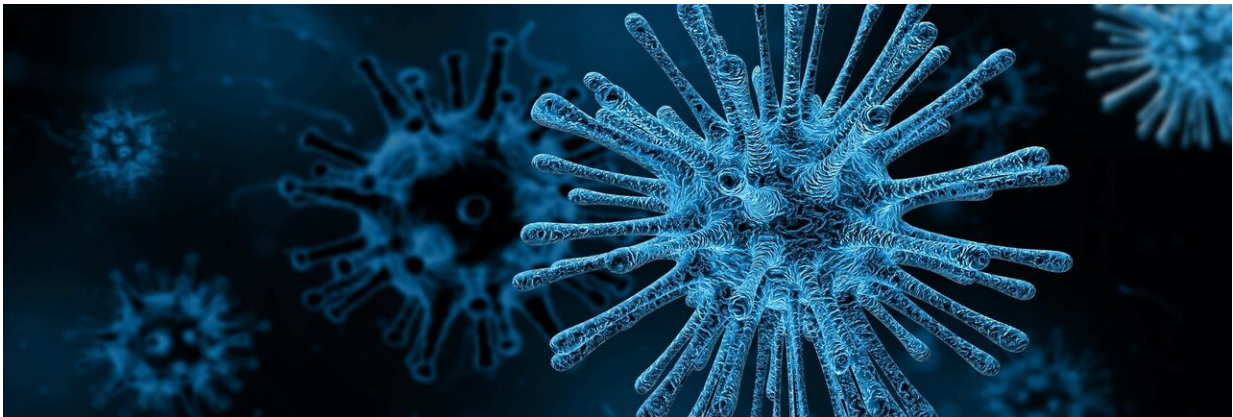


# New coronavirus deaths in US as lawmakers reach funding deal

March 4 2020

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The death toll in the United States from the new coronavirus rose to 11 on Wednesday, as lawmakers in Congress reached a deal to provide more than \$8 billion to fight the outbreak.

Governor Gavin Newsom reported the first fatality in California from the COVID-19 illness while health officials in nearby Washington state said a 10th person had died there.

Newsom gave no details about the person who had died, saying only that the victim lived in Placer County, in northern California.

"The state is working with federal officials to follow up on contact tracing of individuals that may have been exposed to provide treatment and protect public health," he said in a statement.

Earlier in the day, Los Angeles County officials declared an emergency as six new cases were reported in the West Coast metropolis, while New York reported four more patients—all close contacts of a man who tested positive.

Nationwide, more than 130 people have so far been infected, with the virus detected in more than a dozen states. Most of the deaths have so far been in Washington state, with most of the victims residents of a nursing home.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Thursday said that Republicans and Democrats had reached a deal to fund the response to the outbreak to the tune of \$8.3 billion.

### **'Coordinated, fully-funded response'**

"Americans urgently need a coordinated, fully-funded, whole-of-government response to keep us safe from the widening coronavirus epidemic," she said in a statement.

"We can do that now because today we reached a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on an emergency coronavirus response funding package of \$8.3 billion of entirely new funds."

President Donald Trump had initially sought a much lower amount of \$2.5 billion but later said he was happy to accept more money.

All of the newly infected individuals in Los Angeles were exposed to COVID-19 through close contact, health officials said.

Barbara Ferrer, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, said three of the cases concerned travelers who had gone together to northern Italy—a virus hotspot with more than 100 deaths.

Two other cases involved individuals who had come in contact with a family member who had the virus and the last concerned someone whose job exposed them to travelers.

"There's one person that is hospitalized, and all of our other five new cases are being isolated at home and closely monitored by the public health department," Ferrer said.

Authorities said the emergency declaration was aimed at ensuring the county was well-prepared to prevent the spread of the virus.

"The step we're taking today is about preparation, not panic," said Mayor Eric Garcetti.

Officials said they expected the number of infections in California to rise in coming days and urged families to brace for possible school closures and the cancellation of public events.

There have now been seven people infected in LA County. Statewide, about 50 people are known to be infected, the most of any state.

In New York, state officials reported on Wednesday that the family members and neighbor of a man who had the virus had also tested positive.

Governor Andrew Cuomo said the wife and two children of the man were now infected, as is a neighbor who had driven the man to hospital, taking the number of cases in the state to six.

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