales test can actually help the United Kingdom analyze more samples, and can give results quickly than others if the swab test kits are immediately rolled out around the country. It is likely to cut the need to send samples to one of the laboratories run by Public Health England or ones that are set up in 40 National Health Service (NHS) hospitals--which take several days to process. The testing kit is now being evaluated by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and could already be in use within the week in several care homes. [Tech Times](#)

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Sepsis study highlights risks of overly broad antibiotic treatment

21 April- A large new study of patients with sepsis has found that broad-spectrum antibiotics are frequently administered to patients not infected with antibiotic-resistant pathogens, and are associated with higher mortality in these patients. The study, published last week in JAMA Network Open, looked at data on more than 17,000 culture-positive community-onset sepsis patients in US hospitals and found that more than two-thirds received antibiotics targeting drug-resistant organisms like methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and Pseudomonas aeruginosa. Yet only in one in eight sepsis patients had resistant gram-positive or gram-negative organisms, respectively. Treatment with unnecessary broad-spectrum antibiotics was associated with a 22% increase

in mortality. The study also found that under treatment with antibiotics that didn't cover the infecting pathogen was associated with higher mortality. The authors of the study say the findings highlight the need for more judicious use of broad-spectrum antibiotics in sepsis treatment and for better tests to rapidly identify resistant organisms. [CIDRAP](#)

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Study raises questions about false negatives from quick COVID-19 test

21 April- The fastest test being used to diagnose people infected with the coronavirus appears to be the least accurate test now in common use, according to new research obtained by NPR. Researchers at the Cleveland Clinic tested 239 specimens known to contain the coronavirus using five of the most commonly used coronavirus tests, including the Abbott ID NOW. The ID NOW has generated widespread excitement because it can produce results in less than 15 minutes. But the ID NOW only detected the virus in 85.2% of the samples, meaning it had a false-negative rate of 14.8 percent, according to Dr. Gary Procop, who heads COVID-19 testing at the Cleveland Clinic and led the study. "So that means if you had 100 patients that were positive, 15% of those patients would be falsely called negative. They'd be told that they're negative for COVID when they're really positive," Procop told NPR in an interview. "That's not too good." Procop says a test should be at least 95% reliable. Procop, who plans to publish the study soon, chairs the Commission of Science, Technology and Policy for the American Society for Clinical Pathology. Although the paper has not yet gone through the traditional peer-review process, Procop says the findings have been carefully reviewed at his hospital and he is confident in the results. [NPR](#)

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Transplants plummet as overwhelmed hospitals focus on the coronavirus

22 April- Fred Banks apologizes for pausing mid-sentence to catch his breath. "I'm on oxygen 24/7," explains the 65-year-old former wheat- and barley-farm worker. On the waiting list for a double-lung transplant since December, Banks has twice made the trip by ferry from his home on the Olympic Peninsula to Seattle for the potentially life-saving surgery, the second time even going under anesthesia. Each time, his surgeons at the University of Washington Medical Center rejected the donated organs as not good enough to help him. Then Covid-19 hit, raising the stakes for Banks and tens of thousands of others in his precarious position. His pulmonary fibrosis puts Banks at high risk for severe illness or death if he's infected, even as the pandemic has slashed the supply of organs donated nationwide. While he waits for the next call, he makes limited trips to Walmart and a few other stores, sandwiching a HEPA filter meant for vacuum cleaners in between two homemade masks. "The only thing that bothers me now, with this Covid-19 involved, is when I go for a transplant, my wife will only be able to see me for a few minutes inside the hospital where I go to surgery," he said. "But you know, that's the way it is." Organ

transplant medicine is always a high-wire act, balancing too many people's needs with too few matches. The coronavirus epidemic has only heightened the significant risks and hoped-for benefits of transplant surgery. Organ donations are down by a third and the health care system itself is in full-blown scarcity, triaging elective surgeries to some unknown future date so only emergency cases find their way into precious operating rooms and intensive care beds. As life-saving as they are, even many transplants are being put off.

[Stat News](#)

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INFLUENZA

AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

Week 15 (05 April 2020 — 11 April 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 decreased to moderate. Among positive influenza specimens, the majority have been 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 remained minimal. The majority of influenza specimens continued to be influenza A.

CENTCOM- ILI activity decreased to minimal. [DHA -Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch](#)

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

Key Updates for Week 15, ending April 11, 2020: Laboratory confirmed flu activity as reported by clinical laboratories 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 top of page...](#)

VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY

Australia joins U.S. in having Listeria cases linked to imported mushrooms

18 April- Six people in Australia are part of an international Listeria outbreak traced to imported mushrooms that has also killed four in the United States. The Listeria monocytogenes patients in Australia have been identified by whole genome sequencing as being related to the U.S. outbreak strain. Their illnesses were reported between October 2017 and March this year. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) said the investigation was ongoing but no deaths have been attributed to listeriosis amongst cases. Of the six infections in Australia related to the U.S. outbreak strain, four are thought to have been exposed in the country. Of these, three are residents of Queensland, and one is from New South Wales. The other two are thought to have been exposed while travelling overseas. The median age of cases is 75 years old, four are female and two are males, and

all of them had underlying health conditions. *Listeria monocytogenes* was detected in enoki mushrooms imported from South Korea that were recalled in the country earlier this month. Choi's Mushrooms recalled Green Co. Enoki Mushrooms in 200-gram and 300-gram packages. The products were sold at Asian supermarkets and grocers in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. Both products have date markings: April 22, May 5, May 12, May 19 and May 26, 2020. Enoki mushrooms are a long thin white mushroom, usually sold in clusters. They are popular in East Asian cuisine and also known as enokitake, golden needle, futu or lily mushrooms. Korean authorities and enoki mushroom suppliers are trying to ensure sanitary controls are being met and cooking instructions are put on packaging. In Korea, enoki mushrooms are cooked and not eaten raw in salads. [Food Safety News](#)

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Great Value Spaghetti Marinara recalled for undeclared allergens

21 April- Florentina Foods is recalling Great Value Spaghetti Marinara in Canada because it contains milk and sulphites that are not declared on the label as required by law. Anyone who is allergic to milk, has lactose intolerance, or is allergic to sulphites could have a serious reaction if they eat this product. This product was distributed nationally in that country at the retail level. The recalled product is Great Value Spaghetti Marinara, sold in 215 gram packages. The UPC number on the product is 6 28915 16438 1. All packages bearing Best Before 2021 MR 18 and where milk and sulphites are not declared on the label are recalled. If you bought this Great Value Spaghetti Marinara and are allergic to or sensitive to milk or sulphites, or are lactose intolerant, do not eat it. Throw it away or take it back to the store where you bought it for a full refund. Food allergies can appear at any time in life with no warning. The symptoms of a sulphite (sulfite) allergy can include upset stomach, diarrhea, vomiting, difficulty swallowing, flossing, dizziness, hives, itchiness, a drop in blood pressure, and trouble breathing. Symptoms of milk allergy can include a runny nose, congestion, coughing, difficulty breathing, stomach cramps, gas, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, hives, eczema, and swelling of the eyes, face, lips throat, and tongue. Symptoms of lactose intolerance include abdominal pain or cramps, gas, loose or foamy stools, diarrhea, and vomiting. Anyone experiencing any of these symptoms should see a doctor as soon as possible. [Food Poisoning Bulletin](#)

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Homestead Creamery recalls unsalted butter for Listeria contamination

18 April- The Wirtz, VA- based Homestead Creamery Inc. has recalled unsalted butter because of the potential contamination of Listeria monocytogenes, an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail, or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. The recalled butter was distributed to distribution partners, through home delivery service, and the Wirtz retail store. The unsalted butter affected comes in ½ pound marked with an expiration date of 04/30 stickered on the plastic packaging. No illnesses have been reported to date in connection with the recall. The potential for contamination was noted after routine testing by Homestead Creamery and revealed the presence of Listeria monocytogenes in our unsalted butter. The production of the product has been suspended while the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services continues to investigate the source of the issue. Consumers who have purchased the unsalted butter with the corresponding expiration dates are urged to return them to the place of purchase for a full refund. Others may suffer only short-term symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain, and diarrhea, Listeria infections can cause miscarriages and stillbirths among pregnant women.

[Food Safety News](#)

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WELLNESS

You can burn out when you're working from home, too

20 April- Workplace burnout doesn't just happen to people who put in long hours at the office. It's also a threat to the millions of people working from home due to the coronavirus pandemic. Burnout happens when you face elevated levels of stress over a long period of time. It can affect both your mental and physical health. With so many workers suddenly working from home and juggling multiple responsibilities, they could be more prone to burnout. "With the suddenness and degree of the shift to remote work, the loss of childcare, and all of the worries that accompany the pandemic and its economic fallout, all of the things that typically cause burnout are intensified, which means the risk of burnout is intensified," said Vanessa K. Bohns, associate professor of organizational behavior at Cornell University via email...A lack of work-life balance is a big contributor to burnout. And working from home can make it even harder to achieve that balance. Leaving the office every day and commuting home is a forced boundary that helps separate your work from your personal life. While losing the commute when you work from home can be seen as a major perk, it also means there is no barrier between work and home. If you never really shut down your computer or walk away from your work, it's easy to just continue working into the evening or over the weekends. "What happens to most people when they are working from home is they often work more hours," said Ben Fanning, author of "The Quit Alternative: The Blueprint for Creating the Job You Love Without Quitting." To combat

working around the clock, you have to establish clear boundaries. Create a cut off time for when you will stop working, with boundaries like not working at night or on the weekends to clearly define your free time, Bohns suggested. It also helps to make non-work time feel different, like changing into more comfortable clothes, to signal a break from work. [CNN](#)

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USAFRICOM

Congo records five new Ebola cases, shelves declaration of end to epidemic

17 April- BENI, Democratic Republic of Congo (Reuters) - Five new Ebola infections have been recorded in eastern Congo since last week in a new flare-up just as the government was about to declare an end to the deadly epidemic, the World Health Organization said on Friday. Small outbreaks or one-off transmissions are common towards the end of an epidemic. Health workers are often able to prevent the virus spreading out of control by quarantining and vaccinating contacts of new cases. On April 9 a 26-year-old electrician died of the hemorrhagic fever in the eastern town of Beni two days before the Democratic Republic of Congo planned to declare an end to the Ebola outbreak, which has killed more than 2,200 people since its onset in August 2018. The two newest cases were a 43-year-old woman and a 28-year-old motorbike-taxi driver who had brought the electrician to the hospital, according to Boubacar Diallo, deputy incident manager for the WHO's Ebola response operation. It was unclear if the woman was linked to the other cases in a new chain of transmission, he said, but the new cases forced Congo's national government to shelve its declaration of an end to the epidemic. [Reuters](#)

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COVID-19 in Africa: Researchers say world must help continent in staying ahead of the curve

19 April- UN health officials reported a doubling of COVID-19 cases in Africa in the last week. "Last week, there was a 51% increase in the number of reported cases on my own continent, Africa, and a 60% increase in the number of reported deaths," said WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, at a press conference organized virtually from Geneva. As of April 17, the WHO African region had more than 12,360 confirmed cases of COVID-19. "With the current challenge of obtaining test kits, the actual numbers are likely to be higher than indicated," said Dr. Tedros, originally from Ethiopia.

[Outbreak News Today](#)

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Guinea worm disease: Ethiopia reports six suspected new cases in recent weeks

22 April- After reporting zero human cases for more than two years, Ethiopia has recorded six suspected new human cases of dracunculiasis (guinea-worm disease) over the past two weeks. All of them are from Gog district in the region of Gambella. "All the six suspected new cases of infection are people who used water from farm side-ponds and all of them are now being followed-up in a containment centre" said Dr. Zeyede Kebede, Acting NTD Programme Coordinator, WHO Country Office, and Ethiopia. "Four of the suspected cases were detected from Dulli farm side village and two others from two different villages namely – Metaget Dipach and Wadmaro in Gog Dipach Kebele". Besides the six-suspected new infection, a further 40 suspected cases are also being followed up in the Guinea Worm Case Containment Center. Furthermore, an estimated 200 households have been visited and 1254 people interviewed and provided with health education. The Ethiopian Dracunculiasis Eradication Programme (EDEP) is scheduled to continue the larviciding of ponds in the area; further assess the utilization of filters by residents and devise a mechanism to maximize and maintain its utilization. The EDEP also plans to work with relevant stakeholders to provide safe water to the villages with suspected cases. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USCENTCOM

Polio: Additional cases reported in Pakistan, polio vaccine history

19 April- This past week, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) reported additional wild poliovirus cases in Pakistan. Three cases of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) were reported: one each in Khyber Pakhtoon, KPTD and Sindh bringing the number of 2020 cases to 39. Globally, 42 WPV1 cases have been reported in 2020 to date (including 3 in Afghanistan). [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USEUCOM

Germany COVID-19: Some businesses opening, Merkel is 'greatly concerned'

21 April- As of April 21, the Robert Koch Institute is reporting (computer translated) 143,457 coronavirus disease, or COVID-19 cases. The death toll in the country is now at 4598. In Germany and across much of Europe, steps are being taken to reopen some businesses. Germany will be permitting bookshops, florists, fashion stores, bike and car outlets and other shops smaller than 800 sq. m are permitted to reopen on Monday morning. In Berlin a

few schools allowed final-year students to sit exams. Pupils arrived wearing face-masks and took their seats at widely spaced desks. This has prompted German Chancellor Angela Merkel to express her concern. "We stand at the beginning of the pandemic and are still a long way from being out of the woods," she told journalists, saying that it would be a "crying shame if we were to stumble into a relapse with our eyes wide open". She also urged the public to maintain social distancing measures, such as keeping 1.5 meters apart and avoiding gatherings of more than two people, voicing her "skepticism" and "huge concern" over the population's discipline. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Spain COVID-19 death toll tops 20,000, more than 900K tests performed

18 April- Spain's Ministry of Health reported an additional 4499 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, bringing the country total to 191,726. In addition, the death toll has risen to 20,043 as of Friday. The Madrid Autonomous Community has reported 52,946 cases, followed by Catalonia with 39,943 and Castilla la Mancha with 16,349. On Thursday, the Minister of Health, Salvador Illa, announced an increase in the capacity to carry out PCR in Spain: "In the last three weeks, we have managed to go from the 20,000 daily PCR to between 40,000 and 47,000, according to the estimated consumption provided by the autonomous communities". From the beginning of the crisis and until April 13, the total number of PCR carried out in Spain is 930,230. "This increase in capacity has been possible thanks to the work carried out by the Carlos III Health Institute, which has validated 8 new research centers and universities, and there are already 13 centers validated to carry out PCR, as well as the efforts of the Autonomous Communities", Illa has stressed. The Minister of Health has emphasized that "PCR tests are the cornerstone of the diagnostic strategy, here and in other countries" but he clarified that "in a complementary way, we are using rapid diagnostic tests for the detection of antibodies because with their use we are able to expand the diagnostic capacity". These rapid tests allow the positive cases to be screened in high-prevalence groups in a fast and safe way and, globally, it is possible to increase the ability to diagnose citizens by means of PCR. Salvador Illa highlighted in Congress the work carried out by Primary Care professionals during the pandemic: "They have reorganized to attend to mild cases at home and actively follow the most vulnerable people by phone, taking care of their health and avoiding complications requiring income." "Through his work," he added, "in addition to treating mild cases, it has prevented the worsening of COVID-19 and other pathologies, which has protected people's health and prevented many hospital admissions." And, he insisted: "It is the best level capable of reaching the entire population in an equitable and preventive way and ordering coordination within the Public Health more efficiently." Therefore, their work to emerge from the pandemic will also be important. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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Fiji: Leptospirosis, dengue and typhoid reported post Tropical Cyclone Harold

18 April- A little over a week since Severe Tropical Cyclone Harold hit Fiji and other Pacific Islands, health officials in Fiji are reporting the appearance of several infectious diseases in different areas of the island country. According to a Fiji Sun report, dozens of dengue cases have been in the Northern, Western and Central Divisions. Officials in the Northern Division have also reported cases of typhoid and leptospirosis has been reported in Kadavu Island. Officials note that the above diseases are commonly seen after cyclones. Health officials have been deployed to affected areas to contain the spread of these diseases. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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India suspends coronavirus antibody tests after questions over reliability

22 April- India has ordered a pause in testing for antibodies to the coronavirus because of concern over the accuracy, health officials said on Wednesday, complicating the fight against the epidemic as its tally of cases nears 20,000. India trails many countries in conducting the standard swab tests to determine the presence of the novel coronavirus because of limited testing equipment and protective gear for medical workers. Early this month, health authorities approved blood tests for coronavirus antibodies as a faster way to bolster the screening effort and they ordered more than a half billion testing kits from China. But the chief of epidemiology at the Indian Council of Medical Research, Dr. R.R. Gangakhedkar, said he had asked health authorities to temporarily stop the tests for antibodies because of conflicting results. "This is a first-generation test developed in just three-and-a-half months and needs refinement, the variations cannot be ignored," he said. Federal health experts have been sent to help authorities in states to validate the equipment. "We have advised the states not to use them for the next two days until we come out with an advisory," he said. The antibody tests do not always pick up early-stage infections but show whether a person had the virus in the past, even if the person had no symptoms of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus. [Reuters](#)

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Philippines COVID-19: 200 additional cases reported, testing protocol explained

16 April- DOH explained this week the testing protocol saying that assessment by a licensed health professional remains a prerequisite before one could get tested for COVID-19.

“Those who think they are infected will still need to be assessed by a health professional. They can do this in the comforts of your home through Telemedicine consultations,” Health OIC-Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire explained during the DOH’s daily Beat COVID-19 Virtual Presser. OIC-Usec. Vergeire also stressed that those most at risk for COVID-19 will be prioritized for the expanded testing as prescribed by DOH Department Memorandum 2020-0151, and reiterated by Department Circular No. 2020-0179. She was referring to these two priority sub-groups of: (1) patients or healthcare workers with severe or critical symptoms and history of travel or exposure, and (2) patients or healthcare workers with mild symptoms, relevant history of travel or exposure, and considered vulnerable (e.g. 60 years old or older, has other illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes, or is immunocompromised). Patients or healthcare workers who are not considered vulnerable but with mild symptoms and relevant history of travel or exposure, and those with no symptoms but have relevant history of travel or exposure will also be tested under the expanded testing scheme. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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USNORTHCOM

U.S.: Florida- Coronavirus disease cases top 27,000, 307 nursing homes with positive cases

20 April- On Monday, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) reported that the number of coronavirus disease, or COVID-19 cases has grown to 27,058 after reporting nearly 400 cases this evening—26,329 positive cases in Florida residents and 729 positive cases in non-Florida residents. Thirty-four people have died who tested positive for COVID-19 Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Dade, Duval, Hernando, Highlands, Lake, Lee, Madison, Manatee, Orange, Palm Beach, Polk, Sarasota and Suwannee counties. The total deaths in Florida stands at 823. 4,000 people required hospitalization in Florida. Dade County has reported 9657 cases to date, followed by Broward (4078), Palm Beach (2260), Orange (1216) and Hillsborough (973). DOH reports 307 long-term care facilities have positive cases of COVID-19. Of the 1,928 cases of residents or staff in long-term care facilities, 204 have died. More than 266,000 tests have been performed in Florida. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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U.S.: Illinois- COVID-19 case count nears 30K, 125 additional deaths

19 April- Since the first confirmed COVID-19 case in Illinois (Chicago) on January 24, 2020, the number of cases in Illinois has reached nearly 30,000. According to the latest data from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), 1,585 new cases of coronavirus disease were reported Saturday, bringing the state total to 29,160 cases. In addition, 125 additional deaths were reported from 10 counties yesterday, bringing the death total to 1,259. Illinois health officials report performing 137,404 COVID-19 tests to date. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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U.S.: New York- Confirmation of COVID-19 in two pet cats

22 April- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) today announced the first confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) infection in two pet cats. These are the first pets in the United States to test positive for SARS-CoV-2. The cats live in two separate areas of New York state. Both had mild respiratory illness and are expected to make a full recovery. SARS-CoV-2 infections have been reported in very few animals worldwide, mostly in those that had close contact with a person with COVID-19. At this time, routine testing of animals is not recommended. Should other animals be confirmed positive for SARS-CoV-2 in the United States, USDA will post the findings. State animal health and public health officials will take the lead in making determinations about whether animals should be tested for SARS-CoV-2. In the NY cases announced today, a veterinarian tested the first cat after it showed mild respiratory signs. No individuals in the household were confirmed to be ill with COVID-19. The virus may have been transmitted to this cat by mildly ill or asymptomatic household members or through contact with an infected person outside its home. Samples from the second cat were taken after it showed signs of respiratory illness. The owner of the cat tested positive for COVID-19 prior to the cat showing signs. Another cat in the household has shown no signs of illness. Both cats tested presumptive positive for SARS-CoV-2 at a private veterinary laboratory, which then reported the results to state and federal officials. The confirmatory testing was conducted at NVSL and included collection of additional samples. NVSL serves as an international reference laboratory and provides expertise and guidance on diagnostic techniques, as well as confirmatory testing for foreign and emerging animal diseases. Such testing is required for certain animal diseases in the U.S. in order to comply with national and international reporting procedures. The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) considers SARS-CoV-2 an emerging disease, and therefore USDA must report confirmed U.S. animal infections to the OIE. Public health officials are still learning about SARS-CoV-2, but there is no evidence that pets play a role in spreading the virus in the United States. Therefore, there is no justification in taking measures against companion animals that may compromise their welfare. Further studies are needed to understand if and how different

animals, including pets, could be affected. [CDC](#)

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USSOUTHCOM

Brazil dengue: Mato Grosso do Sul reports 2nd most cases

20 April- Health officials in the midwestern Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul have reported 45,759 dengue fever cases to date, as reported by the Campo Grande news. This gives the state an incidence of 1,769 cases per 100,000 inhabitants and 22 deaths. The capital of Campo Grande has seen 8281 dengue notifications with an average of 995 cases per 100 thousand inhabitants. Next comes Corumbá in total cases with 3,487 notifications and 3,248 records per 100 thousand inhabitants. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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