

U.S. leads in coronavirus death toll, as Trump considers lifting restrictions



Washington, April 13 (RHC)-- The United States has the highest recorded COVID-19 death toll in the world, topping 22,000, after it surpassed Italy's death toll on Saturday. All 50 states now have a disaster declaration in place for the first time in history. Over half a million cases have been identified nationwide, but testing remains limited, making the true number of cases unknown. Worldwide, there are over 1.8 million confirmed cases and over 115,000 deaths.

Over Easter weekend in the U.S., many churches and families held virtual celebrations, though some pastors defied social distancing guidelines to hold in-person gatherings. President Trump appeared to boast about the nationwide disaster declaration Sunday, tweeting: "For the first time in history there is a fully signed Presidential Disaster Declaration for all 50 States. We are winning, and will win, the war on the Invisible Enemy!"

But many observers say the battle is far from won. A grim picture is emerging of the coronavirus's impact on nursing homes, where over 2,200 deaths have been reported, though the true number is also expected to be much higher since many states either do not report this data or in some cases do not even track it.

In New York City, nearly 6,000 new cases over the past day has put the city's total number of coronavirus infections at over 104,000, with over 9,300 deaths. Sunday was the sixth straight day in which more than 700 deaths were reported, although Governor Andrew Cuomo noted hospitalizations were down.

On Sunday, Trump reposted a tweet calling for the firing of White House coronavirus task force scientist Dr. Anthony Fauci after he acknowledged in an interview on CNN that adopting lockdown measures earlier on could have saved lives.

Dr. Anthony Fauci: "Obviously, you could logically say that if you had a process that was ongoing and you started mitigation earlier, you could have saved lives. Obviously no one is going to deny that. But what goes into those kinds of decisions is complicated. But you're right. I mean, obviously, if we had, right from the very beginning, shut everything down, it may have been a little bit different. But there was a lot of pushback about shutting things down back then."

President Trump has suggested he could order the reopening of the country as early as May 1st. When asked by a reporter what "metrics" will be used to make that decision, the U.S. president said: "The metrics right here," pointing to his head.

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