

US cautiously optimistic as coronavirus curve appears to flatten

April 9 2020



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US health officials made cautiously optimistic noises about coronavirus despite a jump in deaths Thursday, suggesting Americans might be able to take summer holidays, as falling hospitalization rates hint at a turning

point in the battle against COVID-19.

With unemployment skyrocketing and the economy tanking, President Donald Trump is keen to lift social confinement measures and get the United States open for business again as soon as possible.

Trump's top pandemic advisor Anthony Fauci warned America cannot be reopened overnight due to the threat of further waves of infections, but said it could be up and running again by the [summer months](#).

That is, he said, providing citizens adhere to social distancing guidelines and widespread stay-at-home orders, which have the vast majority of Americans on lockdown, throughout April.

When asked by CBS This Morning whether he could envision a summer of vacations, baseball games, weddings and family get-togethers infectious disease expert Fauci replied, "It can be in the cards."

His comments came as New York Governor Andrew Cuomo struck a similar tone of cautious optimism despite the state reporting a record single-day death toll for the third time this week Thursday.

New York is bearing the brunt of the United States' deadly [coronavirus](#) pandemic, accounting for around half the number of deaths across the country.

'Nightmare'

Cuomo said COVID-19 had claimed the lives of 799 New Yorkers in the past 24 hours, bringing the state's death toll to more than 7,000 and outdoing the previous high of 779 announced on Wednesday.

He added though that curve was flattening because of social distancing

orders.

"We had a 200-net increase in hospitalizations, which you can see is the lowest number we've had since this nightmare started," Cuomo told reporters, adding that intensive care admissions were also at their lowest yet.

The COVID-19 [death toll](#) in the US leapt to more than 15,000 Thursday, according to a running tally by Johns Hopkins University, from well over 400,000 confirmed cases

Meanwhile unemployment is rising at a jarring rate, with data Thursday showing 17 million have lost their jobs since mid-March, when America began shutting down.

Fauci, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases director, said the US could be opened by the summer if it is ready to deal with the inevitable spike in infections a relaxing of restrictions will bring.

"It is very likely that we will progress towards the steps towards normalization as we get to the end of this thirty days.

"And I think that's going to be a good time to look and see how quickly can we make that move to try and normalize. But hopefully, by the time we get to the summer we will have taken many steps in that direction," he said.

Trump, who veers between sounding ominous warnings about the crisis to threatening to scrap the mitigation measures, struck a similar tone on Wednesday.

'New normal'

"We are hopefully heading towards a final stretch, the light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

In recent days, an Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) model used by the White House has revised down America's projected number of COVID-19 deaths from 93,000 to 82,000 and then 60,000.

The model, which is considered too optimistic by some states, suggested the United States will reach its peak number of confirmed cases this Easter weekend.

America's top doctor, Surgeon General Jerome Adams, told CBS the spread was slowing and the next 30 days were crucial.

But rather than returning to life as it was before, the former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Tom Frieden said the country should be prepare for a "new normal" to "box the virus in."

Cuomo, who this week extended New York's shutdown of schools and non-essential businesses until April 29 said it was too early to say when the city might be reopened again.

"I'm not going to say to anyone 'this is where I think we'll be in three weeks or four weeks or five weeks.' I have no idea," Cuomo admitted.

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Citation: US cautiously optimistic as coronavirus curve appears to flatten (2020, April 9)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-cautiously-optimistic-coronavirus-flatten.html>

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