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Miami medical teams feel helpless as COVID-19 devastates South Florida



FILE PHOTO: Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) arrive with a patient while a funeral car begins to depart at North Shore Medical Center where coronavirus disease (COVID-19) patients are treated, in Miami, Florida, U.S. July 14, 2020. REUTERS/Maria

MIAMI (Reuters) - As the coronavirus ravages Florida, healthcare workers in Miami hospitals are struggling to cope with the emotional and physical impact of treating a crushing wave of COVID-19 patients.

After seeing 10,000 new cases a day become the norm across the state in July, many of those on the frontlines are frustrated with the apparent inability of local, state, and federal governments to coordinate an adequate response. They are equally aghast with what appears to be the reluctance or refusal of many Floridians to honor safety precautions to stop the spread of coronavirus.

"I know, and my colleagues know, that we're putting a Band-Aid on a problem, we're supporting people as best we can to get them through, but the real fight happens outside," said Dr. Eric Knott, a pulmonary and critical care fellow working in three of Miami's largest hospitals. "If you can't stop the spread, all of my work is for nothing."

For Miami doctors, concerns about the virus far surpass those stirred up by even the largest hurricanes. "A hurricane tends to be a sort of finite amount, and this is infinite," said Dr. Mark Supino, an attending physician in Jackson Memorial Hospital's emergency department.

Many healthcare workers and union leaders were critical of Miami's reopening several weeks after the number of cases of the novel coronavirus first began rising in early

March.

On Friday, state health officials reported a total of 402,312 cases across Florida, with 135 new deaths bringing the total to more than 5,600.

While the death toll in South Florida has not approached that of New York City, an early epicenter of the U.S. outbreak, hospital beds and intensive care units across the region have filled to capacity, and in some cases surpassed it.

At Jackson Memorial Hospital, the largest facility in the region, officials have called in hundreds of additional medical workers as employees have fallen sick and had to stay home or be hospitalized. An auditorium was sealed and prepared for COVID-positive patients with a negative pressure system to limit the air flow to prevent new infections.

"In 10 years of medicine I never had to put another nurse on life support, I never had to worry about my co-workers dying," said Kevin Cho Tipton, a critical care nurse practitioner who works at one of Miami's largest public hospitals. "It's been emotionally very challenging, physically very challenging." Among the most difficult and stressful parts of the job are the sheer number of ICU patients.

Healthcare workers must constantly keep tabs on the vital or-

gans of patients on ventilators, and many of the sick have to be flipped over and over again to stave off any complications from lying in one position for a prolonged period. To do so without risking detaching any of the life support systems can take up to six people.

The intensity has overwhelmed some. Shore Medical Center where coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Jude Derisme, vice president of Service Employees International Union 1199, which represents 25,000 medical workers across Florida, said the union had to help get one nurse, a 25-year veteran, off a hospital floor after a "break down."

"My fear is that if we don't find a way to bring these numbers down over the next two weeks, if they're worse than these last two weeks, we're going to be stretched too thin," said Martha Baker, a registered nurse and president of Service Employees International Union 1991, which represents about 5,600 medical professionals within Miami's Jackson Health System. "The sad news is that that's when patients die."

While her chapter of the union along with others across Florida have advocated for more personal protective equipment, better overtime pay, hazard pay, and worker's compensation for those waylaid by the virus, they also acknowledged that medical workers can only do so much against the pandemic.

"This is war, and instead of bullets we've got viruses," Baker said. "If we don't find a way to dampen our curve we just keep chasing our tails."

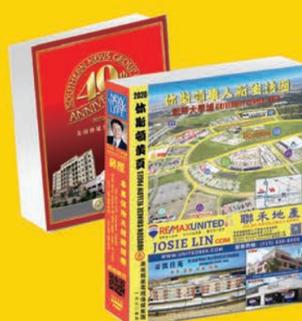
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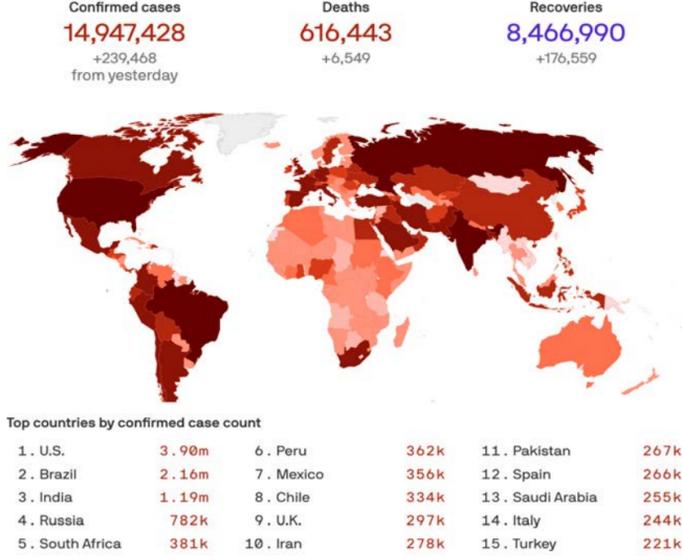
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BUSINESS

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World Coronavirus Dashboard 07/28/20

Confirmed cases of COVID-19



Data: The Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins; Map: Axios Visuals

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Over 15 million confirmed coronavirus cases have been recorded worldwide as of Wednesday, per Johns Hopkins data.

Zoom in: The U.S. accounts for nearly 4 million of those infections.

By the numbers: More than 617,900 people have died from the virus, per Johns Hopkins. More than 8.5 million have recovered.

• **Global:** Total confirmed cases as of 6:30 p.m. ET: 15,056,149 — Total deaths: 619,784 — Total recoveries — 8,557,991 — Brazil has the world's second-highest number of deaths (over 81,400) and infections (more than 2.1 million) after the U.S., which has reported over 142,000 deaths and more than 3.9 million cases.

• **U.S.:** Total confirmed cases as 6:30 p.m. ET: 3,941,741 — Total deaths: 142,756 — Total recoveries: 1,182,018 — Total tested: 47,224,382 — Map.

• **Public health:** Patients with severe

chronic pain are afraid to seek care — Quest warns flu season will further hurt testing.

• **Economy:** Senate GOP, White House consider side deal to extend unemployment benefits — Another stimulus may not be enough.

• **States:** Texas governor's net coronavirus approval rating falls 21 points as cases surge — California breaks record with over 12,000 new cases.

Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios

What's happening: The Australian state of Victoria reported on Wednesday a record 484 new coronavirus cases,

while additional infections in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia took the nationwide total to 502 — the most recorded in the country.

• **Two Chinese hackers** were indicted by the U.S. on Tuesday for a "sweeping global computer intrusion campaign" that recently targeted companies developing coronavirus vaccines and treatments, the Justice Department announced.

• **Mexico** reported it exceeded 40,000 deaths on Tuesday as it reaches new near-record levels of confirmed coronavirus cases, AP reports.

• **Italy's health minister** said Tuesday that he believes the country is "out of the storm" of the coronavirus pandemic, although Italy is "not yet in a safe haven," CNN reports.

• **Austrians** must wear face coverings in supermarkets, post offices and banks, due to a spike in coronavirus cases in recent weeks, Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said Tuesday, per Reuters.



• **EU leaders** agreed to a €750 billion (\$857 billion) post-pandemic economic recovery package, summit chair Charles Michel confirmed in a tweet early Tuesday, stating: "Deal!"

• **Brazil** has reported 7,946 confirmed cases and 177 deaths among indigenous people, PAHO said. The Indian Health Service has reported over 27,000 confirmed cases among indigenous and tribal populations in the U.S.

Between the lines: Policy responses to the crisis have been every-country-for-itself and — in the case of the U.S. and China — tinged with geopolitical rivalry. But the scientific work to understand the virus and develop a vaccine has been globalized on an unprecedented scale.

Coronavirus symptoms include: Fever, cough, shortness of breath, repeated

shaking with chills, muscle pain, headaches, sore throat and a loss of taste or smell.

Headlines At A Glance



Women wait for COVID-19 testing. US labs buckle in testing surge, spike in cases takes nation close to 4M; Populist leaders fare poorly in virus fight.

Laboratories across the U.S. are buckling under a surge of coronavirus tests, creating long processing delays that experts say are undercutting the pandemic response.

With the U.S. tally of **confirmed infections at nearly 4 million**, and new cases surging, the bottlenecks are creating problems for workers kept off the job while awaiting results, nursing homes struggling to keep the virus out and for the labs themselves as they deal with a crushing workload, report Matthew Perrone, Tammy Webber and Matt Sedensky.



Congress: Senate Republicans and the White House reached a tentative agreement for more testing funds in the next COVID-19 relief package, but deep disagreements over the scope of the \$1 trillion in federal aid remain ahead of today's expected rollout. Facing a GOP revolt, Senate Majority Leader Mitch

McConnell was preparing a "handful" of separate COVID-19 aid bills, according to a top lawmaker involved in the negotiations, reports Lisa Mascaro.

The Populism Factor: The countries that top the rankings of COVID-19 deaths globally aren't necessarily the poorest, the richest or the most densely populated. But they do have one thing in common: They are led by populist, mold-breaking leaders like President Donald Trump, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro who are among those who surged to power challenging the old order. But it turns out that when it comes to battling a new disease, populists are faring poorly compared to more traditional liberal democratic models, John Daniszewski writes. (Courtesy AP Morning Wire)



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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

07/27/2020

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

Secretary Chao And Dr. Fauci's Praise And Worry

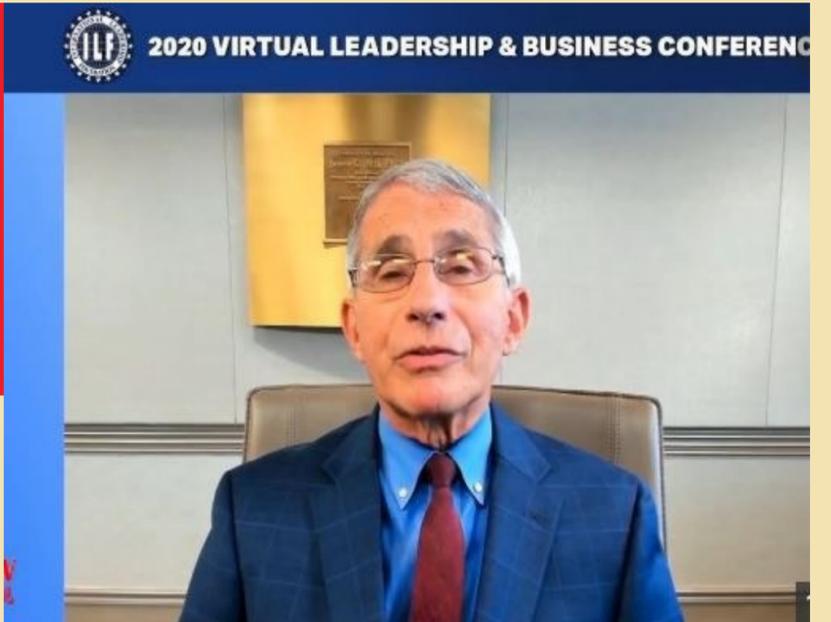
The International Leadership Foundation hosted the 2020 ILF Virtual Leadership & Business Conference last Saturday. The founder of ILF, Chilling Tong invited Elaine L. Chao, U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, Director of the NIAID, U.S. Senator Marco Rubio, U.S. Senator Tim Scott and U.S. Representative Grace Meng to deliver speeches.

All of them praised the many contributions that Asian Americans have

made to our society. As Dr. Fauci said, we have so many Asian American medical personnel standing on the front line fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

Today our society has just been turned upside down because of this horrible virus. Asian Americans have become scapegoats and anti-Asian and anti-Chinese sentiment is brewing in our community.

Just this past weekend, anti-government



demonstrations were held in Austin, Portland and Oakland. Several people were injured and one protester in Austin was killed. Federal officers and local police moved in and clashed with the demonstrators.

We are so angry and sad to witness the

nation just going out of control. And we still don't see any immediate measures being made to calm the pandemic.

There are less than 100 days until the presidential election. All of us need to take action to rescue ourselves and the nation.

Southern News Group 40th Anniversary 1979-2019

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Editor's Choice



A federal law enforcement officer is covered in red paint during a protest against racial inequality and police violence in Portland, Oregon, July 26. REUTERS/Caitlin Ochs



The casket of late U.S. Congressman John Lewis, a pioneer of the civil rights movement and long-time member of the House of Representatives who died July 17, is carried via horse-drawn carriage across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama



Grand Master Jay, center, leader of an all-Black militia group called NFAC, leads his followers on a march during an armed rally in Louisville, Kentucky, July 25. REUTERS/Bryan Woolston



A member of the LGBT community poses during a protest demanding the resignation of Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha, in Bangkok, Thailand, July 25. REUTERS/Jorge Silva



A Reuters photographer holds a picture of a reveller sprinting in front of a bull during the first running of the bulls at the San Fermin festival taken in July 2019 in front of a street, during the second day of San Fermin festival



A man is seen on a boat after his house was flooded, as the flood situation worsened in Munshiganj district, on the outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh, July 25. REUTERS/Mohammad Ponir Hossain



People wearing protective face masks and shields attend mass on the first day of the reopening of the temple of the cult figure La Santa Muerte (The Saint of Death) after government restrictions were eased in Tultitlan, on the outskirts of Mexico



A man works to remove the U.S. Consulate plaque at the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu, Sichuan province, China, July 26. REUTERS/Thomas Peter

U.S. Pandemics: Then And Now

(Editor's Note: The Spanish flu, also known as the 1918 flu pandemic, was an unusually deadly influenza pandemic. Lasting from January 1918 to December 1920, it infected 500 million people – about a third of the world's population at the time. The death toll is estimated to have been anywhere from 17 million to 50 million, and possibly as high as 100 million, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in human history. Today, we face a Coronavirus pandemic with many similarities in terms of how we are responding to this health crisis in terms of service and care to those impacted. The photos we share here are clear testament to even though it was 100 years ago, the hard work and dedication of America's health care workers of yesterday is very similar to today's health care workers who are carrying on the timeless tradition of saving lives and bringing hope.)



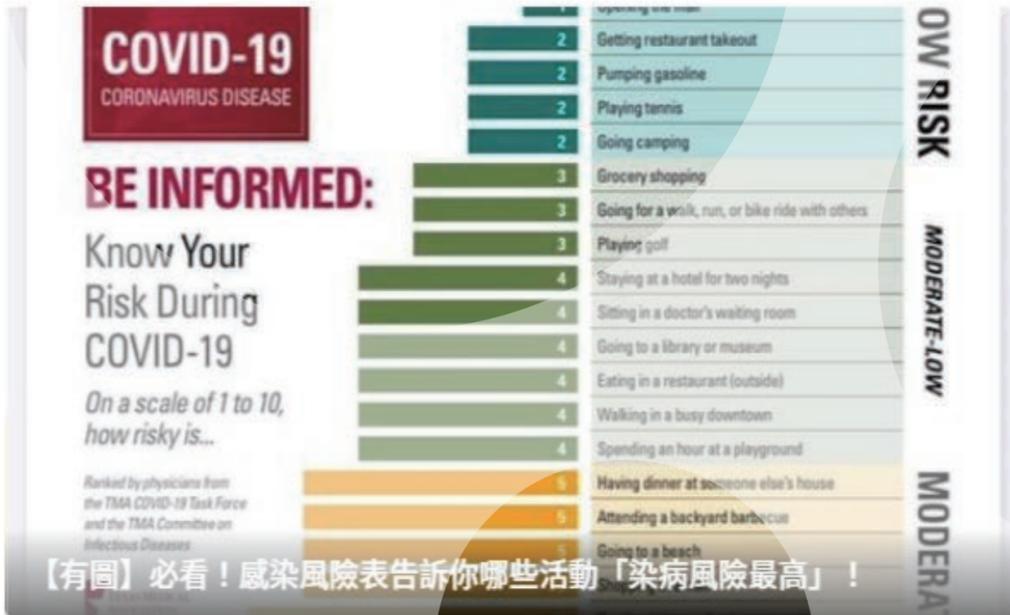
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