

FEATURE

Coronavirus Outbreak

Trump Extends Coronavirus Social-distance Guidelines to April 30 In Turnaround

By Ken Schwartz

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[President Donald Trump speaks during a coronavirus task force briefing in the Rose Garden of the White House, March 29, 2020, in Washington.](#)

WASHINGTON - U.S President Donald Trump has extended social distancing and other coronavirus-fighting guidelines through April 30, saying what has been done so far is saving lives.

“The better you do, the faster this whole nightmare will end,” Trump said Sunday moving the daily coronavirus briefing from the White House press room outside to the Rose Garden.

“I want our life back again,” he said.

The initial two-week period of government-recommended mitigation was set to expire Monday.



Trump Accuses Hospitals of Hoarding Ventilators

Trump, whose critics have accused him of trying to deflect blame over his handling of the crisis, did not cite any evidence to back his accusation that hospitals were hoarding the devices

US death rate

Trump predicted that the U.S. death rate will peak in two weeks and said the country will be “well on our way to recovery” by June 1.

Trump had said he wanted the country back in business by Easter, April 12, saying he didn’t want the cure of an economic shutdown to be worse than the disease.

He backed away from that promise Sunday, now calling that Easter deadline “aspirational.”

Trump said he will have more details on extending the guidance on Tuesday and also promised “interesting things” will be announced over the next few weeks, telling people they will be “amazed.”

Social distancing gets results

The U.S. government’s top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, said the decision to extend federal social distancing guidelines was “wise and prudent.” He said what has been done to date has had an effect, although he stands by his previous forecast of more than 100,000 coronavirus deaths in the United States.

“What we're trying to do is not let that happen,” he said. “So instead of concentrating on the upper and the lower, we're saying that we're trying to push it all the way down.”

As of early Monday, Johns Hopkins University statistics showed 142,000 confirmed cases in the United States with more than 2,500 deaths.

Coronavirus task force member Dr. Deborah Birx said up to 2.2 million Americans could die, and perhaps more, if people did not take social distancing and other measures seriously.

Trump also thanked the Food and Drug Administration for its speedy approval of a new coronavirus test that he says produces “lightning-fast” results in five minutes.

He called the test a “whole new ballgame” and said the reason the United States leads the world in confirmed coronavirus cases is because it has done the most testing, although the country trails South Korea and Italy in the number of tests administered per capita.

Trump approval rating

Trump’s recent job approval rating has hit an all-time high for his presidency – 49% -- in part over the way he has handled the outbreak. But he said he doesn’t want popularity this way



Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaks during a coronavirus task force briefing in the Rose Garden of the White House, Sunday, March 29, 2020, in Washington, as President Donald Trump listens.

and would rather be credited for a strong economy.

Along with deaths directly from the virus, Trump forecasted an upswing in suicides, depression, and drug addiction if people’s lives are continued to be turned upside down because of the disease.

But he thanked Americans for what he described as their “patriotism” and “selfless, inspiring, and valiant” efforts in overcoming the crisis.

Trump Friday signed the \$2 trillion economic stimulus package to help Americans and businesses weather the outbreak. The centerpiece of the bill is direct cash payments to most U.S. families.

He said most people will start seeing checks within weeks.