

## Gov. Gavin Newsom orders all Californians to stay at home



“The magnitude of this crisis is extraordinary and federal-state-local government coordination will be more critical than ever before,” Gov. Gavin Newsom says.

(Randall Benton / Associated Press) By [Taryn Luna](#) Staff Writer

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Gov. Gavin Newsom on Thursday ordered all Californians to stay at home, marking the first mandatory restrictions placed on the lives of all 40 million residents in the state’s fight against the novel coronavirus.

*The governor’s order comes at a critical time in California, where 19 people have died and an additional 958 have tested positive for the disease.*

Officials hope telling people to remain in their homes and restrict social interactions will slow the spread of the virus and ultimately prevent hospitals from being overrun with sick patients. The request for all residents to stay at home marks the strongest escalation of the Newsom administration’s response to the virus.

“It’s time for all of us to recognize, as individuals and as a community, we need to do more,” Newsom said.

Newsom on Thursday also asked Congress for \$1 billion in federal funds to support the state’s medical response to the novel coronavirus, which he said he expects will infect more than half of all Californians.

*The state projects that 25.5 million people in California will be infected with the coronavirus over an eight-week period,* Newsom said in a letter sent to President Trump on Wednesday requesting the [deployment of the U.S. Navy’s Mercy hospital ship to the Port of Los Angeles](#) through Sept. 1.

In a separate letter sent to the leaders of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, Newsom said the financial aid is crucial to the state’s ability to procure ventilators and other medical supplies, activate state-run hospitals, deploy mobile hospitals and meet other healthcare needs.

“The economic disruption caused by this public health crisis will have immediate and devastating effects on our entire country, including too many families in California,” Newsom wrote. “The magnitude of this

crisis is extraordinary and federal-state-local government coordination will be more critical than ever before.”

[Gov. Gavin Newsom’s letter to President Donald Trump on coronavirus assistance](#)

**The governor’s office declined to provide an explanation of the state’s projection that 25.5 million Californians will be infected with this virus. Instead, a spokesman for the governor said the state’s mitigation efforts could lower that estimate.**

“Gov. Newsom has been honest about the threat of the virus and its impact on the health and welfare of Californians,” said Nathan Click, a spokesman for Newsom. “This projection shows why it’s so critical that Californians take action to slow the spread of the disease — and those mitigation efforts aren’t taken into account in those numbers. The state is deploying every resource at its disposal to meet this challenge, and we continue to ask for the federal government’s assistance in this fight.”

In a briefing Wednesday, Newsom said the Navy hospital ship and two mobile hospitals would help the state care for an anticipated surge in patients. The governor said the state would need roughly 20,000 more beds if more than half of Californians come down with the coronavirus.

“That’s just one scenario plan. There’s others that are more modest. Some may, some cases [may] be more extreme,” Newsom said. “When you’re looking at getting an additional [19,000] to 20,000 beds in your system, you have to look at your existing surge capacity within the healthcare delivery system, and you have to look at procuring additional assets.”

Dr. Karen Smith, a communicable disease expert and former director of the California Department of Public Health, said it’s difficult to determine how many people will be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 because so much remains unknown about the novel coronavirus.

But Smith, who is advising the response to the pandemic in Santa Clara and Mendocino counties, said the virus is spreading so rapidly that it’s time for Newsom to mandate statewide closures of businesses that go beyond actions some counties have taken.

Newsom has so far recommended that bars, restaurant dining rooms and other businesses shutter and left legal orders up to the discretion of county officials, who he has argued are in the best position to determine the appropriate response in their communities.

But Smith said the patchwork approach no longer works at this stage in the fight against the virus.

“I personally think that it will be more effective if it is done statewide than if it is done county by county,” Smith said. “There are some counties that aren’t doing anything, but it’s going to leak and it’s going to leak faster if the mitigation stops at some arbitrary boundary.”

She said even some counties that have adopted mandatory closures are allowing too many types of businesses to stay open. Absent mandatory requirements, she said, residents aren’t taking recommendations seriously enough.

“One way to get their attention is to mandate that all of those businesses close and they stay home,” Smith said. “It’s hard and it’s going to hurt people and it’s going to hurt our most vulnerable people a lot, but so will not doing anything. This is unprecedented, and it takes a long time for people to really get it.”

The governor’s request for additional federal funds came three days after lawmakers at the state Capitol approved a plan to spend as much as \$1 billion on the state’s emergency medical response to the pandemic in anticipation of a surge in sick patients.

**The Democratic governor also requested an expansion of unemployment insurance benefits beyond the 26-week maximum and more funding for Medicaid, federal food assistance, housing and homelessness, state-subsidized early learning and child care and several other safety net programs.**

**Newsom's letter to Congress called for support for small businesses, including rental assistance, zero-interest loans and direct cash assistance, and the creation of a new U.S. Treasury Authority to provide guaranteed loans.**

With schools closed across the state and teachers struggling to implement online and alternative learning programs, the governor also asked for an expansion of technology investments for schools, an increase in Title I funding for schools with a high concentration of poverty, broadband internet upgrades, grants for teachers to adapt to digital-age instruction and more money for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Programs.

"The challenges we face as elected leaders in this crisis are immense," Newsom wrote. "Working together, I am confident that we can meet this moment and take the necessary and immediate steps to address our economic and societal needs as we continue to address — and begin to recover from — this unprecedented crisis."