



Florida Sets One-Day Record With Over 15,000 New COVID Cases, More Than Most Countries (Video)

Florida reported a record increase of more than 15,000 new cases of COVID-19 in 24 hours on Sunday, as the Trump administration renewed its push for schools to reopen and anti-mask protests were planned in Michigan and Missouri.

If Florida were a country, it would rank fourth in the world for the most new cases in a day behind the United States, Brazil and India, according to a Reuters analysis.

Florida's daily increases in cases have already surpassed the highest daily tally reported by any European country during the height of the pandemic there. It has also broken New York state's record of 12,847 new cases on April 10 when it was the epicenter of the U.S. outbreak.

The latest rise was reported a day after Walt Disney World in Orlando reopened with a limited number of guests who were welcomed with a host of safety measures, including masks and temperature checks.

Anti-mask activists in several states, including Florida and Michigan, have organized protests against local mandates, arguing that the measures infringe upon individual freedom.

Coronavirus infections are rising in about 40 states, according to a Reuters analysis of cases for the past two weeks compared with the prior two weeks. Nationally, the United States has broken global records by registering about 60,000 new cases a day for the last four days in a row, according to a Reuters tally. Hospitalizations and positive test rates are also rising in Arizona, California, Florida and Texas.

Florida reported a record amount of testing, with nearly 143,000 results announced on Sunday compared with an average of 68,000 for the prior seven days.

(GRAPHIC - Tracking the novel coronavirus in the U.S., [here](#))

TRUMP DONS MASK

Facing a battered economy as he seeks re-election in November, President Donald Trump has pressured states to reopen shuttered businesses and schools.

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said on Sunday that her department did not have its own safe reopening plans to promote, and each school district and state must devise their own plans based on their local coronavirus infection rates.

Health officials have pleaded with the public to wear masks to limit the spread of the virus, but the issue has become politically divisive in the United States unlike many other countries that have seen far lower rates of infection and death.

Seven months into the pandemic, Trump wore a mask for the first time in public when he visited a Washington D.C.-area military medical center on Saturday. He had previously refused to wear a mask in public or ask Americans to wear face coverings, saying it was a personal choice.

Many Americans still refuse to wear a mask, which health experts say help stop transmission of the virus that has killed more than 134,000 Americans.

Anti-mask activists organized a protest on Saturday at a grilled cheese restaurant and bar in Windermere, Florida, which is in Orange County about 12 miles (19 km) from Walt Disney World.

The restaurant, 33 & Melt, has become a focal point of tension after owner Carrie Hudson said she was not requiring customers to wear masks. County officials have mandated the use of masks in public since June 20.

During Saturday's protest, no customers wore face coverings inside the restaurant. Agents from the state's Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco arrived during the rally and served Hudson with a warning, according to a video.

"This is a virus that is very well contained," said one of the demonstrators, anti-mask activist Tara Hill. "Everyone is responsible for their own health care decisions ... We want our choices respected as well."

In addition to a record 15,000 new cases on Sunday, more than four dozen hospitals in Florida reported that their intensive care units are full due to a surge in COVID-19 patients.

Hundreds were expected to attend a demonstration at the Michigan state capitol on Sunday afternoon, according to a Facebook event, to protest against Governor Gretchen Whitmer's order that everyone must wear a mask in public, except when outdoors and able to maintain social distance.

Protesters were also planning to gather outside city hall in Springfield, Missouri on Monday, where the city council was due to vote on a mask mandate in response to rising cases and a more than fourfold increase in Greene County's COVID-19 hospitalizations in the last month.

(GRAPHIC - Where coronavirus cases are rising in the United States, [here](#))

Reporting by Gabriella Borters in New York and Octavio Jones in Windermere, Florida; Writing by Lisa Shumaker; Editing by Daniel Wallis