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COVID-19

Daily updates on the emerging novel coronavirus from the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security.

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February 24, 2020

EPI UPDATES China's National Health Commission issued a new [update](#) this morning reporting 409 confirmed cases. The total number of confirmed cases now stands at 77,150, with 2,592 deaths and 24,634 cured. Hubei province, the original epicenter of the outbreak, still remains the location with the highest proportion of cases, with 398 (97%) of the newly identified cases coming from the province. Testing for all individuals living in [elder care centers](#) in Wuhan city will begin before the end of the month.

South Korea [reports](#) 833 confirmed cases, many linked to a religious service. Over 32,000 individuals tested in the country, with roughly two-thirds coming back negative for SARS-COV-2. The South Korean government has labeled this outbreak as a "severe" national crisis and have already [taken measures](#), like delaying the start of the new school year, to try and mitigate its spread.

The Japanese Ministry of Health [reports](#) 156 cases of COVID-19, in addition to those linked to the Diamond Princess cruise ship. Of the 156, 26 had recent travel to Hubei province and 14 presented with no symptoms. Fifty-eight of the 79 symptomatic patients remain in hospitalization, with one reported death. The Ministry of Health also

[shared](#) that one of the quarantine officers assisting with the Diamond Princess response has now tested positive for the disease.

The ECDC's most recent [update](#) on the spread of COVID-19 within Europe shows a total of 132 confirmed cases in Italy, and an additional 46 cases spread across 7 other countries. Three deaths have been reported, two from the outbreak in Italy and an additional one in the UK. More recent [media](#) reports suggest 7 COVID-19 related deaths in Italy.

Health officials in Iraq [reported](#) 12 COVID-19 related deaths. This comes amid internal contested [reports](#) from the Mayor of Qom, who had accused the government of covering up the outbreak, attesting that his city had seen 50 deaths alone. A number of neighboring middle eastern countries have [now reported travel related](#) cases tied to the Iran outbreak with Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Oman sharing similar reports.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS The stock market [opened lower](#) today; the Dow dropped 900 points, and the S&P fell 2.6%. Over the weekend, the International Monetary Fund [cut forecasts](#) for global growth. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva was quoted as saying, "[i]n our current baseline scenario, announced policies are implemented and China's economy would return to normal in the second quarter. As a result, the impact on the world economy would be relatively minor and short-lived, ... In this scenario, 2020 growth for China would be 5.6 percent. This is 0.4 percentage points lower than the January WEO Update. Global growth would be about 0.1 percentage points lower."

In China, migrant workers have faced a [number of challenges](#) since returning to employment following an initial pause during the onset of the COVID-10 outbreak. Physical restrictions on where workers are allowed to travel and government quarantines have increased the financial and well-being of those groups.

EMERGENCY FUNDING REQUEST IMMINENT The White House said Saturday that it plans to request an [emergency appropriation](#) from Congress to fund the response to COVID-19. Two White House officials told Politico that the request would be for about \$1 billion, but that number was preliminary and could change. Past emergency supplemental appropriations for infectious disease threats have included the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic ([\\$7.7 billion](#)), the 2014 West African Ebola outbreak ([\\$5.4 billion](#)), and

the emergence of Zika virus ([\\$1.1 billion](#)).

CHINESE PARLIAMENT POSTPONED The Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress said Monday that it would [postpone](#) its upcoming session. The AFP noted the extraordinary nature of the postponement, the last of which happened during China's Cultural Revolution.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH An [early release](#) from Emerging Infectious Diseases describes a potential presymptomatic transmission of SARS-CoV-2. The study outlines an investigation into a 2-family cluster of patients from Zhejiang Province, China. The paper concludes that two individuals became ill with COVID-19 after spending time with a potentially presymptomatic patient, and that these patients later transmitted the illness to their family members. They also note that the family tested positive for the virus prior to developing symptoms.

Late last week, a [paper](#) in The Lancet modeled the preparedness and vulnerability of COVID-19 across different African regions. The modeling results suggest that the countries with the highest risk of an imported disease outbreak, Egypt, Algeria and South Africa, were some of the countries with the best capacity to respond, and were able to form three clusters of countries that share similar risks of exposure. This modeling could be used to bolster preparedness and surveillance efforts.

WHO CONDUCTS NEWS BRIEFING Earlier this morning the WHO [conducted](#) a news briefing on the status of the COVID-19 outbreak. The meeting shared information including a conclusion to the WHO-China joint mission and their decision making process in deeming the outbreak a pandemic. The briefing shared the following findings from the the joint commission's final report: the outbreak in Wuhan has already peaked and there has been a steady decrease in cases, they estimate that the case fatality rate within Wuhan is 2%-4% and 0.7% outside of the city, and shared their thoughts on the impact that China's public health measures had on limiting disease spread.

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