

Faint glimmers of hope as virus deaths slow in places

April 6 2020, by Colleen Long, Jennifer Peltz and Lori Hinnant



Health personnel wearing protection gear to protect against the spread of the new coronavirus prepare to attend to a patient during the COVID-19 virus outbreak in Barcelona, Spain, Monday, April 6, 2020. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez Sánchez announced that he would ask the Parliament to extend the state of emergency by two more weeks, taking the lockdown on mobility until April 26. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)

The steep rise in coronavirus deaths in New York appears to be leveling off in a possible sign that social distancing is working in the most lethal hot spot in the U.S., the governor said Monday—a trend that seems to have taken hold even more convincingly in hard-hit Italy and Spain.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo warned that this is no time to relax the restrictions aimed at keeping people from getting too close to one another, and he ordered bigger fines against violators.

"The numbers look like it may be turning. 'Yay, it's over!' No, it's not. And other places have made that mistake," he said as deaths in the U.S. climbed past 10,000, with around 350,000 confirmed infections.

Stocks rallied on Wall Street and around the world on the news out of the U.S. and in Europe, where deaths and new infections appear to be slowing not only in some of the most severely stricken countries but in the Netherlands and Germany as well. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up nearly 1,300 points, or 6%, by early afternoon.

Outbreaks in other places were headed in the opposite direction.

Britain reported more than 600 deaths Sunday, surpassing Italy's daily increase for the second day in a row. And 55-year-old Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who was infected last month, was hospitalized in what his office described as a precaution because of persistent symptoms.



A medical worker has her temperature taken at a control point on a covered footbridge to be screened for coronavirus symptoms before entering the Dell Seton Medical Center at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas, Monday, April 6, 2020. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Eric Gay)

France recorded its highest 24-hour [death](#) toll since the epidemic began, 833. And Japan considered a [state of emergency](#) for Toyko and other areas because of soaring infections in the country with the world's third-largest economy and its oldest population.

Worldwide, more than 1.3 million people have been confirmed infected and over 70,000 have died, according to Johns Hopkins University. The true numbers are certainly much higher, because of limited testing, different ways nations count the dead and deliberate under-reporting by some governments.

The number of dead in New York state rose past 4,700, and the death toll in New York City closed in on the 2,753 lives lost at the World Trade Center on 9/11.

The state has been averaging just under 600 deaths per day for the past four days. As horrific as that number is, the roughly steady daily totals were seen a positive sign. Cuomo also reported that the number of new people entering hospitals daily has dropped, as has the number of critically ill patients who require ventilators.



Passengers wearing protective masks wave to members of the news media as they stand on their balcony aboard the Coral Princess cruise ship while docked at PortMiami during the new coronavirus outbreak, Monday, April 6, 2020, in Miami. According to Princess Cruises, disembarkation of guests is expected to take several days due to limited flight availability. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)

At the same time, he ordered schools and nonessential businesses to remain closed until the end of the month, announced he is doubling the fines for rule breakers to \$1,000, and lambasted New Yorkers for being out in parks over the weekend, calling it "wholly unacceptable."

Even as he announced that the outbreak in New York may be at or near its peak, he warned that hospitals are under extreme pressure.

"If we are plateauing, we are plateauing at a very high level, and there is tremendous stress on the [health care system](#)," Cuomo said. "This is a hospital system where we have the foot to the floor and the engine is at red line and you can't go any faster, and by the way, you can't stay at red line for any period of time or the system will blow."

Elsewhere around the world, Austria and the Czech Republic both began openly discussing how to ease some of the crippling restrictions, starting with reopening some small shops and garden centers next week.



A woman is reflected on a bus station as she wears a protective face mask amid concerns over the country's coronavirus outbreak, in Tel Aviv, Israel, Monday, April 6, 2020. (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)

Italy's day-to-day increase in new COVID-19 cases dipped again, for the lowest one-day increase in early three weeks. The country, ravaged by the virus, also saw a drop for the third straight day in intensive care beds occupied by infected patients.

Italy still has, by far, the world's highest [coronavirus](#) death toll—over 16,500—but the pressure on intensive care units in the north has eased so much that the region is no longer airlifting patients to other regions.

Nursing coordinator Maria Berardelli at the hard-hit Pope John XXIII

hospital in Bergamo said that while the numbers of new patients had eased up a bit, hospital staff members were still pulling long, difficult shifts.

"There has been no reduction in the work," Berardelli said. "There have been fewer admissions to the emergency room, but our intensive care units are still full, so the activity hasn't been reduced."



Health personnel work at the headquarters of the Emergency Medical System (SEM) in Barcelona that coordinates emergencies during the COVID-19 virus outbreak in Catalonia, Spain, Monday, April 6, 2020. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez Sánchez announced that he would ask the Parliament to extend the state of emergency by two more weeks, taking the lockdown on mobility until April 26. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health

problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)

In Spain, deaths and new infections dropped again. The health ministry reported 637 new deaths, the lowest toll in 13 days, for a total of over 13,000 dead. New infections were also the lowest in two weeks.

Emergency rooms in the hard-hit Madrid region of 6.6 million were returning almost to normal a week after scenes of patients sleeping on floors and in chairs.

Transport, Mobility and Urban Affairs Minister José Luis Ábalos said the figures show Spain is entering "a new phase of the battle."

"This new phase does not mean we can let down our guard. We are assessing the measures that we will need to adopt," Ábalos said.

It was a message repeated by leaders around the world: Any gains could easily be reversed if people do not continue to abide by lockdown rules.

A report from a federal watchdog agency found that three out of four U.S. hospitals surveyed are already treating patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. And some places, like Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., are predicting the peak won't come until May or well into the summer.



A man wearing a face mask looks out from a small opening on the door of a pharmacy as he waits for customers in Igualada, Spain, Monday, April 6, 2020. Authorities in Catalonia lifted the total lockdown to the area engulfing the town of Igualada, although national confinement measures still continue. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Felipe Dana)



Beds are shown at the Mountain America Expo Center Monday, April 6, 2020, in Sandy, Utah. The State of Utah has contracted with Salt Lake County to use the Mountain America Expo Center as an alternate care site, or hospital overflow. This is not a site for COVID-19 patients. It is simply an overflow site for certain types of care, should the need arise. It will initially be stocked with 250 beds and medical equipment. (AP Photo/Rick Bowmer)



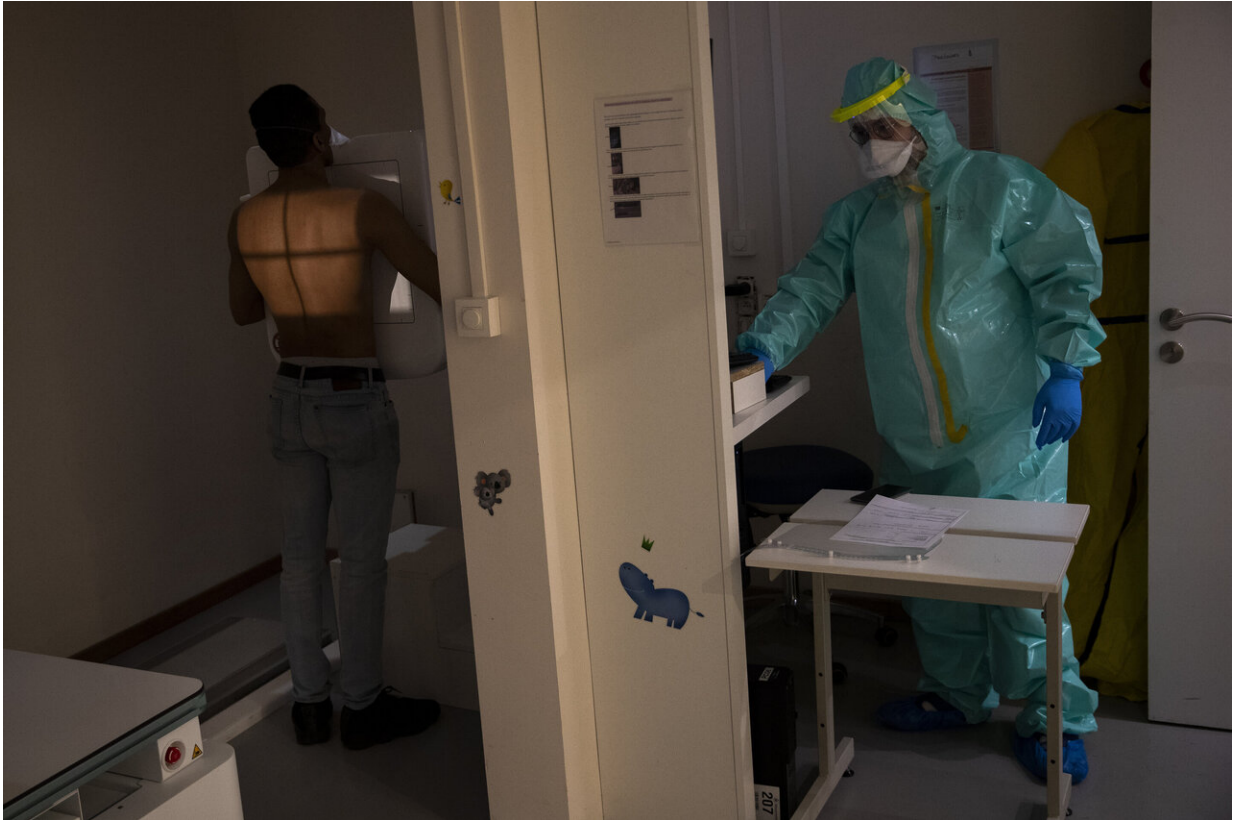
A worker, wearing a face mask as a measure against the spread of the new coronavirus, pushes crates of fish at a marine fish market in Lima, Peru, Monday, April 6, 2020. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)



Shop attendants serve customers behind a sheet of plastic installed to help curb the spread of the coronavirus at a pharmacy in Jakarta, Indonesia, Monday, April 6, 2020. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)



A woman passes by the "Lennon Wall" with a face mask attached to the image of John Lennon, in Prague, Czech Republic, Monday, April 6, 2020. The Czech Republic's government has incorporated dramatic restrictive measures to try and stem the spread of the new coronavirus. (AP Photo/Petr David Jousek)



Medical staffer Wassim Kamari, who has symptoms of coronavirus, receives an x-ray of his lungs at the polyclinic Klinikare during a partial lockdown against the spread of Covid-19 in Brussels, Monday, April 6, 2020. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Francisco Seco)



Homeless people stand in a queue to receive food distributed by the volunteers during the nation wide 21 day lockdown amid concern over the spread of coronavirus, in New Delhi, India, Monday, April 6, 2020. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Manish Swarup)



Police arrest doctors demanding facilities and prevention kits to attend coronavirus patients in Quetta, Pakistan, Monday, April 6, 2020. The government imposed a nationwide lockdown to try to contain the outbreak of the virus. (AP Photo/Arshad Butt)



Laborers cover themselves with a plastic sheet in the rain as they wait for customers in Kabul, Afghanistan, Monday, April 6, 2020. (AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)



A lone taxi cab drives over a typically gridlocked highway with the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, in the skyline behind it in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Monday, April 6, 2020. Dubai, one of seven sheikdoms in the United Arab Emirates, is now under a 24-hour lockdown over the new coronavirus pandemic. (AP Photo/Jon Gambrell)



A woman wearing a mask exits a Costco store with her purchases Monday, April 6, 2020 in Lenexa, Kan. Shoppers continue to stock up on basic supplies while stores are adopting occupancy restrictions, plexiglass shields, one-way isles and other measures in hopes of stemming the spread of the new coronavirus. (AP Photo/Charlie Riedel)

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, reported the death of a newborn girl born prematurely after her mother contracted the disease and was put on a ventilator. Louisiana, a state where New Orleans hosts millions of tourists yearly, had over 500 deaths.

The virus is spread by droplets from coughs or sneezes. For most people, the virus causes mild to moderate symptoms such as fever and cough. But for some, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause

pneumonia. Over 270,000 people have recovered worldwide.

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Citation: Faint glimmers of hope as virus deaths slow in places (2020, April 6) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-faint-glimmers-virus-deaths.html>

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