

## COVID-19 Update From EKA – May 21, 2020

### Stay At Home Order Day 63

Today is day 63 of the [statewide "Stay-at-Home" Order](#). 71 days ago, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a Pandemic. Safer at Home orders have been in place in Los Angeles since March 19. If you have any COVID-19 government or communications questions, please reach out to any member of the EKA team. If you have a specific COVID-19 question, click [here](#) and we will attempt to answer it in our update.

### Previous EKA COVID-19 updates

Our previous COVID-19 updates can be found [here](#). Feel free to share our updates with friends and colleagues.

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY

### Six Health Systems Unite

A half dozen of Los Angeles County's largest non-profit health systems announced today that they have teamed up for a public service effort to address concerns that many people are going without important medical care during the coronavirus pandemic. The [BetterTogether.Health](#) educational campaign is being launched by Keck Medicine of USC, Providence, UCLA Health, Kaiser Permanente, Dignity Health and Cedars-Sinai to encourage people to seek timely medical services when necessary and to address growing concerns about a silent sub-epidemic in which many people are not seeking needed medical advice and assistance. The public service announcements -- which will include the themes "Life may be on pause. Your health isn't," "Thanks L.A. for doing your part" and "Get care when you need it" -- will be distributed to multi-language television and radio stations, along with newspapers, magazines, digital and social media, online information, billboards and links to vital health care resources. Click [here](#) to view the campaign website.

### Stay-at-Home Orders Harder for L.A. County Blacks, Latinos

More than two in five blacks and Latinos in Los Angeles County face difficulty complying with the county's shelter-in-place rules because they live in densely populated communities with restricted access to open spaces and limited access to food, according to a UCLA policy report. The report, by the [UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative](#), the [UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge](#) and Ong & Associates, is intended to support policies and programs that address inequities facing those in neighborhoods where compliance with safer-at-home orders is difficult and to provide guidance for public officials as the state emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic. To read the full report, click [here](#).

## CITY OF LOS ANGELES

### Food Delivery Regulation Update

Joining New York, the L.A. City Council unanimously directed the City Attorney to [draft an ordinance to regulate](#) the food delivery industry a vital tool for restaurants and consumers during the COVID-19 stay at home order. While the actual ordinance must still be approved by the City Council, the [amending motion introduced by Councilmembers Mitch O'Farrell and Curren Price](#) would (1) cap a 15% fee per Order for providing delivery services and 5% for other charges (including advertisement) with a sunset date of 90 days after the on premised dining is allowed; (2) specify that 100% of tips would go to drivers; (3) provide a private right of action if the third-party food delivery company does not cure alleged violations within 15 days; (4) add an "urgency clause" which increases the council vote requirement to  $\frac{3}{4}$  and makes it effective upon publication (usually 10 days). The draft ordinance will return to Council where it requires  $\frac{3}{4}$  support of the 14 voting councilmembers (note that Councilmember Huizar has not been participating in voting) and, if passed, will proceed to the Mayor's desk for signature. The Mayor has 10 days to act on the actual ordinance, but because of the Emergency Declaration, it is possible that he could execute a Public Order Under City of Los Angeles Emergency Authority, which would only apply during the emergency declaration period created by Council.

### **Helping Find Food**

L.A. Controller Ron Galperin launched a statewide guide to food resources. The first and only map of its kind in the state, "[Food for Californians](#)" maps 1,800+ food banks, pantries and emergency distribution centers up and down California where residents can pick up free food. This follows Controller Galperin's release of two local Southern California food resource maps tracking all of the food banks and pantries in the [City](#) and [County of Los Angeles](#), as well as a comprehensive [COVID-19 Resource Hub](#) to make it easier for people to take advantage of hundreds of available federal, state and local resources. To find free food resources, click [here](#).

### **Eligibility Requirements For Microloans To Businesses Relaxed**

The Mayor said he is relaxing eligibility requirements in order to help more L.A. companies obtain microloan funding from the City. The Mayor has instructed the Economic and Workforce Development Department to relax some requirements to make it easier for companies to receive funding through an [\\$11 million economic relief program](#) rolled out in March. He also directed the Department to prioritize loan applications that were previously denied, so they can be reassessed based on the new eligibility standards; and to add capacity to the team charged with processing the loans, so that money can get to companies more quickly. Detailed information about the program can be found at [lamayor.org/loan](#).

### **Current Safer At Home Orders in Los Angeles**

As noted previously, the City has [modified](#) the City of L.A.'s "[Safer at Home](#)" emergency order to allow retail businesses to [resume limited operations](#) with delivery and curbside or doorside service, with the City now providing retail establishments with [temporary retail pickup parking zones](#) to help with compliance and boost safety. The City requires everyone to wear face coverings at all times when outside their homes and around others.

### **City Council Action**

<b>May 20 Council Meeting Agenda Items</b>			
1	PRESENTATION OF THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED 2020-21 BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, related Motions and Resolutions.	<a href="#">20-0600</a>	No Action
19	<p>CONSIDERATION OF MOTION (O'FARRELL - KREKORIAN) relative to funding for the Hollywood Walk of Fame Public Improvements Project (Project) located along Hollywood Boulevard.</p> <p>AUTHORIZE the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) to develop a strategic Master Plan and Schematic Design documents for the entire Walk of Fame, and to conduct the initial environmental reviews and any other relevant documentation necessary for a planned Pilot of the Project in an amount not to exceed \$4,082,572 plus all earned interest in Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles Excess Non-Housing Bond Proceeds from the Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area already set aside under previous Council action.</p>	<a href="#">14-1174-S40</a>	Passed
20	<p>MOTION (O'FARRELL - KREKORIAN) relative to making it unlawful for a third-party food delivery service to charge a restaurant a fee per online Order for the use of its services that totals more than 15 percent of the purchase price of such online Order during the local public health emergency related to COVID-19.</p> <p>REQUEST the City Attorney to prepare and present an Ordinance that will make it unlawful for a third-party food delivery service to charge a restaurant a fee per online Order for the use of its services that totals more than 15 percent of the purchase price of such online Order during the local public health emergency related to COVID-19 as declared by the Mayor.</p>	<a href="#">20-0470</a>	Passed w/ Amendment
21	<p>MOTION (KORETZ - RYU) relative to funding for the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Subsidy (ERAS) Program.</p> <p>TRANSFER and APPROPRIATE \$50,000 from the Council District 5 General City Purpose Fund No. 100/56, Account No. 0705 (CD 5 Community Services) to the Housing and Community Investment Department COVID-19 ERAS</p>	<a href="#">20-0591</a>	Passed

Program Trust Fund to assist eligible renters in Council District 5.		
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## LONG BEACH

### COVID-19 Graphic

Councilmember Suzie Price has released a very insightful [graphic](#) that shows COVID-19 cases in the City.

### Long Beach Plans to Open Streets, Parking Lots for Business Use

As a follow-up to yesterday's update, Long Beach officials are moving forward with a plan to open up some of the City's streets, sidewalks and parking lots for public use in an effort to help businesses stay afloat. The City Council approved the Open Streets Initiative at its last meeting. The plan ``will make it possible to temporarily re-purpose public spaces (sidewalks, off-street parking and large parking lots) into safe spaces for physically distanced retail, dining, and potentially even entertainment. Major streets, meanwhile, could be completely closed to all vehicle traffic except for emergency use. There is no timeline for when Long Beach should implement such a plan, but the Mayor said he hoped the City would ``move quickly" on the idea.

### Economic Recovery Advisory Group

Councilmember Price said the Restart Long Beach Economic Recovery Advisory Group submitted a first amendment to its May 2, 2020 report to the City Manager. The purpose of the letter was to provide recommendations that will both protect public health and move businesses, workers, and residents of Long Beach safely into Stage III activities. The letter urges the City to consider allowing dining and other activities (small concerts, movie presentations, plays, etc.) as soon as possible within legal and practical constraints. Details are available on the [City Manager's webpage](#).

### Small Business Majority's 30-Minute California Policy Brief

On Friday, May 22 at 10:00 a.m. [Small Business Majority](#) and [CAMEO](#) will provide updates on funding options and new policies that could impact businesses. Topics of discussion include federal policy updates, state policy updates, and the latest updates on the Governor's phased reopening plan To register for this free webinar, click [here](#).

## CULVER CITY

### Residential Tenant and Commercial Tenant Eviction Moratoria Extension

The [12th Supplement to Public Order](#) was issued by the City Manager. The Order extends the Residential Tenant and Commercial Tenant Eviction Moratoria (CTEM) to August 31, 2020 or

the end of the Local Emergency, whichever occurs earlier; excludes from the CTEM multinational companies, publicly traded companies, or companies that employ 200 or more employees; and reduces the grace period for the repayment of Back Rent from 12 months to 6 months for commercial tenants that have 10 or more, but less than 200, employees.

## VENTURA COUNTY

### **Ventura County Approved To Reopen More Stores, Restaurants**

Ventura County received the go-ahead from state public health officials to reopen seated dining in restaurants and allow shopping inside many retail stores. Ventura is now one of more than 30 counties in California that can advance to an accelerated stage of reopening. The expansion is due to take effect today when restaurant dining and in-store shopping will be permitted for businesses that have registered and are complying with social distancing and other regulations. For more information on the Order to see the details and requirements, click [here](#).

## SACRAMENTO

### **Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control**

In its [First Notice of Regulatory Relief](#), the ABC provided guidance for on-sale licensees selling and delivering prepared drinks and pre-mixed cocktails in to-go containers in conjunction with bona fide meals prepared on the licensed premises. Since then, the Department has received a number of requests to extend this to-go relief to on-sale licensees that do not operate kitchen facilities. The ABC believes that to-go containers of alcoholic beverages are most appropriately sold in conjunction with meals. The ABC is now allowing on a temporary basis, licensees that do not operate kitchen facilities, and do not prepare bona fide meals on the licensed premises to partner with businesses that do offer meals to sell bona fide meals in conjunction with to-go containers of alcoholic beverages. The ABC said that to-go drinks and meal service will be authorized if the following are met:

- The meal provider must be regularly engaged in the business of preparing and offering bona fide meals for sale to the public. Such meal provider may be a traditional restaurant, a fast food restaurant, a food truck (or similar mobile meal provider), or similar business that prepares and serves bona fide meals. A meal provider may be another retail licensee but cannot be a non-retail licensee. The tied house laws will apply to the relationship with meal providers. The ABC licensee must notify the Department of the agreement and relationship created between them and the meal provider. Meal providers can be affiliated with multiple ABC licensees but must treat them equitably in their agreements with each of them.
- All orders for food and alcoholic beverages must be made to or coordinated by the ABC licensee. Orders and payment from consumers for alcohol and food must be received by the ABC licensee. The ABC licensee may then pass on the food order and a portion of the payment to its meal provider.
- For deliveries away from the licensed premises, the ABC licensee must receive the food order from its meal provider and then deliver both the meal and the alcoholic beverages to the consumer in a single transaction originating from its licensed premises. This must

be done even if using a third-party delivery service. That is, the alcoholic beverages may not be delivered to the consumer separately from a meal delivered by the food provider and cannot leave the licensed premises without being accompanied by the appropriate food order.

### **Vehicle Lease Returns During COVID-19**

Attorney General Becerra sent a letter to 10 major auto manufacturers addressing reports that dealerships are engaging in predatory and harmful practices in connection with the return of leased vehicles amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The AG, along with others, called on auto manufacturers to ensure that their financing arms and affiliated dealerships have proper controls in place to timely accept the returns of leased vehicles during the pandemic. In the letter, the coalition urges car dealerships to:

- Examine their lease-return procedures, including those of their affiliated dealerships, to confirm that policies and procedures comply with the terms of lease agreements and applicable law;
- Assist consumers with prompt and convenient lease returns by providing alternative arrangements, such as home pickup or return facilitated by a third party;
- Provide consumers with a clear point of contact to assist with concerns regarding the return of their leased vehicle or with issues concerning their lease;
- Provide consumers who have already been harmed by these leasing practices with a process to return their vehicle; and
- Refund harmed consumers any additional monthly payments incurred beyond the original leasing term and reimburse for incidental costs resulting from refused lease returns.

Click the following hyperlinks to see the letters sent to [Fiat Chrysler](#), [Ford](#), [General Motors](#), [Honda](#), [Hyundai](#), [Mazda](#), [Nissan](#), [Subaru](#), [Toyota](#), and [Volkswagen](#).

### **California Privacy Rights Act**

A new ballot initiative in California, the California Privacy Rights Act (CPRA), would amend and expand the [California Consumer Privacy Act](#) (CCPA). The CPRA, sometimes referred to as "CCPA 2.0," is sponsored by Californians for Consumer Privacy, the same activist group behind the original ballot initiative that led to the CCPA. The CPRA has secured over 900,000 signatures qualifying it for inclusion on the November 2020 ballot in California. Click [here](#) to read more. As detailed in previous updates, the California Attorney General has made it clear that his office intends to stick with the enforcement deadline of July 1, further issuing a stern warning to California businesses: "We're all mindful of the new reality created by COVID-19 and the heightened value of protecting consumers' privacy online that comes with it. We encourage businesses to be particularly mindful of data security in this time of emergency." In other words, with the "heightened value" of consumer's personal information, companies should not expect any relaxed enforcement from the Attorney General when it comes to immediate enforcement of every requirement within the CCPA come July 1, 2020.

## NATIONAL

### **CDC Releases Detailed Guidelines For Reopening America**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued guidelines for how to reopen the United States. The [60-page document](#) lays out a multiphase approach, including guidance on how restaurants, bars, schools and the like can reopen while tracking and controlling the spread of COVID-19. The plan also covers topics like contact tracing, testing and monitoring. The document says that "widespread community mitigation combined with ongoing containment activities" can limit the spread of COVID-19 while addressing a "serious threat to the economic well-being of the country and the world." The CDC describes three phases for reopening, each with criteria to be met before moving on to the next phase. The criteria include a drop in new cases, decreases in the emergency department or outpatient visits for "COVID-like illness," and "robust" testing ability.

### **CDC Now Says COVID-19 Does Not Easily Spread Via Contaminated Surfaces**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now says the novel virus "does not spread easily" from "touching surfaces or objects" according to an update posted on the CDC's website. Previously, the CDC said it "may be possible" to spread the virus via contaminated surfaces, but the agency now believes it is primarily spread through the respiratory droplets of people in close contact. Other experts warn that doesn't mean it's no longer necessary to take practical and realistic precautions in stopping the spread of COVID-19. The CDC now includes "surfaces or objects" under a section that details ways in which the coronavirus does not readily transmit. To view the latest CDC update on how COVID—19 spreads, click [here](#).

### **Bill Proposes \$120 Billion in Grants to Support Independent Restaurants**

A newly proposed bill could go a long way in supporting small and medium-sized restaurants that have struggled to access and make use of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans. Rep. Earl Blumenauer of Oregon announced plans to introduce the Real Economic Support That Acknowledges Unique Restaurant Assistance Needed to Survive (RESTAURANTS) Act of 2020. In a [press release](#) announcing the proposed legislation, the Congressman said the RESTAURANTS Act would create a \$120 billion grant program. Unlike the Paycheck Protection Program, this bill is tailored to small restaurants and would infuse them with the cash needed to stay open through the rest of the year at mandated limited capacity, with very few strings attached. The proposed [RESTAURANTS Act white papers](#) note that "previous efforts to help small businesses such as the Paycheck Protection Program are too restrictive for restaurants and do not address their specific challenges." The RESTAURANTS Act provides grants that do not need to be paid back, whereas PPP loans are only forgiven if all full-time staff are rehired at least 75% of their pre-pandemic salary by the end of June, and are kept on the payroll for eight weeks. The RESTAURANTS Act, funds would not be accessible to publicly traded companies or chains with more than 20 locations doing business under the same name. This would prevent major chain restaurants, many of which took advantage of a PPP program feature that allows companies with 500 or fewer employees per location to receive millions of dollars in assistance from applying.

### **Apple and Google's COVID-19 Tracking Tools**

Apple and Google announced that their coronavirus tracking tools have launched -- putting their digital contact tracing efforts to a public test for the first time. Government agencies rolling out the apps will have to overcome challenges, including adoption rates and privacy concerns surrounding the technology. The tech companies said that 22 countries, along with several U.S. states, have requested and received access to Apple and Google's exposure notification. While Apple and Google are not creating the apps themselves, they are releasing the infrastructure that public health officials can build these tools on. The apps must be created by government officials, and are limited to one developer per country or state.

## **LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Campgrounds Lawsuit**

A group of Maine campgrounds have filed a lawsuit against Governor Janet T. Mills, saying that the state's campgrounds should be allowed to operate. They argue that the Governor's COVID-19 closure orders have put financial strain on the camping industry. The Maine campground closure lawsuit was filed by Bayley's Camping Resort in Scarborough, and Little Ossipee Lake Campground in Waterborough, along with the owners of Little River Bar & Grill and the Seaside Square Café. They claim that the Governor's closure of many businesses has harmed the camping and restaurant industry in Maine.

## **QUESTIONS EKA HAS RECEIVED**

**In a recent update, EKA provided information regarding the guidance various agencies have issued. What does this all mean the next time we go out to eat after the various lockdown orders are lifted?**

As a part of California's Stage 2 reopening efforts, the state has issued a [12-page guidance document](#) outlining baseline regulations for restaurants to resume dine-in operations. Brewpubs, breweries, bars, pubs, craft distilleries and wineries also can resume modified or full operation if they offer sit-down, dine-in meals in the same transaction as alcohol beverage service. Importantly, the guidance does not automatically allow for dine-in service to resume statewide. Instead, operators will be able to resume service only in counties that have relaxed their local shelter-in-place orders and meet the state's Stage 2 reopening criteria. Although the guidance paves the way to reopen restaurants, in returning employees to work, restaurants must still comply with federal and state wage and hour laws as well as accommodation, discrimination and anti-retaliation laws. The Guidelines do not automatically allow for dine-in service to resume statewide; operators will be able to resume service only in counties that have relaxed their local shelter-in-place orders and filed an attestation that satisfies the state's Expanded Stage 2 readiness criteria. When you go to your favorite restaurant for dinner, you may be asked to make a reservation in advance, or wait in their vehicles – rather than inside the restaurant – to observe 6-foot physical distancing protocols. Physical distancing may also result in fewer tables inside the restaurant and in outside eating areas, or other physical changes to the restaurant space. Tables will no longer be preset, but instead foodware, cutlery, glassware

and napkins will be individually provided. Condiments such as salt, pepper and ketchup will be provided in single-serve containers on request by wait staff wearing gloves and face coverings. Patrons will be asked to make their meal selections from a disposable menu or from a digital menu that can be viewed on their own personal electronic devices. In some circumstances, restaurants may ask patrons to order in advance to reduce time spent within the establishment. After the meal is complete, linens will be placed into a sealed bag by an employee wearing protective equipment, and the seating and tables will be disinfected prior to seating the next party.

Restaurant operators will have to consult with their local county health orders, [Cal/OSHA guidelines](#) and [CDC guidance](#). Although the Guidelines pave the way to reopen restaurants, in returning employees to work, restaurants must still comply with federal and state accommodation, discrimination and anti-retaliation laws. Both the [California Department of Fair Employment and Housing](#) and the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#) have issued guidance for employers on compliance with these laws, which will continue to be rigorously enforced. Employers must also be aware of how these Guidelines interplay with statutory, regulatory or collectively bargained employee rights to ensure continued compliance with employee protections and rights, given that the Guidelines expressly state they do not "revoke or repeal" any employee rights. The Guidelines are not static and as we have reported in our updates, they are constantly changing which present challenges for employers attempting to reconcile public health interests with the protections afforded to employees.

### **Can you help us understand the Executive Order Regarding Workers' Compensation?**

On May 6, 2020, Governor Newsom signed [Executive Order #N-62-20](#) which creates a presumption that any COVID-19-related illness of an employee shall be presumed to arise out of and in the course of the employment for purposes of awarding workers' compensation benefits if certain conditions are met. Those conditions include the following:

- The employee tested positive for or was diagnosed with COVID19 within 14 days after a day that the employee performed labor or services at the employee's place of employment at the employer's direction;
- The day referenced in subparagraph (a) on which the employee performed labor or services at the employee's place of employment at the employer's direction was on or after March 19, 2020;
- The employee's place of employment referenced in subparagraphs (a) and (b) was not the employee's home or residence; and
- Where subparagraph (a) is satisfied through a diagnosis of COVID-19, the diagnosis was done by a physician who holds a physician and surgeon license issued by the California Medical Board, and that diagnosis is confirmed by further testing within 30 days of the date of the diagnosis.

The Governor has taken the extraordinary step of presuming a workplace injury without specific evidence of job-causation. If you have specific questions, it is critical that you consult with your legal and H.R. counsel to make sure those answers are coming from experts.

## WHAT WE'RE READING

### **Just 65 Coronavirus Patients Treated At LA Hospital That Cost \$15 Million To Reopen**

A shuttered Los Angeles hospital that was pressed back into service last month to handle an expected influx of coronavirus patients has treated 65 people at a cost to taxpayers of nearly \$15 million, according to documents and the state's joint operations team. The so-called Los Angeles Surge Hospital opened April 13 at what formerly was St. Vincent Medical Center, a 10-acre campus in the Westlake district near downtown Los Angeles that closed in January. With the COVID-19 pandemic looming two months ago, the state tapped the [recently abandoned St. Vincent](#) facility as part of its plan to outfit roughly 50,000 additional hospital beds to handle a surge in infected patients. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Hollywood Gobsmailed By California Governor's Plan To Potentially Reopen Production Soon**

[California](#) Gov. [Gavin Newsom](#) may see the state as mere days away from new guidelines to further open up from the [coronavirus](#) pandemic, but entertainment industry insiders are feeling broadsided by today's announcement. "WTF?" said one top cable executive to Newsom today announcing he would reveal plans [on May 25](#) that could spur shuttered film and T.V. production back to work sooner rather than later. "Have they talked to the unions, because I don't think that's going to jive with them," the exec added. "We'll look at the guidelines when they come out on Monday," a spokesperson for the WGA West told Deadline of the upcoming Memorial Day plan from the Governor to enter the latest phase of reopening the Golden State's battered economy. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **With More Than 1 Million Unemployment Claims, L.A. County's Economy Takes A 'Sobering' Hit**

With more than 1 million unemployment claims, the Los Angeles County economy has taken a devastating hit with most layoffs among lower-income jobs, officials said Wednesday. An economic task force made up of county officials and leaders from 13 different industries met Tuesday and revealed how they have been impacted by months of closures due to COVID-19. "It was sobering," L.A. County Supervisor Kathryn Barger said. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Magic Johnson Offering \$100 Million in Loans to Struggling Minority-Owned Businesses**

With the future of small businesses in urban communities at risk, former National Basketball Association great Magic Johnson has stepped in to offer assistance. Johnson, the CEO of Magic Johnson Enterprises, collaborated with [MBE Capital Partners to offer \\$100 million](#) in loans to minority- and women-owned companies hurt by stay-at-home orders due to Covid-19. The loans were funded through Johnson's [EquiTrust Life Insurance Company](#) and will be provided through the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Anti-Mask Protesters Are Trying To Commandeer U.S. Disability Laws To Get Into Stores Without Face Coverings**

Some Americans who oppose mandatory face-covering orders are trying to avoid them by commandeering U.S. disability laws. A document on social media advises people to say they

have a disability that a mask might affect. The document says people's rights are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act and they are not required to disclose their disability to store owners. The legal basis is weak. The law says disabilities must be accommodated except when there is "a significant risk to the health or safety of others." Someone hoping to sue a store under the Americans with Disabilities Act for refusing them entry would be entitled only if they were genuinely disabled. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Wearing A Surgical Mask Can Reduce Coronavirus Transmission By Up To 75 Percent, Study Says**

Researchers have found that wearing surgical masks can significantly reduce the rate of airborne [COVID-19](#) transmission, according to a study released on Sunday. The study, conducted by a team of scientists in Hong Kong, found the rate of non-contact transmission through respiratory droplets or airborne particles dropped by as much as 75 percent when masks were used. "The findings implied to the world and the public is that the effectiveness of mask-wearing against the coronavirus pandemic is huge," said Dr. Yuen Kwok-yung, a leading microbiologist from Hong Kong University who helped discover the SARS virus back in 2003. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **These Private SoCal Colleges Are Trying To Figure Out How To Reopen Their Campuses In The Fall**

While public university community college systems have announced that their campuses will remain closed this fall, a handful of small, private universities in Southern California say they're making plans to welcome back students to campus. "Our goal is to resume in-person classes in fall and bring students, faculty and staff back to our campuses and centers," Cal Lutheran University [said in an announcement posted on May 3](#). The university said a final decision is forthcoming. The Thousand Oaks-based university said it's considering these measures for a return to campus. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **The World's Busiest Airports In 2019 Face A Steep Uphill Climb**

The world's busiest airports list is out for 2019, highlighting just how precipitously air travel has plunged amid the coronavirus pandemic. The data, released Tuesday by airport trade association Airports Council International, shows that passenger traffic at the world's top 20 busiest airports grew by 1.7% in 2019. But that was before the Covid-19 crisis brought airports around the world to a near standstill. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Unleash Private Enterprise To Jumpstart California's Economy With These Four Moves**

Two months into California's economic lockdown, it's time to start working on creating a V-shaped economic recovery. Gov. Gavin Newsom has shown strong leadership during the past couple months in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Now he needs to unleash the power of private enterprise to protect our livelihoods. He made the right decision in moving the state into a shelter-in-place strategy at a time when many people were still not convinced COVID-19 was that serious a threat. As a result, the virus has not had the same impact here as it has in many other large states. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Childhood Vaccinations Drop More Than 40%, Thanks To Coronavirus Fears**

The number of vaccinations for kids in California dropped nearly in half this April compared to last April, following a worrying national trend as parents avoid doctors' offices during the coronavirus pandemic, public health numbers show. In April, the first full month after California's mandated shelter-in-place Order took effect, and as fears of a coronavirus surge swept the state, the number of children vaccinated for diseases such as chicken pox dropped more than 40% compared to April last year, the state's public health department announced Monday, but it has not provided the number of vaccinations behind the plunge. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Facebook Will Require Temperature Checks, Masks When Its Offices Reopen**

[Facebook](#) will require temperature checks, face masks and social distancing measures when it reopens offices to some employees starting in July. The social media giant will also apparently [limit workplace](#) capacity to 25%. Facebook is outlining to employees globally how it plans to handle reopening offices amid the coronavirus pandemic. The company's outline could be a blueprint for other companies and offer a glimpse of what working conditions await tech employees. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Your Face Mask Selfies Could Be Training The Next Facial Recognition Tool**

Your face mask selfies aren't just getting seen by your friends and family -- they're also getting collected by researchers looking to use them to improve facial recognition algorithms. CNET found thousands of face-masked selfies up for grabs in public data sets, with pictures taken directly from Instagram. The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a surge in people wearing face masks, and [facial recognition companies are scrambling to keep up](#). Face masks cover up a significant portion of what facial recognition needs to identify and detect people -- [essentially threatening the future of a multimillion-dollar industry](#) unless the technology can learn to recognize people beyond the coverings. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Researchers: Nearly Half Of Accounts Tweeting About Coronavirus Are Likely Bots**

Nearly half of the Twitter accounts spreading messages on the social media platform about the coronavirus pandemic are likely bots, researchers at Carnegie Mellon University said Wednesday. Researchers culled through more than 200 million tweets discussing the virus since January and found that about 45% were sent by accounts that behave more like computerized robots than humans. It is too early to say conclusively which individuals or groups are behind the bot accounts, but researchers said the tweets appeared aimed at sowing division in America.

To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Fact-Checking Trump's Letter Blasting The World Health Organization**

In previous administrations, a letter to an international organization signed by the U.S. president generally would have been carefully vetted and fact-checked. But President Trump's May 18 letter to World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus contains a number of false or misleading statements. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **U.S Coronavirus Map: Tracking The Outbreak**

The number of patients diagnosed with COVID-19 grows every day throughout the U.S. and across the world. Experts expect the number of U.S. cases to continue to rise in the coming weeks as more testing detects new infections. The numbers on this page are based on the latest statistics available, which is likely far lower than the actual number of cases due to limited testing across the U.S. Here's the situation as it stands. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Treasury's Mnuchin, Fed's Powell Defend Coronavirus Relief Measures**

The Senate Banking Committee took its first look at spending under the massive CARES Act, which Congress approved in March to provide assistance to individuals, businesses and local governments affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin were pressed by senators about their stewardship of specific aspects of the approximately \$2 trillion relief package at Tuesday's remote hearing. To read the full story, click [here](#)

### **Navajo Nation Has The Highest COVID-19 Infection Rate In The U.S.**

The Navajo Nation has surpassed New York and New Jersey for the highest per-capita coronavirus infection rate in the U.S. -- another sign of COVID-19's disproportionate impact on minority communities. The Navajo Nation, which spans parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, reported a population of 173,667 on the 2010 census. As a result, with 4,002 cases, the Native American territory has 2,304.41 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Elderly Covid-19 Patients On Ventilators Usually Do Not Survive, New York Hospitals Report**

Most elderly covid-19 patients put on ventilators at two New York hospitals did not survive, according to a sweeping study published Tuesday that captured the [brutal nature](#) of this new disease and the many ways it attacks the body. The study, [published in the Lancet](#), is broadly consistent with clinical findings from China and Europe, and confirmed that advanced age is the greatest risk factor for a severe outcome, particularly if accompanied by [chronic underlying diseases](#), such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease and obesity. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Protecting Privacy In Digital Contact Tracing For COVID-19: Avoiding A Regulatory Patchwork**

Contact tracing for COVID-19 is a necessary tool to allow communities to reopen. Unfortunately, because of the speed and numbers of COVID-19 cases, manual contact tracing is unlikely to be sufficient. [Digital contact tracing can provide enough capacity](#) but comes with serious privacy concerns. Digital contact tracing substitutes mobile apps for individuals who track down instances of COVID-19 exposure through interviews with coronavirus carriers. Individuals install these applications on their phones. To read the full story, click [here](#).

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