

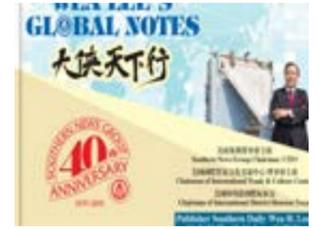


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John Robbins 832-280-5815
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Southern Daily News is published by Southern News Group Daily

Publisher: Wea H. Lee
President: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins, Jun Gai
Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072
E-mail: News@scdaily.com

Sunday October 04 2020 | www.today-america.com | Southern News Group

Trump moved to military hospital after COVID-19 diagnosis



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump is not yet on a clear path to recovery from COVID-19 and some of his vital signs over the last 24 hours were very concerning, a person familiar with his health said on Saturday. The source's assessment of the Republican president's medical status came after a team of doctors told reporters at a press conference earlier on Saturday that he was "doing very well."

One of those doctors said Trump had told them "I feel like I could walk out of here today."

The source, who asked not to be identified, said the next 48 hours will be critical in terms of Trump's care.

Trump, 74, left the White House and was moved to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center near Washington on Friday just hours after he was diagnosed with COVID-19.

The New York Times said the decision to transport Trump to the hospital came after he had experienced difficulty breathing and his oxygen level dropped, prompting his doctors to give him supplemental oxygen, according to two sources that the newspaper said were close to the White House.

White House doctor Sean P. Conley told reporters outside the hospital on Saturday that Trump had not experienced difficulty breathing, and was not given oxygen at Walter Reed. "The team and I are extremely happy with the progress the president has made," Conley said. He declined to give a

timetable for Trump's possible release from the hospital.

Trump tweeted praise for the medical staff at Walter Reed, and other institutions that have joined them, saying they are "amazing" and that with their help, "I am feeling well!"

RELATED COVERAGE

White House chief of staff says Trump is doing very well
UK PM Johnson says 'resilient' Trump will make strong recovery

The White House has said Trump will work in a special suite at the hospital for the next few days as a precautionary measure. He had no public events scheduled on Saturday.

The diagnosis was the latest setback for the Republican president, who is trailing Democratic rival Joe Biden in opinion polls ahead of the Nov. 3 presidential election.

Trump has downplayed the threat of the coronavirus pandemic from the outset, even as the disease has killed more than 200,000 Americans and hammered the U.S. economy.

Conley said Trump had received a first dose of a five-day course of Remdesivir, an intravenous antiviral drug sold by Gilead Sciences Inc GILD.O that has been shown to shorten hospital stays. He is also taking an experimental treatment, Regeneron's REGN.O REGN-COV2, one of several experimental COVID-19 drugs known as monoclonal antibodies, as well as zinc, Vitamin D, famotidine, melatonin and aspirin, Conley has said.

Trump announced on Twitter early on Friday that he and the first lady, Melania Trump, had contracted the virus.

He is at high risk because of his age and weight. He has remained in apparent good health during his time in office but is not known to exercise regularly or to follow a healthy diet.

A number of other prominent Republicans have also said they tested positive for COVID-19 since Trump's announcement, including Republican Senators Mike Lee, Thom Tillis and Ron Johnson, former White House senior adviser Kellyanne Conway, and former New Jersey governor Chris Christie.

Vice President Mike Pence, who would take over presidential duties if Trump became severely ill, tested negative, a spokesman said. The former Indiana governor, 61, is working from his own residence about three miles from the White House.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who was himself hospitalized with COVID-19 in April, told reporters on Saturday he had no doubt Trump would make a strong recovery.

"He's a naturally obviously very resilient character and I'm sure he'll come through it very well," Johnson said. Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a message to Trump and his wife on Saturday, wishing them a speedy recovery, Chinese state TV said.

ELECTION DAY LOOMS

The Trump campaign on Friday suspended in-person campaign events involving the president or his family. But Pence will continue stumping for the president and Trump's campaign said on Saturday that Pence will host an Oct. 8 event in Peoria, Arizona.



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BUSINESS

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U.S. To Ship 150 Million COVID-19 Virus Tests To Reopen Schools, Economies



President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence arrive to speak on Covid-19 testing in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, on Sept 28, 2020. (Photo/AFP via Getty Images)

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

President Donald Trump announced on Monday that the U.S. government will start distributing 150 million rapid COVID-19 tests to states this week in a bid to help governors safely reopen K-12 schools and economies. Of the total, the administration is dedicating 100 million tests for schools and measures meant to help reopen economies. An additional 50 million tests will target the most vulnerable elderly population in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, as well as home health and hospice sites. "This continues our critical effort to use testing to protect high risk communities," Trump said. The administration has already shipped 2.1 million of the new tests to nursing homes and over 900,000 tests to assisted living facilities, Adm. Brett Giroir, the administration's lead on testing, said during the White House announcement. Long-term care facilities account for a sliver of the U.S. population but more than 40 percent of deaths from the CCP virus.



The new tests, once produced and delivered, will allow the United States to more than double the 111 million tests it has already performed to screen for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus. There are no restrictions on how the 100 million tests meant for schools and economies can be used, but the Trump administration will urge governors to prioritize for settings that need rapid, low-tech methods of testing, like schools, first responder facilities, and areas where outbreaks are detected, Giroir said. The administration plans to ship 6.5 million tests from the school allotment this week. "We just completed a briefing to the gov-

ernors and their state health officials from the Situation Room and we heard words like 'gamechanger' for their states," Giroir told the president.



Adm. Brett Giroir, assistant secretary of Health and Human Services, displays a swab from the new fast result COVID-19 test during a event with President Donald Trump in the Rose Garden of the White House. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

The administration is focusing the testing resources on schools in order to promote the physical, social, and emotional development of children. The rapid tests, manufactured by Abbott Laboratories, would allow teachers, for example, to be tested on a regular basis. The tests could also be made available to parents concerned about a child who has symptoms or to schools for baseline surveillance, like testing a small group of students every week or every month to ensure the infection levels are low. The president announced the move at a time the United States is experiencing an elevated number of new COVID-19 cases per day and, on average, per week. Some experts have suggested the nation may face a surge of infections as the weather gets colder in the fall and winter months ahead. Trump's announcement arrived one day prior to the first presidential debate and five weeks prior to the election in November. The campaign of former Vice President Joe Biden targeted the president's handling of the pandemic as its main line of attack. With the exception of a federal mask mandate, on which the Democrat presidential nominee has pulled back, Biden's plan for handling the outbreak differs little from what the Trump administration has already put in motion.



The Trump administration previously ordered 150 million rapid tests from Abbot. The tests don't require specialty equipment to process, are about the size of a credit card, and deliver results in about 15 minutes.

Broad access to testing is part of both federal and state reopening plans. After initial setbacks with a government-made test, several private sector companies developed a variety of testing solutions. The United States leads the world in the number tests performed. The nation is on track to soon have the capacity to run 3 million tests per day, on average, Giroir told Congress last week. The United States is now averaging about 920,000 tests per day, Giroir said at a press conference at the White House on Sept. 28.

The CCP virus has claimed the lives of more than 200,000 Americans since the beginning of the outbreak earlier this year.



Trump has for months urged state and local leaders to open schools this fall. The president frequently speaks about the lockdowns and closed schools at campaign rallies. He has on more than one occasion suggested that the lockdowns are a political maneuver by the Democrats who seek to boost Biden's election chances by smothering the economy. "It's a shame what's going on," Trump told a crowd of supporters in North Carolina on Sept 8. "On November 4th, every one of those states will be open. They're doing it for political reasons." Abbott's test is an important advance because of its low cost and easy-to-use for-

mat. Until now, the vast majority of coronavirus tests had to be sent to high-grade medical laboratories for processing that typically took several days. Backlogs led to repeated delays in reporting results, especially during a summer spike in cases.

But rapid, point-of-care tests like Abbott's have their own downsides. They are less accurate, and positive results often need to be confirmed with higher-grade lab tests. Additionally, because the tests are often performed outside the health care system, state officials have warned that many tests are going unreported. That could lead to undercounts of new cases, skewing government data needed to track the virus.



"What we're hearing from the states is that they don't know where these tests are being done," said Dr. Jeffrey Engel of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, in a recent interview. He warned that schools generally do not have the capacity or expertise to report mass testing results, which could artificially lower infection counts sent to state and federal officials.

The tests from Abbott are being made in two factories, one in Illinois and one in Maine. The company is in a ramping-up phase. One day after the FDA's approval of the Abbott rapid test, the Trump administration placed an order for 150 million kits. The kits include a nasal swab Trump secured by invoking the Defense Production Act, Giroir said.

It will take the rest of the year to completely fill that order. After that, the administration will decide whether the government should purchase more or whether the free market can determine adequate distribution. (Courtesy ntd.com and The Associated Press.)

WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

10/03/2020

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

President Trump Is In The Hospital



President Trump arrived Friday evening at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center 15 hours after he had tested positive for the coronavirus. The White House said the move was precautionary and not the product of an urgent deterioration in Trump's condition.

Trump walked out of his residence in the White House without assistance and displayed no outward signs of illness.

White House spokeswoman Alyssa Farah said there has been no transfer of

power to Vice President Pence and that President Trump was still in charge. Pence is working at his own residence and remains in good health.

First Lady Melania who also tested positive for the coronavirus remains well with only a mild cough and headache.

Moments before Trump was heading to Walter Reed, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden said he was suspending all negative campaign advertising for the time being.

According to the 25th Amendment, Trump could make a determination for transfer of power from himself with a letter to the Senate to formally hand over power to the Vice President who would then govern until Trump informed the Senate that he was taking power back.

The most significant problem for Trump is that his COVID-positive diagnosis will prove almost impossible for him to effectively handle the health crisis.

The full extent of the political fallout of the situation remains unclear and depends on the severity of Trump's illness. But the whole world is still watching.



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Editor's Choice



Kellyanne Conway, a former counselor to President Trump, on October 2 said she had tested positive for COVID-19. "My symptoms are mild (light cough) and I'm feeling fine. I have begun a quarantine process in consultation with physicians," Conway...MORE



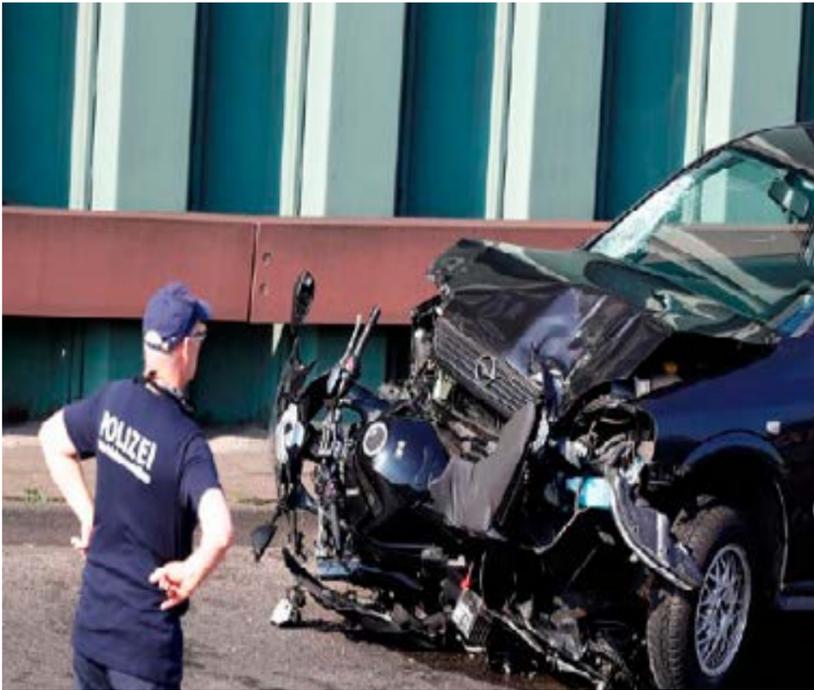
Former New Jersey governor Chris Christie has tested positive for coronavirus and will be receiving medical attention, Christie wrote on Twitter on October 3rd. "I want to thank all of my friends and colleagues who have reached out to ask how I was feeling in the last day or two," Christie wrote. REUTERS/Mark Kaulzarich



Jeepney passengers seated in between plastic barriers, wear face masks and face shields mandatory in public transportation in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines. REUTERS/Eloisa Lopez



Hope Hicks, a top adviser and trusted aide, tested positive for the coronavirus on October 1. She travels regularly with the president on Air Force One and, along with other senior aides, accompanied him to Ohio for the presidential debate and to Minnesota for a campaign event earlier in the week. REUTERS/Leah Millis



A police officer investigates the scene of a series of allegedly deliberate car crashes on highway A100 in Berlin, Germany. REUTERS/Fabrizio Bensch



President Donald Trump, who played down the threat of the coronavirus pandemic for months, said October 2 that he and his wife Melania had tested positive for COVID-19 and were going into quarantine, upending the race for the White House. "We will begin our quarantine and recovery



People wear protective masks as they wait in line at a testing site for the coronavirus set up for returning students, faculty and staff on the main campus of New York University (NYU) in Manhattan. REUTERS/Mike Segar



Republican National Committee Chairman Ronna McDaniel tested positive for the virus on September 30, a spokesman said. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque

New Workplace COVID Testing Is Big Relief For Texas Employers



UT Physicians is now offering COVID-19 testing to companies looking to get employees examined before returning to work. (Photo/UT Physicians)

By Gwendolyn Wu, Houston Chronicle Business Reporter

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

Why have employees wait in drive-thru lines when they could get COVID-19 testing through their companies, much as they get flu shots? That's the thinking of UT Physicians, which is offering coronavirus testing services to local businesses as the falling rate of COVID-19 cases again raises the prospect of bringing employees back to the office. Already, UT Physicians, a group of about 2,000 doctors owned by the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, has signed up eight companies for its testing program. The physician's group aims to capitalize on its access to the University of Texas Health Science Center's laboratory, which can process up to 1,000 nasal or throat swabs a day and produce results within 48 hours. It would allow companies to bypass testing backlogs that previously plagued contractors such as LabCorp or Quest Diagnostics. "The timeliness and action that (employers) are able to take with their employees is really the selling point," said Kim Al-

man, UT Physicians' director of nursing and patient care services. Lab contractors nationwide are introducing "return to work" testing initiatives as companies determine strategies for bringing employees back into the office. Ready access to testing and quick results is considered crucial by many companies because it can help them prevent someone from unknowingly carrying the virus into the workplace, spreading it to colleagues and forcing the shutdown of production or services.



UT Physicians offer two options. Companies can send individuals to one of UT Physicians' four test sites or, for larger companies that want to test groups of

employees, clinicians can come to company offices to conduct the testing. Results are provided to both the test-taker and their employer. Among the firms that have signed up for the testing services is Frazer, a southwest Houston company that builds ambulances and mobile health care clinics. CEO Laura Griffin said she became frustrated by how long it took for her employees to get COVID-19 results back, which by June were taking 10 to 14 days. Often, employees had to negotiate long lines at test sites, particularly early on. In April, lines to get tested in Houston wrapped around parking lots and clogged streets. Frazer in 2014 had designed UT Physicians' mobile stroke unit, an ambulance specially designed for stroke patients. Griffin reached out to Alleman, who was thinking about creating a testing program for local businesses. Frazer signed on in June as one of UT Physicians' first corporate COVID-19 testing customers. Frazer pays \$150 per test. If a Frazer employee gets COVID-19 symptoms or that they've been exposed to the virus, a manager can schedule a same-day or next-day test at UT Physicians. Seven of Griffin's roughly 160 workers have tested positive for COVID-19. The corporate test, she said, prevented internal spread within the company. "We consider it a very small cost to keep our employees safe," Griffin said.



On July 30, Bert Jones, a Frazer vice president left work feeling rundown. He woke up at 5:30 the next morning, a Friday, and sent a text about his symptoms to a group chat with colleagues, including Griffin and Christian McPherson, the company's safety director. Two hours later, McPherson called with instructions to get a COVID-19 test at UT Physicians. By 9 a.m., he was pulling up in

an alleyway for a nasal swab at their Texas Medical Center location. At 10 p.m., he had the results: positive. Jones has a mild case and returned to work July 17. For Griffin, the quick results provided "peace of mind" that the virus was identified before it could spread. The speedy turnaround also impressed Alastair McClean, president of Houston-based Venture Global Technology, which expands pipelines for both onshore and offshore well construction and repair. McClean worried if he didn't catch one COVID-19 case, the virus could spread through his staff of nearly 125 employees — a worry that intensified after one of his workers spent hours in line at a drive-thru testing site. "It's the others exposed as well," McClean said. "If they've been in close contact, we may end up with four or five staff that can't go to work." Companies pay different prices depending on how many tests they order, with discounts for larger volumes. Venture paid \$250 per test, and allowed employees' spouses to be tested at their own expense. Five people have been tested since the company signed up with UT Physicians in early July. Many of the operators Venture works with require COVID-19 testing before letting people onto installations. Being able to test quickly gives McClean a sense of which employees are available to work.

What's allowed By offering free testing to employees, employers can get a better sense of whether their workers have caught the novel coronavirus. But there may be complications around testing employees under the Americans with Disabilities Act, said Jill Chapman, a senior consultant at Insperty, a Houston human resources services company. Companies can require workers to take medical exams such as a COVID-19 test swab if it



affects their ability to work and because even

one infected employee could pose a "direct threat" to the health of the workforce, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. But it's not a replacement for social distancing guidelines and masks. At this time during the pandemic, it's legal for all employers to require a test. And it makes sense, especially in workplaces where there's a lot of interaction with customers, such as a restaurant or store, or if employees work in close quarters, such as at a factory. Tests to determine whether an employee has COVID-19 antibodies are not allowed, because they only determine whether a person has had the disease in the past, not if they pose an immediate threat to their co-workers, according to the EEOC. Jones, the Frazer executive, said he is grateful that the quick test and speedy results kept him from getting too close with his girlfriend and her kids or going into the office and unknowingly spreading COVID-19 to others. Not long after the test, he broke out into a low-grade fever for eight straight days. He was confined to bed rest for about 10 days. Three weeks later, when the symptoms subsided, Jones went back to work. Before the pandemic, he'd never worried about flu season or a stomach bug going around. But now, Jones said, it's valuable to have ready access to COVID-19 testing, not just for himself but also for the 160 other employees at Frazer. "As someone in leadership, I appreciate just knowing we're going to get a result within the day," Jones said. "It's really a relief." (Courtesy The Houston Chronicle)

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