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TUESDAY • APRIL 14, 2020

TRUMP, STATES AT ODDS OVER POWER TO REOPEN

■ 2 groups of governors team up to discuss restarting economies

■ New York's death toll passes 10,000, nearly half of U.S. fatalities

■ President asserts federal authority to ease restrictions is 'total'

■ San Diego County reports two more deaths, bringing total to 47

TREND IS DOWN IN LOCAL COVID CASES

BY PAUL SISSON

The deaths of two women, ages 96 and 100, are the latest COVID-related fatalities among county residents, public health officials announced Monday, bringing the total for the region to 47.

The number of confirmed cases reached 1,847 as the county reported 45 new cases to the public, just a couple more than the day before.

Dr. Eric McDonald, the county's epidemiology director, declined to read much into two days of results.

"I really would step back and look at it as a longer-term trend," McDonald said.

But by tracing the slope of the line of daily case reports, it appears the pandemic's local trajectory has flattened.

It has been eight days since the county has reported a daily new case total in the triple digits, and the estimated number of confirmed cases that have recovered exceeded the total number hospitalized late last week.

But it's difficult for the public to see the true trend in the daily numbers. That's because the county releases case totals only by the day that positive test results were reported to the county. Despite numerous requests, the county has not released any day-by-day data organized by the dates that symptoms first appeared in patients or when diagnoses were made. Tracking cases by these factors, rather than the day that the county was notified of cases, would provide a more accurate picture.

Likewise, the county has refused requests for more

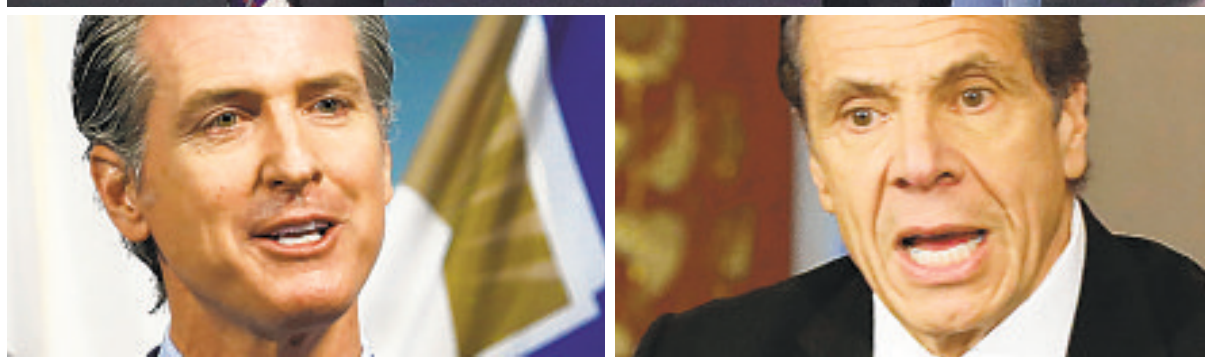
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MORE COVERAGE INSIDE

■ A3 • Navy battling growing outbreak on San Diego-based hospital ship Mercy.

■ B1 • San Diego expanding \$6 million relief fund for small businesses with seed money.

■ C1 • State insurance chief says drivers, others should receive refunds for premiums.



AP & GETTY IMAGES

President Donald Trump says he has the authority to decide when and how to lift coronavirus pandemic restrictions and reopen the economy. Govs. Gavin Newsom and Andrew Cuomo say they will proceed with their own plans, adding that decisions will be based on science and not political pressure.

CORONAVIRUS COMPOUNDS GRIEF FOR HOSPICE PATIENTS' FAMILIES

Loved ones, facilities cope with restrictions isolating them due to COVID-19 pandemic

BY LAUREN J. MAPP

Over the past six years, Gary and Sharon Caradonna have weathered his heart transplant and her worsening dementia, together, side by side. But now, for the first time in their 23-year marriage, they are separated.

Sharon is receiving hospice care and living at an Escondido memory care facility, while Gary remains in their Rancho Bernardo home after receiving care for his own health issues. He can no longer visit his wife due to county health orders barring family from entering assisted living facilities.

"I'm locked out and can't see her," Caradonna said. "That's after putting her in a new place that I knew very little about. After caring for her the way that I did with my caregivers, I'm wondering if they are going to take care of her the same way there."

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to reshape society, it's changing the ways people receive hospice care and adding to the emotional burdens of their caregiving family members.

For people who have a terminal illness with a limited prognosis, hospice supports them with palliative, end-of-life care to help them feel more comfortable. A typical team is composed of a physician, nurse, nurses aids, social workers, spiritual guide or chaplain, and other volunteers to help provide companionship.



EDUARDO CONTRERAS U-T

Gary Caradonna, who lives in Rancho Bernardo, can't visit his wife in a memory care facility because of COVID-19 concerns.

In San Diego County, there are about 4,000 people receiving hospice on any given day and approximately 16,000 receiving care each year, said Lisa Marcolongo, media relations and veterans specialist for The Eliza

SEE HOSPICE • A6

THE NEW NORMAL

VIRTUAL COUNSELING SESSIONS, VIDEOS AIM TO EASE CONFLICTS

BY PAM KRAGEN

Like many other San Diegans over the past month, Bonnie Clayton was so preoccupied with taking care of her children, moving her business online and trying to organize her family's food supply that she forgot to take care of herself.

So a few weeks ago she signed up for one of the National Conflict Resolu-

tion Center's new Virtual Community Circles, which are online group therapy sessions conducted via the Zoom meeting app. The free, twice-weekly sessions were created to help isolated San Diegans like Clayton learn coping mechanisms and communication tools during the COVID-19 crisis.

"Even though I wasn't in the room with everyone, their images were on

screen. So I still felt pretty much like I was in community, which was delightfully surprising," said Clayton, an elder-care mediator who runs Shine Your Light Dementia Care Services. "I might not have known how low level I was getting — fearful, anxious and a little depressed — but 10 minutes after I disconnected from that first call I was walking around realizing I'm feeling a lot better. It

was a striking shift." After nearly a month of enforced togetherness, civility is becoming strained between spouses, roommates and family members, as well as between co-workers who are communicating remotely. To help bridge these divides in a virtual way, the NCRC has launched a series of online programs, including weekly tutorial videos and the community

circles, which are supported by the San Diego County Health & Human Services Agency, as part of the Live Well San Diego Exchange program. Topics for some of the upcoming community circle meetings are self-care in a crisis and resilience in challenging times. NCRC project manager Brittny Ochira said many of the people who contact the

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HEALTH

REMEMBER TO REST

While under quarantine, take these steps to get adequate rest and ward off disease. E1

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ROOSEVELT SAILOR IN HOSPITAL DIES FROM COVID-19

Ship sidelined in Guam after several crew tested positive

BY ANDREW DYER

A sailor assigned to the San Diego-based aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt has died after being hospitalized with COVID-19, the Navy announced Monday.

The sailor had tested positive for coronavirus March 30 and was taken off the ship and placed in "isolation housing" along with four other sailors at Naval Base Guam. On the morning of April 9 he was found unresponsive during a medical check and was moved to a local hospital's intensive care unit.

The Navy is withholding the sailor's name until 24 hours after the family is notified. It is the first death of an active-duty sailor related to the novel coronavirus.

The Roosevelt, which left San Diego in January for a routine deployment, was sidelined in March after several sailors on board tested positive for COVID-19. It pulled into Guam, where sailors have been moving off the ship in an effort to get the virus under control.

On Monday, the Navy said 585 crew members have tested positive for the novel

SEE ROOSEVELT • A3



**CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

# MOST CORONAVIRUS CASES IN N.Y. CAME FROM EUROPE

Researchers believe virus was spreading as early as February

BY CARL ZIMMER

New research indicates that the coronavirus began to circulate in the New York area by mid-February, weeks before the first confirmed case, and that travelers brought in the virus mainly from Europe.

"The majority is clearly European," said Harm van Bakel, a geneticist at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, who co-wrote a study awaiting peer review.

A separate team at NYU Grossman School of Medicine came to strikingly similar conclusions, despite studying a different group of cases. Both teams analyzed genomes from coronaviruses taken from New Yorkers starting in mid-March.

The research revealed a previously hidden spread of the virus that might have been detected if aggressive testing programs had been put in place.

On Jan. 31, President Donald Trump barred foreign nationals from entering the country if they had been in China during the prior two weeks.

It would not be until late February that Italy would begin locking down towns and cities, and March 11 when Trump said he would block travelers from most European countries. But New Yorkers had already been traveling home with the virus.

"People were just oblivious," said Adriana Heguy, a member of the NYU team.

Heguy and van Bakel belong to an international guild of viral historians. They ferret out the history of outbreaks by poring over the genetic material of viruses taken from thousands of patients.

Viruses invade the molecular machinery of a cell, causing it to make new viruses. The process is quick and



VERONIQUE DE VIGUERIE GETTY IMAGES

**Researchers believe the coronavirus outbreak in New York can be traced to travelers from Europe.**

sloppy. As a result, new viruses can gain a mutation that wasn't present in their ancestor. If a new virus manages to escape its host and infect other people, its descendants will inherit that mutation.

Tracking viral mutations demands sequencing all the genetic material in a virus — its genome. Once researchers have gathered the genomes from a number of virus samples, they can compare their mutations.

Sophisticated computer programs can then figure out how all of those mutations arose as viruses descended from a common ancestor.

Maciej Boni of Penn State University and his colleagues recently used this method to see where the coronavirus, designated SARS-CoV-2, came from. While conspiracy theories might falsely claim the virus was concocted in a lab, the virus' genome makes clear that it arose in bats.

The deepest branches of the coronavirus tree all belong to lineages from China. The virus probably first moved into humans from an animal host in late 2019.

In January, as the scope of the catastrophe in China became clear, a few countries started an aggressive testing program. They were able to track the arrival of the virus on their territory and track its spread through their popula-

tions. But the United States fumbled in making its first diagnostic kits and initially limited testing only to people who had come from China and displayed symptoms of COVID-19.

The first positive test result in New York came on March 1, and after a couple of weeks, patients surged into the city's hospitals.

Heguy and her colleagues found some New York viruses that shared unique mutations not found elsewhere. "That's when you know you've had a silent transmission for a while," she said.

Heguy estimated that the virus began circulating in the New York area a couple of months ago.

And researchers at Mount Sinai started sequencing the genomes of patients coming through their hospital. They found that the earliest cases identified in New York were not linked to later ones.

They found that these viruses were practically identical to viruses found around Europe. They cannot say on what particular flight a particular virus arrived in New York. But they write that the viruses reveal "a period of untracked global transmission between late January to mid-February."

Zimmer writes for The New York Times.

## CONFLICT

FROM A1  
NCRC say they feel like nobody understands what they're going through.

"What we keep hearing again and again is, 'Why am I feeling a roller coaster of emotions? One minute I'm fine and feeling productive and have gratitude for my health, and the next minute I feel like crying,'" Ochira said. "They're grieving the loss of their normal routines. People think they're alone in feeling it. But in reality, we're all having this same universal experience right now."

Every Monday for the past month, NCRC has posted a video on its YouTube channel ("NCRC-SINCE1983") called "Mindful Mondays." Hosted by Ashley Virtue, the center's director of external relations, the two- to three-minute videos offer communication techniques for dealing with family and co-workers during this crisis.

In last week's video, Virtue explained how the physical distance created by social-distancing policies has led to a growing sense of emotional detachment for many people.

"When we stop holding meetings or stop engaging with friends and family members about how they're doing and how we're doing, our brains aren't activated in the same ways as they were before," Virtue said. "That can lead to a lack of productivity. It can lead to feeling depressed or anxious. So being able to hold healthy conversations with people is really key to getting through this time in a healthy manner."

Like the in-person community circles the NCRC has been holding over the past several years, the virtual circles are open to the public and free. People can sign up for the meetings on Eventbrite.com (search "virtual-community-circle"). Group size is limited to 15 to 25 people and there has been a waiting list for every session so far. The circles run two hours and begin with a mediated group session followed by breakout sessions for groups of two to three people on more specific topics.

Ochira said one of the most popular circle topics so far was about keeping the family peace, which she can

### Five tips on keeping peace at home

- 1 Hold a family meeting:** Let every family member talk about what they want to get out of this "break." Agree on a plan for tackling the chores that still need to get done. Set a daily schedule.
- 2 Set boundaries:** If you haven't already, define a work space that is separate from home life, if possible, and establish "office hours." Make agreements as a family to stay connected and communicative, while respecting these boundaries. And recognize that encroachment is inevitable.
- 3 Check-in:** How are things going? A daily download of what's working and what isn't — perhaps at the dinner table — can allow you to course correct before things get out of hand. Be sure to listen to each other and ask for support when needed.
- 4 Maintain a sense of humor:** Finding the funny is a known stress buster. Start your day with a smile (even if you have to fake it). Interject a surprise, something you normally wouldn't do as a family.
- 5 Be compassionate:** Acknowledge that social distancing, our new normal, isn't easy for any of you. There will be good days and bad — and with them, times to give and receive special kindness.

— From Steven P. Dinkin, president of the National Conflict Resolution Center

relate to as the mother of a 1-year-old who, along with her husband, is working full-time from a one-bedroom apartment. She said working parents are juggling so many balls these days that it's impossible to avoid some of them dropping.

"Everyone is feeling like they're not doing great emotionally for themselves and that manifests with them not being very patient with their kids and not having everything figured out," Ochira said. "The big struggle is the judgment we place on ourselves as parents and the expectations that we should also be their teacher and be working full-time."

Another popular topic is how to resolve conflicts between couples where one member is obsessed with watching the news and debating the latest coronavirus statistics while the other would rather focus their attention on helping others in the community.

"Maybe the more news-oriented person will feel you don't care about the struggles of the people who are really suffering, whereas the more action-oriented person may say, 'This is how I care, by doing something tangible,'" said Ochira, who recommends that partners facing this type of conflict practice active listening and active self-awareness skills to understand the underlying difference in their coping styles.

All of the circle meetings

begin with participants agreeing to the same ground rules, which are to be present and curious, to speak and listen with respect and from the heart, and to be patient. Ochira said following these simple rules can often help couples, families and co-workers mediate many crises on their own.

"One hope for these conversations," Ochira said, "is that we all get to bring that experience of feeling heard and deeply listening to others back into our homes and into our work. As we navigate these times we learn how to give time to each other, be civil and give each other that extra support and kindness we all need right now."

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