



## Coronavirus Updates

THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

# FEMA Predicted Pandemic Effects In July 2019

April 9, 2020 · 4:09 PM ET



BRIAN NAYLOR



A portable FEMA cot at a temporary medical facility in a gym at Southern New Hampshire University.

Charles Krupa/AP

In a remarkably prophetic report last summer, the Federal Emergency Management Agency accurately predicted that a nationwide pandemic would result in a shortage of medical supplies, hospitals would be overwhelmed and the economy would shut down.

The warnings were contained in the 2019 National Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, published last July. Its existence was first reported by E&E News.

The pandemic warning was part of an array of nine scenarios that were gamed out by FEMA, including "both natural and human-caused incidents — that would most challenge the Nation's capabilities."

FEMA said the report was aimed at helping federal, state and local governments to prepare for various scenarios.

Under the pandemic scenario, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention detect a novel influenza virus which infects 30% of the population in the U.S. and worldwide causing severe illness.

"Conventional flu vaccines are ineffective against the current strain, and the CDC estimates that a new vaccine could be months away from mass production. Because of the pandemic, social distancing is in widespread effect," FEMA predicted.

"There is a shortage of medical supplies, equipment, beds, and health care workers as hospitals are quickly overwhelmed, with up to millions of individuals seeking outpatient medical care and millions more requiring hospitalization. Civil disorder contributes to the high rate of absenteeism and the overcrowding of hospitals and medical centers," the report warns.

While there have been no reports of civil disorder related to the coronavirus pandemic, most of the other predictions have proved accurate.

There have been widespread reports of shortages of medical equipment including respirators, ventilators, and masks. Unemployment claims have soared as businesses across the nation have been forced to close, and it will be months, experts say, before a vaccine is developed to combat the disease.

The FEMA report is just one of a number of accounts issued by various government agencies and officials warning of the effects of a pandemic that were ignored by the Trump administration.

"Ultimately, the assessments will help answer the question: 'How prepared is the Nation?'" FEMA wrote.

---

## Coronavirus Updates

READ & LISTEN

**Home**

**News**

**Arts & Life**

**Music**

**Podcasts & Shows**

CONNECT

**Newsletters**

**Facebook**

**Twitter**

**Instagram**

**Press**

**Contact & Help**

ABOUT NPR

**Overview**

GET INVOLVED

**Support Public Radio**

---

[terms of use](#)

[privacy](#)

[your privacy choices](#)

[text only](#)