



DAILY COVID-19 UPDATE

April 29, 2020

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY

According to data released today by the Commerce Department, the U.S. economy shrank by an annualized rate of 4.8 percent in the first quarter of 2020. This marks the first quarter of negative gross domestic product (GDP) in the U.S. in the same period since 2014.

Additionally, President Trump held a roundtable meeting with leaders from the automotive, food, and hospitality industries to discuss re-opening the economy.

Since our last update, the Department of Labor and Small Business Administration published additional guidance. Please see below for more details.

LATEST PMJ RESOURCES

- [COVID Legislative Tracker](#)
- [COVID State Reopening Tracker](#)
- [Drug Shortage and Medical Supply Chain Tracker](#)
- [COVID-19 Travel Restrictions](#)
- [Global COVID-19 Export Controls](#)
- [Memo - Federal Reserve COVID-19 Announcements](#)
- [Federal Reserve Lending Facilities Deck](#)

ECONOMIC UPDATE

Congressional

- ***House***
 - In a [Dear Colleague letter](#), Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) announced, along with Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-SC), the Members to serve on the House Select Committee on the Coronavirus Crisis.
 - In a [Dear Colleague letter](#), House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) confirmed the chamber will not return on May 4. Leader Hoyer stated, “The House will return to session to consider CARES 2 legislation whenever it is ready for Floor action.”
- ***Senate***

- Next week, the Senate Banking Committee will meet in an open session to [conduct a hearing](#) on the nominations of The Honorable Brian D. Miller for Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recover at the U.S. Department of Treasury and Dana T. Wade for Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Administration

- Federal Reserve
 - The Federal Reserve [issued](#) a FOMC statement.
- Treasury
 - U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Small Business Administrator (SBA) Jovita Carranza [issued a statement](#) on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) amid continuing efforts to aid small community lenders, their small business customers, and ensure SBA's systems run efficiently.
 - Secretary Mnuchin and Administrator Carranza [issued a statement](#) on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
 - The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) [released](#) a new Spanish language version of their online tool that allows Americans to quickly and easily register for their Economic Impact Payment.
- Small Business Administration (SBA)
 - The Small Business Administration (SBA), in consultation with the Department of the Treasury, released an updated version of the [Paycheck Protection Program Loans FAQs](#), which updated guidance on the eligibility of businesses owned by private companies with adequate sources of liquidity to support the business's ongoing operations (Question 37).
 - The SBA released an [interim final rule](#) on disbursements related to the Paycheck Protection Program.
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)
 - The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) [took steps](#) to make it easier for consumers with urgent financial needs to obtain access to mortgage credit more quickly.

Articles of Interest

- 4/29 Politico published an article titled, "[Economists urge Republicans to ignore the deficit.](#)"
- 4/29 Politico published an article titled, "[U.S. economy shrank at 4.8% rate last quarter as virus struck.](#)"
- 4/29 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, "[Fed's Powell Says More Spending Will Be Needed From Congress.](#)"
- 4/29 The Wall Street Journal published an article titled, "[Mnuchin Says U.S. Aiming to Note Lose Money on Fed Lending Facilities.](#)"
- 4/28 Politico published an article titled, "[Trump lauds 'amazing' SBA loan program as big banks feel angst.](#)"

PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Congressional

• House

- Speaker Pelosi penned a [Dear Colleague letter](#) on oversight of the coronavirus relief funds.
- Speaker Pelosi [appointed](#) six Democrats to sit on the bipartisan House Select Committee on the Coronavirus Crisis, which will provide oversight of the \$2 trillion CARES Act. At the same time, she is urging House Minority Leader McCarthy to select Republican members to serve on the panel so that it is as "nonpartisan as possible."
- Speaker Pelosi joined Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, AFSCME President Lee Saunders and four public service workers on the front lines of coronavirus response on a [press call](#) to urge Congress to swiftly pass urgently needed funding for cash-strapped state and local governments.
- Ways and Means Republicans posted a [coronavirus bulletin](#) titled, "State and Local Governments Have Received Over \$765 Billion in Federal Coronavirus Spending."
- A bipartisan group of more than 160 House members sent a [letter](#) to Speaker Pelosi and House Minority Leader McCarthy, urging them to include \$26 billion in funding for research grants and contracts and emergency relief and funding for additional graduate student and postdoc opportunities for up to two years as part of the next coronavirus aid package.
- Rep. Tonko introduced [legislation](#) that would fund research to study the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has on the mental health of Americans, and more specifically, health care providers.
- Rep. "Chuy" García and the Congressional Tri-Caucus [introduced a bill](#) to end health disparities in the U.S., which the coronavirus has not only exposed but exacerbated.
- Rep. Maloney issued a [statement](#) that officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and HHS had told lawmakers in briefings that states face shortages of testing supplies as well as personal protective equipment, such as masks and medical gowns.
- 115 House members sent a [letter](#) to congressional leaders urging the the removal of barriers threatening pharmacy financial stability and a pharmacy's ability to support patients by enacting much needed pharmacy DIR clawback reform.

• Senate

- Nine Democratic Senators sent a [letter](#) to Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer urging public health data and infrastructure modernization in any subsequent COVID-19 response package.
- Sens. Stabenow and Peters sent a [letter](#) to HHS Secretary Azar, urging the Trump administration to ensure that health care providers and hospitals gain immediate access to the \$175 billion in additional funding recently passed by Congress.
- 11 Democratic Senators sent a [letter](#) to Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer requesting supplemental funding of \$15 billion for Title VIII Nurse Workforce Development Programs in further COVID-19 relief packages.
- Sen. Schumer issued a [statement](#) calling on Majority Leader McConnell and Senate Republicans to immediately begin vigorous oversight hearings of Trump admin's response to COVID-19.

- Sens. Murphy and Markey sent a [letter](#) to Secretary of State Pompeo requesting information about the Administration's response to reports of safety and management concerns at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV).
- Sens. Baldwin, Murphy, and Schumer introduced [legislation](#) that lays out a framework for an effective COVID-19 response by federalizing and adding critical oversight and transparency to the supply chain for critical medical supplies and equipment. [The Medical Supply Transparency and Delivery Act](#) requires the president to utilize all available authorities under the Defense Production Act to mobilize a federal response to the pandemic through an equitable and transparent process.
- Senator Blumenthal sent a [letter](#) to Department of Veterans Affairs Inspector General Missal demanding an investigation into reported shortages of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 testing supplies at the VA.
- Sen. Cardin [is working to protect](#) symptomatic patients who test negative for COVID-19 from sky-high medical bills.

Administration

- White House
 - The White House Council of Economic Advisers released an [article](#) titled, "Deregulation Sparks Dramatic Telehealth Increase During the COVID-19 Response."
- Health and Human Services
 - HHS has begun the distribution of an additional \$20 billion of the \$50 billion general distribution to Medicare facilities and providers impacted by COVID-19, augmenting the \$30 billion that was allocated earlier this month. In order to receive payment, providers eligible for the general distribution must submit required revenue information for verification, and must attest to the terms and conditions of this additional distribution. The portal for submitting this information is open linked from hhs.gov/providerrelief. Payments will go out on a rolling basis as eligible providers submit and verify the required information.
- Food and Drug Administration
 - FDA issued a new [video resource](#) explaining Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs), one of several tools FDA uses to help make important medical products available quickly during public health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - As part of its work to help protect public health, FDA [updated its FAQ page](#) with information about smoking and COVID-19. Smoking cigarettes can leave smokers more vulnerable to respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19.
 - FDA posted [information and resources](#) to assist manufacturers submitting generic drug applications with bioequivalence studies that may be impacted during COVID-19.
- National Institutes of Health
 - NIH announced a new [initiative](#) aimed at speeding innovation, development and commercialization of COVID-19 testing technologies. With a \$1.5 billion investment from federal stimulus funding, the newly launched Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) initiative aims to speed delivery of accurate, easy-to-use, scalable tests to all Americans.

Articles of Interest

- 4/28 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation published an article titled, "[The COVID-19 Pandemic is Straining Families' Ability to Afford Basic Needs.](#)"

- 4/28 The Associated Press published an article titled, "[CDC compiles new guidelines to help organizations reopen.](#)"
- 4/29 Stat published an article titled, "[Gilead says critical study of Covid-19 drug shows patients are responding to treatment.](#)"
- 4/29 The Hill published an article titled, "[Early studies show promise in coronavirus immunity.](#)"
- 4/29 CNN published an article titled, "['US could be in for a bad fall and a bad winter' if it's unprepared for a second wave of coronavirus, Fauci warns.](#)"

LABOR UPDATE

Congressional

- House
 - Reps. Stevens and Pappas introduced the [Essential Worker Protection Act](#), a bill to create an interagency task force focused on worker protection as millions of essential workers continue to perform their duties despite the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Administration

- Department of Labor
 - DOL's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) issued [deadline relief and other guidance](#) under Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) to help employee benefit plans, plan participants and beneficiaries, employers and other plan sponsors, plan fiduciaries, and other service providers impacted by the coronavirus outbreak.

Please note this daily update may not encompass all public guidance documents on implementation; as such, we encourage you to review public agency websites. Please let us know of any questions.