



Number of Coronavirus Cases Spike in Several States

Cases of the novel coronavirus have started to spike in the United States as many states proceed with re-opening. This week, seven states have announced new record high numbers of hospitalizations from COVID-19. Arizona, Arkansas, California, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas all broke their record for number of hospitalizations. Texas and California each reported upward of 5,000 new confirmed cases in a single day, and Arizona, Missouri, and Nevada also reported new 24-hour highs. The upward climb of coronavirus cases is seemingly linked to the re-opening process that is occurring across the country. Top federal health officials warned that cases would likely continue to increase without new restrictions.

Western and Sun Belt states are particularly at risk of developing new cases rapidly, according to data compiled by the Washington Post. Texas, Arizona, and California have seen large spikes in confirmed cases since re-opening began. Mayor Eric Johnson of Dallas said that a reason for this is lockdown fatigue was likely beginning to weigh on people. Likewise, in Houston, the city's top elected official said that the city was on the "precipice of a disaster."

Many states that have recorded new highs of confirmed coronavirus cases believe the spike to be the result of businesses re-opening and Memorial Day gatherings in late May. It is also thought that the widespread protests over police brutality and racial inequality have contributed to the rapid spread of the virus. Some states, including Arizona, are facing a shortage of space in intensive care units, which could pose a major problem if a second wave of the virus is long-lasting. Some leaders, including Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida, have attributed the spike in new cases to increased testing. In the case of Florida, DeSantis argued that health officials have been travelling into high-risk areas in an effort to test more people, which has led to more cases being discovered.

In response to new cases rising, Governor Gary Herbert of Utah said that many counties across his state would pause their re-opening process. Governor Herbert's approach is in opposition to many of his fellow governors, including Greg Abbott of Texas and Ron DeSantis, both of whom are forging ahead with re-opening their states despite the rise in confirmed cases. Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York is also remaining cautious, warning counties that their re-openings could be at risk if large gatherings were allowed to proceed.

For his part, President Trump has pressed states to be aggressive in re-opening. During a campaign style rally in Tulsa, the president told supporters that he had requested testing be slowed down, so the number of confirmed cases didn't appear as severe as it is. Members of his administration later said the president was joking, despite it not being the first instance of the president appearing to spread misinformation pertaining to the virus. Federal health experts are following the outbreak of cases closely, with warnings that a second lockdown may be necessary if the virus continues to spread unabated.