



DAILY COVID-19 UPDATE

March 17, 2020

ECONOMIC UPDATE

Since our last update, a number of emergency economic stimulus packages have been proposed on the Hill and by the Administration. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) created three task forces to address the 3rd relief package. Additionally, he said the Senate will vote on the House-passed Families First Coronavirus Response Act ([H.R. 6201](#)) and will not leave town until a third assistance bill is completed.

Congressional

- House
 - The Democratic Caucus retreat scheduled for March 26-27 has been postponed.
 - Speaker Pelosi issued this [statement](#) on provisions under consideration to expand emergency leave in the House's third coronavirus response package, including:
 - Ensuring that workers who are sick can access longer term leave if short- and medium-term leave is exhausted;
 - Increasing the scope of allowable uses of family and medical leave;
 - Expanding refundable tax credits to provide support for self-employed workers, workers in the gig economy or other workers with non-traditional employment; and
 - Working to ensure that any action taken by the Administration balances the workforce needs on the frontlines of the coronavirus crisis while ensuring that first responders and health care workers have access to the paid leave that they need.
- Committees

- McHenry, Stivers Call on Public Housing Authorities to Prepare for Impact of Coronavirus on Residents
 - House Ways and Means Committee has canceled hearings through March.
- Senate
 - There is a group of six Senate Republicans – the stimulus task force – working on the Finance Committee portion of the third package. They are looking at a lot of the same types of items that were in a few of the Bush Administration stimulus bills – for example, the idea of individual checks that has surfaced.
 - Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), in consultation with his Ranking Members, introduced a new comprehensive proposal that would provide an immediate minimum of \$750 billion. This proposal would aim to get money directly into the hands of Americans and include federal funding to:
 - Address hospital and treatment capacity issues;
 - Expand Unemployment Insurance and Increase Medicaid Funding;
 - Ensure affordability of all COVID-19 treatment
 - Provide Immediate Loan Payment Forbearance for ALL Federal Loans & Moratoriums on Evictions/Foreclosures;
 - Deliver immediate help to small businesses;
 - Fund emergency child care, especially for health care workers and first responders;
 - Help schools with remote learning;
 - Ensure senior citizen medicine and food delivery;
 - Provide assistance to keep public transportation running;
 - Utilize the Defense Department to provide personnel, equipment, supplies, and critical response capabilities to support on the nationwide response;
 - Address public health and economic needs in Indian Country
 - Senator Mark Warner (D-VA) is pushing the Temporary Corporate and Small Business Liquidity Facility.
 - The idea here is to create a \$1 trillion facility to provide low-cost, government-backed, loans to help small- and medium-sized businesses.

Administration

- White House
 - The White House is considering an economic stimulus of \$1-1.2 trillion.

- Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin wants to send out \$250 billion in direct cash payments to Americans in April, with another \$250 billion to follow in May if necessary.
 - Payroll tax cut not on the table as of now.
- Federal Reserve
 - [Federal Reserve Board announces establishment of a Commercial Paper Funding Facility \(CPFF\) to support the flow of credit to households and businesses](#)
 - [Federal Banking Agencies Provide Banks Additional Flexibility to Support Households and Businesses](#)
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
 - Taxpayers will get a three-month reprieve to file their 2019 income tax returns, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Tuesday at a press conference.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- [Treasury and IRS to Delay Tax Season Deadline by 90 Days](#) – NBC, by Darla Mercado
- [Trump Administration Seeks to Send Checks to Americans as Part of Stimulus Package](#) – The Wall Street Journal, by Andrew Duehren, Andrew Restuccia and Kate Davidson
- [Senate could push through 'Phase 3' coronavirus rescue plan this week](#) – Politico, by John Bresnahan and Brianna Gurciullo

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

While the Senate continues to work through the House-passed H.R. 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, conversations have already begun on a third package of economic stimulus proposals. This would likely include support for hospitals and other public health priorities. In addition to these congressional efforts, the administration moved forward on expansion of telehealth benefits, among other things.

Congressional

- During a [news conference](#) this afternoon, Majority Leader McConnell stated the Senate will vote on H.R. 6201, the House-passed coronavirus relief bill, "as soon as the Senate can get permission to vote..." He added that Senate lawmakers will work with the Administration to draft a third COVID-19 emergency response package and not leave town until a bill is ready.
- Senator Schumer released the following [document](#) and [powerpoint](#) detailing Senate Democrats' priorities for a third COVID-19 emergency response package.

- During a Democratic Caucus call yesterday, Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer told House members that recess has been extended indefinitely and that they will not return to D.C. until a third coronavirus emergency response package is ready for a vote.
- Ways and Means Republicans released this document to help explain the provisions in H.R. 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

Administration

- Today, CMS approved Florida's Section 1135 waiver request following President Trump's emergency declaration. This waiver authority will grant Florida's state government more flexibility to respond to the outbreak.
- As of today, CMS is expanding telehealth benefits to Medicare beneficiaries, including patients in nursing homes and individuals in their own homes, to stem the spread of COVID-19. The agency also released a companion piece outlining Medicaid telehealth guidance for states.
- During a White House press briefing, NIAID Director Dr. Fauci, implored millennials to cooperate with the President's coronavirus guidelines to slow the spread, saying "we can't do this without" the younger generation. He also noted that it could be several weeks before we see whether these public health recommendations are having a measurable impact on the pandemic.
- FDA Commissioner Dr. Hahn warned Americans to be careful of any individual or any company "claiming they can cure COVID-19."
- In order to achieve more rapid testing capacity in the U.S., the FDA updated its policy on diagnostic testing for the coronavirus, giving states new powers to authorize laboratories to develop their own diagnostics.
- During a call with governors on March 16, President Trump told states that while the federal government will be "backing" them, they should try purchasing their own n95 masks and ventilators for healthcare workers and patients because it will be "faster."

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- **3/16 NBC published an article titled, "Some states have seen a 'phenomenal increase' in coronavirus tests — but U.S. still lags far behind."**
- **3/16 Politico published an article titled, "Latest coronavirus testing glitch: Not enough cotton swabs."**
- **3/17 The Hill published an article titled, "Critical supplies shortage hampers hospitals, health providers."**

- **3/17 NPR published an article titled, “Poll: Nearly 1 In 5 Households Have Lost Work Because Of Pandemic.”**