



The Latest News on Deadly Coronavirus

The outbreak and spread of the 2019-nCoV, otherwise known as the coronavirus, has quickly risen to a global health concern with the number of infections at 7,700, including 160 deaths according to the latest report by China's National Health Commission. Confirmed cases outside China are relatively small, at 73, but are spread across 17 countries and territories in Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America, with the latest being two cases in Germany, causing newfound concern since the infected individuals had not recently been in China. On Wednesday morning, the first case in the Arab Emirates was also confirmed.

Given the novelty of the virus, scientists are still uncertain about the virus' transmission behavior, including its spread among asymptomatic cases, although it has been established the virus can transmit between humans among close contacts and health workers. The incubation period for the virus can be as much as two weeks, which means there may be an exponential amount of people already infected that have yet to show symptoms.

The Chinese government is constructing hospitals specifically for the care of its infected population. The first cases were reported in a cluster of individuals from Wuhan city, Hubei Province, in China in December 2019 and has since spread across the country and internationally. While the World Health Organization has refrained from calling the outbreak a global emergency, it is a national emergency in China, with multiple cities shutting down public transportation including railway and airport stations in efforts to curb the spread of the virus.

On Tuesday, in an abundance of caution, the United States airlifted more than 200 individuals, including diplomats and U.S. expatriates back to the United States. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said a complete ban on travel to and from China is among the options the Trump administration is considering as it tries to address the rapid spread of the deadly new coronavirus. Pompeo noted to reporters, on a flight to Europe, Wednesday that the U.S. had issued its highest level of alert for Wuhan, warning Americans to entirely avoid the city considered ground-zero of the outbreak.

(continued on Page 2)

Around the Globe...

◆ **The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** announced that *Mark Suzman* will take over as CEO of the organization on February 1, 2020, replacing *Sue Desmond-Hellmann*. Suzman is a 12-year veteran of the Gates Foundation where he has served as Chief Strategy Officer as well as President of Global Policy and Advocacy. Originally from South Africa, he worked as a correspondent for the *Financial Times* and joined the organization in 2007 as director of global development policy and advocacy. Suzman has helped to build the Foundation's global presence and to oversee philanthropic partnerships, government partnerships and strategic communications.

◆ The global campaign, **Fight the Fakes** launched a very successful week-long campaign aimed at drawing attention to the dangers of falsified and substandard medicines. It was the second awareness-raising drive for the campaign which emphasized the threats posed by fake meds to public health, how fake meds undermine patient trust, and the fact that manufacturers of fake meds do not discriminate in what products are targeted. Both branded and generic, domestic and imported are in the crosshairs of these disreputable manufacturers. The campaign reached over 4 million users on social media and gained extensive media coverage in various European outlets, further highlighting the campaign's momentum and advocacy work on a global level.

◆ The **World Health Organization** has published its 10 global health challenges for the next decade, reflecting a deep concern in the lack of resources being invested in core health priorities and systems. Included in the list are: (1) Elevating health in the climate debate; (2) delivering health in conflict and crisis; (3) making health care more fair; (4) expanding access to medicines; (5) stopping infectious diseases; (6) preparing for epidemics; (7) protecting people from dangerous products; (8) investing in people who defend our health; (9) keeping adolescents safe; and, (10) earning public trust. For more information, visit <https://www.who.int/news-room/photo-story/photo-story-detail/urgent-health-challenges-for-the-next-decade>.

(continued on Page 2)

The Gates Foundation and Pharma Giants Commit to Expanding Healthcare Access in Africa

(Source: An article by Leon Kay for Triple Pundit)

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and five pharmaceutical companies—Novartis, Johnson & Johnson, Lilly, Pfizer and GSK—together announced an initiative to train more community health workers and expand healthcare access to 1.7 million people across six nations in Africa.

Two NGOs, Living Goods and Last Mile Health, will run the program. The five pharmaceutical giants and Gates Foundation will contribute a combined \$18 million over the next three years to make the project possible.

While many regions worldwide report shortages of medical

(continued on Page 2)



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Coronavirus (cont.)...

"We will evaluate it on a continuous basis, literally hour by hour, whether that's the appropriate level in Wuhan and whether we get it right in other places," Pompeo said. "That includes travel advisories, a wide range of things, including banning travel."

Across Africa, countries are ramping up airport screenings of passengers arriving from China, in efforts to prevent the spread of coronavirus on a continent already facing multiple outbreaks, including Ebola and measles.

"This thing is big. I've not seen a rapidly evolving outbreak like the one we are dealing with," said Dr. John Nkengasong, director at the Africa Centres for Disease Control during a press conference Tuesday in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

While there have not been any confirmed cases in Africa, he noted that there are "rumors of unconfirmed cases in several countries." Health officials are investigating a potential case in Côte d'Ivoire, although they believe it is pneumonia. A student from China arrived at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi with coronavirus-like symptoms and has been isolated at a nearby hospital. There could also be active cases on the continent that have not yet been detected because of weak surveillance systems that exist in some nations across the continent.

Heightening concerns about a spread to Africa are the high levels of movement between the two continents as commerce and trade increases between regions. Direct airline flights between China and Africa have increased over 600% in the past decade.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced a commitment of US\$5 million to the Africa CDC to help African nations scale up preparedness for a potential spread of 2019-nCoV. This includes funding for "technical support to implement the screening and treatment of suspected cases, laboratory confirmation of 2019-nCoV diagnoses and the safe isolation and care of identified cases."

On Tuesday, Africa CDC activated its incident management system for the virus. It has set up a weekly brief on the outbreak to inform countries about the latest news on the virus and is working with national public health institutes to coordinate in areas such as improving surveillance, laboratory support, and developing protocols for treatment, Nkengasong said.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is coordinating with its national Red Cross societies giving them the relevant updates on the virus and helping them to strengthen their preparedness efforts, such as developing risk communications for communities. It is also encouraging them to partake in preparedness meetings organized at the national level with ministries of health, so that they can support the ministries with a unified response.

A series of tweets, published this week by Tom Inglesby, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, made recommendations for global and national planning efforts on what should be done in the event that the virus can't be contained.

He also called for a major expansion of personal protective gear for health care workers, hospital infection control plans, and the need for governments to provide transparent, comprehensive, and rapid communications on the spread of the virus. He also urged that travel and trade remain open, even if the virus spreads widely.

On a positive note, scientists in Australia have claimed a "significant breakthrough" in efforts to combat the rapid spread of the deadly new strain of coronavirus from China.

CBS News partner network BBC News said researchers at the

Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity had become the first to recreate the "novel coronavirus 2019" strain outside of China. Chinese researchers have also duplicated the virus, but BBC said they have only shared its genome sequence with the World Health Organization. The Australian researchers said they would provide the duplicated virus to the WHO to help efforts to diagnose and treat it.

Researchers at the specialist lab in Melbourne told the BBC they were able to grow a copy of the virus from a sample taken from an infected patient.

"We've planned for an incident like this for many, many years and that's really why we were able to get an answer so quickly," the Doherty Institute's Dr Mike Catton told the BBC.

Gates Foundation (cont.)...

professionals, the reality is that community health workers are critical for the delivery of healthcare services in much of the world. They are integral to helping patients gain access to dental care in rural America, and armed with little more than a cell phone, they can deliver frontline medical care and information to citizens in India.

Many of these community health workers, who are often volunteers, can gain the trust and confidence of locals in a way that someone wearing a white jacket or scrubs cannot. When many municipalities cannot afford the cost of a clinic or even a traveling medical professional, these community health workers are a valuable lifeline, whether they are distributing medicines or sharing information about prenatal care.

Each of the five companies involved say they can contribute unique expertise to help drive health technology innovation and deepen impact in Liberia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, and two countries yet to be named. In addition to financial contributions, these companies will contribute disease-specific expertise and experience to supplement the community health models that Last Mile Health and Living Goods have fine-tuned over the years.

Around the Globe (cont.)...

- ◆ Leprosy is re-emerging as a global health challenge. Across the African continent and in countries such as Indonesia, India and Brazil, new cases are reported at an alarming rate. Brazil, which has the second-highest burden of cases, reports approximately 28,000 annually while Indonesia reported 16,826 cases and is third on the list. One of the biggest challenges is the stigma affecting those infected. Individuals face unbelievable discrimination and are often deemed social outcasts. Sunday, January 26th was World Leprosy Day and is observed to raise awareness of the disease and those affected by it.

- ◆ IFPW recently participated in the Center for Global Development's seminar/webinar, *Global Health Supply Chains: The Role of Private Wholesalers and Distributors in Improving Access to Medicines*. The event, held on January 27th, focused on knowledge sharing as well as calling attention to the global importance of wholesalers and distributors in improving efficiency and effectiveness in global health supply chains, and featured several speakers and a panel discussion that included IFPW President, Mark Parrish. Participants were excited and interested in learning more of IFPW's involvement in the newly-created **African Pharmaceutical Distribution Association (APDA)**. To hear a recording of the seminar/webinar, please visit <https://www.cgdev.org/event/global-health-supply-chains-role-private-wholesalers-distributors-improving-access-medicines>.

(Sources: Company Press Releases, Forbes, Healio.com, InterPress Service, and Securing Industry)