

Stark disparities in New York City's virus toll

May 19 2020, by Deepti Hajela, Marina Villeneuve and Karen Matthews



Nico Ramos, left, a volunteer with the Grant Houses Tenant Association, holds the door for a resident as he delivers food to elderly residents of the NYCHA Grant Houses, Monday, May 18, 2020, in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. 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/Mary Altaffer)

The coronavirus has cut an unequal path of grief through New York City, hitting hardest in a ring of predominantly poorer, nonwhite neighborhoods a long subway and bus ride from Manhattan, according to data released by the city Monday.

The [new accounting](#) of fatalities by neighborhood revealed that the ZIP code with more deaths per capita than any other place in New York is the one that contains Starrett City, a huge complex of apartment towers in Brooklyn that is the largest federally subsidized [housing development](#) in the country.

Of the area's roughly 12,400 residents, 76 have been killed by the virus. Nearly 63% of the people living in the ZIP code are black. It is also the ZIP code with the largest percentage of older people in the city, likely a contributing factor in the high fatality rate.

Other areas of the city with unusually high death rates shared some characteristics with the complex, which is in a far-flung part of Brooklyn not far from Kennedy Airport.

Brooklyn's Coney Island and the Far Rockaway section of Queens both had high fatality rates, as did the northeastern-most parts of the Bronx, including Co-Op City, another huge apartment development upon which Starrett City was modeled.

The data released Monday reinforced earlier revelations that black and Hispanic New Yorkers were both more than twice as likely to be killed by the virus as white people.



Nico Ramos, left, a volunteer with the Grant Houses Tenant Association, delivers food to elderly residents of the NYCHA Grant Houses, Monday, May 18, 2020, in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. 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/Mary Altaffer)

And it also showed a direct link between death and poverty.

Neighborhoods with very high poverty levels suffered an average of 232 deaths per 100,000 residents while areas with low poverty rates experienced 100 deaths per 100,000 residents.

Jonathan Westin, executive director of New York Communities for

Change, a group that advocates for low-income communities, called the disparities devastating. He said Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio, both Democrats, could have lessened the impact of the pandemic on the poor.

"It's a crisis that they haven't canceled rent for the millions of people who have no jobs or are forced to go to work because they can't pay their rent and are living in overcrowded situations already and then bring the [coronavirus](#) home because they have to work, they have to make rent, they have to live," Westin said.



Dee, a volunteer with the Grant Houses Tenant Association delivers food to elderly residents of the NYCHA Grant Houses, Monday, May 18, 2020, in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. 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/Mary Altaffer)

COVID-19 has killed at least 16,000 New York City residents, plus another 4,800 whose deaths weren't immediately confirmed by a lab [test](#).

Here are other coronavirus developments in New York:

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SLOW REOPENING

Western New York, including the city of Buffalo, met the state's coronavirus containment goals and can begin to reopen its economy, Cuomo said Monday.

Hospitals will be able to schedule elective surgeries as the region enters the first phase of reopening on Tuesday, but gatherings such as church services and sports events will still be banned, Cuomo said.

Cuomo said he would encourage professional sports leagues to plan reopening without fans in the stands.

"Personal disclosure—I want to watch the Buffalo Bills," said Cuomo, who held Monday's briefing in Buffalo. "But I'm still objective, I'm acting as governor."



Residents of the NYCHA Grant Houses wait for the elevator after picking up donated food, Monday, May 18, 2020, in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. 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/Mary Altaffer)

Most of upstate New York will have started reopening by the end of this week, but it will likely be weeks before New York City and its suburbs meet metrics for reopening including the availability of hospital beds and the hiring of enough contact tracers to contain the spread of the virus.

As part of the reopening, judges and staff members will return courthouses in 30 upstate counties starting this week, Cuomo said.

The governor said 106 people died of COVID-19 statewide on Sunday, the lowest number since late March.

Cuomo's own COVID-19 test, taken at his daily briefing on Sunday, was negative, he said.

Here are the latest coronavirus-related developments in New York:

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TEST KITS MADE IN NEW YORK

New York City ramped up its ability to test for the coronavirus, with testing available at more than 150 sites citywide and test kits made in the city now in use at city-run health clinics, de Blasio said Monday.



Ridley Goodside wears a goggles and a filtration mask to protect himself from exposure to coronavirus as he reads "The Book of Why" while sitting in a circle marked on the grass for proper social distancing at Domino Park in the Williamsburg borough of Brooklyn, Monday, May 18, 2020, in New York. The small park with views of Manhattan's skyline was the site of severe overcrowding during a spate of warm weather just over a week ago. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



People sit inside circles marked on the grass for proper social distancing as they relax in Brooklyn's Domino Park during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 18, 2020, in New York. The circles are a reminder to people to stay at least six feet from others after an episode of severe overcrowding just over a week ago during a spate of unseasonably warm weather. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



People relax in designated circles marked on the grass at Brooklyn's Domino Park during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 18, 2020, in New York. The circles were added after the park became severely overcrowded during a spate of unreasonably warm weather just over a week ago. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



Two young women relax in a circle marked on the grass for proper social distancing in Brooklyn's Domino Park as others do the same to prevent the spread of coronavirus, Monday, May 18, 2020, in New York. The small park, which offers good views of the Manhattan skyline and the Williamsburg bridge, was the site of severe overcrowding during a spate of unseasonably warm weather just over a week ago. The circles have been added to promote good behavior on the park of park visitors. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



People relax in circles marked on the grass for proper social distancing at Brooklyn's Domino Park, Monday, May 18, 2020, in New York, during the current coronavirus outbreak. The circles were added after the park, which has excellent views of the Manhattan skyline, became severely overcrowded during a spate of warm weather just over a week ago. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



Ridley Goodside wears a rubber diving head covering along with goggles and a special air filtration mask to protect himself from the spread of coronavirus as he sits in a designated circle marked on the grass at Brooklyn's Domino Park during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 18, 2020, in New York. The circles were added after the park became severely overcrowded during a spate of unseasonably warm weather just over a week ago. Goodside said he's been protecting himself since he first heard about the virus much earlier this year. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



People relax in circles marked on the grass for proper social distancing at Brooklyn's Domino Park during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 18, 2020, in New York. The circles were added after the park, which offers excellent views of the Williamsburg Bridge and the Manhattan skyline, became severely overcrowded during a spate of warm weather just over a week ago. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



A young girl peers out at the East River with the Manhattan skyline as a backdrop as she relaxes on the boardwalk at Brooklyn's Domino Park during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 18, 2020, in New York. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



With the Williamsburg Bridge as a backdrop, food delivery worker Norbu Sherba takes a break from his job in Brooklyn's Domino Park during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 18, 2020, in New York. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



In this Feb. 12, 2007, file photo, apartment buildings are shown in Starrett City in the Brooklyn borough of New York. The coronavirus has cut an unequal path of grief through New York City, hitting hardest in a ring of predominantly poorer, nonwhite neighborhoods a long subway and bus ride from Manhattan, according to data released by the city Monday, May 18, 2020. The new accounting of fatalities by neighborhood revealed that the zip code with more deaths per capita than any other place in New York is the one that contains Starrett City, a huge complex of apartment towers in Brooklyn that is the largest federally subsidized housing development in the country. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens, File)



Eddie Otero catches a baseball in the middle of a deserted Brooklyn street while playing catch with a friend in the shadow of the Williamsburg Bridge during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 18, 2020, in New York. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

The partnership between the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and local businesses Print Parts and Collab will be producing 60,000 test kits weekly by the week of June 1, de Blasio said. "We'll keep going as far as we have to go to make sure that every New Yorker who needs a test gets one," he added.

De Blasio announced Sunday that urgent care provider CityMD would offer tests for the virus at its 123 locations, raising the number of test sites in the city to more than 150.

The mayor said the city is continuing to hire public health workers to trace the contacts of people who test positive for COVID-19.

"All of the pieces—the test kits, the test sites, the labs, the tracers—all of these pieces are coming together to give us the huge, robust test and trace program we need to push back this disease and move forward in this [city](#)," he said.

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