

《白宫专家：美国新冠肺炎疫情进入“新阶段”》

白宫冠状病毒应对工作小组协调员德博拉·伯克斯8月2日表示，全美新冠疫情进入“新阶段”，病毒传播范围比疫情早期更广泛。她敦促美国人外出佩戴口罩，遵守防疫指南。美国疾控中心的一项最新预测显示，未来三周可能有近2万名美国人死于新冠肺炎。



A nurse wearing personal protective equipment watches an ambulance driving away outside of Elmhurst Hospital during the ongoing outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the Queens borough of New York, US, April 20, 2020. [Photo/Agencies]

Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House coronavirus task force coordinator, said on Sunday that the US is “in a new phase” of battling against the coronavirus pandemic and urged Americans to wear masks and follow social distancing guidelines.

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"What we are seeing today is different from March and April. It is extraordinarily widespread ... it's more widespread and it's both rural and urban," Birx said during an interview on CNN.

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"To everybody who lives in a rural area, you are not immune or protected from this virus," Birx said. "And that is why we keep saying, no matter where you live in America, you need to wear a mask and socially distance, do the personal hygiene pieces."

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The US has more than 4.6 million coronavirus cases and at least 154,449 deaths, the most of any country, according to data from the Johns Hopkins University.

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Asked about former FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb's warning that the country could experience 300,000 deaths by the end of 2020, Birx responded, "Anything is possible" but declined to provide details on current projections.

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Birx said the US virus death toll will depend on how southern and western states with the worst outbreaks respond to the virus over the coming weeks.

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The virus is rapidly spreading across much of the Midwest, as well in states like Florida and California that have experienced a significant surge in infections. The Northeast, once the epicenter of the virus, has seen a decline in cases since hitting a peak in April.

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"It's not super spreading individuals, it's super spreading events and we need to stop those," Birx said. "We definitely need to take more precautions."

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Asked if schools should stay closed and have remote learning in areas where there is a 5% positivity rate, Birx deferred to the CDC's guidelines on school reopenings.

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"If you have high case load and active community spread, just like we are asking people not to go to bars, not to have household parties, not to create large spreading events, we are asking people to distance learn at this moment so we can get this epidemic under control," Birx said.

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New Yorkers in need receive free produce, dry goods, and meat at a Food Bank For New York City distribution event at the Barclays Center on July 30, 2020 in New York City. [Photo/Agencies]

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"Our levels are still far too high," said Dr. Megan Ranney, an emergency physician at Lifespan Health System and associate professor at Brown University.

The relentless death toll is projected to reach 173,000 by August 22, according to a new composite forecast from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's an average of almost 1,000 US deaths every day for the next 30 days.

Dr. Carlos del Rio, the executive associate dean at Emory University's School of Medicine, explained that in the spring the pandemic was largely felt in large urban communities. Now, more and more rural communities are seeing the spread of the virus.

"The epidemic is moving into every community in America," del Rio told CNN. "And that's why we all need to be wearing a mask."

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Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan said Wednesday that 44% of residents who had recently tested positive had attended family gatherings. Another 23% had attended house parties, and 21% attended outdoor events.

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