

## *Virus Is Twice as Deadly for Black and Latino People Than Whites in N.Y.C.*

Officials revealed that disparity on Wednesday as they announced that 779 more people in the state had died of the virus, the second straight day that deaths spiked to new highs.



By **Jeffery C. Mays** and **Andy Newman**

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The coronavirus is killing black and Latino people in New York City at twice the rate that it is killing white people, according to preliminary data released on Wednesday by the city.

The disparity reflected longstanding and persistent economic inequalities and differences in access to health care, Mayor Bill de Blasio said on Wednesday morning.

“There are clear inequalities, clear disparities in how this disease is affecting the people of our city,” Mr. de Blasio said. “The truth is that in so many ways the negative effects of coronavirus — the pain it’s causing, the death it’s causing — tracks with other profound health care disparities that we have seen for years and decades.”

The preliminary death rate for Hispanic people in the city is about 22 people per 100,000; the rate for black people is 20 per 100,000; the rate for white people is 10 per 100,000; and the rate for Asian people is 8 per 100,000. The rates are adjusted for the size and age of the population.

Another 779 people in New York State died of the virus, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo reported on Wednesday, the second straight day that deaths spiked to new highs — even as the mayor acknowledged that the death toll may be higher than the reported figures.

Mr. de Blasio said on Wednesday that there are “100 to 200 people per day” in the city who die at home and are presumed to be virus victims but who are not tested and are left out of the virus death toll.

“This used to be a very, very rare thing in New York City,” the mayor said of people dying at home. “Obviously it’s jumped up, and the only thing that’s changed is Covid-19.”

There was also a glimmer of hope in the state’s hospitalization figures on Wednesday: The number of virus patients in hospitals had increased by 3 percent since Tuesday, the fifth consecutive day that number had increased by less than 10 percent — suggesting that the curve of infection may be flattening.

Mr. de Blasio swept into office in 2013 on a wave of rhetoric about how New York had become a bastion of inequality. Over the last six years of his administration, the mayor has set out to repair that imbalance with universal prekindergarten, increases in the minimum wage for city workers and paid sick leave.

The coronavirus outbreak has now illuminated other gaps between the haves and have-nots in New York City, from the availability of testing sites to the availability of beds and personal protection equipment at hospitals.

In New York City, Latinos represent 34 percent of the people who have died of the coronavirus but make up 29 percent of the city’s population, according to preliminary data from the city’s Health Department. Black people represent 28 percent of deaths but make up 22 percent of the population.

New York City’s racial disparity in deaths is similar to that in other parts of the state, but is actually less pronounced than in other states and cities that have released racial breakdowns of coronavirus cases and deaths.

In Chicago, for example, black people account for 72 percent of virus-related fatalities, even though they make up a little less than a third of the population.

Mr. Cuomo said on Wednesday that some of the difference could be attributed to poorer people having more untreated chronic health problems than more-affluent individuals, making them more likely to die if they contract the virus.

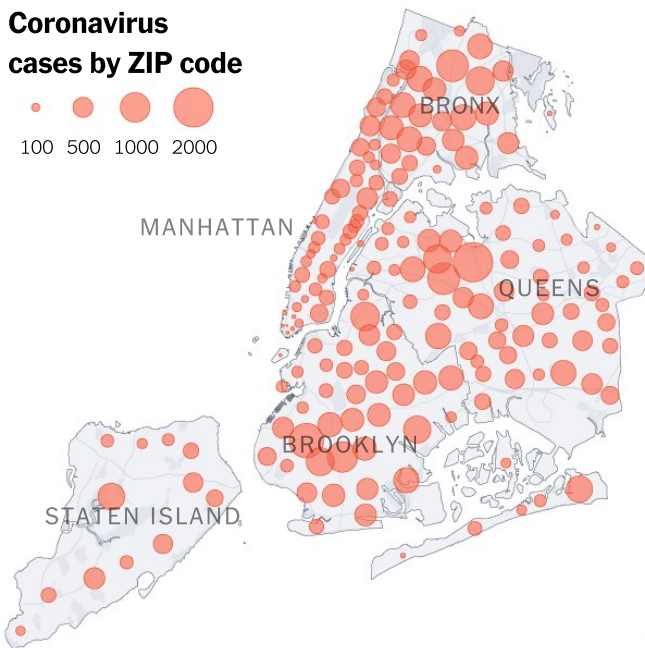
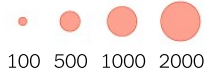
But he said that black and Hispanic people may also be disproportionately represented on the front lines of workers who are at high risk.

“Are more public workers Latino and African-American?” the governor asked. “Who don’t have a choice, frankly, but to go out there every day and drive the bus and drive the train and show up for work and wind up subjecting themselves to, in this case, the virus. Whereas many other people who had the option just absented themselves.”

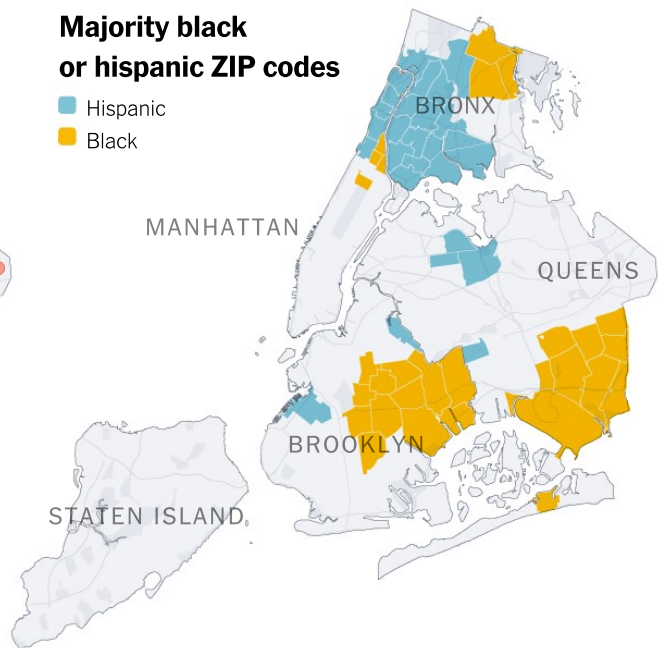
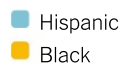
Mr. Cuomo committed on Wednesday to more testing in minority and low-income communities and a study to find out why the disparities exist.

A study from Scott M. Stringer, the city comptroller, found that 75 percent of front-line workers in the city — grocery clerks, bus and train operators, janitors and child care staff — are minorities. More than 60 percent of people who work as cleaners are Latino, and more than 40 percent of transit employees are black.

**Coronavirus cases by ZIP code**



**Majority black or hispanic ZIP codes**



Sources: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; U.S. Census Bureau; sociaexplorer.com • By The New York Times

If New York City is the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak in the country, minorities and people in the city's poorest neighborhoods reside at the core.

Data from the Health Department shows that emergency room visits for flulike symptoms have surged in neighborhoods where the typical household income is less than the city's median of \$60,000, according to an analysis of data by The New York Times. All but one of the top 20 neighborhoods with the lowest percentages of positive tests are in wealthy ZIP codes.

**The Coronavirus Outbreak** >

## Frequently Asked Questions and Advice

Updated June 16, 2020

### **What is pandemic paid leave?**

The [coronavirus emergency relief package](#) gives many American workers paid leave if they need to take time off because of the virus. It gives qualified workers two weeks of paid sick leave if they are ill, quarantined or seeking diagnosis or preventive care for coronavirus, or if they are caring for sick family members. It gives 12 weeks of paid leave to people caring for children whose schools are closed or whose child care provider is unavailable because of the coronavirus. [It is the first time the United States has had widespread federally mandated paid leave](#), and includes people who don't typically get such benefits, like part-time and gig economy workers. But the measure excludes at least half

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"We are watching, in real time, racial disparities and the pandemic of poverty," said Michael Blake, an assemblyman from the Bronx whose district overlaps with one of the poorest congressional districts in the country.

Mr. Blake and other elected officials have called on the governor and mayor to set up more rapid testing sites in places like the South Bronx and southeast Queens, as well as a field hospital and temporary housing for medical and military personnel.

Mr. de Blasio and Dr. Oxiris Barbot, the city's health commissioner, stressed that members of the city's Hispanic community might have been discouraged from seeking health care because of the anti-immigrant rhetoric that has dominated the national discourse in recent years.

“The overlay of the anti-immigrant rhetoric across this country, I think, has real implications in the health of our community,” Dr. Barbot said Wednesday.

Mr. de Blasio said the city would increase its efforts to make sure the city’s public hospitals, where many poor and uninsured people go for treatment, have all the resources they need, including ventilators and personal protective equipment. The city will also make it easier for people calling 311 to speak to a health care worker in their language about the virus.

“This is about the most essential concept of ensuring that everyone gets health care regardless of their background, regardless of their ZIP code, regardless of their income,” Mr. de Blasio said.

The mayor had said on Tuesday that providing ethnicity data was less of a focus in a “crisis atmosphere.”

But Eric Adams, the Brooklyn borough president, said that not releasing the data had caused mistrust in minority communities. “There has been an outer-borough response to Covid-19 and a Manhattan response,” he said. “The allocation of resources should go to the area of higher needs.”

Malo Hutson, an associate professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation and director of the school’s Urban Community and Health Equity Lab, said that the mayor’s challenge to lessen the inequities exposed by the outbreak was daunting.

“It’s one thing to raise the issue and say there are a disproportionate amount of blacks and low-income people who become infected with coronavirus,” Professor Hutson said. “It’s another to turn this into policy.”