

Outbreak Breakdown

June 12, 2020

This weekly report is provided as an informal information resource for certain AdvaMed member work groups. Content is provided by staff and is not to be construed as conveying AdvaMed viewpoints or endorsement. AdvaMed's COVID-19 response is led by [Chris White](#), AdvaMed COVID Action Team Leader, COO & General Counsel. Newsletter contacts: [Andy Fish](#), Chief Strategy Officer and [Kristina Shultz](#), Manager, Strategy & Policy.

AdvaMed Update

PPE Sourcing: As reported previously, AdvaMed has established a [PPE Sourcing Program](#) to assist member companies with securing PPE supplies.

#MedtechMobilizes: This week, AdvaMed released a video highlighting medtech's critical role in the fight against COVID-19. Check it out [here](#) and on AdvaMed's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

26 Groups Sign On to Re-entry Guidance: 26 additional health care professional societies and associations have signed on to the "[Re-entry Guidance for Health Care Facilities and Medical Device Representatives](#)" published by AdvaMed, the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN), and the American Hospital Association (AHA). AdvaMed's press release can be read [here](#).

MedTech Responds: Comprehensive information on AdvaMed's COVID-19 response and resources is available [here](#). A list of upcoming meetings and webinars that may be of interest to AdvaMed members is available [here](#).

Something Completely Different

Summer officially starts next week and [RVs are starting to look pretty good](#) right now. Too bad [interstellar space travel](#) isn't right around the corner.

Headlines

[Tulane Outbreak Daily](#)

[Johns Hopkins Daily COVID-19 Situation Reports](#)

[A Revolt Against Wearing Masks Creates a New Coronavirus Danger as California Reopens](#) | Los Angeles Times, June 12

[Summer Setback: Cities Put Brakes on Reopening as Virus Spikes Again](#) | Politico, June 12

[On East Africa's Borders, Vast Jams as Truckers Are Tested for COVID-19](#) | Wall Street Journal, June 12

[The Coronavirus Pandemic Isn't Ending – It's Surging](#) | Washington Post, June 11

[Nursing Homes Run Short of COVID-19 Protective Gear as Federal Response Falters](#) | June 11

[Handheld Ultrasound Devices Are Speeding Diagnosis of COVID-19](#) | Scientific American, June 11

[COVID-19 Patient Gets Double Lung Transplant, Offering Hope for Others](#) | New York Times, June 11

[U.S. Hits 2 Million Coronavirus Cases as Many States See a Surge of Patients](#) | NPR, June 10

[States Are Wrestling on Their Own With How to Expand Testing, With Little Guidance From the Trump Administration](#) | Washington Post, June 10

[How Data Became One of the Most Powerful Tools to Fight an Epidemic](#) | New York Times, June 10
[Fauci Says COVID Pandemic His 'Worst Nightmare,' Far From Over](#) | Bloomberg, June 10
[COVID-19 Genetic PCR Tests Give False Negative Results if Used Too Early](#) | ITN, June 10
[Coronavirus Hospitalizations Rise Sharply in Several States Following Memorial Day](#) | Washington Post, June 9
[Cities are Using Sewer Systems as COVID-19 Early Warning Signs](#) | The Verge, June 9
[5 Rules to Live By During a Pandemic](#) | New York Times, June 9
['We Don't Actually Have That Answer Yet': Who Clarifies Comments on Asymptomatic Spread of COVID-19](#) | STAT News, June 9
[WHO Creates 'Confusion' about Asymptomatic Spread. Here's What We Know.](#) | NPR, June 9
[When 511 Epidemiologists Expect to Fly, Hug, and Do 18 Other Everyday Activities Again](#) | New York Times, June 8
[For Experts Who Study Coronaviruses, a Grim Vindication](#) | Undark, June 8
[CDC Wants States to Count 'Probable' Coronavirus Cases and Deaths, but Most Aren't Doing It](#) | Washington Post, June 8
[With Recovery of Last Case, New Zealand Has Eradicated Virus](#) | AP, June 8
[Positive COVID-19 Tests Kept a Mom and Baby Apart for 55 Days. Experts See It as a Bigger Testing Problem.](#) | STAT News, June 8
[The Anatomy of a Pandemic](#) | BBC, June 6
[Here's How States Actually Determine Reopening](#) | Medpage Today, June 5

Pandemic Outlook

Global: As of yesterday, there are [7.27 million confirmed cases and 413,372 deaths from COVID-19](#) across the world. The geography of the pandemic continues to shift away from the countries that were the first to encounter it, with large parts of Asia and Europe resuming “normal” life. Parts of South America, Africa, and the Middle East are emerging as the [new hotspots](#), with Brazil leading the world in terms of daily incidence. One area to watch in particular is India and its neighbors. India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh all have increasing daily incidences but are simultaneously reopening, which will likely hamper their efforts to control their local epidemics. Meanwhile, New Zealand [reported](#) this week that it is now COVID-free, with zero active cases.

United States: As of today, the U.S. has surpassed [2 million](#) total cases and is approaching [115,000](#) deaths from COVID-19. Cases and hospitalizations are rising in [almost half](#) the states, likely due to a combination of factors including the lifting of stay-at-home orders and increased testing. Notably, cases and hospitalizations are increasing in many of the states that were the first to lift restrictions (Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and Texas, among others). Arizona, California, Alaska, and Vermont are also seeing increasing daily incidences. Some states are reporting their highest daily incidences and hospitalizations ever over the past week. Arizona hospitals are raising [concerns](#) that they may run out of hospital beds in the coming weeks. Meanwhile, many of these states are continuing to proceed with their reopenings as originally planned, while others are [pressing 'pause.'](#)

Model of the Week

We have compiled [this informal guide](#) to prominent COVID-19 pandemic modeling and data visualization initiatives and are updating it from time to time. Model of the Week coverage is based on apparent media and policy relevance, as well as what we deem of interest, not on an independent assessment of the accuracy or credibility of the models discussed.

New Model on Mask-Wearing: On Tuesday, a new [study](#) investigating the use of cloth face coverings by the general public found that the use of masks, with or without social distancing restrictions, can be sufficiently effective to contain transmission of SARS-CoV-2. The researchers developed a model that showed that routine mask-wearing by a high proportion of the general public would reduce the virus' effective reproduction rate below 1.0, which is necessary to bring the epidemic under control. The same effect was found even when masks were assumed to only be 50% effective at catching exhaled droplets, as long as a high proportion of the public used them. The authors hope their research will encourage places without mandatory mask policies to reconsider, based on the growing body of evidence supporting mask use.

The Importance of Data: In Wednesday's New York Times, [How Data Became One of the Most Powerful Tools to Fight an Epidemic](#) provides a historical look at the critical role data plays in managing outbreaks, how its use in this pandemic isn't that different from outbreaks that occurred centuries ago, and how animal surveillance may be the key to stopping future pandemics. It provides a brief biography of William Farr, who is best known for pioneering the field of epidemiology and creating the "curve" in "flatten the curve." The article mentions several of the trackers included in our informal guide, including [COVID Near You](#) and the Kinsa [Health Weather](#) maps.

Vaccine Tracker: The New York Times launched a [tracker](#) that is monitoring some of the 135 COVID-19 vaccine candidates currently in development.

ICYMI

Senate Pandemic Planning White Paper: U.S. Senate HELP Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) [released](#) a white paper for public comment, entitled [Preparing for the Next Pandemic](#). The white paper provides extensive background on the history of pandemic preparation, lists 20 initial recommendations, and poses 31 additional questions to inform future legislation. AdvaMed is preparing comments in response to this white paper.

CDC Public Survey and Media Briefing: In today's MMWR, the CDC reported on a survey of [Public Attitudes, Behaviors, and Beliefs Related to COVID-19](#). In a [media briefing](#) today prior to release of the MMWR, Dr. Jay Butler, CDC's Deputy Director of Infectious Diseases and COVID-19 Response Incident Manager, commented that the country is "not out of the woods yet" and that we "could see increases in the number of cases of COVID-19 as states reopen and as there's an increase in public gatherings as we move into the summer across the country." Dr. Butler went on to say that "It's too soon to tell if this will happen", but also said that "we must be overprepared for what we might face later this year".

Conducted May 5-12 among adults across the country, with an emphasis on New York City and Los Angeles, the survey found broad support for stay-at-home orders and discomfort with lifting restrictions at that time. In the subsequent month, the country has moved well past those questions as most states continue to progress through their reopening phases. More recent media reporting suggests that the public may now be more restive than that May survey indicated. As noted above, see [A Revolt Against Wearing Masks Creates a New Coronavirus Danger as California Reopens](#). For more recent polling, see [Public Split on Return to Routine Due to Coronavirus](#).

Asymptomatic Transmission: Earlier this week, the World Health Organization (WHO) caused some confusion when, during a press conference, Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, Technical Lead for the COVID-19

response, stated that asymptomatic transmission is possible but [“very rare,”](#) according to current evidence. Many of the current pandemic control measures (social distancing, mask-wearing by the general public, etc.) are based on the assumption that asymptomatic people can, and do, transmit the virus. Dr. Van Kerkhove’s statement garnered a significant amount of media coverage and questions over whether countries and regions had responded accordingly.

On Tuesday, Dr. Van Kerkhove [clarified](#) her statement during a [Q&A session](#) and explained that she failed to distinguish between truly asymptomatic infections (those who never develop any symptoms) and presymptomatic infections (those who are not currently showing symptoms but will eventually develop them). There is not currently enough evidence to distinguish differences in transmissibility in those two groups. During the Q&A, Dr. Mike Ryan, Executive Director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, reinforced that transmission by people not showing symptoms is occurring and that measures taken to slow the spread, such as stay-at-home orders, have been effective.

Last week, we shared a [review](#) published in the Annals of Internal Medicine that concluded that asymptomatic persons account for approximately 40-45% of total infections. Studying asymptomatic transmission is difficult, because it requires widespread testing and tracing to find cases and also requires follow-up to distinguish between truly asymptomatic cases versus presymptomatic cases. It’s also possible that some “asymptomatic” cases are actually cases with very mild symptoms that the patient does not recognize or report.

New WHO Guidance on Mask Usage: WHO released updated [guidance](#) on the use of masks, changing course from their previous recommendations to now advise that the general public wear masks in crowded areas in areas experiencing widespread transmission. WHO also recommends masks for all health personnel (not just clinicians treating COVID-19 patients) and for all people at high risk for severe disease in areas of community transmission. The guidance provided new recommendations on the construction of cloth masks, including [guidance](#) on the types of fabrics to use for each mask layer to provide the most protection.

Research Roundup

[Prevent Epidemics Weekly Science Review](#)
[Helio COVID-19 Resource Center](#)

Blood Type & COVID-19 Risk: Several recent reports and study pre-prints have reported variations in COVID-19 susceptibility and severity depending on ABO blood group and type. A [pre-print](#) (not yet peer-reviewed) found that blood group A was associated with a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 than non-A blood groups, and that blood group O was associated with lower risk than other blood groups. Another [pre-print](#) examining patients with respiratory failure due to COVID-19 in Italy and Spain found an increased risk of severe illness in individuals with type A-positive blood. Those researchers also noted a protective effect for blood group O. There isn’t enough evidence yet to guide clinical decision-making, but these findings indicate that genetic differences may play a significant role in COVID-19.