

# *U.S. surpasses 12 million COVID-19 cases*

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New York, November 21 (RHC)-- The United States has registered more than 12 million cases of COVID-19, as public health experts continue to caution people to heed a warning not to travel for the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday.

As of Saturday afternoon, the U.S. reported over 12.09 million cases of the coronavirus and more than 255,000 deaths – the highest totals of any country in the world, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

The U.S. has seen a surge in new infections, as well as hospitalisations, in recent weeks as colder weather is forcing more people indoors. Authorities in several states have warned that healthcare systems could soon be overwhelmed, as hospitalisations have more than doubled since the summer months. As of Friday, more than 82,000 people were in hospital with the disease, the COVID Tracking Project said.

With the November 26th Thanksgiving holiday fast approaching, state and national officials have increasingly warned against travelling. On Saturday, seven governors of Midwestern states -- Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Michigan -- released a joint video message urging their residents to heed public health advice and not celebrate Thanksgiving with people outside their households.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a "strong recommendation" to stay home on Thursday. The agency discouraged any gatherings with people who have not lived in the same household for 14 days -- the virus incubation period.

However, many people appear to be ignoring that advice. Transportation Security Administration spokeswoman Lisa Farbstein tweeted that Friday was only the second time since the pandemic began that over one million travellers were screened at airports across the country.

A spate of new restrictions have been put in place to respond to the surge in COVID-19 cases. On Saturday, California will begin imposing a curfew between 10pm and 5am local time (06:00 and 13:00 GMT), while New York City shut down schools for 1.1 million students earlier this week. Chicago -- the third-largest city in the country -- has been under stay-at-home orders since Monday.

The Associated Press news agency reported on Saturday that Republican lawmakers in states where the virus is surging, including Ohio, Missouri, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania, are resisting rules requiring them to wear masks in their own government buildings.

Nearly 200 legislators nationwide have tested positive for COVID-19 and four have died since the pandemic began, the news agency said.

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