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New York, November 11 (RHC)-- Several U.S. states have imposed more restrictions to curb the spread of the coronavirus as people admitted to hospitals soared, straining the facilities and medical resources

across much of the country.

The number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in California has risen by 32 percent over the past two weeks and intensive-care admissions have spiked by 30 percent, Dr Mark Ghaly, the state's health and human services secretary told reporters.

As a result, Ghaly announced that three counties that are home to about 5.5 million people – San Diego, Sacramento and Stanislaus – must reverse their reopening plans and go back to the most restrictive category of regulations under which indoor dining in restaurants is not allowed and gyms and religious institutions are also not permitted to hold indoor activities.

"We anticipate if things stay the way they are ... over half of California counties will have moved into a more restrictive tier" by next week, Ghaly said.

In Minnesota, Governor Tim Walz announced new restrictions as the Midwestern state reported a fresh record high in daily COVID-19 hospitalisations and medical systems in Minnesota expressed concerns about their ability to cope with the surge. The state reported 1,224 coronavirus hospitalisations on Tuesday, up from 1,084 the previous day and a new daily record, according to the latest figures.

"We've turned our dials, we're going to have to turn them back a little bit today," Walz told a briefing.

In Illinois, which recorded its highest number of daily cases on Tuesday with 12,626 new infections, Governor JB Pritzker told reporters the majority of the state's regions were seeing higher hospitalisation rates compared with last spring.

Faced with rampant coronavirus infections and a strained healthcare system, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds also took steps to curb the disease's spread by limiting the size of social gatherings and imposing a targeted mask-wearing requirement for certain situations.

U.S. Health Secretary Alex Azar expressed concern about rising hospitalisations that were straining medical facilities in areas hardest hit by the surge, and said health officials will work to set up temporary medical facilities where they might be needed.

"As you get more cases, you get more hospitalizations," Azar said in an interview with MSNBC. "It's just simple math."

There were more than 59,000 COVID-19 patients in hospitals across the U.S. on Monday, the country's highest number ever of in-patients being treated for the disease. Daily new infections exceeded 100,000 for the sixth consecutive day.

Hospitalizations are a key metric of how the pandemic is progressing because, unlike case counts, they are not influenced by the number of tests performed. The harsh statistics tallied by Reuters cemented the U.S. position as the country worst affected by the coronavirus pandemic, even as drugmaker Pfizer Inc on Monday provided some hope: successful late-stage tests of its vaccine.

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