

# *U.S. coronavirus cases surge past 14,000; deaths hit 200*

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Seattle, March 20 (RHC)-- The U.S. death toll from the coronavirus outbreak has reached 200 and the number of cases surged past 14,000, forcing the state of California to order a state-wide lockdown. As of Friday morning, at least 14,250 people across the US have tested positive for the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19.

More than 2,700 new cases were reported in the country in 24 hours between Wednesday morning and Thursday morning. At least 240,000 people have now been confirmed with the coronavirus globally, of which nearly 85,000 have recovered, while more than 9,800 have died, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

Italy has surpassed China in total deaths connected to the coronavirus, with the country reporting 3,405 fatalities as of Thursday. Efforts to contain the spread of the virus in the U.S. and Europe have brought life in many major cities in the West to a standstill, and governments are launching a variety of aid packages meant to alleviate the worst of the economic impact.

As the number of cases grows in the US, so does the burden on health officials. Many cities are already struggling with shortages of medical equipment, with some attempting to fill the gaps on their own. New York, America's most populous city, is two to three weeks away from running out of some medical supplies, according to Mayor Bill de Blasio.

The governor of California ordered the state's almost 40 million residents to stay home except for essential trips. "This is not a permanent state, this is a moment in time," Governor Gavin Newsom said in a news conference. "We will look back at these decisions as pivotal."

After initially playing down the threat, President Donald Trump's tone on the pandemic has changed dramatically over the past few days. Sick people across the U.S. say they are being denied the coronavirus test, as American states scramble to slow the spread of COVID-19 and stop hospitals from being overwhelmed with a surge in critically ill patients.

The former Surgeon General of the United States warned last week that America's top medical centers are suffering from a severe shortage of coronavirus testing supplies and are being forced to turn away potential patients amid the fast-spreading pandemic.

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