



June 25, 2020

To: Distribution

From: Pandemic Working Group

Re: **COVID-19: On Resurgences ~ New York, New York ~ Blood Type Part II**

One Step Forward . . . As reported by the New York Times yesterday, a spike in coronavirus cases is causing certain cities and states to slow down or stop their plans to reopen their economies. Texas, with a record high 5,000 cases on Tuesday, urged residents to stay home, Maine shelved its plans to allow bars to reopen on July 1, and in hotspots within central Idaho, gatherings of 50 or more are again outlawed. The patchwork of controls within each state alone is confusing enough for the public. On-the-fly adjustments to the rules make it even more obscure. And some comments by regional leaders are downright incomprehensible. Take, for example, the advice of Texas Governor Gregg Abbott who stated, "There is never a reason for you to have to leave your home unless you do need to go out." Candidly, I'm not sure what he's driving at. It's kind of like saying, "It only rains when water comes from the sky," or "Gee, that slippery floor sure has a low frictional coefficient!" I'm sure that he meant something, but it comes off as a tautology. At any rate, in the face of changing rules and offhand advice, we are best to continue social distancing – physical space, face coverings, hand washing, no hands to the face. We have the tools.

Mysterious Resurgence in Beijing. As reported by ScienceMag.org on June 17, experts are flummoxed by the resurgence of coronavirus cases that returned in Beijing after 55 straight days of no local transmission. As of last week, according to the Xinhua news agency, 137 cases had been detected following the testing of 356,000 people, and virtually all infections were linked to



the huge wholesale food market (pictured here) named Xinfadi. The massive, 112-hectare complex houses 2,000 stalls selling produce, seafood and meat with 10,000 customers and workers visiting daily. At this stage, the genomic sequence of the outbreak-virus is not yet available. Dirk Pfeiffer, veterinary epidemiologist at City University of Hong Kong, suspects that the sheer volume of people passing through the market, coupled with "suboptimal hygienic conditions" and humid, chilled air, likely increased the risk of transmission. This outbreak, which drew a severe response from the Chinese government, including a complete lockdown of local neighborhoods, closure of schools and cancellation of hundreds of flights, serves as a reminder that, without a vaccine or herd immunity, this disease tends to resist eradication.

Meat Processing in Germany. On a related note, as reported by CNN, in a country that had enjoyed a significant decline in coronavirus cases, a major outbreak was detected in a meat processing facility in the North-Rhine Westphalia state of Germany. Within the massive Tonnies factory (pictured here with a soldier in the foreground courtesy of CNN), which employs nearly 7,000 persons, 1,553 workers tested positive for coronavirus in recent days. In response, the state closed the plant, sent all workers home, locked down their families and sent 100 mobile testing units to comb through the district in search of anyone who might be infected. As of Tuesday, only 24 new cases had been found outside of the factory. This case recalls the consistent trend of superspreading among domestic food processing plants. While researchers have yet to reach definitive conclusions, at this stage we can observe that like the Xinfadi market in Beijing, meat and food processing plants typically include closely-packed persons lingering within humid, forced, cool air, suggesting that these environmental factors may be especially conducive to transmission of coronavirus.



On Domestic Quarantines. Following upon our earlier story about the EU potentially barring US citizens from their bloc, as reported in the New York Times yesterday, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that New York, New Jersey and Connecticut would require visitors from nine states having unacceptably high coronavirus infection trends (a positivity trend of higher than 10 percent on a seven day trailing average) to quarantine for 14 days upon visiting any of these three states. At present, the states include Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas and Utah. Violators in New York would be subject to a \$2,000 fine for first offense and up to \$10,000 for subsequent offenses (while there is no such sanction in either NJ or CT). How this might impact trucking or shipping is not yet clear.

Blood Type Revisited. Finally, as you may recall, earlier in the week we reported on a recent study that was published in the New England Journal of Medicine on the potential correlation between blood type and coronavirus infection. While I had conveyed the observation of a secondary source (TheHill.com) for the proposition that, according to the study, persons with Type A blood type are 45% more likely to be infected than those with other blood types, our own Humberto Lopez, to his credit, read the primary source itself. He reports that, in fact, the study found that those persons with Type A blood are 45% more likely to have a severe reaction to the disease (as defined by needing to be put on a ventilator) than those having other blood types. Further, the likelihood of infection based upon blood type was not covered in the study. So, I'm not sure that that conclusion makes me feel any better, but I thank Humberto for clarifying the matter. It always helps to read the text. - TD

If you have any questions or comments on this advisory, please contact either [kellyw@amvac.com](mailto:kellyw@amvac.com) or [timd@amvac.com](mailto:timd@amvac.com).