

Daily Update on the Coronavirus Outbreak

December 22nd, 2020

INFORMS Members In The News

- [The year in food: Online delivery changed how we eat in 2020 \(USA Today\)](#)
INFORMS Member: Anna Nagurney
- [Millions head to the airport despite CDC recommendations \(KOLD 13\)](#)
INFORMS Member: Sheldon Jacobson
- [COVID-19 Vaccines Arrive As Pandemic Worsens In NC \(WFAE 90.7\)](#)
INFORMS Member: Julie Swann
- [The real reason people think Dippin' Dots can help with the COVID vaccine \(Mashed\)](#)
INFORMS Member: Julie Swann
- [Moderna COVID-19 vaccines arriving to Georgia \(11 Alive\)](#)
INFORMS Member: Julie Swann
- [N.C. State Expert Provides Insight into Coronavirus Vaccine \(Spectrum News 1\)](#)
INFORMS Member: Julie Swann
- [The Engineer Using Science to Build a Better World After Coronavirus \(VICE\)](#)
INFORMS Member: Pinar Keskinocak
- [UPS, Freight Companies Love Newest Version Of Boeing's Oldest Plane, The 747 8F \(Forbes\)](#)
INFORMS Member: Anna Nagurney

Federal Policy Update

- Last night, Congress passed a multitrillion-dollar omnibus spending package, which included the highly-anticipated coronavirus relief package. The House voted in two separate votes, with the segment including the COVID-19 relief measures passing by a vote of [359-53](#). Shortly thereafter, the Senate passed the bill by a vote of [92-6](#). The legislation has now proceeded to President Trump's desk for his signature. The package provides:
 - Another \$284.45 billion to the Paycheck Protection Program, which will be extended through March 31st, 2021;
 - A supplemental \$300 weekly unemployment benefit through March 14th, 2021;
 - \$600 direct payments to be sent to taxpayers and children, with the payments starting to phase out at \$75,000 of modified gross income by a rate of \$5 per \$100 of additional income;
 - \$25 billion in rental assistance and an extension on the eviction moratorium;
 - \$20 billion for vaccine purchasing and an additional \$20 billion for COVID-19 testing;
 - An extension on the repayment period for deferred payroll taxes through December 31st, 2021; and more.

- White House Coronavirus Coordinator Deborah Birx announced that she would retire today, but emphasized that she would continue to serve as a resource for the Biden administration as needed.
- Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) stated today that he has spoken with President-elect Joe Biden about the need for further stimulus funding after he assumes office.
- National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci and Health & Human Services Secretary Alex Azar have both received the coronavirus vaccine.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officially accepted the recommendation from their Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices to place older adults and frontline essential workers next in line to be vaccinated.

State Update

- Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker (D) announced that the state would implement new restrictions on indoor capacity for businesses, as well as new limitations on indoor and outdoor gatherings.
- South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster (R) has tested positive for COVID-19.
- The state of Florida has begun vaccinating senior citizens who do not reside in nursing homes.
- New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio (D) announced that widespread vaccinations of the city's residents would likely not be completed until June.

Global Response

- New information has emerged on the variant strain of COVID-19 that has emerged in the United Kingdom, with scientists cautioning that the strain seems to be more infectious and also potentially more dangerous for children than previous strains.
- The European Union is recommending that the bloc's member states cancel their bans on travel to and from the United Kingdom. However, despite this recommendation, Germany has extended their travel ban until January 6th.
- The French government rescinded its United Kingdom travel ban, replacing it instead with the caveat that residents can travel to the UK as long as they provide a negative coronavirus test.
- Switzerland announced that their government has received the first 107,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine candidate, and confirmed that they would begin their official national rollout on January 4th.
- The Irish government announced that they would reinstate level 5 restrictions in the country, which will go into effect on December 24th. This would include a shutdown of all pubs and restaurants, mandated online learning, and limits on social gatherings.
- Nepal announced that they would ban all incoming travel from the United Kingdom.
- Morocco is imposing new restrictions on residents, beginning December 23rd. The restrictions, which include a nightly curfew, will remain in place for the next three weeks.

- The Malaysian government has signed a deal with pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca to procure 6.4 million doses of their coronavirus vaccine candidate.
- The Indian state of Maharashtra announced that they would be imposing a nightly curfew from December 22nd to January 5th.
- The South Korean government announced that they would tighten social distancing measures during a “special quarantine period,” effective from December 24th to January 3rd. This will include a ban on private gatherings of five or more.
- The capital city of Bangkok, Thailand will close all their schools for two weeks, beginning December 21st.

Economic Update

- U.S. stocks were volatile today, with the three indices closing with mixed results. The Nasdaq Composite rose by 0.51%, while the S&P 500 fell by 0.21% and the Dow Jones Industrial Average by 0.67 %.

Latest Impact Data

- In the United States: Over 18,632,305 cases and 330,066 deaths in 50 states, 4 territories, and Washington, D.C.
- Worldwide: Over 78,282,677 cases and 1,721,888 deaths in at least 204 countries and territories.

In the News

- [Trump signs stopgap funding bill; Congress awaits his approval of \\$892 billion COVID aid \(Reuters\)](#)
- [Pfizer Nears Covid-19 Vaccine Deal With U.S. to Supply More Doses \(The Wall Street Journal\)](#)
- [Questions and answers about the second round of stimulus payments \(The Hill\)](#)
- [CDC warns that travel could spread British Covid-19 strain in U.S. \(Politico\)](#)