

California, New York give stay at home order

Other states will also consider action

By **TIM SULLIVAN** and **NICOLE WINFIELD**
Associated Press

California, New York and Illinois on Friday ordered all residents to stay in their homes unless they have vital reasons to go out, restricting the movement of more than 70 million Americans in the most sweeping measures taken yet in the U.S. to contain the coronavirus.

The governors of the three states acted in a bid to fend off the kind of onslaught that has caused the health system in southern Europe to buckle. The lockdowns encompass the three biggest cities in America — New York, Los Angeles and Chicago — as well as No. 8 San Diego and No. 14 San Francisco.

“No, this is not life as usual,” New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said as the death toll in the U.S. topped 200, with at least 35 in his state. “Accept it and realize it and deal with it.”

Cuomo said that starting Sunday, all workers in non-essential businesses must stay home as much as possible, and all gatherings of any size will be banned in the state of over 19 million people. California likewise all but confined its 40 million residents Friday in the biggest lockdown in the nation.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced a similar order set to take effect on Saturday for the state’s 12.6 million people.

Exceptions were made for essential jobs and errands, such as grocery shopping and obtaining medicine, as well as for exercise.

The lockdowns sent another shudder through the markets, where many fear a recession is a near certainty. Stocks tumbled on Wall Street, closing out their worst week since the financial crisis of 2008. The Dow Jones



John Minchillo/AP Photo

A bicycle delivery worker wears a protective face mask as he rides through a sparsely populated Times Square in New York on Friday.

Industrial Average fell more than 900 points, ending the week with a 17% loss.

The increasingly drastic measures in the U.S. came as gasping patients filled the wards of hospitals in Spain and Italy, and the global death toll surpassed 11,000, with the virus gaining footholds in new corners of the world.

Italy, the hardest-hit country in Europe, reported 627 new deaths Friday, its biggest day-to-day rise since the outbreak began, and said new cases also shot up. Italy now has seen over 4,000 deaths — more even than China — and 47,000 infections. The soaring numbers came despite a nationwide lockdown.

The World Health Organization noted the epidemic’s dramatic speed, pointing out that it took more than three months to reach the first 100,000 confirmed cases but only 12 days to reach the next 100,000. As of Friday, Johns Hopkins University counted more than 260,000 infections worldwide.

Across the U.S., governors and public health officials watched the crisis in Europe with mounting alarm

and warned of critical shortages of ventilators, masks and other protective gear at home.

As promised earlier in the week, President Donald Trump officially invoked emergency wartime authority to try to speed production of such equipment.

But while the government has vowed to fix the botched roll-out of widespread virus testing, laboratories reported serious shortages of test supplies such as swabs and chemical components.

There are “acute, serious shortages across the board” for supplies needed to do the tests, said Eric Blank, of the Association of Public Health Laboratories, which represents state and local health labs.

Late Friday, Blank’s group and two other public health organizations recommended that testing be scaled back due to “real, immediate, wide-scale shortages.”

The groups said only patients with COVID-19 symptoms who are elderly, have high-risk medical conditions or are medical staff should be tested.

Countries frantically prepared for a deluge of patients in the coming weeks.

In Britain, the government asked 65,000 retired nurses and doctors to return to work. A convention center and hotels in Madrid were being turned into field hospitals for nearly 10,000 patients. France’s military worked to build a makeshift medical center in the hard-hit town of Mulhouse. The U.S. readied military hospitals for civilian use, and more than 4,000 National Guard members were deployed in 31 states to help distribute food, scrub down surfaces and help in other ways.

Trump also announced the closing of the Mexican border to most travel but not trade. That brings it in line with the

restrictions on the Canadian border earlier this week. The income tax filing deadline was also moved from April 15 to July 15.

“We’re about to enter into a new way of living here in Los Angeles,” Mayor Eric Garcetti said as California went into lockdown. “What we do and how we do it and if we get this right will determine how long this crisis lasts.”

The streets of America’s cities were quieter than normal Friday — even in many of those communities not under lockdown — but not empty.

In New York, Edjo Wheeler said he knew two people very sick with flu-like symptoms, which can indicate the coronavirus.

“That makes me walk around with my hands in my pocket to make sure I’m not touching things,” said Wheeler, 49, who runs a non-profit art center. He added: “If everyone doesn’t cooperate it’s not going to be effective.”

The virus has struck at the very identities of many countries: closing down cafes, restaurants and boulevard life in France, ending la dolce vita in Italy, shutting down England’s pubs and the ceremonial changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, wrecking sales of tulips in Holland and shuttering the Statue of Liberty in the U.S.

Governments are trying to balance locking down residents with the need to keep food, medicine and other essentials flowing.

In Britain, the category of vital workers includes doctors, nurses and paramedics — and also vicars, truckers, garbage collectors and journalists. In New York, people venturing outside will have to stay at least 6 feet apart. And while they will be free to go out to get some exercise to keep their sanity, there will be no “playing basketball with five other people,” Cuomo said.

“These provisions will be enforced,” the governor said. “These are not helpful hints.”

The Federal Reserve moved Friday to pump huge amounts of cash into the financial system to ease disruptions that have escalated since the viral outbreak.

The New York Federal Reserve Bank said it will offer \$1 trillion of overnight loans a day through the end of this month to large banks. That is in addition to \$1 trillion in 14-day loans it is offering every week.

The Trump administration announced Friday that states can cancel federally required school testing this year to protect students and teachers, a measure that some states had requested as they shut down schools over the coronavirus pandemic.

Trump also announced that federal student loan holders can get their payments paused for 60 days if they submit a request with their loan servicing company. It adds to Trump’s earlier promise to suspend loan interest during that period, which is being done automatically.

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