

California is monitoring at least 8,400 for signs of coronavirus as 33 test positive for COVID-19 in the state including a patient with 'unknown origin' who 'took FOUR DAYS' to be screened for the disease as 'they didn't fit the criteria' for infection

- California Gov Gavin Newsom said Thursday officials are monitoring 8,400 people for coronavirus symptoms
- All of the individuals have recently returned to California after their traveling on domestic commercial flights
- Health officials confirmed the first case of coronavirus where origin of disease is unknown in California
- CDC said patient hadn't traveled from foreign country and wasn't in contact with another confirmed case
- Patient is being treated at UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento; origin of patient's infection is not known
- Email from hospital officials said CDC took four days to test patient, despite requests from hospital staff
- Some hospital staffers were also asked to go home, isolate themselves and monitor their temperatures
- President Donald Trump insisted in a press conference on Wednesday that the risk to Americans is 'low'
- The president announced Vice-President Mike Pence will be in charge of the nation's response to the disease
- On Thursday, Pence convened first meeting of Coronavirus Task Force after Trump made him point-person
- There are 60 coronavirus cases in the US, including 42 passengers who were on Diamond Princess cruise ship
- Stocks on Wall Street dropped for the sixth day in a row after a press conference by Trump on Wednesday failed to calm fears amid concerns of a massive coronavirus outbreak
- Pope Francis canceled Thursday morning Mass at St John Lateran basilica Mass in Rome due to illness just a day after he kissed heads and touched faces and said he had solidarity with those suffering from coronavirus

By [VALERIE EDWARDS FOR DAILYMAIL.COM](#) and [ASSOCIATED PRESS](#)
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California health officials are monitoring 8,400 people for coronavirus symptoms after their arrival on domestic commercial flights, Governor Gavin Newsom said on Thursday.

The state currently has only about 200 test kits, an 'inadequate' number, but has been in 'constant contact with federal agencies' that have promised to send a fresh supply of kits in coming days, he said at a news briefing in Sacramento.

California officials said 33 people had tested positive for the virus there, but five had since left the state.

On Wednesday, California reported the first known case of the virus in the United States of unknown origin.

The patient had not recently traveled to an area with a reported outbreak, and was not exposed to another known infected person.

Dr Sonia Angell, California's state public health officer, said local, state and federal health investigators were contacting and isolating individuals who may have been exposed to the patient in what could be the first US case of local 'community spread'.

On Thursday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revised its criteria for who should be tested for the coronavirus and is shipping more test kits out to states including California, the agency's director told lawmakers.

'When a clinician or a public health individual suspects coronavirus, then we should be able to get a test for coronavirus so that's the current guidance that went out today,' CDC Director Robert Redfield said at a House of Representatives hearing on the government response to the fast-spreading virus.

The news comes shortly after it was revealed that the CDC took several days to test the woman, who is a resident of Solano County, which is about 35 miles outside of Sacramento. She was admitted into UC Davis Medical Center on February 19.

Scroll down for video



California health officials are monitoring 8,400 people for coronavirus symptoms after their arrival on domestic commercial flights, Governor Gavin Newsom (right) said on Thursday

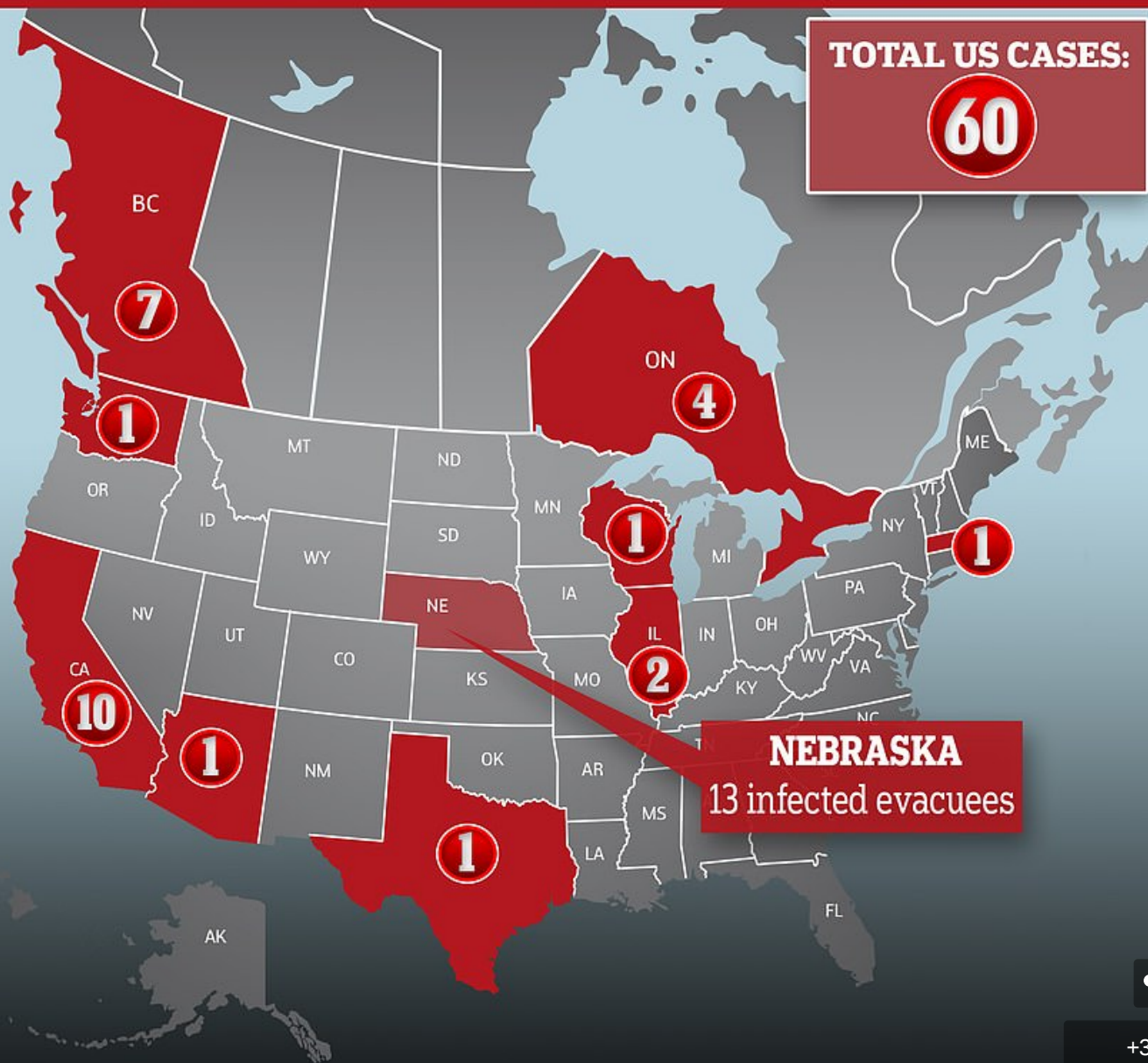


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The state currently has only about 200 test kits, an 'inadequate' number, but has been in 'constant contact with federal agencies' that have promised to send a fresh supply of kits in coming days, Newsom said at a news briefing in Sacramento. This image shows medical staff treating patients infected by the coronavirus in Wuhan, China, on Monday

CORONAVIRUS IN THE US AND CANADA



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Coronavirus cases in the US have now risen to 60, including 42 passengers who were aboard the Diamond Princess cruise ship, three people repatriated from China and 15 on US soil

An email from medical center officials to employees revealed that the CDC took four days to test the patient for the deadly disease despite requests from staff at the center.

The leaked memo also suggested medical center staff may have been unnecessarily put at risk after dozens were told to go into isolation and watch for symptoms.

According to the email, the CDC didn't test the patient, who has not been identified, for coronavirus until February 23.

It has also been revealed that experts like Dr Adrian Hyzler, the chief medical officer for Healix International, believe the virus could spread in the US overnight like it did in Italy.

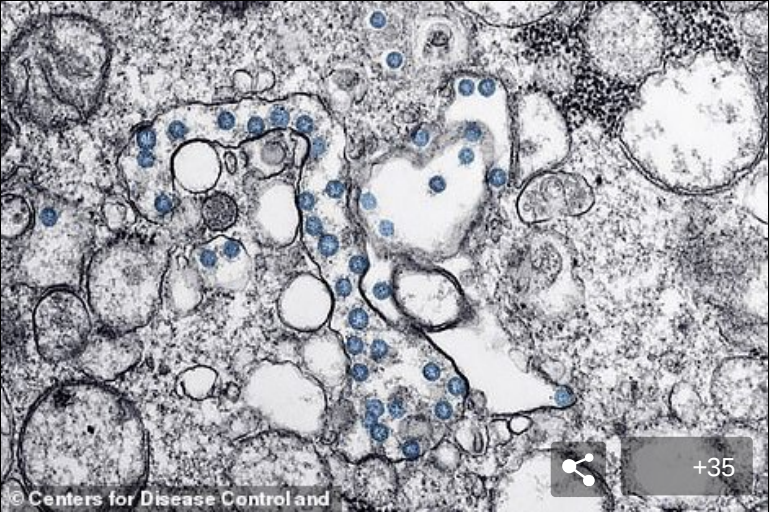
'It spreads very rapidly because of the ease with which you can pass on this virus through respiratory droplets and surface spread,' Hyzler told The Daily Beast.

There is every possibility that this could happen in the US,' Hyzler said, referring to the outbreaks in Iran and Italy.

Hyzler then pointed to a place like New York City where the coronavirus 'would spread very rapidly on a crowded subway or metro system'.

Hyzler told the [Daily Beast](#) that quarantines could help, but 'if community transmission had already occurred in a city like NYC, then a citywide shutdown would be almost impossible to organize, and it would be much less effective'.

According to the internal memo from UC Davis Medical Center obtained by [CBS13](#), the patient was transferred from the NorthBay VacaValley Hospital on February 19 and was already intubated and on a ventilator.



The news comes after it was reported that the CDC took four days to test a woman for coronavirus. The test results came back positive on Wednesday. This illustration shows a transmission electron microscopic image of an isolate from the first US case of COVID-19



The patient, who is a resident of Solano County, is being treated at UC Davis Medical Center (pictured) in Sacramento



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The leaked memo also suggested medical center staff may have been unnecessarily put at risk after dozens were told to go into isolation and watch for symptoms. This image shows a man wearing a mask and gloves in San Francisco on Thursday

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- In Washington state, school administrators closed Bothell High School on Thursday over coronavirus fears
- San Francisco's mayor declared emergency to make it easier for city to combat possible cases of coronavirus
- New York monitoring 83 people in self-quarantine for coronavirus symptoms after possible exposure to virus
- People are selling respirator masks on Ebay from \$40 to \$1,000 for brands that are usually only a few dollars
- Airlines that have evacuated people from Wuhan, China, have stepped up their aircraft-cleaning efforts
- The airlines are using Viraclean, a hospital-grade disinfectant that can kill herpes simplex and Hepatitis B

• **Around 14 per cent of coronavirus patients tested positive a second time in one Chinese region, officials said**

However, despite requests from medical center officials for the CDC to test the unknown individual, the patient was only tested for coronavirus on Sunday - four days after they were admitted to the hospital - because 'the patient did not fit the existing CDC criteria for COVID-19', the email said.

The email from the David Lubarsky, vice-chancellor of human health services, and Brad Simmons, interim CEO of UC Davis Medical Center, to the center employees confirmed that the test had come back positive Wednesday.

'Upon admission, our team asked public health officials if this case could be COVID-19. We requested COVID-19 testing by the CDC, since neither Sacramento County nor (the California Department of Public Health) is doing testing for coronavirus at this time. Since the patient did not fit the existing CDC criteria for COVID-19, a test was not immediately administered,' said the email, which added that, 'UC Davis Health does not control the testing process'.

The hospital has been treating one other confirmed case of coronavirus, though the other patient contracted the disease through travel after returning to the US from China on February 2.

'This is not the first COVID-19 patient we have treated, and because of the precautions we have had in place since this patient's arrival, we believe there has been minimal potential for exposure here at UC Davis Medical Center,' the email said.

However, the email said some staff members had been warned to go into isolation and to stay vigilant to any developing symptoms.

'A small number of medical center employees have been asked to stay home and monitor their temperatures,' the email said.

The CDC confirmed that the person had not recently returned from a foreign country, and had not been in contact with another confirmed case.

The news suggests that fears of the disease spreading locally in the US could now be a reality - while President Donald Trump continued to tell the public that the risk to Americans is 'low'.

Trump announced in a press conference Wednesday night that the US was 'very ready' to tackle the disease as he also handed Vice-President Mike Pence the task of leading the nation's response to the disease.

The US has taken extreme precautions to ensure that anyone traveling back from China has been quarantined in order to limit the spread of the disease.

News of the first case where a patient has no known connection to travel abroad or to another known case has raised concerns over how the disease could spread across America.

A statement from CDC confirmed the first possible instance of 'community spread' in the US Wednesday evening.

Florida governor and surgeon general REFUSE to confirm whether any suspected coronavirus cases have been tested in the state

Officials in **Florida** have raised concerns about transparency after refusing to confirm whether any suspected cases of **coronavirus** have been tested for the disease in the state.

'There is still no known cases of coronavirus in the state of Florida,' Governor Ron DeSantis said at a press conference in Tallahassee on Thursday morning.

'Obviously, if there is — and hopefully we don't have — any identified cases, it is something we would notify the public about,' DeSantis added.

However, Florida Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees declined to say whether anyone in the state had been suspected of infection with coronavirus but tested negative for the disease.

Rivkees and DeSantis cited state laws and privacy concerns for withholding any statistical information.

State Democrats, who hold a minority in both houses of Florida's legislature, blasted the Republican governor for failing to provide more information.

'At this time, the patient's exposure is unknown. It's possible this could be an instance of community spread of COVID-19, which would be the first time this has happened in the United States. Community spread means spread of an illness for which the source of infection is unknown,' the statement said.

The CDC did not rule out that the patient may have been in contact with an infected individual who is yet to be diagnosed or linked to the individual.

'It's also possible, however, that the patient may have been exposed to a returned traveler who was infected,' the statement said.

'This case was detected through the US public health system — picked up by astute clinicians. This brings the total number of COVID-19 cases in the United States to 15.'

Officials said they will be tracing the infected individual's contacts to see how they may have been infected and if any other individuals may be at risk.

A chief doctor at the medical center refuted Trump's claims that the US is 'ready' for an outbreak and sent a stark warning that the local Californian community is not prepared.

'We don't have that much data, so we don't really know how many symptomatic, or asymptomatic patients there are in the community right now. The testing is very limited. We would like to have more widespread testing so we know where this virus is — who's sick and who is at risk,' Dr Dean Blumberg, the Chief of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at the UC Davis Children's Hospital, told [CBS Sacramento](#).

Blumberg said that if community transmission is confirmed, there could be many more cases out there.

'We only have this one confirmed case of community transmission, but it suggests that we don't know where they got it from, so the person who exposed them, so there's probably other cases in the community that we don't know about,' Blumberg said.

The UC Davis Medical Center has not responded to a request for comment from DailyMail.com.

On Thursday, Vice President Mike Pence convened his first meeting of the Coronavirus Task Force one day after President Donald Trump made him the government's point-person for the epidemic.



Florida Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees (center) declined to say whether anyone in the state had been suspected of infection with coronavirus but tested negative for the disease

'To be clear, we are all confident in Florida's public health infrastructure and professionals in preparing and protecting us from coronavirus,' said Democratic state Senator Jose Javier Rodriguez in a statement.

'What we need is better management of public information,' he added.

U.S. Rep. Stephanie Murphy, who represents the Orlando area, also called for more transparency.

'I was disappointed that at today's briefing, state officials failed to be forthcoming with the public about suspected cases in Florida,' she said in a statement to [WJXT-TV](#).

'As a top tourist destination and home to many vulnerable seniors, Florida is uniquely at risk from the threat of this illness,' she said.





On Thursday, Vice President Mike Pence convened his first meeting of the Coronavirus Task Force one day after President Donald Trump made him the government's point-person for the epidemic



Pence named a seasoned medical professional as his chief adviser on the response. Pence explained on Thursday that he's 'leading the task force', while noting Alex Azar (left), the Health and Human Services Secretary, would still hold the title of chairman

He named a seasoned medical professional as his chief adviser on the response and said Trump had 'tasked us to take every step necessary to protect the health of the American people'.

It came amid confusion over who was leading the inter-agency coordinating process to confront the virus.

Pence brought in Debbie Birx, the administration's global AIDS coordinator and a medical doctor, to serve as his chief adviser for responding to the virus outbreak.

He also added Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Larry Kudlow, the director of the National Economic Council, to the task force, a recognition that the virus was quickly becoming an economic, not just a public health, threat.

The White House and Pence's team moved Thursday to control the flow of information from federal agencies about the virus response, ordering that public communications be cleared by their offices.

A person familiar with the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the internal guidance, said the decision was made to ensure the whole-of-government response was on message.

Pence explained on Thursday that he's 'leading the task force', while noting Alex Azar, the Health and Human Services Secretary, would still hold the title of chairman.

Until now, acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney had the role of coordinating the response across the government outside of the health care agencies.

Facing questions about the new organizational chart from lawmakers Thursday, Azar said Pence would now fill that role.

Administration aides insisted there was no daylight between the two men, noting that Pence had scheduled the first meeting to be held at HHS, rather than at the White House.

Fears of coronavirus exposure forces officials in a Washington state town to close a high school

Meanwhile, school administrations in Washington state have been taking precautions of their own.

In a letter to families, officials announced that Bothell High School would be closed on Thursday.

According to Michelle Reid, the superintended of the Northshore School District, officials have gained more insight into 'the number of families in our community that traveled internationally during our time off'.

Reid said a Bothell High School staff member returned to work on Monday after a week of international travel.

'They reported that a family member who was traveling with them became sick on Tuesday, and was taken to the hospital, and is currently being treated, monitored and quarantined. The staff member is also quarantined at home for 14 days.

'At this time, there is no confirmation that the family member's illness is connected to the coronavirus outbreak, but out of an abundance of caution, the family member is being testedm,' Reid wrote.





White House keeps government health experts from speaking about coronavirus

The White House sought Thursday to gain control over an undisciplined communication response to the coronavirus – requiring even top government health experts to run all media appearances through Vice President Mike Pence's office.

The move comes hours after Trump put Pence in charge of the nation's coronavirus response, drawing immediate attacks from Democrats who scrutinized his record dealing with the spread of AIDS in his home state of Indiana.

Government scientists and health experts must now clear all media appearances in advance with Pence's office, the [New York Times](#) reported.

Even NIH virus expert Anthony Fauci, a staple on TV who has spoken about the challenges of the outbreak and precautions people can take, must get permission to appear. He told associates about the White House directive, according to the report.





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Meanwhile, school administrations in Washington state have been taking precautions of their own. In a letter to families, officials announced that Bothell High School (pictured) would be closed on Thursday



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A school janitor walks toward the front of closed Bothell High School on Thursday in Bothell, Washington

The Department of Health issued a letter that indicated that the risk to students at the high school was minimal and that they didn't believe the situation warranted closing the school.

However, Reid said she wasn't taking any chances and closed the school 'out of an abundance of caution'.

Support services staff have been taking initial steps to disinfect the areas where the staff member traveled on the campus.

Officials are also in the process of contacting the families of students and staff or visitors that the staff member came into contact with on Monday.

Coronavirus cases in the US have now risen to 60 with the addition of this case together with two more Diamond Princess cruise evacuees confirmed on Wednesday.

That figure includes 42 passengers who were aboard the Diamond Princess cruise ship, three people repatriated from China and 15 on US soil.

If community spread is confirmed in this case, this will spark major concerns across the US.

To date, the 59 other cases of the infection have been among people who traveled to Asia or were in close contact with people who had traveled there.

The US's first case that can't be traced to the virus's original source of origin follows hot on the heels of a similarly worrying statement from German officials Wednesday.

Germany's health minister, Jens Spahn, said new cases confirmed in Germany were 'partially no longer trackable' to the virus's original source in China or to hotspots.

New York City ramps up preparations for a potential coronavirus outbreak as 83 people remain in quarantine on Long Island

The US has taken measures to quarantine anyone thought to be carrying the disease, including 83 individuals currently in quarantine in Nassau County, New York.

New York City has been ramping up preparations for a potential coronavirus outbreak.

Mayor Bill De Blasio announced at a news conference Wednesday that the city had prepared at least 1,200 hospital beds ready for if or when the disease strikes.



New York City hasn't reported any patients under investigation, but in Chinatown people are already wearing protective masks (pictured). Nearby Nassau county has 83 residents in self-isolation

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Parrot looks embarrassed as owner catches him sharpening its beak



Indiana mother films herself slapping her 10-month-old baby



The city has also distributed 1.5 million face masks to residents and has requested 300,000 more.

De Blasio said he is also requesting the CDC expand its testing of travelers entering the US beyond China, to include Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand.

'Right now, it is too narrowly focused on travelers coming out of China,' he said.

'We think that needs to be expanded to any traveler coming from a country that's seen a major surge in cases.'

De Blasio said the city is ready to handle a possible spread of the disease.

The plans come as around 700 people have been voluntarily quarantined in New York since February 3 after they returned to the city from parts of China where the disease is widespread.

New York State Health Department officials said that none of the people quarantined were showing symptoms of the disease but they had voluntarily checked into a 14-day self-isolation.

De Blasio said the self-quarantine protocol was working in the city. No active cases of the virus have yet been confirmed in New York City.

San Francisco and other California counties declare state of emergencies in preparation for a possible coronavirus outbreak

Several counties in the San Francisco Bay Area declared local emergencies Wednesday in response to the outbreak.

San Francisco Mayor London Breed declared a local emergency to make it easier for the city to combat possible cases of coronavirus.

'This declaration of emergency is all about preparedness,' Breed said at a news conference on Wednesday.



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Several counties in the San Francisco Bay Area declared local emergencies Wednesday in response to the outbreak. Passengers wear masks while they wait for the flights at the LAX airport



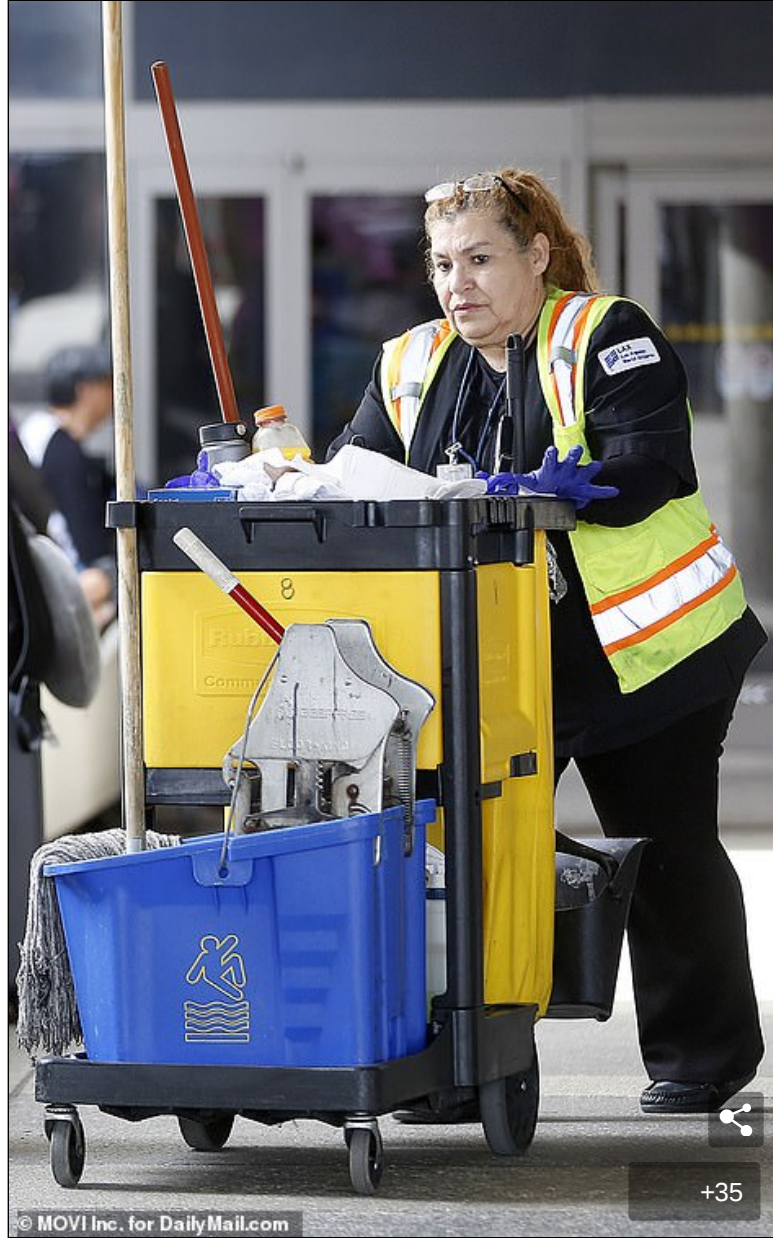
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Flight attendants are seen at the Los Angeles International Airport wearing masks on Thursday



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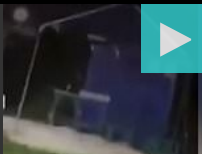
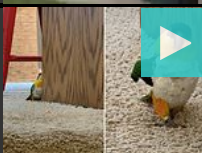
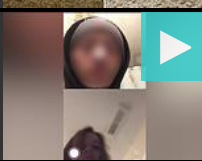


Passengers (left) were seen wearing masks throughout the Los Angeles International Airport on Thursday as airport employees worked to keep areas sanitized (right)



The Los Angeles International Airport looked eerily quiet on Thursday as employees and passengers alike continue to take precautionary measures against the spread of the coronavirus

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San Francisco and Orange County declared states of emergency, while Orange County also backed a bid filed by the city of Costa Mesa to block coronavirus patients from being housed in their cities.

The move will, among other things, help the city get reimbursed by state and federal governments for money it spends on preparedness, Mayor London Breed said at a news conference

Similar declarations occurred in California's Santa Clara and San Diego counties.

Breed's declaration is in effect for the next seven days. A board of supervisors will vote on its continuation on March 3.

President Donald Trump insists that the risk of coronavirus spreading in Americans is 'low' but vows to spend 'whatever' it takes to beat the deadly virus

Before news of the unknown origin case broke, only two cases of human-to-human transmission of coronavirus had been confirmed in the US.

However, CDC officials had previously warned that it was no longer a matter of 'if' but 'when' the virus would be active in US communities.

Fears are ramping up around the globe, as the number of new confirmed cases outside China has outpaced those inside the country for the first time.

The shock news that the disease may be spreading through community transmission came as President Donald Trump continued to insist that the risk to Americans is 'low' and that the nation is 'very ready' to tackle cases.

Trump announced Vice-President Mike Pence will be in charge of the nation's response to the disease at a White House press conference Wednesday night.

He also declared the US would spend 'whatever' it takes to beat coronavirus.



The shock news that the disease may be spreading through community transmission came as President Donald Trump continued to insist that the risk to Americans is 'low' and that the nation is 'very ready' to tackle cases

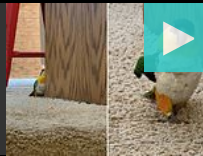
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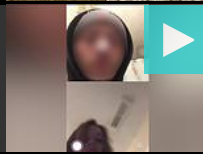
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'We're very, very ready for this, for anything,' the president said.

'Every aspect of our society should be prepared. I think schools should get ready - just in case,' he added later.

The president also revealed one of the 15 Americans diagnosed with coronavirus in the US is 'pretty sick' and being treated in a hospital.

It was unclear if Trump knew about the 'unknown origin' case before the conference.

But Trump said the risk to Americans' health remained 'low,' and that the number of people diagnosed with the virus was small. Trump said Pence would report to him. Pence has no medical training; Trump praised his running of healthcare in Indiana when he was governor.

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The vice president said extra personnel would be brought in to the White House for 'this whole of government response' to the mounting worldwide health crisis.

The president boasted that he had made 'early decisions' which had kept the level of coronavirus down in the US - but said that he would make sure government health workers have the resources they need.

'They can do whatever they want,' Trump said at the press briefing surrounded by top officials including Alex Azar, his Health and Human Services Secretary - who had denied he was being replaced by a czar just hours earlier.

'If Congress want to give us the money, we'll take the money.'

At the podium, Trump defended his administration's response to the coronavirus thus far, including shutting out non-citizens from China, where the first outbreak was reported.

'Decisions that were ridiculed from the very beginning,' the president said.

'A lot of people thought we shouldn't have done it that early, but we did and it turned out to be a very good thing.'

Asked directly about closing the borders to people from areas with worse infections he said: 'At the right time we

US markets drop 10% from peak and enter correction territory in worst week since Great Recession

Stocks are falling sharply on Wall Street as countries take increasingly drastic measures to contain the coronavirus outbreak and more big-name companies warn that they'll be affected.

In midday trading on Thursday, the S&P 500 index was 10 percent below the record high it set last week and was

may do that, right now it's not the right time.

'But at the right time, and we are checking people as they come through, specifically for the problem, the problem that we're dealing with.

'So we're checking a lot of people coming from South Korea, that's been hit pretty hard, Italy's been hit pretty hard. China, it's obvious what's happening in China, but again the numbers seem to be leveling off and going down in China which is very good news.'

He was also asked if he was prepared to quarantine entire cities - as has happened in Italy and China already - and replied: 'We do have plans on a much larger scale, should we need that.

'We don't think we're going to need it, but you always have to be prepared.'

Trump marveled at the number of people killed annually by the flu, explaining that in the US it numbered between 25,000 and 69,000 a year.

'That was shocking to me,' Trump said.

The president said just 15 people in the US have thus far had coronavirus, with eight returning home, one in the hospital and five fully recovered.

Trump also pulled out a piece of paper that he said listed the best prepared countries to deal with an epidemic, a product of research from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

'John Hopkins, I guess, is greatly respected,' Trump said. 'We're rated No. 1 for being prepared.'

Trump also noted how the US brought in 40 people - American citizens - from a Japanese cruise ship where they had been diagnosed with the virus.

'We thought we had an obligation to do that,' he said. 'We found that it was an obligation that we have, we could have left them and it would have been really bad.'

The White House had asked for \$2.5 billion in extra funding for the CDC, but had come under pressure to increase that spending by both Republicans and Democrats.

The press conference was an apparent attempt to calm fears over the virus, which has seen stock markets plunge and Democrats and Republicans both criticizing the official response.

Trump instead suggested that the Democratic 2020 field was largely responsible for the 2,000 point drop in the Dow Jones since Monday morning. He went on to make

headed for its worst week since October 2008.

If the S&P closes that low it would mark what market watchers call a 'correction,' a normal phenomenon that analysts have said was long overdue in this bull market, which is the longest in history.

The Dow and Nasdaq were also trading down 10 percent from recent peaks on Thursday.



Trader Peter Tuchman works on the floor of the New York Stock on Exchange Thursday

At their heart, stock prices rise and fall with the profits that companies expect to make. Now the virus outbreak is causing Wall Street's expectations for profit growth to diminish.

Apple and Microsoft, two of the world's biggest companies, have already said their sales this quarter will feel the economic effects of the virus.

Budweiser maker InBev also warned investors that its first-quarter profits would be down because of a sharp decline sales in China.

American Airlines shares fell 5.2 per cent as airlines continue to feel pain from disrupted travel plans and suspended routes.

Goldman Sachs on Thursday said earnings for companies in the S&P 500 index might not grow at all this year, after predicting earlier that they would grow 5.5 per cent.



A five-day view of the Dow Jones Industrial Average shows the cumulative declines this week

reference to his well-known reputation for germaphobia, and provided safety tips for Americans to follow.



'I do it a lot anyway as you probably heard,' he said.

He gave guidance consistent with what public health officials have recommended: taking prudent steps to avoid viral transmissions, as with flu and seasonal colds.

'Wash your hands. Stay clean. You don't necessarily have to grab every hand rail unless you have to. You know, certain things that you do when you have the flu,' he advised.



Trump also pulled out a piece of paper (pictured) that he said listed the best prepared countries to deal with an epidemic, a product of research from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore



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A photograph of Hon. Alex Azar, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a dark suit and tie, speaking at a hearing. A nameplate in front of him reads "Hon. Alex Azar". A large teal play button icon is overlaid on the right side of the image.

'I said, "Are you well?" He says no. He said, I have the worst fever and the worst flu. And he's hugging and kissing me. ... I went back and started washing my hands. So you have to do that,' Trump said.

House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, who visited Chinatown in New York City on Monday, dismissed Trump Wednesday, saying: 'I don't think the president knows what he's talking about - once again.'

When asked about the criticism made by Pelosi, he slapped back by calling the California Democrat 'incompetent.'

Trump also suggested under Pelosi, Democrats would lose the House again - and he said impeachment 'lifted my poll numbers up by 10 points.'


'She's trying to create a panic,' Trump said. 'And there's no reason to create a panic because we have done so good.'




House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi (center, on Monday), who visited Chinatown in New York City on Monday, dismissed Trump Wednesday, saying: 'I don't think the president knows what he's talking about - once again'

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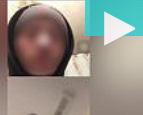


Shocking moments before the murder of a transgender Puerto Rican woman



Parrot looks embarrassed as owner catches him sharpening its beak





Azar was on stage to see Pence made czar - hours after he denied claims that he was about to be replaced by an epidemic czar in the project to oversee the US's handling of the coronavirus outbreak.

He claimed after Trump spoke that he was still in charge. 'I'm still chairman of the task force,' he said.

'Having the vice president gives me the biggest stick one can have in the government, on this whole-of government approach. Not in the least.

'When this was mentioned to me I was delighted I get to have the vice president helping ... delighted, absolutely.'

Also on stage was the director of the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Disease (NIAD) Dr Anthony Fauci, who reiterated the news that trials are set to begin for a vaccine for coronavirus, a record-setting three months after the virus was sequenced.

He added that the vaccine won't be ready for a year to a year-and-a-half.

At that point, it will make little impact on the current outbreak but, in the likely event that the virus is here to stay in coming years, Fauci expects a vaccine will be ready.

During the presser, Bernie Sanders, currently the Democratic frontrunner, sent out a statement blasting Azar for not guaranteeing during Congressional testimony earlier Wednesday that a coronavirus vaccine would be affordable to all.

'Under the Trump doctrine, if you are wealthy you can buy a vaccine and not succumb to the sickness. If you are poor or working class, you may have to get sick or even die,' Sanders said.

'That is an outrage. That is unacceptable. We need a vaccine that is available to all, not just those who can afford it.'

Sellers are listing respirator masks for nearly \$10,000 on eBay amid coronavirus outbreak

Several people are trying to capitalize off of the spread of the coronavirus by selling respirator masks for thousands of dollars on eBay.

One seller listed 80 boxes of the masks for \$9,999.99 while a 20-pack is listed for \$5,000.

Similar masks can be found online or in stores for less than \$5.



10 Cases 3M 8210 N95 Particulate Respirator Face Masks 80 Boxes / 1600 Masks

Brand New

★★★★★ 46 product ratings

\$9,999.99

or Best Offer

Free Shipping

♥ Watch

129 new & refurbished from \$4.00



NEW LISTING 20 Pck 3M 8210 Plus N95 Respirator Mask

Brand New

★★★★★ 89 product ratings

\$5,000.00

6d 7h left (Wed, 06:44 PM)

0 bids

or Best Offer

+\$8.25 shipping

♥ Watch

46 new & refurbished from \$20.00



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Several people are trying to capitalize off of the spread of the coronavirus by selling respirator masks for thousands of dollars on eBay (listings pictured)

Amazon has already warned sellers about selling masks that are 'not in compliance' with its pricing policies

According to Amazon's 'Fair Pricing Policy', sellers are required to set fair prices for its products that are not 'significantly higher than recent prices offered on or off Amazon'.

It's unclear if eBay will be taking this same approach and a DailyMail.com request for comment was not immediately returned.

Facebook has canceled its annual conference for developers due to coronavirus

Facebook says it is canceling F8, its annual conference for developers.

The show had been scheduled to take place May 5-6 in San Jose, California.

On Thursday, the company said it is planning other ways for its developer community to get together, including live streams, locally hosted events and videos.

More than 5,000 people from around the world attended last year's F8. Facebook said it will donate \$500,000 to organizations serving residents of San Jose.

CDC confirms positive test results for six additional Diamond Princess cruise ship evacuees

The White House briefing came as the CDC confirmed the positive test results of an additional six cruise evacuees on Wednesday, including four that had already been announced by local health departments.

At least five of the new patients were evacuated from the Diamond Princess cruise ship last week.

They were then transported to three different quarantine sites: military bases in California and Texas and the National Quarantine Unit in Nebraska.

'Now is the time for US businesses, hospitals and communities to begin preparing for the possible spread of COVID-19,' CDC officials posted on Twitter Tuesday afternoon.

Officials said more coronavirus cases are 'likely to be identified in the coming days, including more cases in the United States' and that 'person-to-person spread will likely continue to occur, including in the United States'.

The CDC's point person on the coronavirus outbreak, Deputy Director for Infectious Diseases Dr Nancy Messonnier had advised parents to talk to their kids' schools about 'teleschooling' in the event of quarantines or class cancellations amid an outbreak.

'I told my children that they are not at risk now, but we as a family need to prepare for significant disruption in our lives,' Dr Messonnier told reporters in a Tuesday press briefing.

In a bizarre twist, she is the sister of Rod Rosenstein, the former attorney general who oversaw the Robert Mueller special counsel investigation and who was a repeated target for Trump's ire.

MSC Meraviglia cruise ship passengers face health checks to see if they can come ashore in Mexico after boat was blocked from Jamaica and the Cayman Islands over coronavirus fears

The cruise ship MSC Meraviglia, which is carrying 4,500 passengers and 1,600 crew from Miami, was turned away by two nations due to fears of a virus outbreak.

It has since docked at Mexico's Caribbean island of Cozumel on Thursday and President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said passengers will be allowed to disembark.

López Obrador said Mexico had to act with 'humanity' after the ship was refused entry at ports in Grand Cayman and Jamaica.



The cruise ship MSC Meraviglia (left), which is carrying 4,500 passengers and 1,600 crew from Miami, was turned away by two nations due to fears of a virus outbreak



It has since docked at Mexico's Caribbean island of Cozumel on Thursday and President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said passengers (pictured on Thursday) will be allowed to disembark

The cruise line had expressed frustration with the rejections, which came after it reported one crew member from the Philippines was sick with common seasonal flu. It said no passengers had shown evidence of the Covid-19 virus.

'The ship is being allowed to dock and the passengers, those who are aboard the cruise ship can disembark,' López Obrador said, adding that health inspections will be carried out.

'We cannot act with discrimination,' he said. 'Imagine if a ship arrived and it wasn't even allowed to dock, and they were told, "Keep going on your way, see where you can dock." That is inhuman.'

He added: 'We cannot close our ports, nor can we close our airports'.

Despite the flu diagnosis, health authorities in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands decided not to allow people off the boat at Ocho Rios and George Town.

Airlines using herpes disinfectant to clean planes that have evacuated people from Wuhan

Several airlines are using some of the world's strongest disinfectant in a bid to clean planes that have helped with evacuations from Wuhan, China, the epicenter of the coronavirus.

Qantas Airways is using Viraclean, a disinfectant that kills a range of bacteria and viruses including Hepatitis B and herpes simplex.

Korean Air Lines is using MD-125, a diluted version of D-125, which is a cleaning solution that fights 142 bacteria and viruses, including salmonella, avian flu, HIV and measles.



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Several airlines are using some of the world's strongest disinfectant in a bid to clean planes that have helped with evacuations from Wuhan, China, the epicenter of the coronavirus. Qantas Airways (file image) is using Viraclean, a disinfectant that kills a range of bacteria and viruses including Hepatitis B and herpes simplex

World Health Organization warns coronavirus has 'pandemic potential'

The global death toll from coronavirus has reached more than 2,800, with the vast majority in mainland China. There are more than 82,000 confirmed cases of the disease.

Earlier this week, the chief of the World Health Organization stopped short of saying the coronavirus crisis was at pandemic levels despite a sudden spike in cases.

Dr Tedros Adhanom admitted in a press conference Monday that the surge of COVID-19 infections was 'deeply concerning' but said he would not declare it a pandemic - which is defined as the uncontrolled worldwide spread of a new disease.



© AFP via Getty Images



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The CDC gave a stark warning on Tuesday that US cities, communities and hospitals would need to ramp up preparations for the virus' spread as more cases were likely on their way. A nurse checks on a patient at a hospital in Wuhan, China, on Wednesday



© EPA

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL



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Dr Tedros Adhanom (pictured) admitted in a press conference Monday that the surge of COVID-19 infections was 'deeply concerning' but said he would not declare it a pandemic - which is defined as the uncontrolled worldwide spread of a new disease

MORE VIDEOS

Health official grilled in hearing over coronavirus preparations



Shocking moments before the murder of a transgender Puerto Rican woman



Parrot looks embarrassed as owner catches him sharpening its beak



Indiana mother films herself slapping her 10-month-old baby



He said: 'The sudden increase in new cases is certainly very concerning. There is lots of speculation about whether this outbreak has now become a pandemic.

'For the moment, we are not witnessing the uncontained global spread of this virus and we're not witnessing large scale disease or deaths.'

His comments at a press conference in Geneva came after the WHO admitted the killer outbreak will never be officially declared a pandemic.

Instead, the UN-body said the crisis has already been a public health emergency of international concern – the highest warning level – for a month.

But fears of a pandemic have been mounting, with a surge in cases outside of China and deaths declared in Iran and Italy while Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman all confirmed their first cases.

The body, headquartered in Geneva in Switzerland, argues a pathogen must spread easily between humans across the world before it is called a pandemic.

The WHO said the current crisis is a cluster of cases in 36 countries and territories, which can be traced back to Asia.

14 per cent of coronavirus patients tested positive for a second time in Guangdong Province

Around 14 per cent of coronavirus patients tested positive a second time in one Chinese region despite being given the all clear.

A health official in Guangdong Province told [The New York Times](#) the reinfected patients had been discharged from a hospital after testing negative for the virus but then fell ill again later.

It follows reports in Japan of a 40-year-old woman who tested positive for a second time on Wednesday.

Experts said the cases raised fears the virus could be a 'persistent' infection, meaning it can lie dormant in patients for years and suddenly flare up again, such as viruses that lead to herpes and chickenpox.



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Around 14 per cent of coronavirus patients tested positive a second time in one Chinese region despite being given the all clear. Nurses distribute meals to patients at a temporary hospital at Tazihu Gymnasium in Wuhan on February 21

Professor Mark Harris, a virology expert at the University of Leeds, said: 'Although coronaviruses generally cause short-term, self-limiting infections which are cleared, there is some evidence in the scientific literature for persistent infections of animal coronaviruses, mainly in bats.'

Scientists believe the virus may have originally spread to humans from wild animals, possibly bats, being sold as food in markets in Wuhan, the Chinese city at the epicentre of the outbreak.

Professor Harris added: 'The reports that patients who tested negative subsequently tested positive again is clearly of concern.'

'It is unlikely that they would have been reinfected having cleared the virus, as they would most likely have mounted an immune response to the virus that would prevent such reinfection.'

'The other possibility therefore is that they did not in fact clear the infection but remained persistently infected.'

It's not yet clear if the people who tested positive for a second time are contagious as 13 of those who were in close contact with more than 100 people after being discharged appear to have not passed it on, the health official said.

Patients in China must test negative twice and undergo a chest scan before they can be released.

Officials in Hong Kong say a dog has tested positive for the coronavirus

A pet dog has tested positive for coronavirus in Hong Kong, officials from Hong Kong's Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department said Thursday.

According to the agency, a referral was sent to them on February 26 from the Hong Kong Department of Health after the dog's owner tested positive.

The dog's test results were weaker in comparison to a human. The dog is being kept in quarantine for further testing.

In a statement, the agency said: 'The AFCD does not have evidence that pet animals can be infected with COVID-19 virus or can be a source of infection to people.'

Experts have revealed that the coronavirus has an HIV-like mutation that could be 1,000 times as strong as SARS

The deadly virus has the ability to bind with human cells, similar to the HIV mutation.

Scientists in China and Europe have found that coronavirus could be up to 1,000 times as strong as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus.

At first, the coronavirus outbreak spread slower than Ebola, SARS and swine flu. But, by Day 41 of their respective outbreaks, 243 were ill from Ebola, 182 were sickened by Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), 520 had come down with swine flu, and 3,600 were infected with SARS.

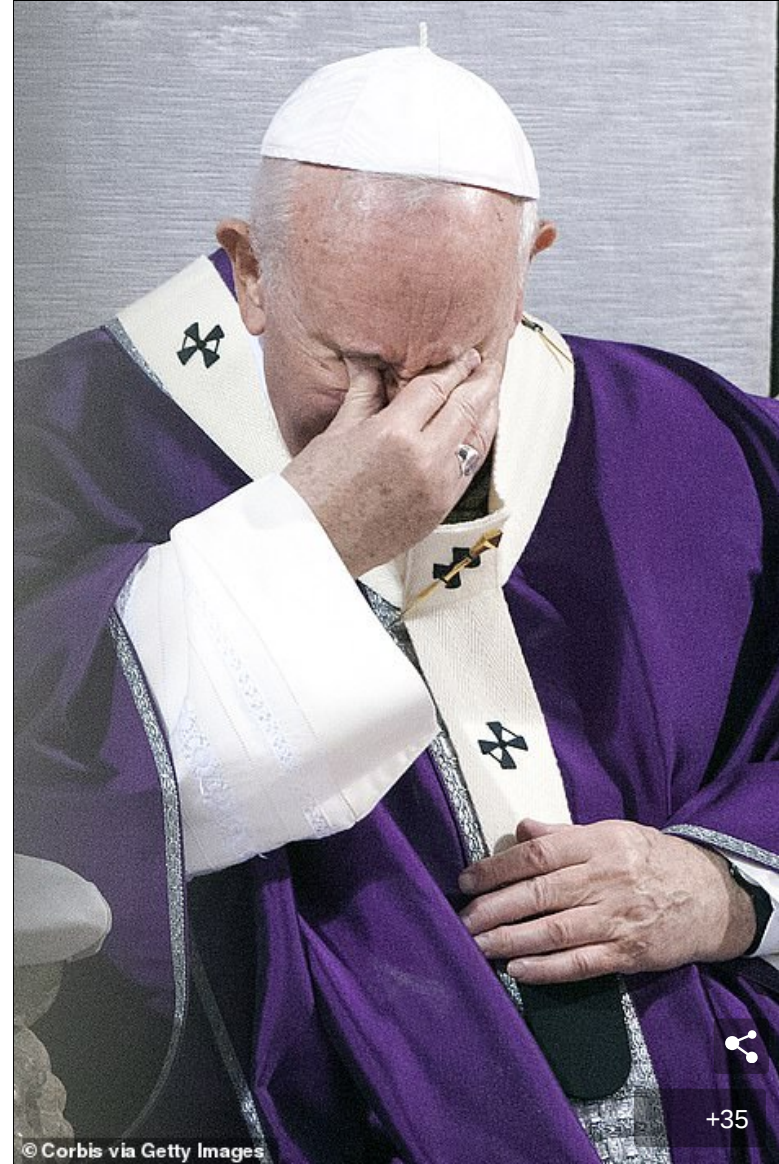
In comparison, on Day 41 of the coronavirus outbreak - February 12 - more than 41,700 people were infected worldwide.

Pope Francis cancels Mass in Rome due to 'slight illness' after he kissed heads and touched faces while meeting with crowds in St Peter's Square, saying he had solidarity with those suffering from coronavirus

The Vatican said the 83-year-old pontiff had a 'slight indisposition' that meant he did not attend an event at the St John Lateran basilica in Rome on Thursday morning.

A spokesman said Francis would continue with the rest of his day's business, but preferred to stay within the Vatican rather than travel across the city.

There was no word from the Vatican about the nature of his illness, but the pope was seen coughing and blowing his nose during the Ash Wednesday Mass.





Pope Francis has cancelled an event in Rome on Thursday morning due to a 'slight illness', a day after he was pictured coughing and blowing his nose during Ash Wednesday Mass



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His illness came just a day after he kissed heads and touched faces as he met with crowds in St Peter's Square, saying he had solidarity with those suffering from coronavirus. Rome had three cases, but all three were cured

It comes a day after he kissed heads and touched faces as he met with crowds in St Peter's Square, saying he had solidarity with those suffering from coronavirus.

Italy is currently in the grips of a coronavirus outbreak that has seen towns in the north placed on lockdown and travellers from the region spread the infection to previously unaffected areas of Europe.

Rome had three cases, but all three were cured.

Francis had been scheduled to go to the St John Lateran basilica to meet with Rome clergy and celebrate a penitential Mass at the start of Lent.

Francis is bishop of Rome, but delegates the day-to-day running of the archdiocese to a vicar.

The Argentine pope has generally enjoyed good health. He lost part of one lung as a young man because of a respiratory illness, and suffers from sciatica, which makes walking difficult.

Iranian vice president for Women and Family Affairs infected with 'mild' case of coronavirus

Masoumeh Ebtekar who was a spokeswoman for the 1979 hostage-takers during the US embassy crisis has been infected with coronavirus.

Ebtekar, regarded as the most powerful woman in Iranian politics, was said to have contracted the infection this week, according to local media.

She was seen sitting near President Hassan Rouhani during a meeting of Iranian cabinet members on Wednesday. Ebtekar's case was said to be mild and she has not been admitted to a hospital.

Her diagnosis comes as it emerged today that Iran's former ambassador to the Vatican, Hadi Khosroshahi, died of coronavirus.



Masoumeh Ebtekar (pictured in January 2019) who was a spokeswoman for the 1979 hostage-takers during the US embassy crisis has been infected with coronavirus

Ebtekar is currently the Iranian vice president for Women and Family Affairs.

The report of Ebtekar's diagnosis comes as other top officials in Iran's Shiite theocracy have caught the virus.

Earlier today the head of Iran's parliamentary security and foreign relations commission, Mojtaba Zonnour, announced he had also tested positive for the virus.

This week the country's Deputy Health Minister, Iraj Harirchi, plus two MPs said they had been infected and were under quarantine.