

Experts warn U.S. death toll could surge in coming weeks as states begin reopening



Washington, May 6 (RHC)-- The official coronavirus death toll worldwide has topped a quarter of a million, with over 3.6 million confirmed cases. The official U.S. death toll is near 70,000, but that is widely believed to be an undercount.

A pair of studies predict the COVID-19 outbreak is set to become far deadlier in the United States. A draft Federal Emergency Management Agency report forecasts that daily coronavirus deaths in the United States would rise to 3,000 people a day by June 1 -- that's a 70% increase over the current figure.

Separately, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington estimates the U.S. death toll will reach around 135,000 by August in the United States -- more than double the institute's previous forecast.

Despite the worsening outbreak, many states are continuing to lift restrictions this week, including Florida, where Governor Ron DeSantis gave the green light for state parks, non-essential businesses, and restaurants to reopen across most of the state at reduced capacity.

On Monday, Miami Beach had to close a popular park -- just five days after reopening it -- after thousands failed to adhere to new rules requiring social distancing and wearing a face mask.

In California, Governor Gavin Newsom said some manufacturing and retail businesses -- including bookstores, clothing and sporting goods stores and florists -- would be allowed to reopen Friday. Businesses will have to abide by certain rules, including social distancing and offering curbside pickup.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said: "The data says it can happen, but we recognize, as we begin to modify, behavior is modified, and possible community spread may occur. If that's the case and we do not have the capacity to control that spread, to trace that spread, to track that spread, to isolate individuals that may have been in contact with COVID-19, we will have to make modifications anew."

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