

Colleges in 50 states seeing COVID cases on campus

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THURSDAY, Sept. 10, 2020 (Healthday News)—Just weeks into the fall semester, universities and colleges in all 50 states are now struggling to contain the spread of coronavirus on their campuses.

More than 40,000 cases of COVID-19 have been reported among students, staff and faculty nationwide, *CNN* reported. That number is likely higher due to a lag from schools that update their data every few days.

Many outbreaks have cropped up after gatherings at fraternities and sororities: One cluster of COVID-19 cases was traced back to a fraternity party held at the University of New Hampshire. More than 100 people attended the Aug. 29 party and few wore masks, *CNN* reported.

At Indiana University Bloomington, 30 sorority and fraternity houses have been ordered to quarantine following what campus officials have described as an "alarming increase" in COVID-19 cases within the houses, *CNN* reported.

School officials told Greek houses to suspend all in-person activities until at least Sept. 14, according to *CNN*.

"IU's team of public health experts is extremely concerned that Greek houses are seeing uncontrolled spread of COVID-19," the university said in a statement. "This poses a significant risk to the nearly 2,600 students currently living in Greek or other communal housing organizations, as well as to the other 42,000 IU Bloomington students, the campus's 12,000 faculty and staff, and the surrounding community."

Meanwhile, the University of Wisconsin-Madison has told all undergraduate students they must restrict their movements for the next two weeks, to try to reverse a rise in COVID-19 cases, *CNN* reported. The university also directed nine campus fraternities and sororities with

off-campus live-in houses to quarantine for at least 14 days.

"We've reached the point where we need to quickly flatten the curve of infection, or we will lose the opportunity to have campus open to students this semester, which we know many students truly want," Chancellor Rebecca Blank said in a statement.

Some of the highest number of cases are at Miami University, University of South Carolina, Ohio State University and East Carolina University, all of which have over 1,000 confirmed cases, *CNN* reported. The University of Missouri has 862 confirmed cases, while Missouri State University has 791, the *CNN* tally shows.

Even what is left of the college football season is on shaky ground: A number of teams have postponed their openers this weekend because of the pandemic, the *Washington Post* reported. Some of these games may not be made up, or won't be made up until December at the earliest. And other postponements cannot be ruled out as colleges continue to deal with spikes in coronavirus cases.

COVID vaccine trial halted following illness

Final testing of a leading coronavirus vaccine candidate was paused by drug maker AstraZeneca on Tuesday after a trial volunteer experienced a serious adverse reaction.

The company did not release specifics on the case, and whether the reaction was caused by the vaccine or was coincidental is still unclear, *The New York Times* reported.

The disappointing news came as drug companies around the world race to develop a coronavirus vaccine that could bring an end to an international pandemic that has claimed almost 900,000 lives, the *Times*

reported.

AstraZeneca's vaccine is a front-runner, with late-stage clinical trials underway in different countries. If the cause of the reaction turns out to be related to the vaccine, efforts to have it ready by the end of the year could be delayed, the *Times* reported.

In a statement, AstraZeneca described the trial's halt, which was done voluntarily, as a "routine action which has to happen whenever there is a potentially unexplained illness in one of the trials, while it is investigated, ensuring we maintain the integrity of the trials."

The company added that in large trials participants sometimes become sick by chance "but [the cases] must be independently reviewed to check this carefully."

A person familiar with the situation, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, told the *Times* that the participant who had the suspected adverse reaction had been volunteering in a trial based in the United Kingdom. The volunteer was diagnosed with transverse myelitis, an inflammatory syndrome that affects the spinal cord and is often sparked by viral infections.

"This is the whole point of doing these Phase 2, Phase 3 trials," Dr. Phyllis Tien, an infectious disease physician at the University of California, San Francisco, told the *Times*. "We need to assess safety, and we won't know the efficacy part until much later. I think halting the trial until the safety board can figure out whether or not this was directly related to the vaccine is a good idea."

The news also came the same day that nine [drug companies](#), including AstraZeneca, made a joint pledge to reaffirm that they would not move forward with any vaccines before thoroughly vetting them for safety and

efficacy.

Second wave likely this fall

In a sobering illustration of the toll the coronavirus pandemic took this summer, tallies now show the number of Americans who have died of COVID-19 jumped from just under 100,000 to over 186,000 between Memorial Day and Labor Day, while cases more than quadrupled, to over 6.2 million.

As troubling as those statistics are, [public health experts](#) warn the fall and winter could be even worse, the *Post* reported.

A cold-weather surge of COVID-19 cases could trigger a much-feared "second wave" of infections and deaths that begins well before Election Day in November, though scientists believe the crest of cases would come weeks later, the *Post* reported

"My feeling is that there is a wave coming, and it's not so much whether it's coming but how big is it going to be," Eili Klein, an epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, told the newspaper.

Still, national numbers have been slowly dropping following surges that showed up in the Sun Belt in early summer, the *Post* reported.

A model produced by the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) predicts a daily death toll of 1,907 on Election Day, roughly double the current number. Under the IHME forecast, the numbers would continue to rise until early December, peaking at more than 2,800 deaths daily.

By year's end, over 410,000 will have died under the model's most likely

scenario. That's more than double current total.

"I firmly believe we will see distinct second waves, including in places that are done with their first waves. New York City, I'm looking at you," Andrew Noymer, an epidemiologist at the University of California at Irvine, told the *Post*.

"I expect fall waves starting in mid-October and getting worse as fall heads into winter, and reaching a crescendo certainly after the election," he told the newspaper. "Some places will peak around Thanksgiving, some places will peak around Christmas, some places not until January and February."

Cases keep mounting

By Thursday, the U.S. coronavirus case count neared 6.4 million as the death toll passed 190,700, according to a *Times* tally.

According to the same tally, the top five states in coronavirus cases as of Thursday were: California with over 749,000; Texas with more than 675,000; Florida with over 652,000; New York with more than 445,800; and Georgia with over 270,600.

Curbing the spread of the coronavirus in the rest of the world remains challenging.

India has overtaken Brazil to become the country with the second-highest number of coronavirus cases in the world, the *Times* tally shows. The country's case count is now over 4.4 million; only the United States has recorded more. More than 75,000 people in India have died of COVID-19, making it the worst-affected nation in Asia.

Meanwhile, Brazil posted nearly 4.2 million cases and over 128,500

deaths as of Thursday, the *Times* tally showed.

Unlike the United States and Brazil, where the number of new cases have eased in recent weeks, India has been reporting the highest daily increases in cases in the world since early August, the *Post* reported.

After instituting the world's largest lockdown this spring, Jayaprakash Muliyl, a leading Indian epidemiologist, predicted that the country's daily reported cases will continue to rise in coming weeks. He told the *Post* that the daily cases could double over the next month before retreating.

Cases are also spiking in Russia: The country's [coronavirus](#) case count has passed 1 million, the *Times* reported. As of Thursday, the death toll in Russia was 18,200.

Worldwide, the number of reported infections passed 27.8 million on Thursday, with over 900,000 deaths, according to the Hopkins tally.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on the [new coronavirus](#).

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