



3/24/20 OFW Law Daily COVID-19 News Conference Summary

President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence held a 45-minute press conference beginning at 5:42 this evening. They were joined by White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Deborah Birx, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Dr. Anthony Fauci, and National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow.

Summary of the President's remarks and questions:

1. The President urged Americans to continue to follow the Coronavirus guidance.
2. He hopes to open things up in large parts of the country by Easter.
3. His first priority is the health and safety of the American people, working with the Task Force.
4. He said that the virus is attacking 149 countries, with everyone looking to the US for how our nation is responding.
5. He reviewed the volume of medical devices that have been sent out by FEMA.
6. He referenced his [Executive Order regarding the use of authority under the Defense Production Act](#).
7. He spoke about the Corps of Engineers and the National Guard building medical facilities in New York, the hospital ship that will be in New York in a few weeks, and other hospital facilities being built in Louisiana, Washington, and New Jersey.
8. The President said Secretary of the Treasury Mnuchin working with Congress on a legislative package that will help hospitals, industries, and workers. He described it as a bridge loan to bring companies back to health.
9. He spoke about the Dow Jones Industrial Average gaining a record 2,100 points today. He went on to restate his view that this is a medical crisis, not a financial crisis.
10. The crisis shows the importance of strong borders and manufacturing capability. American supplies for American hospitals. We need to be an independent and self-reliant nation.
11. The President claimed that the legislative package will set us up to supersede where we were.
12. The President was asked if the goal of an Easter deadline is realistic according to the doctors. He said that he is looking at Easter in consultation. The Easter date is based on a certain level of weeks passing from when we started action.
13. Given Louisiana and other places now identifying more incidents, what is the President seeing that would warrant the Easter timeframe? The President said there are portions of the country that are doing "unbelievably well". He is helping New York would just love to see the Easter goal.

14. The President was asked what metrics will be used to make a decision to open access. The President said he is looking at a number of things and will be guided by Drs. Fauci and Birx.
15. The President agreed that New York can be considered the epicenter. When asked about areas that could be opened the President suggested the Farm Belt, the Midwest, and portions of the State of Texas.

Summary of the White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Deborah Birx's remarks and questions:

1. Dr. Birx said we are continuing to accelerate testing, now having completed 370,000 with 220,000 done in just the last 8 days. This recent amount is equal to what South Korea did in 8 weeks.
2. She said she knows we have to do more, and repeated that those who need the test should be the first.
3. She spoke positively about the self-administered swabs since it eliminates the amount of Personal Protective Equipment that may have to be used by medical personnel.
4. She is encouraged by the results in Italy where there has been a reduction in mortality and the number of new cases.
5. We are still working on eliminating the testing backlog, which provides disproportionate results each day. When we can get into a true 24-hour testing period we will have a better situation for assessment.
6. She is concerned about New York City with its large number of cases and 31% mortality rate. She urged New Yorkers to follow the guidelines. She went on to say that people who have left New York may have been exposed and should self-quarantine in their new locations for 14 days.

Summary of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Dr. Anthony Fauci's remarks and questions:

1. Dr. Fauci said testing results help develop policy. We are now getting a lot more data to will help with this development.
2. Areas that are not hotspots still have a window to use to contain the virus.
3. New York is serious, and we are seeing people who want to leave New York. He repeated that those who go to another place should isolate themselves for their own safety and to not create another seeding point.
4. He spoke about drugs being used for off-label purposes. Randomized clinical trials are being done to determine if this usage is effective and safe.
5. With respect to the Easter goal, Dr. Fauci said the days are very flexible, and it will be on a day-by-day, week-by-week basis. No one will want to tone down action if we see things like New York City. There are areas of the country where we need to know more about the level of penetration. We may want flexibility in different areas, and need to know more about areas where there is not an obvious outbreak.

Summary of National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow's remarks and questions:

1. Mr. Kudlow said progress is being made on response legislation. It is urgently needed for cash infusion. It will help the nation get through difficulties right now and position us for an economic rebound later this year.
2. This will be the single largest main street assistance program in the history of the US. It will provide assistance with sick leave; a small business package including loan guarantees and a requirement for worker retention; provide direct deposit checks of \$3,000 for families of four; income tax and student loan interest deferrals with no penalties; and replenish the Treasury Exchange Stabilization Fund, with complete transparency.
3. The package will be a total of \$6 trillion, with \$2 trillion in direct assistance and \$4 trillion in lending power.
4. It will help recovery occur in a matter of weeks, not years.

Summary of the Vice President's remarks and questions:

1. The Vice President repeated the recommendation that Americans follow the Coronavirus guidelines to help reduce the incidence of the virus.
2. The Task Force, with FEMA, has been focused on the needs for testing and supplies.
3. He repeated that those who do not have symptoms should not get a test.
4. He said that county laboratories and hospitals should be reporting their testing and results to the CDC.
5. They are particularly focused on New York, which is the source of 60% of new cases. New York will be monitored and treated as a high risk area. He said 4,000 additional ventilators will be provided in the next 24 hours. Facilities are being built out and resources continue to be provided.
6. The Vice President repeated that 7.6 million N95 masks and 14 million surgical masks have been provided throughout the nation, with 73 pallets of supplies sent to New York and 36 pallets to Washington.
7. The Defense Production Act will be used if needed, but no company has refused to comply. He highlighted Apple donating 9 million N95 masks.