

Record single-day COVID-19 deaths in Florida, Alabama and Utah

By Benjamin Mateus
15 July 2020

With COVID-19 infections continuing to rise at record rates, the United States recorded more than 900 deaths on Tuesday, including single-day records in Florida, Alabama and Utah. Oregon matched its daily death record.

The bipartisan back-to-work drive, driven by the demand of the corporate-financial elite for a resumption of production and profit-making, has produced a catastrophe that is worsening by the day. There are now more than 3.5 million cases of COVID-19 in the US (representing 26.4 percent of all global cases), with almost 140,000 deaths. There are 1.8 million active cases.

The seven-day US average stands at 62,243 new cases per day and continues to rise. Twelve states posted more than 1,000 new cases yesterday. Texas had more than 11,000. Oklahoma set a one-day record of 993 new cases.

Hospitalizations are up 43 percent in California, which is now reporting 8,000 new cases of COVID-19 per week. Texas and Arizona are readying refrigerated trucks to store the overflow of bodies from inundated morgues.

In a rambling, nearly hourlong rant in the White House Rose Garden Monday, President Donald Trump continued to hail his administration's response to the pandemic and blame the explosion of new cases on increased testing. He cited as vindication of his policies the recent decline in coronavirus death rates, even as daily deaths once again neared the levels that prevailed in April and early May.

He cited the surging stock market as more proof of the success of his handling of the pandemic. In fact, the 556-point rise in the Dow on Tuesday was further evidence that the criminal indifference to the loss of life is rooted in a conscious policy of class war being

pursued by the ruling class. It views the public health and social disaster triggered by the pandemic as an opportunity to increase its wealth, compliments of unlimited infusions of cash by the Federal Reserve, and intensify the attack on the jobs, wages and working conditions of the working class.

This policy is being dutifully carried out by both big business parties, with Democratic as well as Republican governors and mayors forcing workers back into factories and workplaces that are breeding grounds for the virus, without any serious measures to shield workers from infection and death.

Meanwhile, the administration has ordered hospitals to bypass the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and, beginning today, send all coronavirus patient information to the Department of Health and Human Services in a transparent effort to control and manipulate data on the progress of the pandemic. Trump has in recent days repeatedly clashed with the CDC, and even more openly with Dr. Anthony Fauci, the country's preeminent expert on infectious diseases.

Florida, whose Governor Ron DeSantis, a Trump protégé, has been at the forefront of pushing for a herd immunity policy, is now the epicenter of the pandemic, with Miami-Dade County reporting 2,090 new cases in the last 24 hours. Average daily new cases in Miami-Dade over the past 14-day period have risen by more than 200 percent, and deaths have increased by more than 25 percent. Trump and his billionaire Education Secretary Betsy DeVos have been touting the Miami-Dade school board, which has announced a full, in-person reopening of the schools in August, as the model for his demand to fully reopen schools across the country.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks during a

roundtable discussion with Miami-Dade County mayors during the coronavirus pandemic, Tuesday, July 14, 2020, in Miami. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

At a press briefing at Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital on Monday, an activist shouted, "Shame! Shame on you! You are an embarrassment! We are getting record-breaking cases every day, and you are doing nothing." DeSantis was visibly startled and flustered. The heckler was quickly removed from the press conference.

In an interview, Dr. David J. De La Zerda, director of the medical intensive care unit at Jackson Memorial, acknowledged the dire state of public health in South Florida. Admitting that ICU capacity could reach capacity by the end of the week, he said, "The things that we are seeing right now—one issue is the staff, especially nurses, are tired, and they are just burnt out. ... For the physicians, what we're trying to do is follow similar models that they did in New York, meaning that we're getting more help from our colleagues, like dermatologists, urologists and other colleagues, are actually coming to the hospital and trying to help out. And then at the end, you know, it's the Convention Center in Miami Beach, there are hospital beds. So, I think we'll be transferring patients soon."

Rebekah Jones, the statistician who was fired in May for not fixing the numbers on COVID-19 cases in Florida, has recently appeared on media outlets after penning an opinion piece in *Star-Banner*. "The Department of Health has never maintained data on the number of cases actively hospitalized," she said. "They did not monitor admission and discharge dates and would often only learn of a case hospitalization weeks or months afterward."

Angry and frustrated Florida nurses have turned to social media to vent their grievances and frustrations. One Pinellas County nurse wrote, "I have been on a COVID positive unit since March, and we have never emptied. We have three floors for COVID positive patients (non-ICU), two floors for COVID rule out, and three ICU COVID units (one was PACU but has since been converted). The fatality numbers in the news seem off. They reported 11 deaths last week, and we had more than that in my hospital."

Others wrote, "I have been working 5- to 12-hour shifts a week, and I am tired." "I'm in Duval, and the COVID units are exploding, they are adding more beds

in at least two of the hospitals." "In Broward/Miami area, we are crazy! We need nurses ASAP." "In Boca Raton and it's out of control. Going to get worse, I think. My coworkers are getting sick as well." "We have beds, but we don't have staffing because so many nurses are either positive or quarantined for exposure."

To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>