

'A lot of pain.' NY has biggest 1-day jump in virus deaths (Update)

April 7 2020, by Marina Villeneuve, Karen Matthews and Michael Hill



A medical worker wearing personal protective equipment pauses after wheeling a body to a refrigerated trailer serving as a makeshift morgue at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center, Monday, April 6, 2020, in the Brooklyn borough of New York. 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/John Minchillo)

New York state recorded 731 new coronavirus deaths, marking its biggest single-day jump, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Tuesday.

The state's death toll since the beginning of the outbreak last month grew to 5,489.

The alarming surge in deaths comes even as new hospital admissions have dropped on average over several days, a possible harbinger of the outbreak finally leveling off. Cuomo said the death tally is a "lagging indicator" that reflects the loss of critically ill people hospitalized earlier.

"That's 731 people who we lost. Behind every one of those numbers is an individual. There's a family, there's a mother, there's a father, there's a sister, there's a brother. So a lot of pain again today for many New Yorkers," Cuomo said at a briefing at the state Capitol.

The state has been recording more than 500 new deaths a day since late last week. The number of confirmed cases—which does not include infected people who have not been tested—is close to 139,000 statewide.

While Cuomo said New York could be reaching a "plateau" in hospitalizations, he warned that gains are dependent on people continuing to practice social distancing.

"This is a projection," he said. "It still depends on what we do, and what we do will affect those numbers."

Here are other coronavirus developments in New York:

SEPT. 11 ATTACKS



In this photo provided by the U.S. Navy, the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) departs Naval Station Norfolk, Va., March 28, 2020. Comfort is deploying in support of the nation's COVID-19 response efforts and will serve as a referral hospital for non-COVID-19 patients currently admitted to shore-based hospitals. This allows shore-based hospitals to focus their efforts on COVID-19 cases. (Petty Officer 1st Class Joshua Sheppard/U.S. Navy via AP)

More people have now died from the coronavirus in New York City than perished in the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center. At least 3,202 people have been killed in the city by the virus, according to a new count released by city health officials Tuesday.

The deadliest terror attack on U.S. soil killed 2,753 people in the city and 2,977 overall, when hijacked planes slammed into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, on Sept.

11, 2001.

The coronavirus has again made New York ground zero in a national tragedy and the center of a crisis that is reshaping Americans' lives, liberties and fears.

The coronavirus death toll has mounted over the course of just a few weeks. The city recorded its first on March 13, less than two weeks after confirming its first infection.

New York City is conducting its own count of fatalities, separate from the state's, and its tally was announced prior to Cuomo's release of the new state fatality numbers.

HOSPITAL SHIP INFECTION

A crew member of a Navy hospital ship sent to New York City for the coronavirus outbreak has tested positive for the disease.

The USNS Comfort crew member tested positive Monday and was being isolated, the Navy said in a prepared statement. The positive test will not affect the hospital ship's mission to receive patients, according to the Navy.



Local residents watch as the USNS Comfort departs Hampton Roads en route to New York to help in the response to the coronavirus outbreak Saturday, March 28, 2020, in Hampton, Va. (AP Photo/Steve Helber)

The Comfort has treated about 40 non-COVID-19 patients since arriving in the city last week. But President Donald Trump said Monday he'd allow coronavirus patients aboard the ship.

Though the Comfort has 1,000 beds, Cuomo said the transition to handling coronavirus patients will reduce the ship's capacity to 500 beds.

TEMPORARY GRAVES

New York City is looking into burying coronavirus victims in temporary graves if makeshift morgues are overwhelmed, but Mayor Bill de Blasio said "we're nowhere near that now."

The mayor said Monday that officials are exploring the possibility of temporary burials on Hart Island, a one-mile, limited access strip off the Bronx that has long served as the city's potter's field. De Blasio told TV station NY1 that under such a contingency plan, bodies of COVID-19 victims would be buried individually so families could later reclaim them.

"There will never, ever be anything like mass graves or mass internment in New York City, ever," de Blasio said.

The city was forced to address the issue of temporary burials Monday after a lawmaker incorrectly tweeted that the city would use a park for that purpose.

The city's 2008 Pandemic Influenza Surge Plan states that Hart Island would be used as a temporary burial site in the event the death toll reaches the tens of thousands and if other storage, such as the refrigerator trucks parked outside hospitals, is full.

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