

## Economy's prognosis? Depends on whom you ask

Some experts insist it can be jolted back to life; others say there's no "on-off switch." **In Money**

## Idled athletes get flexible about staying in shape

With their seasons and training in question, MLB and NFL players improvise. **In Sports**



KATHY WILLENS/AP

## Lockdown or no lockdown, airlines are still flying

"Essential" service is still going on, at least for now and despite the empty planes, but many people are wondering why. **Nation's Health**

# USA TODAY

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### CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



China used security guards as well as civilians to control residential access in February. KEVIN FRAYER/GETTY IMAGES

## How China beat virus: Would it work here?

Kim Hjelmgaard, Eric J. Lyman and Deirdre Shesgreen  
USA TODAY

In late February as coronavirus infections mounted in Wuhan, China, authorities went door-to-door for health checks – forcibly isolating every resident in makeshift hospitals and temporary quarantine shelters, even separating parents from children who displayed symptoms of COVID-19, no matter how seemingly mild.

Caretakers at the city's ubiquitous large apartment buildings were pressed into service as ad hoc security guards, monitoring the temperatures of all residents, deciding who could come in and implementing inspections of delivered food and medicines.

Outside, drones hovered above streets, yelling at people to get inside and scolding them for not wearing face masks. Elsewhere in China, facial-recognition software, linked to a mandatory phone app that color-coded people based on their contagion risk, decided who could enter shopping malls, subways and other public spaces.

"We couldn't go outside under any circumstances. Not even if you have a pet," said Wang Jingjun, 27, a graduate student who returned to Wuhan from the Chinese coastal province of Guangdong in mid-January to live with her elderly mother and grandparents. "Those with dogs had to play with them inside and teach them to use the bathroom in a certain spot."

As the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic has moved to the USA, Chinese officials and public health experts

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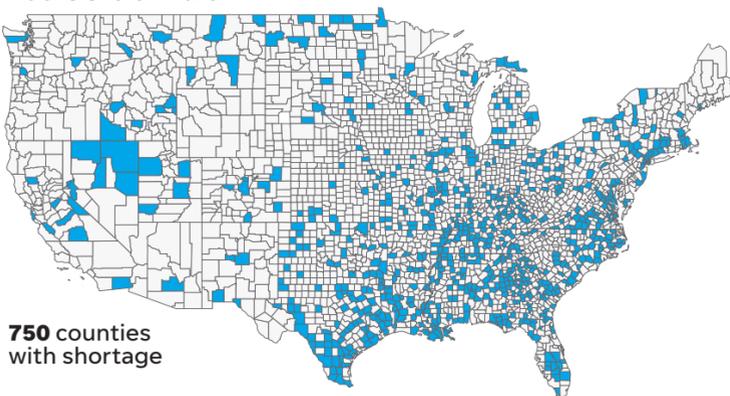
Thousands of health workers across the nation face layoffs and furloughs as demand for routine services dries up

## Caregivers on the sidelines

Potential family medicine office closures, cutbacks from COVID-19

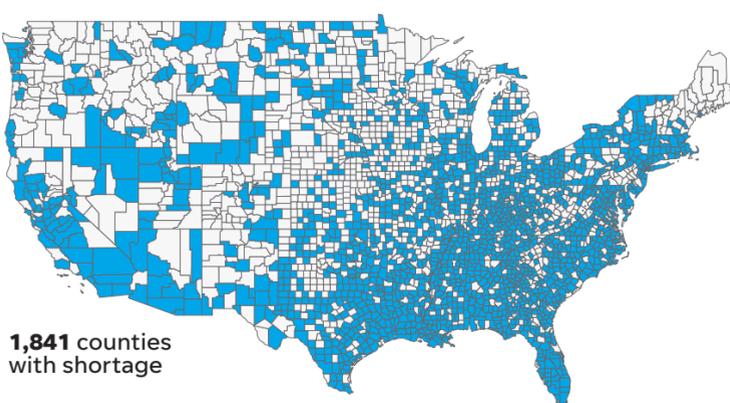
Counties with more than 3,500 people per family medicine provider, indicating a significant shortfall in health care providers

At the end of March



750 counties with shortage

At the end of June



1,841 counties with shortage

SOURCE Health Landscape/American Academy of Family Physicians  
JAVIER ZARRACINA/USA TODAY

### INSIDE

Joe Biden says it's "hard to envision" the Democratic convention going on as planned. **2A**

Navy scrambles to respond to an outbreak aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt. **3A**

COVID-19 deaths in the USA could peak by the middle of the month, a new model shows. **1D**



"I feel guilty not being at work," said Dotty Orr, 64, who lost her job as a receptionist for a primary care doctor in Akron, Ohio. SPECIAL TO THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Kim Norvell and Jayne O'Donnell  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Dotty Orr took time off from her job as a receptionist for a primary care physician in Akron, Ohio, to get her knee replaced March 4.

Thursday, she found out she's not going back.

Orr, 64, worked for Dr. Pennie Marchetti for eight years. Marchetti laid off Orr and a part-time nurse as patient visits dropped nearly 80% amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Marchetti said she hopes to bring her staff back when her workload picks back up, but no one knows when that will be.

"I feel guilty not being at work," said Orr, who faces an \$8,000 bill for her surgery.

Orr joins thousands of health care workers across the nation who have been laid off, furloughed or are working reduced hours as their services are deemed nonessential and patients skip routine visits during an outbreak of COVID-19 cases.

How many health care workers are included in the record 3.28 million Americans that filed for initial unemployment benefits last week is unknown. Specific data from the U.S. Department of Labor will be released when it reports its March unemployment numbers Friday.

The workers range from dentists and general surgeons to medical assistants and nurses, from allergists and dermatologists to primary care physicians and pediatricians.

By June, an estimated 60,000 family practices will close or significantly scale back, and 800,000 of their employees will be laid off, furloughed or have their hours reduced as they see a decline in business during the pandemic, according to a HealthLandscape and American Academy of Family Physicians report released Thursday.

That represents 43% of the nearly 1.9 million people employed at family medicine offices, including receptionists, medical assistants, nurses, physicians, billing staff and janitors.

The figure doesn't include reductions at hospitals and specialty clinics that also feel the pinch.

The situation is a Catch-22 of sorts. As hospitals and emergency rooms deal with a surge of patients who have

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### USA TODAY Snapshots

#### Who gets paid sick leave?

Access to this benefit last year varied, with many occupations now seen as "essential" amid the pandemic far less likely to get it.

96%	94%	90%
Teachers	Management, business and finance workers	Registered nurses
72%	68%	64%
Transportation workers	Production workers	Sales and related workers

SOURCE: Pew Research Center  
AMY BARNETTE, BILL CAMPLING/USA TODAY

### LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

#### Global infections near 1 million

Florida will order its 21.3 million residents to stay at home for 30 days beginning Friday, while Vice President Mike Pence said Wednesday it could be June before the U.S. has the coronavirus "largely behind us as a nation."

More than 4,600 Americans had died from the virus as of Wednesday evening, still only a fraction of the toll the U.S. could see this spring, according to federal forecasts. Known U.S. infections topped 209,000 Wednesday, and worldwide cases were approaching 1 million.

#### A new quarter, more losses

U.S. stocks tumbled on dampened outlooks and lingering uncertainty over how long shutdowns may last. The Dow Jones Industrial Average shed 973.65 points to close at 20,943.51; the S&P 500 sank 4.4% to finish at 2,470.50.

#### The invisible threat

A new study provided more evidence



The CDC is reviewing whether members of the public should wear masks. JAY JANNER/USA TODAY NETWORK

that the virus can spread between people before the infected know they're sick. Data for 243 reported cases in Singapore found that presymptomatic transmission accounted for about 6.4% of cases. Transmission occurred one to three days before patients noticed symptoms, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

#### Loans for U.S. businesses

Small businesses seeking loans through the \$2 trillion relief package could re-

ceive money as soon as Friday, when sole proprietors, freelancers and companies with up to 500 workers can begin submitting applications, administration officials say.

#### Mask guidance under review

With more evidence of the virus spreading without symptoms, the CDC is reviewing whether the public should indeed wear masks, Surgeon General Jerome Adams said. The CDC's current guidance says only the sick and those in contact with them should wear masks. "Even if you do wear a mask, it can't be at the expense of social distancing," Adams said.

#### Waiving SAT, ACT tests

The University of California system is the most influential institution to waive its requirement that prospective 2021 students submit SAT and ACT scores. The ACT and the College Board, which administers the SAT, already delayed or canceled dates for their tests.

— Matt Leclercq

# CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

## China

Continued from Page 1A

insist that even if President Donald Trump were to immediately adopt all the strict testing and lockdown measures that Western scientific advisers advocate, these actions would still not be sufficient to stem the spread of a disease that is swiftly approaching a million worldwide cases.

More severe steps are needed in the USA, these officials say, although they cast doubt on whether Americans could do what the Chinese did, for a mixture of reasons: political will and deep-rooted cultural inclinations among them.

To help quell its outbreak, Beijing embarked on one of the largest mass mobilization efforts in history, closing all schools, forcing millions of people inside, quickly building more than a dozen vast temporary hospitals, deploying thousands of extra medical staff to Wuhan and the surrounding Hubei province and meticulously testing and tracing anyone and everyone who may have encountered the virus.

It did a lot more than that.

“Lockdowns, bans on gatherings, basic quarantines, testing, hand-washing, this is not enough,” Huiyao Wang, a senior adviser to China’s government, told USA TODAY in a phone interview from Beijing. “You need to isolate people on an enormous scale, in stadiums, big exhibition halls, wherever you can. It seems extreme. It works.”

“No one left behind” was the slogan in Wuhan,” he said. “No one.”

In the USA, Trump urged Americans to avoid gatherings of 10 or more people and suggested the worst-affected states should shutter schools, bars and restaurants.

Overall, he has left it to individual states and cities to decide whether to close businesses or explicitly order people to stay at home, despite evidence from countries in Asia, such as China, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, that aggressively limiting public gatherings and social interactions can help stop transmission of COVID-19, when done in combination with extensive testing and tracing of the disease.

Trump said he expects to see U.S. cases peak “around Easter,” although his claims about how quickly the USA can overcome the outbreak and bounce back contradict assessments from top health officials, such as Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

After New York City became the new locus of the outbreak, Trump announced Sunday an extension of federal guidance on social distancing measures through April and issued a “strong travel advisory” urging residents of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut to refrain from nonessential travel for 14 days to help limit the spread of the virus.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the new restrictions would help slow the spread of the respiratory illness, which has infected more than 209,000 Americans and killed more than 4,600. The daily death toll in the USA may not dip below 100 per day before June, according to a study by the University of Washington.

### China’s nationwide response

Wang, the Chinese government adviser, said the example of Wuhan, where authorities have started lifting some of their stringent anti-virus controls that kept tens of millions of people at home for two months, illustrates that the USA and West more generally need to take far more radical virus-dampening actions that many people outside China might find culturally, logistically and emotionally unpalatable.

“It was not just families being isolated together in Wuhan but individuals being isolated away from their friends and families,” said Andy Mok, a fellow at the Center for China and Globalization, a public policy think tank based in Beijing.

“China’s response to the outbreak was truly a nationwide response: systematic, comprehensive and coordinated. This is why China was able to ‘flatten the curve’ so dramatically,” he said, referring to social isolation measures aimed at keeping the number of coronavirus infections at a manageable level for hospitals and medical workers who would otherwise be overwhelmed with sick patients.

Mok said that even in Beijing, about 750 miles north of Wuhan, coronavirus rules were established requiring residents to have a formal pass to get in and out of their apartment buildings and homes. At the outbreak’s height in Wu-



Staff members deliver vegetables to a hospital in Wuhan, China, on Feb. 21. AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Huiyao Wang, a senior adviser to China’s government, said hand-washing and basic quarantines are not enough. “You need to isolate people on an enormous scale. ... It seems extreme. It works.” NICHOLAS KAMM/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

han, nobody was allowed in or out of the city, and access to food stores was limited to once every few days.

Video footage published by the Australian Broadcasting Corp., the country’s state-funded broadcaster, showed Chinese authorities in Wuhan welding doors to entire apartment buildings shut – with residents inside – to enforce quarantines. The footage, collected from Chinese social media users, could not be independently verified by USA TODAY.

Mok questioned whether Americans, raised on a diet of individualism and civil liberties that has informed every aspect of life from travel to economic institutions, would be willing to abide by invasive virus detection and containment methods that require a strong commitment to “collectivism” and abridged freedoms.

Europe has adopted some, but not all, of China’s most restrictive steps. In France, residents must fill out of a signed attestation to justify leaving their homes or apartments. Police hand out large fines to anyone who doesn’t follow the rules.

“It’s a very clever form of social engineering for civic purposes: It forces you to think about and justify to yourself, as well as to the world, why you are leaving the house,” said Sarah Maza, a French history professor and U.S. citizen living in France for the year.

Yang Junchao, a member of a Chinese delegation of COVID-19 doctors and medical experts assisting Italy in halting its coronavirus infections – the worst in Europe – said its epidemic will be controlled “as long as the Italian public cooperates.”

Some American public health officials have acknowledged that to bring the virus under control – outside of a vaccine breakthrough – actions that overstep the bounds of what most Americans would be comfortable with, such as mass quarantines and other severe restrictions on movement, may be necessary.

“The approach we should be taking right now is one that most people would find to be too drastic because otherwise, it is not drastic enough,” Francis Collins, the director of the National Institutes of Health, said in a USA TODAY interview.

“It may be a country like China has a more top-down ability to insist on certain behavior changes. But we ought to be able to do it in our way, in a bottom-up fashion,” he said.

### ‘Widespread discontent’?

Trump administration officials have repeatedly condemned China’s initial suppression of warnings about the outbreak and questioned the accuracy of

Beijing’s infection figures.

China’s central government has dismissed persistent allegations that it tried to downplay the severity of infections, although it has not denied initially detaining whistleblowing doctors and citizen journalists in December who tried to speak out about the mysterious virus in Wuhan. China’s National Health Commission said Tuesday it will start including asymptomatic coronavirus carriers in its daily figures.

As of Wednesday, China recorded less than half – about 82,000 – the number of U.S. coronavirus cases. It may be bracing for a potential second wave of infections: Over the past few days, China has reclosed some public spaces and businesses, such as movie theaters, amid spiking clusters of cases, mostly imported.

“The Chinese are trying to paint the narrative that the model they have pursued has been a huge success and that we are failing” because of our mode of governance, J. Stephen Morrison, director of the Global Health Policy Center at the Center for Strategic and International Affairs (CSIS), a Washington think tank, said in a media briefing.

Morrison said there’s significant evidence that the Chinese government’s handling of the crisis sparked “widespread discontent and dissatisfaction,” pointing to the case of Dr. Li Wenliang, who was detained when he tried to alert other health care providers about the novel coronavirus. He died from the virus.

Concern has grown over the whereabouts of Ai Fen, the head of Emergency at Wuhan Central Hospital. She is the doctor who first alerted Wenliang about the spread of the virus. An Australian investigation team that interviewed Fen last week said she has disappeared, possibly detained by the Chinese government.

Heather Conley, the director of the Europe program at CSIS, said that although the response in democratic countries may look chaotic, there’s strength in that approach. “You have neighbors helping neighbors, and you have states making decisions. Sometimes it’s the federal level having to catch up with those decisions, and that’s a much more dynamic, nimble and resilient response,” she said.

Jan Renders, 29, a graduate student who was studying Chinese politics at Central China Normal University in Wuhan and was airlifted out Feb. 1 to his home in Belgium, said the Chinese response was “too harsh” and lacked transparency.

“In Wuhan, when everything went into lockdown, nobody could come or go, and that included patients, the hospitals were overloaded, and I’m sure

people died because they couldn’t be transported to other hospitals, where there was room,” he said, noting that German hospitals started taking coronavirus patients from overcrowded hospitals in Italy, where more than 13,000 people have died of COVID-19, the most anywhere.

Edward Tse, the Hong Kong-based founder of the Gao Feng Advisory Co., a management consultancy with roots in mainland China, said his perception is that, on the whole, most people in China supported the government’s tough measures.

“Isolation is the key,” he said. “It just depends on how you do it. The Chinese government decided to do it in a certain way. It turned out to be quite effective.”

A British video blogger posted a video on China’s Twitter-like Weibo platform last week that explained how China implemented the softer side of its policy of “ling jiechu,” which translates as “zero contact.” It allowed neighborhood committees to take charge of arrangements for shopping and deliveries. Highways were made toll-free, with no limits to the number of cars on a road. For those without a car, customized bus routes were set up and operated according to demand. Tickets could be purchased on a smartphone app, and capacity was set at 50%. Many restaurants installed basic but effective pulley systems to maintain employee-customer distance.

Wang, the student who returned to Wuhan from Guangdong to live with her elderly relatives, said many people in China “have the idea, and maybe it’s a stereotype, that medical care” in the USA and Europe is more advanced than in China.

“I am worried about places like New York City and Milan,” she said. “I don’t know why the deaths are so much higher there. I hope they will be strong and keep calm.”

*Hjelmsgaard reported from London, Lyman from Rome and Shesgreen from Washington.*

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