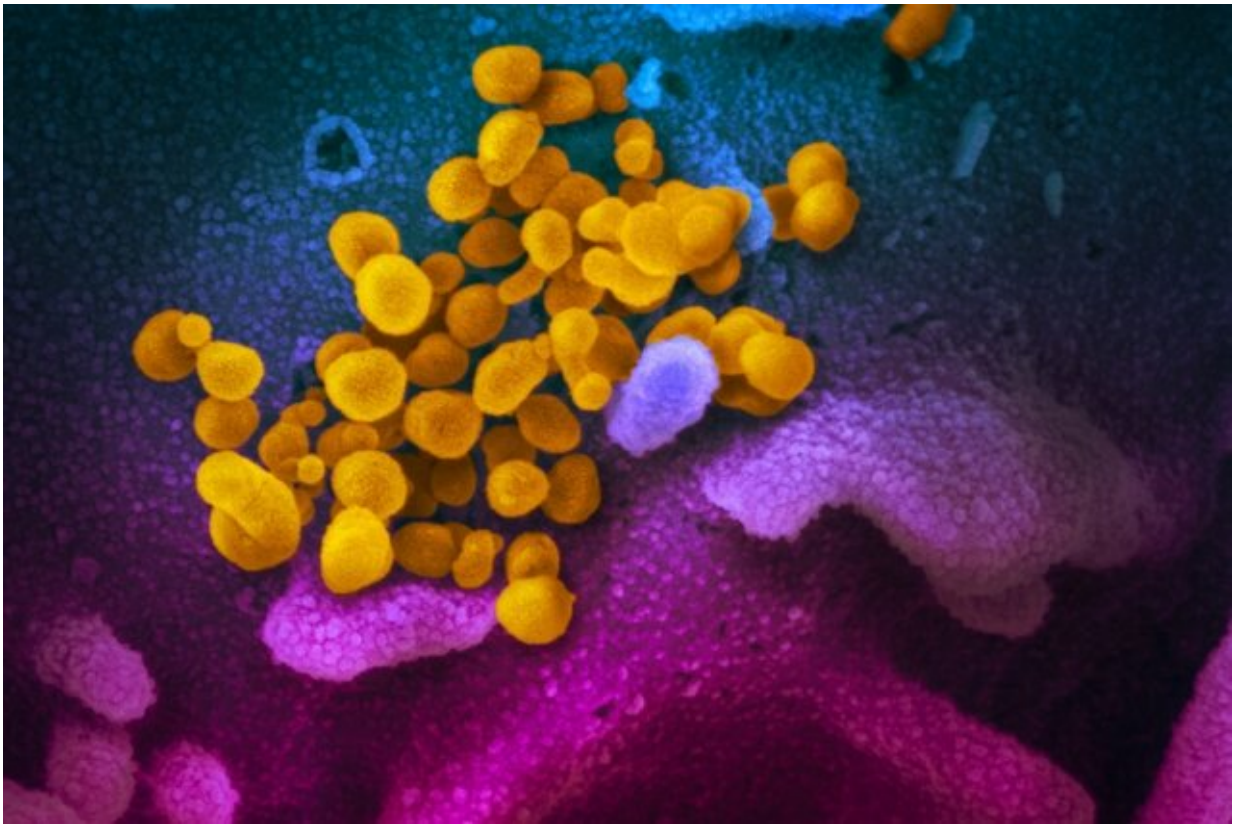
US announces free COVID-19 testing in three southern hotspots

July 7 2020



This scanning electron microscope image shows SARS-CoV-2 (yellow)—also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus that causes COVID-19—isolated from a patient, emerging from the surface of cells (blue/pink) cultured in the lab. Credit: NIAID-RML

The United States on Tuesday announced it was offering free

COVID-19 testing to people without symptoms to stem a surge of cases in three southern hotspots.

America has fared exceptionally poorly in its handling of the pandemic, with more than 130,000 people losing their lives, the highest death toll in the world by far.

Five thousand tests per day will be offered in Jacksonville, Florida; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and Edinburg, Texas.

This will continue for between five to 12 days.

The Department of Health and Human Services said testing is available to anyone aged five and over "including those experiencing symptoms; those who believe they may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 coronavirus; and anyone who is worried about possibly having the virus."

The US is currently testing some 600,000 people a day, according to the COVID Tracking Project, but even this is deemed insufficient by health experts because of the very high rate of positive cases being found.

In the south, the positivity rate has soared to 12 percent even as testing increases—which implies the virus is spreading rampantly.

Forty of the country's 50 states are seeing a rising case load.

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