

# Study: Virus death toll in NYC worse than official tally

May 11 2020, by Jim Mustian

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Pedestrians walk through the nearly empty Oculus during the coronavirus pandemic Saturday, May 9, 2020, in New York. (AP Photo/Frank Franklin II)

New York City's death toll from the coronavirus may be thousands of fatalities worse than the tally kept by the city and state, according to an

analysis released Monday by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Between March 11 and May 2, about 24,000 more people died in the city than researchers would ordinarily expect during that time period, the report said.

That's about 5,300 more deaths than were blamed on the coronavirus in official tallies during those weeks.

Some of those excess fatalities could be COVID-19 deaths that went uncounted because a person died at home, or without medical providers realizing they were infected, the researchers at New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene said.

It might also represent a ripple effect of the health crisis, they wrote. Public fear over contracting the virus and the enormous strain on hospitals might have led to delays in people seeking or receiving lifesaving care for unrelated conditions like heart disease or diabetes.

"Tracking excess mortality is important to understanding the contribution to the death rate from both COVID-19 disease and the lack of availability of care for non-COVID conditions," the report said.

The report underscored the challenges authorities face in quantifying the human toll of the crisis. Deaths caused by the coronavirus are believed to be undercounted worldwide, due in large part to limits in testing and the different ways countries count the dead.



People wait in line to enter a grocery store along the Fifth Avenue business district in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 11, 2020, in New York. Although New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Monday that some upstate areas may begin preparations to reopen, New York City is not one of them. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

Through Sunday, New York City had recorded nearly 14,800 deaths confirmed by a lab test and another nearly 5,200 probable deaths where no test was available but doctors are sure enough to list the virus on the death certificate.

In its analysis, the report released Monday said the 5,293 excess deaths were on top of both confirmed and probable fatalities.

Here are other coronavirus-related developments in New York:

## SLOW REOPENING OF UPSTATE

Several regions of upstate New York that have shown progress in taming the coronavirus outbreak are ready to restart some economic activity by the end of the week, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Monday.

Three upstate regions have met all criteria for opening some businesses Friday: the Southern Tier, Mohawk Valley and the Finger Lakes. Other upstate regions are making progress and could follow soon after.



Signs outside a grocery store alert customers to keep a six foot distance and wear masks at all times as a worker returns shopping carts to the street in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn, Monday, May 11, 2020, in New York.

Although New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Monday that some areas of upstate New York may begin preparations to reopen, New York City, which is still confirming 1,000 new cases of coronavirus a day, is not ready to reopen. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

The loosening of shut-down rules will be gradual. Construction and manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and fishing can resume, as well as retail stores, but only with curbside pickup. Customers won't be able to enter shops.

Additionally, landscaping and gardening businesses and drive-in theaters can open statewide, the governor said. Cuomo said the state also is relaxing restrictions on low-risk outdoor activities such as tennis.

The reopening regions still need to work out logistics, such as creating regional "control rooms" to monitor the effects of the reopening.

"This is the next big step in this historic journey," Cuomo, a Democrat, said at his daily briefing.

The virus killed 161 people in New York on Sunday, he said, its lowest total since close to the start of the crisis in mid-March.



A sign in a closed fish restaurant tells the public it will reopen on May 14, along the Fifth Avenue shopping district in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn, Monday, May 11, 2020, in New York. Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday gave the green light to several regions of the state not as severely affected by the outbreak to gradually re-start their economies once the latest stay-at-home order expires Friday. But New York City is not ready to reopen yet. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

Cuomo shut down most workplaces and barred people from gathering in groups of any size starting March 22 as New York emerged as a global pandemic hot spot.

Cuomo last week said parts of the state could phase in reopening if they met seven conditions related to hospitalization trends and capacity to test

and trace people who might have the virus.

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## CONTACT TRACERS

New York is poised to launch its training plan for the huge corps of disease detectives it plans to deploy to track people who might have been exposed to the virus.

The effort, seen as a key to keeping the outbreak from flaring again, will likely involve hiring several thousand people who have no background in public health.

And since getting huge groups of people together in one place for a contact-tracing boot camp is impossible, the training will be done through a five- to six-hour online course launching Monday.



Three young men walk past a block of shuttered stores along the Fifth Avenue business district in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn, Monday, May 11, 2020, in New York. Although New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo gave the green light to some areas of the state to begin preparations to reopen when the current lockdown order expires on Friday, New York City is not one of those areas. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

"There's all this discussion about using technology in some way. But fundamentally, this is a pretty human activity," said Josh Sharfstein of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, which developed the course with Bloomberg Philanthropies, the charitable foundation of former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

When someone becomes newly infected with the virus, tracers will be



tasked with figuring out everyone who might have had contact with that person, reaching out to them, and advising them how to quarantine.

Bloomberg is putting up \$10.5 million through his foundation to help the state roll out its tracing plan.

Cuomo has made hiring at least 30 contact tracers per 100,000 residents a requirement for any part of the state to reopen.

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## VIRUS SURVIVOR SPEAKS

A man who was the second person in New York to officially be diagnosed with COVID-19 said he didn't suspect he had the virus when he went to the emergency room, and woke up from a coma weeks later with no memory of his time in the hospital.



People walk past shuttered stores in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 11, 2020, in New York. Although New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday gave the green light to some areas of upstate to gradually begin to reopen once the latest stay-at-home order expires Friday, New York City, which records as many as 1,000 cases of coronavirus daily, is not prepared to do so. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

"So it's as if three weeks of my life had completely disappeared, and I was asleep for all of it," Lawrence Garbuz, a lawyer from New Rochelle, said on NBC's "Today" show Monday in his first television interview.

Garbuz, 50, was the first New Yorker to be publicly identified as having contracted the virus without having traveled internationally. His case quickly became linked with an outbreak in New Rochelle that prompted

the governor to shut schools and houses of worship.

Garbuz's wife, Adina Garbuz, said she and her husband originally thought he had pneumonia, but he kept getting worse. He has now fully recovered.

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## ARRESTS IN BIAS ATTACK

A man and woman are charges with trying to pull the masks off people who had gathered in an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn.

Police said Clelia Pinho, 46, and Paulo Pinho, 35, accosted three men Sunday, pulling the masks off their faces and making anti-Semitic remarks falsely blaming Jews for the coronavirus outbreak.



A bicycle-riding delivery person rides down a street in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 11, 2020, in New York. Although Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday gave the green light to several regions of the state to gradually re-start their economies once the latest stay-at-home order expires Friday, New York city will not be one of them. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



Two women walk past shuttered stores in the business district of the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 11, 2020, in New York. Although Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Monday that some areas of upstate New York may begin preparations to reopen, New York City is not ready to reopen. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



A man waits by a shuttered sporting goods store in business district of the Sunset Park neighborhood of the Brooklyn borough, during the coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 11, 2020, in New York. Although Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday gave the green light to several regions of the state to gradually re-start their economies once the latest stay-at-home order expires Friday, New York City is not one of them. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



A worker removes bags of trash from the basement of a produce and meat market Monday, May 11, 2020, along the Fifth Avenue business district of the Sunset Park neighborhood in the Brooklyn borough of New York. Although Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday gave the green light to several regions of the state not as severely affected by the outbreak to gradually re-start their economies once the latest stay-at-home order expires Friday, New York City is not one of them. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



A woman protects herself with her coat as a light rain begins to fall while walking along Fifth Avenue in the business district of the Sunset Park neighborhood in the Brooklyn borough of New York, Monday, May 11, 2020, where many stores are still shuttered. Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday gave the green light to several regions of the state not as severely affected by the coronavirus outbreak to gradually restart their economies once the latest stay-at-home order expires Friday but New York City is not one of them. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)





People line up outside a grocery store along the Fifth Avenue business district of the Sunset Park neighborhood in the Brooklyn borough of New York, Monday, May 11, 2020, during the coronavirus outbreak. Although Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday gave the green light to some areas to gradually begin to reopen once the latest stay-at-home order expires Friday, New York City is not one them. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



A man carries a window past a shuttered jewelry store in the business district of the Sunset Park neighborhood in the Brooklyn borough of New York during the coronavirus outbreak Monday, May 11, 2020. Although Gov. Andrew Cuomo gave the green light on Monday to several regions of the state to gradually reopen on Friday once the current stay-at-home order expires, New York City is not one of them. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



A bandana-wearing man walks down a street in the business district of the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 11, 2020, in New York. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday gave the green light to several regions of the state not as severely affected by the outbreak as New York City to gradually re-start their economies once the latest stay-at-home order expires Friday. But the governor said New York City, which is still recording as many as 1,000 new coronavirus cases daily, will not reopen any time soon. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



A woman talks on her phone as she walks past a bakery in the Sunset Park neighborhood of the Brooklyn borough of New York during the coronavirus outbreak Monday, May 11, 2020. Although Gov. Andrew Cuomo gave the green light on Monday to several regions of the state to gradually reopen on Friday once the current stay-at-home order expires, New York City is not one of them. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



A woman leaves a bakery carrying a cake in the business district of the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn during the current coronavirus outbreak, Monday, May 11, 2020, in New York. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo gave the green light to some regions of the state to reopen when the current stay-at-home order expires on Friday. However, New York City, which is still recording as many as 1,000 new cases of coronavirus daily, will not reopen any time soon. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

The pair were arrested on charges of aggravated harassment as a hate crime. Information on their lawyers wasn't immediately available.

Mayor Bill de Blasio called the attack "unacceptable" and said Monday: "We don't accept bias in New York City. We don't accept hate in any form."

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