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Mr. Lee's Commentary and Dairy



Inside C2

Southern DAILY

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Top U.S. Capitol security officials apologize for ‘failings’ in Jan. 6 attack



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Top U.S. Capitol security officials apologized on Tuesday for “failings” during the deadly attack on the building by followers of then-President Donald Trump in a bid to stop the certification of Joe Biden’s election victory.

structures.

“I am here to offer my sincerest apologies on behalf of the Department,” said Yolanda Pittman, the acting chief of Capitol Police, according to a prepared statement for the U.S. House of Representatives’ Appropriations Committee.



FILE PHOTO: An explosion caused by a police munition is seen while supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump gather in front of the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, U.S., January 6, 2021. LREUTERS/Leah Millis
The officials specifically acknowledged a number of missteps: conflicting intelligence, inadequate preparation and insufficient mobilization of partner agencies, and called for improving accountability systems and communications

“That was the directive they were given,” Ryan said, adding that once a lockdown was ordered at the Capitol and adjacent buildings, it was not fully enforced.

“You still had people blowing in and out ... that whole entire thing needs to be reviewed,” said Ryan, who chairs a House Appropriations subcommittee that oversees U.S. Capitol Police and its funding.

Ryan emphasized that a series of investigations were still in early stages, with many unanswered questions.

He said the force’s budgets will be reviewed, noting that officers did not have enough riot gear and other equipment to deal with the mob. Public hearings are expected.

Pittman said many of the officers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder after the assault in which five people died, including one Capitol police officer. Pittman said the death of a second officer was indirectly linked. She and Timothy Blodgett, the acting U.S. House of Representatives’ sergeant at arms, said security officials were working to do more to boost protection of the U.S. Capitol, the seat of government.

Pro-Trump supporters stormed the building following Trump’s urgings at a rally near the White House to go to the Capitol. Trump was subsequently impeached by the House on a charge of incitement and the trial in the Senate is scheduled to begin the week of Feb. 8.

The then-chief of the Capitol Police and House and Senate sergeants at arms stepped down.

Biden limits private prisons and bolsters fair-housing policies

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Joe Biden took executive actions on Tuesday to roll back the U.S. government’s use of private prisons and bolster anti-discrimination enforcement in housing, part of what he called an initiative to tackle U.S. systemic racism.

U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris watches as President Joe Biden signs executive orders on his racial equity agenda at the White House in Washington, U.S., January 26, 2021. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque
“We’ve never fully lived up to the founding principles of this nation - to state the obvious - that all people are created equal and have a right to be treated equally,” Biden told reporters.

Four steps announced by the White House are part of a package by the Democratic president to roll back policies of his Republican predecessor Donald Trump and promote racial justice reforms that he pledged to address during the election campaign. Biden will also sign an order on Tuesday underscoring the federal government’s commitment to Native American tribal sovereignty and memos condemning discrimination against Asian Americans and Americans of Pacific Island descent. “President Biden is committed to reducing mass incarceration while making our communities safer - that starts with ending the federal government’s reliance on private prisons,” Susan Rice, Biden’s domestic policy adviser, told reporters at the White House. Shares of two leading publicly traded companies that operate private prisons fell after the White House announcement, with GEO Group Inc down 3.5% in afternoon trading and Corecivic Inc off 3.7%.



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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

01/26/2021

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

Wealee@scdaily.com

Our Brother Hector Rests In Peace Now

More than twenty-one years ago. Brother Hector joined our Southern News family. He was only 42 when he passed away last week. Today in the employees' gathering I told my colleagues, "Hector was one of the most loyal employees and family members for us. Hector's life was too short, but we will remember him as a brother and his contribution to Southern News is forever. Today we all remember Hector and his footprint will always be a part of our campus. Life is so very unpredictable. All of us need to take care of ourselves.

I remember in early 2000 when we were finishing our news building on Bellaire Blvd. in the hot summer in Houston, Hector and his dad came to our jobsite and asked for printing work. I saw this nice and friendly father and son I hired them the next days. His father was very skillful and did very professional work. When they finished the whole printing work, he brought his son Hector to see me. He wanted Hector to stay with us and continue to work here. When I talked to Hector in English, he could reply very well for a young man not even twenty years old. I could tell he wanted to work and wanted to help his family. I finally hired him to be a helper in our company.

In the summer of 2001, our new Southern News Group building was opened with the new press room and many other new facilities. We were operating 24 hours and our daily newspaper deadline ended on midnight



every day. Along with printing our own newspaper, we also printed a hundred of other community weekly newspapers. In many cases our press room was always busy and sometimes in chaos. I always saw Hector standing there rolling the newspapers, sometimes working day and night. He never complained.

Two years later, our new International Trade Center building was inaugurated. With a size of almost 20,000 square feet, in the "ITC" we housed the Houston United Nations Association, Congressman Al Green's office, the Pakistan Chamber of Commerce, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and the Caribbean Chamber of Commerce. We have hosted hundreds of functions and festivals for more than twenty years. And Hector was the one who set up each event and did the whole job. He never complained.

In the summer of 2017, the destructive Hurricane Harvey hit Houston, Texas. On the night that the hurricane hit, I called Hector to check the building. When he arrived, he called me and said, "Mr. Lee, it is very serious now. The water has started coming in on the printing press, the floors are flooded as well as the paper rolls."

When I received his call I wanted to come to the company, but Hector told me, "Don't come because it is very dangerous." So I didn't go until the next morning. When I walked into the press room I saw the whole printing press was flooded and the water was about three feet deep. And the newspaper rolls were wet and had fallen down to the ground. It was the first time I felt that all of our "property" was gone. I felt very helpless. Hector looked at me and said, Mr. Lee, don't be too sad. Let's rebuild our company. I will still be helping you as long as you want me to. Since then, we have faced the



most difficult time of our whole life. We still have to face it. I have no choice but to continue to manage and to survive.

In February 2020, the coronavirus hit our nation and all over the world, including Houston. The city and county announced that citizens should stay home. The virus attacked and the city has become quiet and idle. We have let our employees work at home. Only Hector was the only one who came in every day to take care of the building. He never complained. He insisted this was his duty to do so.

One morning almost two months ago when I left the office I told Hector to fix the fence on the ground. Right after I left I received a call from Jennifer my assistant who told me that Hector had a heart attack and was taken to the hospital. By the time I came back he was already gone.

Since that day Hector never woke up and just a couple of days ago he passed away and probably went to Heaven and to a better place. In his whole life Hector never stopped working. Maybe he was very tired.

In my whole business life career, I have met hundreds and thousands of people. Hector was the only one who always remained so loyal and diligent over the years. And the guy never gave up and just kept trying to fix everything that was broken.

In the compound of Southern News Group, even though you are gone Hector, but your footprint and legacy are still with our group.

We are so sad to say goodbye to you, Hector. We all hope you can relax in another happier world.



Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee



Southern News Group Chairman / CEO
Chairman of International Trade & Culture Center
Chairman of International District Houston Texas

Stay Home!

BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

'We Cannot Afford Inaction': Biden Unveils \$1.9 Trillion COVID-19 Relief Plan



President Joe Biden announces his COVID-19 relief plan in Wilmington, Del. (Photo/ Matt Slocum/AP)

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

President Joe Biden outlined his plans for economic relief from the coronavirus crisis citing the need for a more robust vaccination plan as well as for additional direct payments to American families to help recover the U.S. economy. His plan, called the American Rescue Plan, is expected to cost \$1.9 trillion. The package includes \$1,400 direct stimulus checks, which would supplement the \$600 checks Congress passed last year. Biden also proposes an additional \$160 billion for a national vaccine program, including \$20 billion for distribution, and an additional \$50 billion for expanded testing.

"It's not hard to see that we are in the middle of a once-in-several generations economic crisis, with a once-in-several generations public health crisis. A crisis of deep human suffering is in plain sight," Biden said.

"We have to act, and we have to act now," Biden said. "We cannot afford inaction."

The plan also calls on Congress to invest \$170 billion in K-12 schools and higher education, including \$130 billion for schools to safely reopen. Furthermore, Biden has proposed raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour, as well as providing billions for child care assistance, federal nutrition programs, rental assistance and tribal governments' pandemic response.

The package also includes \$350 billion in emergency funding for state and local governments. During his campaign, Biden made tackling COVID-19 and the economic hardships it had put on Americans a core pitch to voters. He has described recent \$600 coronavirus relief checks as a "down payment" and said he would push to see Americans receive an additional \$1,400 payout. More than 385,000 Americans have died from coronavirus-related illness, and as many U.S. hospitals once again have reached crisis levels in capacity for aiding those affected by the virus. Biden has pushed the importance of getting as many Americans as possible vaccinated from the virus. His plan includes launching community vaccination centers and mobile vaccination units in more remote areas, as well as increasing funding for more testing.



The president has also said he will urge the

country to wear masks for the first 100 days of his presidency. Wearing masks is a practice public health officials advocate in slowing the spread of the virus but one that had become a political issue during President Trump's tenure in the White House. Biden hopes these relief options will help stabilize the U.S. economy and reopen a number of sectors that have had to shutter in full or in part as a result of the virus. Also a priority is American schools, which have struggled to adequately tackle the virus, adding an additional strain to working families during the pandemic.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce in a statement said it welcomed Biden's economic recovery plan. "Specifically, we applaud the President-elect's focus on vaccinations and on economic sectors and families that continue to suffer as the pandemic rages on."

The president views this package as a first step in his administration's coronavirus plan and is expected to outline a full recovery plan next month.

"I know what I just described does not come cheaply," Biden said on Thursday, "But failure to [act] will cost us dearly. The consensus among leading economists is we simply cannot afford not to do what I'm proposing."

Related

\$1,400 Checks And Help For The Jobless: What's

In Biden's Plan To Rescue The Economy

President Joe Biden has long pledged he would deliver an aggressive plan to address the raging coronavirus pandemic and the painful recession it spawned.

Now he has proposed an ambitious \$1.9 trillion relief plan that includes \$1,400 stimulus checks, additional benefits for the unemployed, as well hundreds of billions of dollars for struggling businesses and local governments.



Then presidential candidate Joe Biden speaks at a "Build Back Better" Clean Energy event on July 14, 2020. On Thursday,

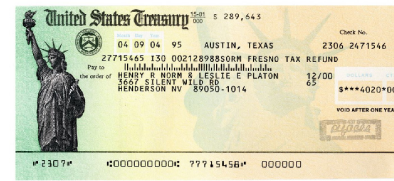
Biden unveiled an ambitious economic plan just days before he's set to be inaugurated as president. (Photo/O. Douliery/AFP via Getty Images)

"The crisis of deep human suffering is in plain sight," Biden said during a televised address. "There's no time to waste. We have to act and we have to act now."

Biden's plan comes just weeks after Congress passed a \$900 billion relief plan that took weeks of painful negotiations. But economists have said the economy would need additional help as new coronavirus infections continue to surge, and as the daily death toll from COVID-19 exceeds 4,000. The pandemic is dealing fresh blows to the U.S. economy, with more than 1.2 million Americans filing new claims for unemployment benefits in the first week of the new year.

Here are key aspects of the plan:

COVID-19 shots While newly approved vaccines offer hope for relief from the pandemic,



Biden described the sluggish initial delivery of the shots as a "dismal failure." The Trump administration invested heavily in developing a vaccine, but has left distribution largely up to states. The number of shots delivered so far has fallen far short of what was promised.

"We'll have to move heaven and earth to get more people vaccinated," Biden said. "To mobilize more medical teams to get shots in people's arms, to increase vaccine supply, and to get it out the door as fast as possible." Biden called for a \$20 billion campaign to speed vaccinations, including the launch of community vaccination centers around the country and mobile units to deliver the shots to hard-to-reach areas. Policy makers and experts have said a long-term recovery of the economy is unlikely until the pandemic is under control. Biden's plan also calls for hiring 100,000 additional public health workers, and a more robust surveillance system to watch for new and challenging mutations of the virus.

Help for struggling Americans The president-elect praised Congress for approving addi-

tional economic relief last month, but cautioned that was only a "down payment."

Biden will now ask lawmakers to spend heavily on measures designed to cushion the economic fallout from the pandemic, including expanded unemployment benefits and additional direct payments to most Americans. Among the measures he will propose are \$1,400 in relief payments to most adults and children, which would come in addition to the \$600 payments that were approved in December. Congress voted last month to extend emergency unemployment benefits through March and boost those benefits by \$300 per week. Biden's plan would increase the additional benefits to \$400 per week, and extend them through September, or longer if economic conditions warrant.

Rescuing small businesses, local governments

Biden also proposed \$350 billion in emergency funding for state and local governments — an idea which congressional Republicans have so far rejected.

State and local governments have cut 1.3 million jobs since the pandemic began and have struggled financially as tax revenues declined while costs related to fighting the pandemic surged last year. Biden's plan also calls for \$15 billion in grants to small businesses, as well seed money for as much as \$175 billion in low-interest business loans.

Looking ahead at recovery

Lastly, Biden advisers have characterized his proposal as a combination of "rescue" measures to combat the immediate pain of the recession and "recovery" initiatives designed to address longer-term economic challenges. The latter category includes his push for a \$15 minimum wage — a goal pushed by many Democrats but opposed by many Republicans — and increased tax subsidies for families with children.

"We didn't get into all this overnight," Biden said of the nation's twin challenges of the pandemic and recession. "We won't get out of it overnight. And we can't do it as a separated, divided nation. The only way we can do it is to come together. To come together as fellow Americans, as neighbors." (Courtesy <https://www.npr.org/>)

Editor's Choice



A nurse attends to a patient on a COVID-19 ward at Milton Keynes University Hospital in Milton Keynes, Britain, January 20, 2021. REUTERS/Toby Melville



Workers dig graves at a cemetery, amid the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, in London, Britain, January 11, 2021. REUTERS/Toby Melville



Simon O'Brien, 36, looks on as his wife, Elizabeth Kerr, 31, speaks in a COVID-19 ward, days after they married in an ICU when both had become critically ill and were uncertain of their chances of surviving, in Milton Keynes University Hospital, Milton Keynes, Britain, January 20, 2021. REUTERS/Toby Melville



Health care workers transport a patient at the Royal London Hospital in London, Britain, January 19, 2021. REUTERS/Hannah McKay



Paul from Feet First Coffins coffin makers prepares a casket, made in a different method due to time constraints during the outbreak, near Buckingham, Britain January 21, 2021. REUTERS/Andrew Boyers



Workers wearing protective suits bury the body of a person at a cemetery in Chislehurst on the outskirts of London, Britain January 12, 2021. REUTERS/Hannah McKay



People wait to receive the coronavirus vaccine inside the Salisbury Cathedral, in Salisbury, Britain January 20, 2021. REUTERS/Paul Childs



A worker wearing a protective suit walks at a cemetery in Chislehurst on the outskirts of London, Britain January 12, 2021. REUTERS/Hannah McKay

***“This Is The First Time During The Pandemic
When Our Resources Far Exceed The Demand”***
**Monoclonal Antibodies Could Ease
Record COVID Hospitalizations --
When Will They Be Used?**



Nurse Janet Gilleran treats a coronavirus patient, Mike Mokler, with bamlanivimab, a monoclonal antibody, in at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, MA in December. (Photo/C. F. Walker / Boston Globe via Getty Images)

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

A drug that could protect high-risk Covid-19 patients from developing severe illness is sitting on shelves unused as a record number of people are hospitalized in the U.S.

On Thursday, public health officials at the federal and state levels pleaded with the country to take advantage of its vast supply of monoclonal antibody treatments, the only available therapy that can potentially keep patients out of the hospital.

“This is the first time during the pandemic that I can recall when our resources far exceed demand,” Dr. William Fales, medical director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, said Thursday during a media briefing organized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Fales estimated that just 10 percent of Covid-19 patients in the state who are eligible for the therapy had received it.

Monoclonal antibodies are lab-made drugs meant to mimic natural antibodies to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19. They’re recommended for people who are at high risk of getting very sick from the virus, including anyone over age 65 and people with underlying health conditions.

At least one study showed that the therapy can lower the amount of virus in a person’s system.

But no gold standard research proves that monoclonal antibodies do, indeed, provide this benefit. Most reports are anecdotal.

Fales said his team observed that hospitalization rates during the two weeks after monoclonal antibody therapy seems to be around 5 percent. That’s about half the rate of patients who received placebos in studies of the drugmaker Regeneron’s monoclonal antibody treatment, according to the Food and Drug Administration’s emergency authorization of the drug.

Dr. Andrew Thomas, chief clinical officer at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, suggested Wednesday during a media call that use of monoclonal antibodies has eased strains on the hospital system.



Nicholas Capote of the pharmacy department displays a treatment of bamlanivimab, a monoclonal antibody, in a clear plastic bag.

lanivimab, a monoclonal antibody, in the Respiratory Infection Clinic at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, MA. (Photo/C. F. Walker / Boston Globe via Getty Images)

Thomas said his system “ramped up” use of monoclonal antibodies quickly. “I’d like to think it’s why our hospitalizations have come down,” he said.

Dr. Jonathan Parsons, head of the monoclonal antibody treatment efforts at the Ohio State center, said, “Anyone who gets tested through our swabbing program is entered into an electronic medical record.” Parsons’ staff then contacts the primary care providers for patients who test positive, asking whether they’d like to refer patients for monoclonal antibodies.

New Jersey’s state epidemiologist, Dr. Eddy Bresnitz, said monoclonal antibodies may have played a role in a recent leveling off of the state’s Covid-19 hospitalizations. “It’s worth the effort to get it,” Bresnitz said during a media briefing Thursday.

So why aren’t people getting it? Simply put, a lack of time, resources and awareness.

Monoclonal antibodies must be given soon after a person has tested positive. “These medications work best when given early,” Surgeon General Jerome Adams has said.

The two monoclonal antibody products that have been authorized for emergency use by the FDA, from the drugmakers Eli Lilly and Regeneron, must be given within the first week of illness. But with testing still lagging across much of the country, many patients must wait several days to find out whether, in fact, they have been infected. Simply waiting for the test results can push patients past time they might qualify for treatment.

That barrier, however, shouldn’t be a factor in getting monoclonal antibodies, said Dr. John Redd, the chief medical officer for the office of the assistant secretary of health and human services for preparedness and response.



“Getting these therapeutics does not require having a PCR test,” Redd said during Thursday’s briefing. (A PCR, or polymerase chain reaction, test is considered the gold standard, but it can take days to get a

result.)

Instead, Redd said, “a rapid test is quite appropriate.” Rapid tests can return results within minutes, but they have higher rates of false negatives. Those on the front lines of treating Covid-19 patients say it’s not that easy.

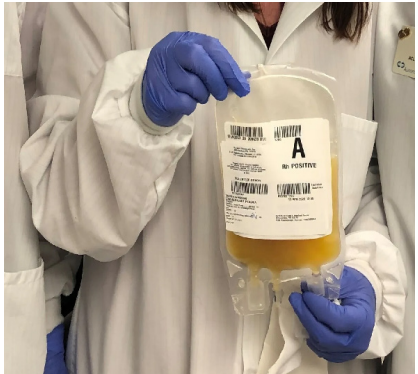
Monoclonal antibodies are given intravenously, in an hourlong infusion, with an appointment lasting three to four hours. Because Covid-19 patients are contagious, they must be separated from other vulnerable patients who need outpatient infusions, such as those receiving chemotherapy for cancer.

Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, an infectious disease specialist at the University of California, San Francisco, said some patients might decline the treatment simply because they’re feeling better. But that might be a mistake. It has become clear that some patients may feel better before they abruptly get worse.

For many others, logistical problems get in the way. Public transportation and ride-shares, such as Uber, are out of the question for those with active Covid-19. In addition, Chin-Hong said, some patients simply can’t afford three hours out of their day away from work or family obligations.

Chin-Hong estimates that his health system has used less than 20 percent of the monoclonal antibodies in stock. What’s more, special infusion centers must be set up and staffed. Some say it’s an unreasonable demand on health systems that are already stretched.

“If we had this pandemic under control, we could set up infusion centers. We could set up rapid testing. But we don’t have those resources,” said Dr. Pieter Cohen, who is an associate professor at Harvard Medical School and a physician with the Cambridge Health Alliance Respiratory Clinic near Boston.



“We’re completely swamped with sick patients,” Cohen said.

Chin-Hong agreed. “These patients are generally well, and you want to focus on the sick patients,”

he said.

“I think that’s where people’s mindsets are — particularly in California right now,” he said. The state has had a surge in Covid-19 cases of late. In the state’s most populous county, Los Angeles, 10 people on average test positive for the virus every minute.

The hurdles aren’t lost on at least some of those leading the federal response. “We recognize the health care system is very stressed,” Dr. Janet Woodcock, therapeutics lead for Operation Warp Speed, said during Thursday’s media call.

“On the other hand, if we don’t do this, the likelihood is that we’ll have even more overwhelmed hospitals and health care workers,” Woodcock said, adding that her team feels that efforts to set up such infusion centers are “worth it” to reduce the burdens on health care systems.

Some standalone kidney dialysis centers across the country have announced that they will begin administering monoclonal antibodies to Covid-19 patients during shifts set up for only those patients. Covid-19 has been shown to be especially dire for patients with kidney disease.

Another factor may be lack of awareness, among both patients and providers, that the treatments are available. During a recent media briefing, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar put the onus for pursuing monoclonal antibodies on patients, who “should be asking their doctors or health care providers why they aren’t being offered these antibody therapies.”

However, HHS’ online tool provides little assistance to those trying to find monoclonal antibody resources. The site has no data for people in at least 31 states, including Alabama, Kansas, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina and Washington.

A spokesperson for HHS said that the team is working “as rapidly as possible” to update the site and that it expects more resources to be available by next week. (Courtesy nbcnews.com)

Why

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