

TRUMP: HOLD ON A LITTLE LONGER

Extends guideline another month

By **RICK SOBEY**
and **ERIN TIERNAN**

The coronavirus death rate in the U.S. is likely to surge in two weeks, President Trump said Sunday as he announced he will extend the nation's social distancing guidelines to April 30.

The president had previously called for reopening businesses by Easter, on April 12, but infectious disease experts have said that would be too early. The highly contagious disease continues to spread at a rapid rate, reaching over 139,000 cases across the country Sunday according to John's Hopkins University.

"Nothing would be worse than declaring victory before the victory is won," Trump said at a White House press conference. "That would be the greatest loss of all."

Modeling estimates show the death rate peak will hit in two weeks, he said.

"Therefore, we will be extending our guidelines

to April 30th to slow the spread," Trump said.

"We can expect that by June 1st, we will be well on our way to recovery," the president said. "We think by June 1st, a lot of great things will be happening."

If everyone follows the social-distancing guidelines, the "faster this whole nightmare will end," Trump continued.

Extending the guidelines until the end of April was a "wise and prudent decision," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Massachusetts has begun to see triple-digit increases in the number of positive cases almost daily. The total number of cases climbed to 4,955 — 940 of them in Suffolk County.

"I expect to see these numbers going up as this week goes on," Walsh said Sunday on WCVB TV's "On The Record."

"People keep talking about the surge and we haven't seen the surge yet," the mayor said.

Speaking to reporters

from City Hall Plaza on Sunday, Walsh chided Boston residents who gathered in groups at parks around the city this weekend to play basketball, tennis or sit in circles and talk.

"This is not social distancing," Walsh said.

"Quite honestly, you're putting other people at risk by doing this," Walsh added, noting the city was "taking new measures" like zip-tying basketball nets to discourage people from gathering in public places.

Walsh said the virus has struck the city's homeless population, which had its first positive case late last week.

The city has added 550 beds to help with quarantining homeless individuals who may have come in contact with the coronavirus — including 250 by reactivating a shuttered Boston Medical Center building, 172 beds at a Suffolk University dorm and 70 more beds by repurposing a former long-term acute care hospital in



Brighton, Walsh
announced Sunday.



GETTING READY: President Donald Trump speaks during a coronavirus task force briefing in the Rose Garden of the White House, Sunday. He extended the nation's social distancing guidelines to the end of April. ^{AP}



NANCY LANE / HERALD STAFF

INCREASED CAPACITY: A facility with 70 beds at a former hospital at 1515 Commonwealth Ave. in Brighton will be converted to care for the homeless during the COVID-19 crisis.