



Governors of 10 States Will Require 'Contact Tracing' to Reopen

The Clinton Global Initiative is promoting contact tracing and building an "army" of investigators to track people and their personal contacts. California Governor Newsom and New York Governor Cuomo are strong supporters of the program. Newsom said that "getting back to some sense of normalcy" is dependent on the government's ability to monitor people and invade their privacy with contact tracing. Freedom to move out of one's home will depend on COVID tests. The common PCR test has an 80% false-positive result in people without symptoms. New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Massachusetts have agreed to coordinate the reopening of their states. Contact tracing will be part of the plan to reopen. California, Oregon, and Washington also will include contact tracing with the lifting of restrictions. -GEG

President Trump's decision on Tuesday to back off his insistence that he would decide when states reopen their economies came after governors grew increasingly frustrated with the White House over his comments, and moved to coordinate their own efforts.

Ten governors, all but one of whom is a Democrat, have formed two multi-state coalitions on both coasts to determine how and when to ease restrictions put in place to slow the spread of

the coronavirus, planning that state officials say has begun in earnest.

The dispute between the states and the president began Monday, when Mr. Trump said he had the “total” authority to reopen the economy, even though individual governors issued orders for their states.

“When someone’s the president of the United States, the authority is total,” Mr. Trump said, a claim that flew in the face of constitutional delineations of power. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo was among the governors who dismissed the president’s comment, calling it “absurd” during an appearance Tuesday on “CBS This Morning.”

“He has total authority to open up the economy – then why didn’t he have authority to close the economy? Why did he leave it to the states and the governors to close it down?” Cuomo asked.

Mr. Trump walked back his inflammatory comments on Tuesday evening, saying “the governors are responsible” for reopening their economies. He said his administration would “authorize” governors “of each individual state to implement a reopening – and a very powerful reopening – plan of their state at a time and in a matter as most appropriate.”

Even before the president conceded that states would take the lead, governors in the Northeast and on the West Coast had begun developing plans to gradually reopen sectors of the economy while preventing a resurgence of infections.

Northeastern coalition

The governors of seven northeastern states announced Monday that they would join forces to develop plans to begin lifting restrictions on individuals and businesses.

The northeastern alliance – which for now includes New York,

New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Massachusetts – could expand in the coming days to include other New England states like Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker is the only Republican currently in the coalition.

Cuomo's office said the group consists of one health expert, one economic development expert and the respective chief of staff from each state who "work together to develop a fully integrated regional framework to gradually lift the states' stay at home orders while minimizing the risk of increased spread of the virus."

"Now it is time to start opening the valve slowly and carefully while watching the infection rate meter so we don't trigger a second wave of new infections," Cuomo said in a statement. "This is not a light switch that we can just flick on and everything goes back to normal – we have to come up with a smart, consistent strategy to restart the systems we shut down and get people back to work."

George Helmy, chief of staff to New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, described "rigorous and regular" conversations among the leaders of northeastern states that begin around 6 a.m. and continue well past 11 p.m. over text, email and quick phone calls. Helmy said the council has begun developing plans to address a range of issues that come with easing restrictions.

"The first question is defining the date, but you can't define that until you've sussed out the plan," Helmy told CBS News. "And that means figuring out testing – how, who, where, when – [and] tracing: how do we trace these people, how do we do contact tracing and what do we need to do that?"

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