

New York, Illinois, Connecticut, and California Issue Stay-at- Home Orders for Residents; Health Care Workers State Equipment Running Low Due to Coronavirus; President Trump Vacillates on Use of Defense Production Act to Increase Production of Medical Supplies; Interview with Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA) on Congressional Measures to Combat Economic Downturn Due to Coronavirus; President Trump Makes Controversial Tweet on Potentially Treatment for Coronavirus; Italy and U.K. Takes Strong Measure to Reduce Coronavirus Spread. Aired 10-11a ET

CNN CNN NEWSROOM 10:00 AM EST

March 21, 2020 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Domestic

Length: 6401 words

Byline: Christi Paul, Victor Blackwell, Sarah Westwood, Kristen Holmes, Sara Sidner, Cristina Alesci, Abdul El-Sayed, Barbie Nadeau, Nick Paton Walsh, Fredricka Whitfield

Guests: Judy Chu

Highlight: New York, Illinois, Connecticut, and California issue Stay-at- Home orders for residents. Healthcare workers state equipment is running low due to the coronavirus spread. Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA) is interviewed on Congressional measures to combat the economic downturn due to the coronavirus.

Body

[10:00:11]

CHRISTI PAUL, CNN ANCHOR: Good morning to you, so glad to you have with us. It is Saturday, March 21st. I'm Christy Paul.

VICTOR BLACKWELL, CNN ANCHOR: I'm Victor Blackwell. You are in the CNN Newsroom.

PAUL: So we are now just minutes away on Capitol Hill from a race to get a deal done as the coronavirus rapidly spreads and hits the American economy in so many devastating ways. Senate negotiators are hammering out, or will start to, the final details on this massive economic stimulus package. Sources tell CNN the final bill could be over \$1 trillion.

BLACKWELL: And two hours from now, President Trump is expected to join his coronavirus task force in the briefing room. Of course, there will be plenty of questions about this package, his input there, and also some questions about the reporting of what the administration could have done far earlier.

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PAUL: And we're hearing that as medical professionals across the country are sounding the alarm, warning that hospitals are running out of masks, ventilators, and other crucial equipment.

BLACKWELL: Now there are three more states, New York, Illinois, Connecticut joining California ordering people to stay at home. And 75 million people are on lockdown, and the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the U.S. has surged now to more than 18,000, 263 people have died.

PAUL: We have so much to get to. We want to start with CNN's Sarah Westwood who is on Capitol Hill right now. Sarah, is there any indication how close the Senate is really to getting the stimulus deal done?

SARAH WESTWOOD, CNN WHITE HOUSE REPORTER: Christi and Victor, there are some outstanding issues with this massive legislation that lawmakers are racing to get done headed into next week. In about a half hour, lawmakers will return here to Capitol Hill to continue those negotiations that lasted well into the night last night.

Just a couple of issues that remain outstanding, one of them is the debate over unemployment insurance payments. That's a big deal, payments to people who may lose their jobs because of the economic fallout of the coronavirus outbreak. Also, lawmakers are still talking about how to structure the state stabilization fund. That's a pot of money that states can access if they slip into dire financial straits.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell had laid out a really ambitious timeline to get this bill done. He had pushed lawmakers to reach a deal by Friday night. He had been hoping to bring this bill to the floor for a vote on Monday. That did not happen. Obviously, lawmakers left Capitol Hill late last night still at an impasse. McConnell had broken lawmakers up into various task groups working on different aspects of this bill. Those task groups meeting again today.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer had said that there was progress made yesterday, but he cited those significant outstanding issues that Democrats are still working through. In fact, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had called the Senate GOP proposal a nonstarter at first, but there's obviously enormous pressure on lawmakers, on the White House that's also participating in these talks to reach some kind of deal by the beginning of next week to prevent an economic collapse at this point.

PAUL: All right, Sarah Westwood, so appreciate the update. Thank you.

So the coronavirus task force is also giving an update from the White House, that's happening today at noon.

BLACKWELL: CNN's Kristen Holmes is there at the White House with more. Kristen, what are we expecting to hear?

KRISTEN HOLMES, CNN NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: There's quite a bit on the agenda, because even though we have these briefings every day, there still seem to be a lot of unanswered questions. The first thing I'm going to point to is these reports overnight in the "Washington Post" that essentially say that the U.S. Intelligence Committee was issuing classified warnings saying that coronavirus was a deadly, a danger, a global threat, and essentially this being at the same time President Trump and lawmakers were downplaying the virus. So lots of questions around that as we still appear to be struggling here in the U.S. at catching up with this virus.

Another big thing we're talking about here is that lack of personal protective equipment. We have been talking to doctors and nurses around the country who are really struggling. They do not have access to masks or respirators and they are in desperate need of help. Now, the administration has said they will do anything, and President Trump on Wednesday invoked the Defense Production Act, giving him wide breadth of power here over the manufacturing industry, which essentially could lead him to be able to take over companies and determine what exactly it is that they are producing and what is critical to this situation.

President Trump had been getting a lot of pressure from Democratic lawmakers as well as from the medical community when he did invoke the Defense Production Act, but right afterwards he sent a tweet saying he wasn't

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actually going to use it. Then on Friday he said that he is actually using it. He's going to use it to get stuff out to the governors, to the states. And then I just talked to the chief of staff for Vice President Pence who said he wasn't using it. So a lot of questions here as to what the federal government's role is actually going to be.

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And the big question, of course, being when are those health care professionals going to get the equipment, the materials that they need. And the last thing on the agenda, and you might have heard this, a staffer in Vice President Pence's office has tested positive for coronavirus. Now, of course, I asked the chief of staff to Vice President Pence just moments ago about that for an update. Take a listen to what he had to say.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MARC SHORT, VICE PRESIDENT'S CHIEF OF STAFF: The individual who tested positive is doing really well. He had cold-like symptoms for about a day-and-a-half and had test results come back Thursday night. He was not in the office Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. He did not have direct contact with the president or the vice president. So e're following the CDC guidelines we recommendations for all Americans. But I'm pleased to tell you that he's recovering and has very, very mild symptoms.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HOLMES: So the White House there, of course, saying that there was no close contact with President Trump or Vice President Pence, but this is coming at a critical time when we are really seeing the spike in these coronavirus cases here in the U.S. And there's a lot of questions about how close people are getting, how much interaction people are having with our top officials.

BLACKWELL: Kristen Holmes there for us at the White House, thank you very much.

Let's talk more about this "Washington Post" report, the federal government may have missed a chance to take on the coronavirus threat months ago. Christi?

PAUL: U.S. officials tell "The Post" U.S. intelligence agencies warned, starting in January, about the spread of this virus in China and then later to other countries, but they say the president and lawmakers publicly downplayed or dismissed the threat and didn't take action then that might have slowed the spread of the virus. According to "The Post," the intelligence agency report also warned that Chinese officials appeared to be minimizing the severity of the outbreak.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SHANE HARRIS, CNN NATIONAL SECURITY ANALYST: The president was saying something remarkably different from what these intelligence reports were indicating. And to be clear, these reports were not saying the coronavirus is going to break on U.S. shores at dates certain. But from what people we understand who have seen these, the volume of this was it was coming every day, and by early February, the majority of reports that get disseminated out to key people throughout the government was looking at the coronavirus, it was sort of overtaking everything.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLACKWELL: The White House released a statement to "The Post" that says in part, "It's more than disgusting, despicable, and disgraceful for cowardly unnamed sources to attempt to rewrite history -- it's a clear threat to this great country."

Four U.S. states on lockdown, 75 million people being told to stay home.

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PAUL: CNN's Cristina Alesci is with us now. So we have got confirmed cases that are surging, Cristina, we have got these drastic measures that are being put in place, and you have to wonder how people are really dealing with this, because it causes a lot of anxiety.

CRISTINA ALESCI, CNN BUSINESS AND POLITICS CORRESPONDENT: It's a huge disruption. And as the cases rise, over 18,900 right now of cases, deaths totaling over 250. Look, at this point, 75 million Americans are ordered to stay at home, four large states taking those actions, New York, California, Illinois, and Connecticut. The governors of those states really trying to mitigate the spread of this disease by issuing those orders. It's really disrupting the American way of life. Those of the numbers, but the mayor of L.A. is trying is to capture the emotional toll that this virus is taking.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MAYOR ERIC GARCETTI (D-CA): This was the week that changed everything. And I know that this has been an emotional time for all of us. I know there's been a lot of crying, and it's OK to cry. I know there's been a lot of fear, and it's OK to be scared. But I also know that it's right to be hopeful, because I have such rock-solid confidence in you in this city that we will get through this moment, as difficult and as challenging as it feels.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ALESCI: Now these city and state officials issuing these orders for people to stay in their homes because they know that their health care systems will be soon overwhelmed. So if they can stop the spread of this disease in any way, that would be helpful. Anecdotally here in New York, the mayor saying that the hospitals here could run out of supplies in two to three weeks' time. So the situation is definitely dire on the ground and people really focused on stopping the spread of this virus. BLACKWELL: Cristina Alesci for us in New York, thank you.

PAUL: So as all of this is happening, we have got nurses and doctors across the country that are pleading for help.

BLACKWELL: Hospitals are facing supply shortages, we're talking the masks and the face shields, the gloves, over protective equipment. Some nurses say the system just was not prepared for this. CNN's Sara Sidner has their stories.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

[10:10:00]

SARA SIDNER, CNN NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Nurses and doctors from coast-to-coast are afraid and concerned.

CONSUELO VARGAS, ILLINOIS NURSE AND UNION MEMBER: I've been a registered nurse for over a decade. My hospital is in complete chaos and confusion in regards to COVID-19.

SIDNER: Do you feel like they were ready for this when it got to the United States?

CATHERINE KENNEDY, NURSE VP NATIONAL NURSES UNITED: No, absolutely not. They're still scrambling. We just don't have what we need.

SIDNER: Are you afraid for yourself and your patients?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Well, it's the first time in my entire career that I've ever been afraid, and I've heard other physicians say that they're afraid.

SIDNER: They are worried about how their hospitals and government are falling short as the coronavirus sweeps the nation. Experts warn, we're not even experiencing the worst of the pandemic yet.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: A lot of hospitals are asking us to keep our mouths quiet.

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SIDNER: This physician asked us to obscure her face and alter her voice because, she says, she believes she'll be fired for speaking out.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We don't have enough staff, we don't have enough protective equipment, and we have too many patients.

SIDNER: She works in Georgia. U.S. health officials are now asking doctors and nurses to do things they haven't had to do before.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We're asked to reuse things, things that are used for one-time use only we're asked to use for the entire day, and then we save for the next day.

SIDNER: If you're being asked to reuse something over and over, going to different patients, aren't you putting patients and yourself at risk?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Absolutely.

SIDNER: In Roseville, California, Catherine Kennedy has been a registered nurse for 40 years.

KENNEDY: We are the front line. If we go down, we're furloughed home, who's going to take care of these patients?

SIDNER: They've never talked, but both agree their hospitals and government didn't properly prepare for a pandemic.

Some of the hospitals will say, look, we didn't know what this was either. This is new to us. How can you expect us to know what to do, how to prepare? What do you say to that?

KENNEDY: We were here before with Ebola. We had a protocol. And various hospitals were ready to utilize that same protocol that they did for Ebola. But the hospital said no. They didn't want to do that. And so then at the last minute they started scrambling.

SIDNER: But Kaiser Permanente, the hospital system Kennedy works for, said the procedure it's using to screen, test, and care for health care workers and patients suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 are aligned with the latest science and guidance from public health authorities. These protocols and personal protective equipment have been reviewed and approved by their infectious disease experts and are in use by the major hospital systems. They said they're committed to ensuring healthcare workers have the right level of protective equipment.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I think these guidelines are irresponsible, and I think that they're playing with human lives knowingly.

SIDNER: You don't believe that it's OK to use different masks?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No. A bandanna is not made for particles of a virus. It's just a decorative item, maybe to keep pollution out a little bit. But it's not meant to protect from potentially lethal disease.

SIDNER: And then there are the fights over testing at some hospitals. Consuela Vargas is a registered nurse in a Chicago emergency room. She says she and other nurses were exposed to a potential COVID-19 patient at work, but days later they have not been tested. And they've not been told if the patient has tested positive.

VARGAS: So I'm supposed to return to work tomorrow. I don't know if I need to get swabbed. I don't know if I need to be off until we get the patient's test result back. I'm left wondering what to do.

SIDNER: Sara Sidner, CNN, Seattle, Washington.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

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PAUL: I know that there is a lot of anxiety around all of this, but we want to point out that there are some good people doing some really good things. Just to lighten the load for you here, I want to introduce you to a fashion designer who is taking his skills from the runway to the hospital. Christian Siriano says his staff is standing by with sewing machines. They're ready to make masks for medical workers in New York. The Project Runway winner and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo actually exchanged some messages on Twitter after he made this announcement. Cuomo has said New York would, quote, pay a premium for protective wear from companies that make them now.

BLACKWELL: Still to come, the state of California is essentially on lockdown after the governor issued a stay-at-home order for nonessential workers. We'll talk with California Democratic Congresswoman Judy Chu about if there should be a national lockdown, a stay-at-home order, and what she wants to see in this relief bill that's being negotiated by the Senate today. That's coming up next.

[10:18:52]

BLACKWELL: It's 18 minutes after the hour now. California was the first state to issue a stay-at-home order for nonessential workers. Right now the state has confirmed 1,077 cases of COVID-19, 24 people have died there in California of the disease. California Democratic Congresswoman Judy Chu has been very vocal. She's talked about the misinformation being spread about the virus and has held Facebook Live conversations with health experts as well. She also thinks President Trump incites fear and endangers Asian-Americans by calling this the Chinese virus. I want to talk about that in a moment. But first, let's welcome in Congresswoman Judy Chu. She sits on the House Ways and Means Committee and is the chairwoman of the Congressional Asian- Pacific American Caucus. Congresswoman, good morning to you.

REP. JUDY CHU (D-CA): Good morning to you.

BLACKWELL: So let's start here. We talked about the stay-at-home order for California, New York, Illinois, Connecticut followed. Should there be a national stay-at-home order?

CHU: Well, our example from California shows that it is important to have the stay-at-home order. This stay-at-home order for us affects 48 million people.

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But what I think is that if there are those from other states that don't have that and they cross the border carrying coronavirus and are asymptomatic, we could just be just defeating ourselves by not having a nationwide stay-at-home order. So I think we are heading that way, actually. It certainly is a time of necessity for this nation.

BLACKWELL: We spoke this morning with the mayor of Miami-Dade County, and he supports, as does the governor of Florida, a domestic travel ban so that people who are from states like California, like New York, like Washington state that has a concentration of cases, the confirmed cases at least, they wouldn't be able to travel to their states and potentially spread the virus. Would you support a travel ban domestically as well?

CHU: I do think every alternative should be considered. I actually think a stay-at-home order might be more effective. People can do their daily essential needs, but we would then shutdown the nonessential needs where the virus can be spread so easily. So I actually think that would be more effective at this point in time. But then all considerations should be on the table at this point.

BLACKWELL: Let me ask you about the stimulus plan, the relief bill, I guess chapter three now being considered and negotiated in the Senate. Senator Majority Leader initially released this plan for \$1,200 to each American, \$2,400 for each couple, of course, with salary caps, or income caps, I should say. Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi have suggested that that's not enough. If that's not enough, what is? What earns your vote?

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CHU: I would hope that we would have at least \$2,000 per adult and at least \$500 per child, if not more. People need this cash infusion, and it looks like we're going to have the stay-at-home orders for some time. This is going to probably be a matter of weeks, if not months. And what are people going to do if they're quarantined, if they're at home, if they're unemployed? They are going to need something in order to make sure that they survive. So yes, I do think we need a greater cash infusion.

I also think we need to have a stronger paid family leave. The paid family leave that we passed out of the second bill was good, but it did exempt companies over 500 and businesses under 50. So I do think that we need to make it universal.

BLACKWELL: I want you to listen to the vacillation from the president during this news conference over the Defense Production Act. Of course, that gives the president the authority to order companies to produce the medical equipment, the respirators, the masks, the ventilators that so many first responders and health care workers say they need. Here's where the president bounced back and forth yesterday.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You had a call with Senator Schumer. He says you have now agreed to invoke the Defense Production Act to actually make those medical supplies that hospitals say are in severe shortage. Two questions. Is that what you're doing now?

DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: It is. I did it yesterday. We invoked it, I think, the day before we signed it, the evening of the day before, and invoked it yesterday. We have a lot of people working very hard to do ventilators and various other things, yes.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: So you're using it now --

TRUMP: We are using it.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: -- to tell businesses to make ventilators, masks, respirators?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I just want to be clear. Are you saying that the administration is requiring these industries to create these products or just asking them?

TRUMP: So far we haven't had to.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Mr. President, I just want to get a clarification, because you just said that you haven't had to require companies to up their production of medical supplies, but you've said last night you invoked the DPA.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLACKWELL: So the president kind of bouncing back and forth there. Would you like to see him force these companies to produce the materials needed? And is there enough bipartisan pressure in Congress to urge the president to do that?

CHU: I absolutely think he has to invoke the Defense Production Act. It's actually not clear whether he's actually invoked it, even though he passed the bill. But it is so clear that we are in dire need of personal protective equipment, as well as masks.

But even further than that, we need to have the production of the swabs and the reagents that allows the testing to be done. I have found out that there are actually labs and hospitals that are ready, willing, and able to increase the testing exponentially, but they don't have those chemicals, those reagents that would allow them to process the tests.

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And yet there are so many people waiting to be tested and have so many anxiety because they are unable to get one.

BLACKWELL: Congresswoman, let me ask you before we let you go. You are the first Chinese-American woman elected to Congress, chair of the Congressional Asian-Pacific American Caucus. The impact of the president continuously calling COVID-19 the Chinese virus, practically for people in your community, Asian-American business owners I've read, what does that mean to people you represent?

CHU: It is dangerous for him to continue calling it the Chinese coronavirus. He is creating more xenophobia every single time he does that. And we can see the results in what's happening to Asian- Americans across this country. A woman was assaulted on the New York subway just for wearing a mask. A young boy out here in Los Angeles County was beaten up by bullies who yelled that he had coronavirus. And, of course, people have gotten all kind of dirty looks and insults. But just this week three Asian-Americans were stabbed in Texas by a man saying he wanted to kill Asian-Americans. So it is a very serious situation, especially in this time of heightened emotion.

BLACKWELL: Congresswoman Judy Chu of California, Congresswoman, thank you so much for being with us this morning. CHU: Thank you.

PAUL: One of the big concerns this morning is this shortage of medical supplies for health care workers across the country who are begging for help. We're going to talk to an epidemiologist and answer some of your questions that you've been sending us. Stay close.

[10:31:18]

PAUL: So according to all the professionals, we're in the middle, the U.S., really the world, facing a public health crisis. The "New York Times" quotes researchers at Columbia University saying this, "Even if the country cut its rate of transmission in half, which is a tall order, some 650,000 people might become infected in the next two months.

BLACKWELL: Nurses, doctors, healthcare workers are running out of equipment. "The Times" reports that in New York alone officials have said the state would need to double the available hospital beds to 100,000 and could be short as many as 25,000 ventilators.

PAUL: Former CDC director Dr. Tom Frieden said there's a long war ahead, and our COVID-19 response must adapt. He goes on to say, "Never in our lifetime has there been an infectious disease threat as devastating to society." Healthcare workers across the country, as you know, are under immense pressure right now, being told to reuse facemasks or bandannas as a last resort. Hundreds of doctors and nurses are rallying online with the hash-tag #getmeppe, begging for public help to get personal protective equipment.

BLACKWELL: Yesterday President Trump was asked about invoking the Defense Production Act to help with the supply shortage. Here's what he said he would be using it for.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TRUMP: I would say ventilators, probably more masks to a large extent. We have millions of masks which are coming, and which will be distributed to the states. The states are having a hard time getting them, so we're using the act. The act is very good for things like this. We have millions of masks that we've ordered. They will be here soon. We're having them shipped directly to states.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLACKWELL: Joining us now to talk about this, Dr. Abdul El-Sayed. He is CNN political commentator, epidemiologist, and public health expert. Dr. El-Sayed, welcome back.

DR. ABDUL EL-SAYED, PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERT: Thank you for having me.

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BLACKWELL: So we want to get to some questions from viewers. We've been asking for them all morning long. But I want to first go to what the president tweeted just a couple minutes ago, if we have the tweet, let's put it up. The president tweeted about what could be a potential therapy or treatment for COVID-19. He tweets "HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE & AZITHROMYCIN, taken together, have a real chance to be one of the biggest game changers in the history of medicine. The FDA has moved mountains -- Thank You! Hopefully they will BOTH (H works better with A, International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents) be put in use IMMEDIATELY. PEOPLE ARE DYING, MOVE FAST, and GOD BLESS EVERYONE!" And then he tags the FDA, the commissioner of the FA, the CDC and the Department of Homeland Security, as if they would not see this any other way. What do you make of the president's tweets here and this continued narrative this could be it?

EL-SAYED: I'll tell you this. For viewers who don't know, this is a continuation of a spar between him and Dr. Anthony Fauci from yesterday's news conference. In fact, Dr. Fauci publicly rebuked him for overhyping this particular treatment. For folks who don't know, Hydroxychloroquine is a drug used to treat malaria. It's been around for a long time. Azithromycin is one of the oldest and most commonly used antibiotics that we have.

It's may be that these two things could be used. The problem is that you don't do science by Twitter. Just by tweeting a thing doesn't make it true. We do rigorous study to make sure that, a, these two drugs used together are safe, and, b, that they're efficacious for treatment, and we just don't know that yet. The evidence is not there. You can't just tweet it into being. And it seems like that's what he's trying to do right now.

There's another danger here, and it's that a lot of people are afraid right now, and in telling them that somehow we have this magical cure -- and he didn't say that, but by tweeting in this way, in this tenor, what he's basically saying is this is the one.

[10:35:06]

And by saying that, it may mean that a lot of people go and rush to their doctors saying I want to get Hydroxychloroquine and Azithromycin, which right now just puts more stress on our doctors who are on the front line dealing with this epidemic. And so it's irresponsible behavior.

PAUL: So I want to read you our first question from one of our viewers who said, if I have mild symptoms of coronavirus, should I go to the hospital? I think this is one of those questions a lot of people are asking.

EL-SAYED: A lot of people are asking that. Stay home. If you have mild symptoms, no shortness of breath, and no reason to believe that this is going to get more serious for you, i.e., you're not one of those older person or someone who has those underlying conditions that could make this extremely serious, it's best to stay home simply because folks are getting on rushed with very serious cases right now at the front lines in the hospitals. And in doing that you might be spreading the illness even further. So if it's not serious, if you don't feel you have that shortness of breath, it's best to just stay home, self- isolate, and hopefully it's a mild case. If and when you start getting very serious symptoms, serious symptoms at all, call your doctor and go in and seek care.

BLACKWELL: A lot of people this time of year are dealing with pollen, and since it appears some have mild symptoms, one person asks, when infected with the virus, how do we know the difference between allergies and the virus?

EL-SAYED: The most important symptom here is that allergies never cause a fever, right. If you have got a fever, which you can measure, in that case it's a different thing than the allergies. If you have the sniffles, you may be getting tight in the throat or the chest, but you don't have that fever, it's not likely to be COVID-19, and it's probably just the allergies. The other thing to do is just make sure that you have your allergy medications so that you can take those symptoms down and address them. If it gets better with the allergy medications, it's certainly not COVID-19.

PAUL: Dr. Abdul El-Sayed, we appreciate your expertise. Thank you for taking time for us this morning.

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EL-SAYED: Thank you for having me.

PAUL: The coronavirus pandemic, remember, it first surfaced in China. Now the World Health Organization says it is Europe that we have to keep our eyes on. What countries are doing there to stop the virus from spreading.

[10:41:21]

BLACKWELL: Some cities in the U.S. are preparing for lockdown over the coronavirus. And this really is a worldwide pandemic, though. And while China was where a lot of the focus was at the beginning, now the World Health Organization says that Europe is the epicenter of the pandemic.

PAUL: In Germany, coronavirus cases spiked by 20 percent in just 24 hours, and that brings their total number of cases to more than 16,000 with 47 people who died. In Italy, 627 people died from the coronavirus in just 24 hours. That is the largest single day death toll in the world since the pandemic began. It's 26 people per hour. The military has been called in to enforce a lockdown there.

PAUL: In France the streets are empty. The city of Nice will impose a curfew starting tonight at 11:00 p.m. to try and stop large gatherings. But in China, there are some signs of hope there. There have been no reports of locally transmitted cases in the last three days. But a second wave has not been ruled out.

We have our reporters covering this all over the world. Our CNN contributor Barbie Nadeau is in Rome, international security editor Nick Paton Walsh is in London. I want to start with you Barbie. Italy now surpassed China in the number of deaths. What is the country doing to combat that?

BARBIE NADEAU, ROME BUREAU CHIEF, "THE DAILY BEAST": The lockdown is being enforced with greater severity. Here, even in my neighborhood this morning, there was a police car going around with a loud speaker telling people to go inside. It's straight out of a movie. There are police everywhere right now. The army has been deployed to help beef up the police forces. And the idea is just to get people to stay inside, because even if you're not -- you're asymptomatic, you could be passing it on to someone for whom it would be fatal. And the idea is we all supposed to act like we might have it. With the numbers so high in this country, getting higher every single day, we're also hoping that very soon they will peak and that curve will flatten, and then we can start seeing the daily increment of cases go down and the daily death rate go down. But it's putting such a stress on the health care system, especially in the north of the country.

BLACKWELL: Barbie Nadeau for us there, Barbie, thank you.

In the U.K., all pubs will shut down to the public starting today. That hasn't even happened in times of war. Prime minister Boris Johnson, he made the announcement Friday after a lot of criticism for not doing so sooner. The country's finance minister also made an unprecedented move, saying the department will pay workers 80 percent of their wages for the time being to keep them afloat.

PAUL: Let's get to Nick Paton Walsh in London. Nick, I think what's astounding right now when you look at your show is that you're standing in the middle of the street, which is something you could never do on a regular day in London because of the crowds. But a lot was happening overnight with last minute drinkers that you ran into who were trying to, I guess, make the most of their final moments in pubs for a while?

NICK PATON WALSH, CNN SENIOR INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Yes, I mean, look around me. This is a place any Londoner would avoid this time on a Saturday because of the unbearable crowds of tourists and the traffic, frankly. But it's being avoided for a different reason. This wasn't what Boris Johnson, the U.K. prime minister, told people necessarily to do last night, but he was clear that he was going to tell pubs, restaurants, gyms, theatres to close. That came out at 5:00, and by about 7:00 or 8:00 in the packed district of Soho near here where I'm standing, most of the bars were closed. A few stragglers, frankly, irresponsibly, some may say, or others may say enjoying, in their point of view, their last night on the town.

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[10:45:02]

But that kind of warning to stay-at-home has carried over here into central London. This is a startling scene, frankly. Neither every of these big red busses, double-decker busses that go past are kind of empty. And it's been a strange scene, frankly. People are almost drag racing their sports motorbikes and flashy sportscars down this street, which they wouldn't normally, frankly, be able to do.

But Boris Johnson, out of nowhere, frankly, a few days ago said that London was a few weeks ahead of the rest of the country in terms of the virus spread, which got many thinking that potentially London may start seeing any time now the sort of scenes that Barbie was talking about in Italy. There was a brief panic last night in one hospital in the north that the city seemed to suggest it may be experiencing a surge in COVID-19 cases. But that has since rescinded and gone back.

The city, deeply on edge, though, 9 million people who know that this has been in their midst probably for quite some time already and are now seeing the government taking startling measures, frankly, that would normally only come into play around round about wartime or so, hundreds of billions of pounds, half a trillion dollars or so put out by the U.K. government to keep the economy afloat. But a sense here really I think amongst Londoners, they've never seen scenes like this this before in their lifetime. They're very anxious about what might literally be over the brow of the hill here in terms of the spread of the virus and the damage that could cause to the health care system here that's free for Britons to try and deal with those who critically need it.

But also, too, people looking at this, seeing their businesses closed, their lives put on hold, being told to stay home, and wondering how long can that carry on for. Victor and Christi?

PAUL: Nick Paton Walsh, you take good care of you and your crew there. Nick, thank you so much.

So coming up, you probably heard of the six degrees of separation, six degrees of Kevin Bacon, right? The actor is putting a new twist on the game in a fun and really thoughtful way to help stop the spread of COVID-19. We're going to show you next.

[10:51:39]

BLACKWELL: Gyms are shutting down across the country because of coronavirus and social distancing, and one gym, though, is loaning out its gear.

PAUL: BTB Fitness in Atlanta offering dumbbells, kettlebells, masks to their customers just to make sure that people can keep exercising at home.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

NICK GECSY, BTB FITNESS: Might as well get everything out to everybody to use. And we're all about providing our members with the best service possible, and right now we can't do that in the gym but we're going to do it at their house.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLACKWELL: If you don't have gear, CNN sports correspondent and cross fit aficionado Andy Scholes shows us there's plenty of ways to work out at home and get the whole family involved.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ANDY SCHOLES, CNN SPORTS CORRESPONDENT: I normally go to cross fit every day, but since we can't do that right now, I still want to get in a high intensity workout here at home. And my gym, Synergy Cross Fit, they provide us with workouts to do at home whether we have equipment or not. And this is good with no equipment, five

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rounds of 10 air squats, 10 step ups or box jumps, just find a ledge, a chair, anything to use, 10 sit-ups, and 10 burpees, I like to incorporate my kids when I do it. Let me show you.

Seven, eight, nine.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Three, two.

SCHOLES: Three. Four.

Two, three.

And if it's too easy without weight, you can add weight just holding one of the kids. One, two, three.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

PAUL: There's a reason we're all being asked to stay home, and some stars like Kevin Bacon are getting personal about it.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KEVIN BACON, ACTOR: Hi, folks. You know me, right? I'm technically only six degrees away from you. Every one of us has someone who is worth staying home for. And I am staying home for Kyra Sedgwick.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Kev?

BACON: Speak of the devil. I'm doing something.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLACKWELL: The "I stay home for" challenge encourages people to help slow the spread of the coronavirus by self-isolating and maintaining social distance. Celebrities, Mariah Carey, Elton John, David Beckham, Demi Lovato, they have all responded posting why they are staying at home.

PAUL: And we hope that you are able to make some good memories staying home. Thank you so much for being with us. We appreciate you.

BLACKWELL: The next hour of CNN Newsroom starts after a break.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: This is CNN breaking news.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD, CNN ANCHOR: Hello, everyone. Thank you so much for joining me. I'm Fredricka Whitfield.

We begin with significant new changes in the fight against the coronavirus. Health officials in New York City and Los Angeles, two of the largest cities in this country, are recommending doctors avoid testing patients in cases where the result would not affect the course of treatment.

Load-Date: March 21, 2020