



NEWS



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76-YEAR-OLD WOMAN SUFFERS SMOKE INHALATION IN HOUSE FIRE IN JOSHUA TREE

Staff Writer, Z107.7 FM News

Posted: January 28, 2020



Firefighters punch a hole in the roof of a home in the 63400 block of Jadeite Street in Joshua Tree Monday morning. San Bernardino County Fire photo

A 76-year-old woman suffered smoke inhalation from a residential structure fire in Joshua Tree Monday morning. **County Fire** Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle said firefighters from Joshua Tree, Yucca Valley and Twentynine Palms were called to the blaze in the 63400 block of Jadeite Street in Joshua Tree at 8:25 a.m. Smoke from the fire could be seen for miles, and firefighters arrived to find the house fully involved in flames. A neighbor found the resident unconscious just inside the home's front door and pulled her outside and managed to revive her before first responders arrived. She was alert and talking when Morongo Basin Ambulance took her to Hi-Desert Medical Center where she was then flown to Arrowhead Medical Center. Tuttle said it took firefighters about 30 minutes to get the fire under control; the home, and a nearby motorhome, are a complete loss. The origin and cause of the fire are under investigation.

<http://z1077fm.com/76-year-old-woman-suffers-smoke-inhalation-in-house-fire-in-joshua-tree/>

Fire crews knock down Joshua Tree blaze, burn victim flown to hospital

Sam Benson Smith, KESQ Channel 3 News

Posted: January 27, 2020, 2:35 pm



San Bernardino County Fire crews knocked down a house fire in Joshua Tree Monday morning.

One victim was transported airlifted to an area burn center for treatment due to injuries sustained in the fire. The blaze was reported at the intersection of Jadeite Street and Flamingo Avenue at 8:45 a.m.

By 9:40 a.m., crews successfully knocked down the fire and transitioned to salvage and overhaul. An ambulance, investigative team, and utility company officials also responded to the scene.

The victim's condition was not released. The cause of the fire was not known at the time of this publication.

<https://kesq.com/news/2020/01/27/fire-crews-knock-down-joshua-tree-blaze-burn-victim-flown-to-hospital/>

San Manuel shows appreciation to Inland Empire wildfire first responders

Staff Writer, Inland Empire Community News

Posted: January 27, 2020



Photo San Manuel: San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Chairwoman Lynn Valbuena and Business Committee Member Johnny Hernandez pose with San Manuel employees and Inland Empire first responders outside of the Bear Springs Hotel.

The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians hosted first responders from San Bernardino, Redlands, Highland, Yucaipa and Loma Linda at the Bear Springs Hotel Event Center for a special thank you brunch on Thursday, Jan. 23. In 2019, the nearest fire, police and paramedics were on-scene to face down threats from the Hillside, Old Water and Sandalwood Fires. These brave men and women are not only heroes here at home, but across the region as they jumped in to help with the 46, Hill and Tick fires among others.

To show their appreciation, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and San Manuel Casino treated first responders to breakfast burritos from local favorite Rosa Marias and a BBQ lunch provided by San Manuel Casino's Just Barbeque. The gathering was an open house-style reception from 9 -2 p.m.

“We want to thank all of the first responders for always putting the Inland Empire community and the safety of its residents first,” said San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Chairwoman Lynn Valbuena. “It does not go unnoticed that these brave men and women sacrifice time with their families to protect ours.”

She concluded with a moment of silence for the three American firefighters who just recently lost their lives battling the wildfires in Australia.

Joining Chairwoman Valbuena was Business Committee Member Johnny Hernandez Jr. who also spoke on behalf of the Tribe during a noontime presentation. In attendance were Cal Fire, Redlands Fire, Yucaipa Fire, **San Bernardino County Fire**, US Forest Service, AMR, San Bernardino City Police Department, and the Central and Highland stations of San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

This appreciation event comes on the heels of a \$1.1 million donation made by San Manuel to fire relief efforts in late 2019. The donation helped support the California Fire Foundation, California Community Foundation, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians and Dry Creek Rancheria, Sonoma County Animal Services, Family Service Association of Redlands.

<http://iecn.com/san-manuel-shows-appreciation-to-inland-empire-wildfire-first-responders/>

US State Department charter flight to depart China amid coronavirus outbreak

Amir Vera, CNN

Posted: January 28, 2020

(CNN)A California-bound flight chartered by the US State Department was scheduled to leave the city at the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak in China on Wednesday morning local time, a department official said.

About 240 Americans could be on the flight from Wuhan Tianhe International Airport. It will stop to refuel in Anchorage, Alaska, before arriving early Wednesday in Ontario, California, about 35 miles east of downtown Los Angeles, according to Alaska Department of Health and Social Services spokesman Clinton Bennett.

About three dozen US diplomats and their families are expected to be on board, a US official with knowledge of the matter told CNN. The State Department has said American citizens can board on a reimbursable basis if space is available.

Priority has also been given to US citizens who are "most at risk for contracting coronavirus" if they stay in city, the State Department official said. There are about 1,000 Americans living in Wuhan.

"All passengers will be subject to CDC screening, health observation, and monitoring requirements," the State Department said in a statement.

There will be three health checks for people on the flight, according to Ivar Satero, director of the San Francisco International Airport Director Ivar Satero.

The State Department issued a Level 4 advisory for Wuhan, meaning "no American should travel to Wuhan while this virus continues to have impact," Vice President Mike Pence said Monday.

The department also ordered personnel working at the US Consulate General in Wuhan -- the epicenter of the outbreak -- to depart for the United States, the official said in a statement Monday.

The order came on the same day as the Centers for Disease Control said on its website that it was monitoring for symptoms of the Wuhan coronavirus at 20 US airports.

The CDC had previously enhanced screening of passengers from Wuhan, China, at five airports: John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, San Francisco International Airport, Los Angeles International Airport, Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

More than 100 people have died

The State Department issued a Level 4 advisory for Wuhan, meaning "no American should travel to Wuhan while this virus continues to have impact," Vice President Mike Pence said Monday.

Also on Monday, the CDC raised its travel precautions for China to its highest of three levels, "warning," which advises travelers to "avoid nonessential travel" to the country.

More than 100 people have died from the Wuhan coronavirus and more than 4,000 cases have been confirmed across China. Five cases of the disease have been confirmed in the US, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The virus can be spread before any symptoms appear, Chinese health authorities said Sunday, meaning carriers may not realize they are infected before they transmit the virus to others.

Ontario Airport said in a statement Monday it has been working closely with federal, state, county and city partners to prepare for the arrival of the Wuhan flight. The airport has "conducted extensive training in managing situations such as this" and health, safety and security preparations are underway ahead of the flight's planned arrival, the statement read.

Ontario Airport will operate under normal operations during the flight's arrival, and the facility is taking steps to minimize risk to other travelers, staff, and the community, the statement read.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/01/28/health/coronavirus-cdc-us-evacuate-americans-china-tuesday/index.html>

Flight Taking U.S. Citizens Out of Wuhan, China Headed to Ontario Airport Amid Coronavirus Concerns

Anthony Kurzweil and Jennifer Gould, KTLA 5 News

Posted: January 28, 2020, 7:14 am

A flight carrying U.S. diplomats, family members and other Americans out of Wuhan, China, as a potentially deadly form of coronavirus continues to spread is expected to land at Ontario International Airport Wednesday.

About 240 U.S. citizens, including nine children, will be screened for symptoms of the Wuhan coronavirus before boarding the plane in China, according to a statement from David Wert, a public information officer for San Bernardino County.

The flight, chartered by the U.S. government, is expected to leave Tuesday night before stopping in Anchorage, Alaska, to refuel. Passengers will again be screened before the plane continues on to Southern California.

"No occupants who present symptoms of illness will be allowed to proceed into the continental United States," Wert said in the statement.

The passengers who do continue on are scheduled to land in Ontario sometime Wednesday.

Upon arrival, the passengers will again be screened and could be monitored in temporary living quarters at the airport for up to two weeks, the statement read.

The arriving passengers will remain "far removed from the passenger terminals and other public areas," Wert stated.

Airport staff have been working with federal, state, county and city partners in training for this possibility, a statement from Ontario International Airport read.

Regular airport operations are not expected to be impacted.

More than 4,500 cases have been diagnosed since the Wuhan coronavirus was discovered last month in central China. The death toll has climbed to more than 100 people.

Five cases have been reported in the United States, including one in Los Angeles County and one in Orange County.

<https://ktla.com/2020/01/28/flight-from-wuhan-china-to-land-at-ontario-international-airport-amid-coronavirus-concerns/>

ONT may be destination of plane bringing U.S. citizens from region of China that is epicenter of coronavirus outbreak

Staff Writer, Fontana Herald News

Posted: January 28, 2020

Ontario International Airport may be the destination of an airplane bringing U.S. citizens from the region of China that is the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak, officials said.

San Bernardino County has been notified by the State Office of Emergency Services that ONT may serve as the repatriation point for up to 240 U.S. citizens, including nine children, arriving from the Wuhan region of China in a U.S. State Department-chartered aircraft.

"County departments and personnel are working closely with our state, city, and ONT partners to prepare for this possible repatriation, focusing on ensuring the arriving citizens are free of any illness before clearing them to proceed to their respective U.S. destinations, and protecting the San Bernardino County community from the possibility of exposure to any contagions," said David Wert, the county's public information officer, in a news release.

ONT was designated by the federal government as the official repatriation center for California about a decade ago, and various county departments have participated in numerous comprehensive repatriation exercises with state and federal agencies during the past several years to ensure the county and all other agencies are prepared for this type of event, Wert said.

The occupants of the aircraft will consist entirely of U.S. State Department employees, U.S. contractors who have been working in China, and other U.S. citizens. The aircraft will first arrive in Alaska, where occupants will be examined by personnel from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. No occupants who present symptoms of illness will be allowed to proceed into the continental United States.

Upon arrival in the continental U.S., possibly ONT, aircraft occupants will again be screened by CDC personnel and monitored for up to two weeks.

"Highly trained professionals from the County Department of Public Health, County Office of Emergency Services, and other County departments are establishing a reception area and temporary living quarters in a space at ONT far removed from the passenger terminals and other public areas. Ontario police and other public safety personnel are prepared to ensure no unauthorized persons enter or exit the area," Wert said.

ONT will proceed under normal operations during this period.

"The safety and security of the people of San Bernardino County and all of Southern California is the utmost priority for the County and its partners. All necessary steps will be taken to minimize any risk to our communities," Wert said.

The coronavirus has killed more than 100 people in China as of Jan. 28. There are at least five confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the U.S., according to the CDC, including two in California.

Still, the CDC said that the risk to U.S. residents is low.

https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/ont-may-be-destination-of-plane-bringing-u-s-citizens/article_e701981c-41e9-11ea-80da-7b52666e1921.html

Chartered Flight with Americans from Coronavirus Region Will Land in Ontario

Chris Jennewein, Times of San Diego

Posted: January 28, 2020

A chartered flight with as many as 240 Americans evacuating the coronavirus-wracked region of China is expected to land at Ontario International Airport.

San Bernardino County officials said Monday night they have been notified that the airport will serve as the repatriation point for State Department employees and other U.S. citizens who are evacuating the Wuhan region.

“County departments and personnel are working closely with our state, city, and ONT partners to prepare for this possible repatriation, focusing on ensuring the arriving citizens are free of any illness before clearing them to proceed to their respective U.S. destinations, and protecting the San Bernardino County community from the possibility of exposure to any contagions,” the county said in a statement.

While no timetable was released, authorities said the aircraft would land first in Alaska, where occupants would be examined by personnel from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. No passengers with symptoms of illness would be allowed to proceed into the continental United States.

Upon arrival in Ontario, passengers would again be screened by CDC personnel and then monitored for up to two weeks.

The Ontario airport was designated by the federal government as the official repatriation center for California about a decade ago, and county agencies have practiced and “are prepared for this type of event,” according to the county’s statement.

The county said temporary living quarters will be established at the airport “far removed from the passenger terminals and other public areas.”

The City of Ontario tweeted that it “is proud it has assets to assist our U.S. government officials returning home... We have trained and exercised with our government partners in preparations for situations like this.”

Two cases of coronavirus involving travelers from Wuhan were reported in Southern California over the weekend.

<https://timesofsandiego.com/life/2020/01/28/chartered-flight-with-americans-from-coronavirus-region-will-land-in-ontario/>

Coronavirus: China must open doors to U.S. experts, health officials say

Lisa M. Kieger, Bay Area News Group / The Mercury News

Posted: January 28, 2020, 10:31 am

As China struggles to control the deadly coronavirus outbreak, it has agreed to share its data and biological material with the international community, removing a major roadblock to global efforts to combat the disease.

But so far, Chinese officials have rebuffed efforts by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control to assist with its public health efforts. The CDC offered to send teams three weeks ago, then again on Monday.

“We are urging China: More cooperation and transparency are the most important steps you can take toward a more effective response,” Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said at a Tuesday morning press conference.

In the U.S., the disease has not yet spread beyond the five reported cases, representing success in containing spread of the mysterious virus.

American airports will expand their screening of passengers, with travelers from China to be assessed at 20 U.S. airports, up from the current five airports, health officials said at a Tuesday morning press conference.

Health officials are urging Americans to not travel to China, but have stopped short of discouraging Chinese travelers to come to the U.S.

Meanwhile, the outbreak continues to expand in China and other Asian nations. On Tuesday, China reported its biggest one-day jump in confirmed cases and fatalities, with 106 deaths from more than 4,500 cases. In a worrying trend, more than half outside the Hubei Province where virus was first detected.

There are more than 60 cases in other countries.

“Diseases are not terribly good at respecting borders,” said HHS’s Azar.

“This is a major public health issue, and we need the best public health people in the world right now,” he said.

China has agreed to allow international experts from the World Health Organization to visit as soon as possible to work with Chinese counterparts, WHO announced on Tuesday morning after a Beijing visit by WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Without studying China’s patients, data and biological samples, outside experts have been unable to answer these central questions:

How deadly is it? There is a high mortality rate in China – but that might not represent the true nature of the illness, because these patients were older or had other illnesses. The mortality rate may drop over time as doctors study a broader set of cases.

How long is the incubation period between exposure and illness? This number varies for related coronaviruses, ranging from 2 to 14 days. That number could be higher or lower for this virus.

Is there asymptomatic transmission? In other coronaviruses, the disease spreads when a person has symptoms. China says it has identified cases acquired from people who had not been sick.

How infectious is it? According to one report, 1.5 to 3 people are infected by one person with the virus. (That compares to a rate of 12 to 18 for measles.) But more data is needed to verify this single report.

On Wednesday, a jet leaving the Hubei Province of China will arrive in southern California's Ontario International Airport with about 230 U.S. passengers from the U.S. embassy, the U.S. State Department said. It will first make a stop in Anchorage, Alaska.

All passengers — reportedly State Department officials and other Americans living in Wuhan, including nine children — will be screened for symptoms of the disease in China prior to departure. The airlift is part of the shutdown of the U.S. consulate in Wuhan, a city on lockdown and at the epicenter of the outbreak.

The Ontario airport is designated as a repatriation center, whereby Americans stationed overseas can return safely.

When the plane arrives in Ontario, the passengers will be taken to a hangar on the opposite side of the airport from the passenger terminals, according to David Wert, a spokesman for San Bernardino County.

After exiting the aircraft, passengers will be reexamined by CDC doctors. There is a possibility that they would remain at the airport for observation for a period of time, Wert said.

In a statement, the county said the Department of Public Health, Office of Emergency Services, and other departments are establishing a reception area and temporary living quarters in a space at ONT removed from the passenger terminals and other public areas.

“The county’s job will be to make this location as comfortable for them as possible, keeping in mind they might be here for up to two weeks,” Wert said.

Passengers will be examined on a regular basis to see if they develop any symptoms, he said.

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/01/28/coronavirus-china-must-open-doors-to-u-s-experts-health-officials-say/>

South Korea and India join Wuhan evacuations over coronavirus

KIM JAEWON and KIRAN SHARMA, Nikkei Asian Review

Posted: January 28, 2020

SEOUL/NEW DELHI -- South Korea is preparing to extract its citizens from the coronavirus-hit Chinese city of Wuhan, joining the U.S. and Japan in an expanding evacuation drive.

A total of 694 South Korean residents have applied for the charter flight, which is to depart on Thursday at the earliest.

The South Korean consulate general's office in Wuhan issued a statement on Monday saying it was arranging the flight.

Chinese nationals will not be allowed on board, even if they are family members of Korean citizens. This rule, the office said, complies with Chinese authorities' regulations. Individuals showing possible symptoms -- such as fever, coughing or vomiting -- will be denied permission to board as well.

On the day of the flight, the office said it will offer shuttle buses from four locations in the city to Wuhan Tianhe International Airport. Passengers will be expected to pay a fee of 300,000 won (\$255) per adult and 225,000 won per child by Feb. 28.

Upon arrival in South Korea, all passengers will be quarantined at a designated facility for 14 days, the consulate general's office said.

India, with no confirmed cases of the coronavirus so far, said on Tuesday it has started preparing to evacuate its citizens affected by the situation.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted that New Delhi's embassy in Beijing "is working out the logistics" and is in touch with Chinese government authorities about the matter.

Chinese media on Tuesday reported that the death toll from the new virus had reached 106, with 4,428 confirmed cases. On Monday, the first death in Beijing was reported.

Meanwhile, the virus continues to spread internationally. There are confirmed cases in Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, the U.S., Canada, Singapore, Malaysia, Nepal, Australia, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, France and Cambodia.

Cambodia confirmed its first case on Monday.

The U.S. is set to fly citizens out of Wuhan on Wednesday. A chartered flight will depart from the international airport that morning bound for Ontario, California. Ontario is about 60 km east of downtown Los Angeles.

Japan, for its part, is aiming to send a plane to Wuhan on Tuesday. Its evacuation flight is expected to arrive back at Tokyo's Haneda Airport on Wednesday.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Coronavirus-outbreak/South-Korea-and-India-join-Wuhan-evacuations-over-coronavirus>

Flight With US Citizens Arriving From Wuhan, China Headed For Ontario Airport

Staff Writer, CBS Los Angeles News

Posted: January 27, 2020, 10:30 pm

ONTARIO (CBSLA) — An airport in San Bernardino was preparing Monday evening for the arrival of up to 240 United States citizens, including nine children, arriving from the Wuhan region of China where the novel strain of coronavirus has already killed at least 106 people.

The repatriation flights come as the U.S. moves to evacuate U.S. State Department employees, contractors who have been working in China and other U.S. citizens from illness-impacted areas. The flight is expected to arrive sometime Wednesday.

According to San Bernardino County officials, the State Office of Emergency Services notified them that Ontario International Airport may serve as the repatriation point for those residents who will be screened for symptoms of the deadly coronavirus before continuing onto their final destinations.

The county said it was working “closely with our state, city and ONT partners to prepare for this possible repatriation, focusing on ensuring the arriving citizens are free of any illness before clearing them to proceed to their respective U.S. destinations, and protecting the San Bernardino County community from the possibility of exposure to any contagions.”

ONT was designated by the federal government as an official repatriation center for the West Coast about a decade ago, and county departments have participated in a number of preparedness exercises with state and federal agencies over the years, the county said.

The plane will first arrive in Alaska, where passengers will be screened by personnel from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention before continuing to the continental United States, possibly landing at ONT.

The county said any passenger exhibiting symptoms of an illness would not be allowed to enter the continental United States. Those who arrive would go through another round of screening by CDC personnel and would be monitored for up to two weeks.

The county said a number of departments were working together to establish a reception area and temporary living quarters in a space at ONT far removed from the passenger terminals and other public areas. Ontario police and other public safety personnel were said to be prepared to ensure no unauthorized persons entered or exited the area.

The airport was said it would operate as normal during the period of repatriation.

<https://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2020/01/27/flight-with-u-s-citizens-arriving-from-wuhan-china-could-be-headed-for-ontario-airport/>

Americans screened at Ontario Airport for spreading virus

Staff Writer, Inland News Today

Posted: January 27, 2020

ONTARIO – (INT) - An estimated 240 U.S. citizens, including nine children, are arriving at Ontario International Airport from the Wuhan region of China where the coronavirus has stricken thousands of people.

The citizens are U.S. State Department employees, U.S. contractors who have been working in China, and other U.S. citizens.

Health officials are making certain the returnees are free of any illness, including the corona virus, before clearing them to proceed to their respective U.S. destinations, and protecting the Inland Empire from the possibility of exposure to any contagious disease.

The Americans are being screened by CDC personnel and monitored for up to two weeks.

Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser said there have been no confirmed cases in his county. But, there have been one each in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

“It is understandable Riverside County residents would be anxious with all the media reports about the growing number of cases, but I want the community to know everything is being done to prevent the illness from spreading here,” said Kaiser. “At this time, we have no evidence these individuals had contacts in Riverside County during the period they would be contagious.”

Ontario International Airport is continuing with normal operations.

<http://www.inlandnewstoday.com/story.php?s=57688>

Americans in Wuhan Prepare to Flee Coronavirus—or Weather Outbreak in Isolated City

James T. Areddy and Liza Lin, The Wall Street Journal

Posted: January 27, 2020

SHANGHAI—Hundreds of Americans were preparing to fly out of Wuhan, bound for California, as fears grew at the epicenter of China’s health crisis. But more U.S. citizens aren’t leaving, having failed to secure a seat on the single U.S.-bound flight—or decided to ride out the emergency where they are.

A State Department evacuation flight promised relief for a segment of Wuhan’s roughly 1,000 Americans, as a lockdown triggered by a coronavirus outbreak turned the focus to the dangers of contagion and a long quarantine in China’s eighth-most-populous city. Roads, restaurants and many shops in Wuhan, a city of 11 million, are now shut as China tries to contain the virus.

A U.S. charter jet was expected to arrive at Wuhan’s closed airport on Tuesday and quickly depart for the U.S., ferrying 230 or so U.S. diplomats, their family members and an “extremely limited” number of private citizens back to the U.S., according to a State Department notice and passengers who have been in contact with the U.S. Embassy in China. The flight is intended primarily to evacuate staff of the U.S. Consulate in Wuhan during a temporary shutdown of the diplomatic mission.

The plane will land in Ontario, Calif., a city about one hour east of Los Angeles, a State Department spokeswoman said Monday. She added that all travelers would be screened for symptoms before departing. During a refueling stop in Anchorage, passengers will disembark into a terminal closed to the general public and receive another health screening before continuing on to California, said Anne Zink, Alaska’s chief medical officer.

Medics will be on the flight, Dr. Zink said. If a passenger shows symptoms between Wuhan and Anchorage, health officials will determine what to do on a case-by-case basis, she said, adding that Anchorage hospitals were prepared to treat any ill passengers.

Representatives for the California state Department of Public Health didn’t respond to requests for comment about the state’s plans for the plane’s arrival.

Vermont native Priscilla Dickie, 35 years old, and her 8-year-old daughter have seats—but she wasn’t sure how she would get to the airport, around 20 miles away, with almost all Wuhan transport shut down. “I have

secured a seat, but the problem is transportation,” she said. Ms. Dickie figured she saw only one car on the roads on Sunday.

Benjamin Wilson is hunkering down. Mr. Wilson, who is from Louisiana and father to a 7-year-old girl, is married to a Wuhan native. The plane wasn’t taking Chinese nationals.

“I would consider sending my daughter, if that were an option,” he said. “But I wouldn’t leave my wife. But if my wife and daughter could travel together, then absolutely yes.”

Wuhan, a transportation hub in central China, is often compared with Chicago, but lacks the comforts that many American expatriates enjoy in more affluent Beijing and Shanghai. Many expatriates are accustomed to traveling to more developed cities for routine medical treatment.

A sprawling metropolis straddling the banks of the Yangtze River, Wuhan is at heart a factory town—what the Chinese government classifies as a second-tier city. Budweiser beer has been brewed there since 1995.

“It’s got the size of New York, but the personality of a backwater town. We always say, it’s country come to town,” said James Dickie, who was married to Priscilla and lived in Wuhan for five years.

Many of the U.S. citizens now in Wuhan and elsewhere across hard-hit Hubei province had flown in to the city before the lockdown to celebrate Saturday’s Lunar New Year with family. Many had heard about a virus, but figured that it was mild and under control.

“When I went to sleep at 10 p.m., everything was normal,” said Rong Shuo, a 38-year-old lawyer and American citizen who arrived in Wuhan last week from her home in San Jose, Calif. On Thursday morning, “when I woke up at 5 a.m., the city was in shutdown mode,” she said. Abruptly announced citywide blockades were under way.

Some Americans said that remaining in Wuhan with loved ones seemed like a safer prospect than getting on an airplane full of people who could be sick or carrying the virus—and who are expecting to face quarantine once they land in the U.S.

“As of right now, my dad is adamant about staying where he is,” said a Brandeis University student who had failed to coax her father back from Wuhan after he flew there for business. “He’s worried about getting sick from people on the plane and potentially bringing it back to us.”

The desperation of some Americans to get out was illustrated by a flood of calls to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing after a weekend report about an evacuation being planned for Sunday was published in The Wall Street Journal, according to a person familiar with the situation and several people who made the calls.

A State Department spokesperson declined to confirm the destination of the flight or whether the passengers would be quarantined upon arrival. “We have been in contact with potential passengers regarding logistics and anticipated screening procedures,” the spokesperson said.

While the timeline has shifted repeatedly, word of brewing evacuation plans set off a scramble for information that Americans said was complicated by their own language challenges, local internet controls, limited information from the embassy and the Lunar New Year holidays.

“All my friends in the U.S. were saying, ‘You’ve got to get on that plane,’” said Carrie Wang, a Wuhan native who lives near Phoenix and arrived in China last week to spend the holiday with her family.

The computer company executive said she emailed the embassy in an effort to secure a spot but also knew her odds weren’t good, with just one flight planned.

By Monday night she hadn’t heard anything, so she resigned herself to a shut-in life, with enough food to last a couple of weeks. “I’m with my family and I could work,” she said. “I might treat this as an extended overseas trip.”

Mr. Wilson, the Louisiana native, is doing his best to keep his family safe. When he steps outdoors in Wuhan, he wears gloves, a rain jacket and pants on top of his regular clothing, and a mask over his mouth. He touches as little as possible and is buying only food that comes wrapped in plastic. When he returns home, he wipes everything down in antibacterial soap. The mask goes in the trash.

“I’m not scared to go outside,” he said. “I’m just trying to minimize exposure to other people.”

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/americans-in-wuhan-prepare-to-flee-coronavirus-or-weather-outbreak-in-isolated-city-11580149927>

Flight leaving center of coronavirus outbreak in China bound for Ontario International Airport

Steve Scauzillo and Sandra Emerson, San Gabriel Valley Tribune / Daily Bulletin

Posted: January 27, 2020, 2:42 pm



In this file photo, a sales clerk at a pharmacy rings up a purchase of face masks as fears of the coronavirus continues, Friday, Jan 24, 2020 in Chicago. A Chicago woman had become the second U.S. patient diagnosed with the dangerous new virus from China, health officials announced Friday. Late Saturday, officials announced a confirmed case in Orange County, California. (Antonio Perez/Chicago Tribune via AP)

A jet leaving the Wuhan region of China, ferrying about 230 U.S. passengers from the center of the coronavirus outbreak, soon will be headed to Ontario International Airport, the U.S. State Department said on Monday, Jan. 27.

The State Department has chartered a flight that will depart from Wuhan Tianhe International Airport for Ontario on the morning of Wednesday, Jan. 29, China Standard Time. It will arrive at ONT sometime on Wednesday, after first making a stop in Anchorage, Alaska, the State Department confirmed by email.

All passengers — reportedly State Department officials and other Americans living in Wuhan, including nine children — will be screened for symptoms of the disease in China prior to departure. The airlift is part of the shutdown of the U.S. consulate in Wuhan, a city on lockdown and at the epicenter of the outbreak.

China has confirmed more than 2,700 cases of the new virus, with more than 100 deaths. Most have been in the central city of Wuhan where the illness surfaced last month.

Ontario airport officials said they are monitoring the situation and working in partnership with the California Department of Public Health in Sacramento, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health.

“The safety and security of our facilities are of utmost importance to ONT, and we are taking whatever steps are necessary to minimize the risk to our customers, our staff and the community at large,” the airport said in a prepared statement on Monday. The airport will remain open under normal operations.

ONT is designated as a repatriation center, whereby Americans stationed overseas can return safely, said ONT spokesman Steve Lambert.

This would be the first time the airport would be used as a repatriation center, said David Wert, a spokesman for San Bernardino County.

Wert said after passengers deplaning at ONT are reexamined by CDC doctors, there’s a possibility they would remain at the airport for observation for a period of time.

In a statement, the county said the Department of Public Health, Office of Emergency Services, and other departments are establishing a reception area and temporary living quarters in a space at ONT removed from the passenger terminals and other public areas.

“The county’s job will be to make this location as comfortable for them as possible, keeping in mind they might be here for up to two weeks,” Wert said.

Passengers will be examined on a regular basis to see if they develop any symptoms, he said.

When the plane arrives in Ontario, the passengers will be taken to a hangar on the opposite side of the airport from the passenger terminals, Wert explained.

The plane “will come right up the hangar,” he said. “The folks will get off the plane. They would be greeted and they would immediately undergo health screenings.”

Ontario police and other public safety personnel are prepared to ensure no unauthorized persons enter or exit the area.

“Every precaution is going to be taken to contain this to a very small area of the airport until we can make sure there isn’t any kind of threat of contamination,” Wert said.

Wert said the county and the airport have been holding numerous exercises and drills to be ready for any scenario. “Everyone’s been preparing for this for years,” he added. The airport reported that the state’s Medical and Health Coordination Center (MHCC) in Sacramento has been activated.

In Anchorage where the plane would stop for refueling on its way to Ontario, passengers would get off the plane and enter a terminal closed to the general public where they would receive a health screening. Anyone showing signs of being sick will most likely be taken to a hospital in Anchorage and not be allowed to proceed to Ontario, Wert said.

Since the coronavirus surfaced, small numbers of cases have been found outside China in Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Nepal, France and Australia.

The U.S. has confirmed cases in Washington state, Chicago, Arizona and two in Southern California – one each in Orange and Los Angeles counties.

<https://www.dailybulletin.com/2020/01/27/flight-leaving-center-of-coronavirus-outbreak-in-china-bound-for-ontario-airport-reports-say/>

Jet carrying US consulate employees from Wuhan, China headed to Ontario amid coronavirus concerns

Staff Writer, KABC 7 Eyewitness News

Posted: January 27, 2020, 5:22 pm

ONTARIO, Calif. (KABC) -- A chartered jet carrying U.S. consulate employees from China is set to land in Southern California this week. The travelers are expected to take off Wednesday from Wuhan, the center of the coronavirus outbreak, and land at Ontario International Airport.

The employees were ordered to leave China and head to the U.S. by the State Department, a State Department spokesperson told Eyewitness News.

Officials say the passengers will go through three health checks to determine if any of them are infected with the coronavirus, which has already claimed dozens of lives in China.

The consulate employees are returning on an order from the U.S. State Department. Depending on available space, some U.S. citizens may also board the flight, according to a department spokesperson.

The Ontario airport, meanwhile, is expected to proceed with normal operations.

"The safety and security of our facilities are of utmost importance to ONT, and we are taking whatever steps are necessary to minimize the risk to our customers, our staff and the community at large," airport officials said in a written statement.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration is being urged to declare a formal public health emergency.

Five people in the United States have been diagnosed with coronavirus, including one person each in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

<https://abc7.com/5883495/>

As deadly coronavirus spreads, U.S. to expand screening of passengers from China at 20 airports

Gerry Shih, Lena H. Sun, Simon Denyer and Joel Achenbach, *The Washington Post*
January 27, 2020, 7:03 pm

BEIJING — As officials grow increasingly fearful about their ability to contain the fast-spreading outbreak of a novel coronavirus, this metropolis recorded its first death on Monday, hundreds of foreign nationals prepared to flee the country, and the U.S. government warned Americans to avoid all nonessential travel to China and planned to boost airport staff to screen nearly all passengers from there.

In a rare public mea culpa, a Chinese official said Monday that the government had mishandled the early stages of the crisis, which has claimed at least 100 lives and infected more than 4,400 people. Wuhan Mayor Zhou Xianwang, speaking with Chinese state broadcaster CCTV, said his city did not release “timely and satisfactory” information at the start of the epidemic, and he appeared to blame higher-ups in his chain of command.

“I hope everyone can understand that this is an infectious disease, and infectious diseases must be disclosed according to law,” he said. “We can only disclose information after we receive authorization.”

The mayor said 5 million people have already left his city, some before and some after the official quarantine. Meanwhile, more than 700 miles away, Beijing recorded its first death from the outbreak, according to the city’s health commission. A 50-year-old man who visited Wuhan on Jan. 8 developed a fever when he returned home a week later and died Monday — one of the pathogen’s younger victims. Seven other cases of illness in Beijing have been confirmed so far.

Late Monday, a top U.S. health official criticized Chinese authorities for not inviting U.S. and other international investigative agencies to join them in researching the new virus. While China has been more transparent than it was during the 2003 SARS outbreak, U.S. officials are still getting their information through press briefings rather than from direct transfer of scientific data, said Anthony S. Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Fauci pointed out that China’s health minister, Ma Xiaowei, said publicly Sunday that the virus could be transmitted by an infected person even before symptoms appear.

“We really need to know what is the scientific basis of saying the virus is spread by someone who doesn’t have any symptoms,” Fauci told *The Washington Post*. “That was a major potential game-changer that gets spoken to us in a press briefing. We should have seen the data.”

This could affect how the U.S. screens people traveling from China.

“If people can be transmitting and infecting without any symptoms, that has a major impact on how you screen people,” he said.

Amid growing alarm about the disease’s fast spread, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is boosting staffing at 20 U.S. airports that have quarantine facilities. Vice President Pence said Monday that those airports receive 90 percent of airline passengers from China. Previously, passengers from Hubei province were screened and tested at five airports if they showed signs of fever or respiratory illness or have been in contact with a sick person, the CDC said. The expanded effort will take effect in coming days.

Epidemiologists around the globe raced to understand how the virus spreads, how long it incubates before making a person ill, whether it can be contagious even when the person is asymptomatic, and how lethal it is. They said the public should not assume the worst about this outbreak. This virus does not appear to be as deadly as SARS or MERS, two similar coronaviruses that made the jump from animals to humans earlier this century and that were ultimately contained. The victims so far of the new coronavirus have overwhelmingly been over 60 or already ill from other causes.

In the United States, 110 people in 26 states are being tested for possible infection, but only five so far — all people who traveled from Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province in central China — are confirmed to have the infection, the CDC said Monday. No one in the United States has died, and there is no known case yet of the virus spreading within the country.

“We understand people may worry about the new #coronavirus,” CDC Director Robert R. Redfield tweeted Monday. “In today’s connected world, an outbreak anywhere can be a risk everywhere. Risk is dependent on exposure. 2019-nCoV is not spreading in the US at this time. CDC continues to believe the risk to the US public is now low.”

The five confirmed cases are in Southern California, Chicago, Arizona and Washington state. Infections also have been confirmed in France, Germany, South Korea, Japan, Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, Vietnam, Taiwan, Canada and Sri Lanka.

The CDC increased its travel warning to a Level 3 Monday — its highest alert level — urging U.S. citizens to avoid all nonessential travel to China because of the outbreak. The warning says those who travel should avoid all contact with sick people, animal markets and products that come from animals, and wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Among the most urgent questions is whether the unprecedented quarantine around the outbreak’s epicenter, in Hubei, will be effective. Widespread suspicions on Chinese social media that government officials mishandled the early stages of the crisis were fanned dramatically on Monday by the Wuhan’s mayor’s interview.

Dong-Yan Jin, a professor of molecular virology and oncology at Hong Kong University’s School of Biomedical Sciences, said Chinese authorities missed the critical moment to control the epidemic: before the Lunar New Year travel rush began a week ago.

“There was a lack of transparency in Hubei and an unwillingness by local governments to face the music; now, they tend to overcompensate,” Jin said. “You cannot expect that to work miracles and stop the outbreak.”

Viruses can mutate during an outbreak and become more or less deadly, but genetic analysis of the virus from people infected shows no sign of mutation, said Nancy Messonnier, director of the CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, speaking to reporters Monday.

As early as Tuesday, a flight is scheduled to evacuate those working for the U.S. Consulate General in Wuhan, along with other U.S. citizens in the city who are willing to leave. In a statement, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing cautioned, “[we] anticipate that there will be limited capacity to transport private U.S. citizens,” and that “priority will be given to individuals at greater risk from coronavirus.”

The flight back to the United States will land in Ontario, Calif., after refueling in Anchorage, according to a U.S. government official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the details. The U.S. citizens aboard the plane will be evaluated before they board, during the flight and after they arrive in the United States, the official said. Once they arrive in California, they will be isolated for 72 hours and monitored, the official said.

Many other countries, including Japan, France and Sri Lanka, are seeking to evacuate their citizens from the coronavirus epicenter of Wuhan. The German government said Monday that it was still “considering” an evacuation.

Monika Sethuraman, a PhD student from India, described Wuhan as a “ghost town” when she stepped out of her university dormitory for the first time in four days Monday to stock up on supplies. She bought vegetables to last for three weeks. She said the university has asked students to remain confined to their rooms and distributed thermometers.

“Every day before noon, we have to check our temperature and register it on a university portal,” she said.

Debesh Mitra, a postdoctoral scientist at another university in the city, described the situation as “grim.” He said he had avoided leaving the campus for fear of contracting the virus. “We really want to come back [to India] at the earliest,” he said. “All our families are very worried.”

Global markets took a sharp downturn Monday as investors grew increasingly anxious about the swift spread of the coronavirus beyond China. The Dow Jones industrial average plunged 454 points, or about 1.6 percent. The Standard & Poor’s 500 and Nasdaq indexes were also down 1.6 percent and 1.9 percent, respectively.

“Stock markets are selling off this morning on fears that the coronavirus might be harder to contain than previous viral outbreaks,” said Ed Yardeni, president of Yardeni Research.

A reliable estimate of the lethality and infectiousness of the new virus — which experts have been referring to simply as “the novel coronavirus” and which has the temporary technical name of “2019-nCoV”— would require a better understanding of how many people have been infected so far. Many infected by the virus may have thought they simply had a cold.

Officials in the United States and China have said the best estimate so far of the coronavirus’s contagiousness is that it will spread to between 1.5 and 3 people from every person who is sick. That is much less transmissible than measles, for which the rate can be as high as 18. But any number above one is problematic; only by lowering the rate below one can an outbreak be suppressed over time.

An American epidemiologist who helped China contain the 2003 SARS virus plans to return Tuesday to assist his Chinese counterparts with their response. Ian Lipkin, director of Columbia University’s Center for Infection & Immunity, said it’s still too early to predict how widespread or deadly the outbreak will turn out to be.

“Until we have a handle on all of these issues, it’s very difficult to make predictions about the outbreak,” Lipkin said.

He added that putting the outbreak in the context of other prevalent diseases was key: "It's fair to say that every year, there are 30,000 to 40,000 people who die of flu in the United States. It is very unlikely that this will ever reach the level that we annually lose to flu."

https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/as-deadly-coronavirus-spreads-us-to-expand-screening-of-passengers-from-china-at-20-airports/2020/01/27/deb0fb78-412e-11ea-aa6a-083d01b3ed18_story.html

US chartering evacuation flight out of Wuhan coronavirus zone to California for staff, some citizens

Conor Finnegan, abc News

Posted: January 27, 2020, 8:06 pm

The U.S. government is chartering a flight out of Wuhan, China -- the city at the center of the novel coronavirus outbreak -- for U.S. personnel, their families and some U.S. citizens on Wednesday.

The evacuation flight for staff at the consulate general in the city of 11 million will end up in Ontario, California, according to a State Department spokesperson.

All travelers aboard the plane will be screened for symptoms at the airport prior to departure and subject to additional screening, observation and monitoring requirements by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the spokesperson told ABC News in a statement. The charter flight is expected to arrive early Wednesday morning at Ontario International from Wuhan, after refueling in Anchorage, according to a U.S. official with knowledge of the matter.

The CDC is planning to keep everyone on the flight in quarantine in California for at least three days. Those who show illness and need to be tested could be held for as many as 14 days. Passengers will be monitored along the way and if anyone gets sick in the air they may be separated in Alaska and flown onward independently, the U.S. official said.

While around 4,500 people have been sickened in China, the CDC said on Monday that the disease is "not spreading" in the U.S. There have been five confirmed cases so far -- all of whom traveled to Wuhan -- out of 110 individuals being investigated in 26 states.

The consulate general is evacuating the majority of its staff and urging U.S. citizens not to travel to Hubei province, all but closing its doors amid the outbreak that has rattled nerves around the world.

Seats on the charter flight are also open to American citizens, with an alert sent Sunday notifying those in China and registered with the U.S. mission. American citizens are required to pay for their seat, and capacity is limited, with priority given to those most at risk of infection, per the spokesperson.

The initial notice that went out Sunday said the flight would travel to San Francisco, but Mayor London Breed and Ivar Satero, director of San Francisco International Airport, said Monday that this was no longer true.

The flight will first land in Anchorage, Alaska, before continuing to Ontario International Airport, just east of Los Angeles, according to Satero. He did not provide exact details on departure or arrival, and the State Department spokesperson said only that the flight would leave Wednesday morning local time in Wuhan.

"Ontario International Airport (ONT) is working closely with our federal, state, county and city partners to plan for the possibility of a flight carrying U.S. government officials and private citizens returning this week from Wuhan, China," Ontario International Airport said in a statement. "Ontario International is an official repatriation center for the West Coast and has conducted extensive training in managing situations such as this. In the event that the returning passengers do arrive at ONT, preparations are being made to ensure that proper health, safety and security procedures are followed."

The State Department raised its travel advisory for China on Monday, urging American citizens to "reconsider travel" to the whole country. There has been a "do not travel" warning in place since Thursday for Hubei province when the consulate general announced it was pulling out all nonemergency personnel.

The CDC raised its travel warning on Tuesday to match the State Department's, urging travelers to avoid all non-essential travel to China.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/us-chartering-evacuation-flight-wuhan-coronavirus-zone-california/story?id=68571310>

Coronavirus: Ontario Intl. Airport Plans For Wuhan Evacuees

Toni McAllister, Patch News

Posted: January 27, 2020, 5:06 pm

ONTARIO, CA — Amid an outbreak of coronavirus (nCoV) in Wuhan, China, officials at Ontario International Airport announced Monday afternoon that they are working with federal, state, county and city partners to plan for the possibility of a flight carrying U.S. government officials and private citizens returning this week from the Chinese city.

Thursday, the U.S. Department of State ordered the departure of all non-emergency U.S. personnel and their family members from Wuhan. Then over the weekend, it was announced that Washington was arranging a charter flight to evacuate American diplomats and citizens from Wuhan in the Hubei province.

The Mercury News reported Monday that the Wuhan-based Americans will be flown into Ontario International, and the airport has issued a statement: "Ontario International is an official repatriation center for the West Coast and has conducted extensive training in managing situations such as this. In the event that the returning passengers do arrive at ONT, preparations are being made to ensure that proper health, safety and security procedures are followed."

Airport officials said Ontario International will "proceed under normal operations" during any arrivals and screening.

"The safety and security of our facilities are of utmost importance to ONT, and we are taking whatever steps are necessary to minimize the risk to our customers, our staff and the community at large," the Ontario International statement read.

The State Department is warning Americans that Chinese authorities have imposed strict travel restrictions in the area around Wuhan.

"Travelers should be aware that the Chinese government could prevent them from entering or exiting parts of Hubei province," the department said in a released statement. "Travelers should be prepared for travel restrictions to be put into effect with little or no advance notice."

There are currently no confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the Inland Empire.

<https://patch.com/california/banning-beaumont/coronavirus-ontario-intl-airport-plans-wuhan-evacuees>

Coronavirus: Cancel travel to China, say health officials

Lisa M. Krieger, The Mercury News / MSN.com

Posted: January 27, 2020

Health officials are recommending that Americans avoid all non-essential travel to China, a major step that further isolates the two nations as Asia grapples with a fast-spreading respiratory illness caused by a new coronavirus.

The Centers for Disease Control's travel warning – level 3, its highest, issued Monday afternoon – appears designed to not only protect Americans abroad, but to reduce the chance of domestic outbreaks sparked by returning travelers.

Already, stocks tumbled on Monday's news of the virus's spread, with tourist companies and airlines dependent on Chinese tourism particularly hard hit. The S&P 500 fell 1.6 percent, the sharpest decline since Oct. 2.

Tech companies, despite shared investment and collaboration with China, are likely to follow the government's example.

A Facebook spokesperson in Shanghai told Reuters that the company has asked employees to suspend non-essential travel to mainland China to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The company told employees who had traveled to China to work from home.

Also on Monday, the United States government announced that it is evacuating diplomats and staff from its Wuhan embassy and will fly them in a chartered plane to southern California's Ontario Airport, about 38 miles east of downtown Los Angeles, on Wednesday morning.

All passengers will be screened for symptoms in Wuhan prior to departure and will be monitored upon arrival in California. The Chinese consulate, first established in 1861, provides emergency services to U.S. citizens in the region and promotes economic and cultural exchanges.

Meanwhile, health officials sought to calm fears that deliveries of Chinese goods are safe. Even the worse case scenario — say, someone sneezes into your Apple iPhone 11 package, then ships it to your home by air via United Parcel Service or FedEx — isn't dangerous. Based on related research, it is unlikely that the virus can survive more than a few hours on a product or its packaging.

"In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures," Dr. Nancy Messonnier, director of the Center for Disease Control's Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said in a Monday press briefing.

But human-to-human transmission is well established, with an average of 1.5 to 3 people becoming infected from a single sick person.

The evacuation and new travel recommendations are signs of how seriously U.S. officials take the outbreak, which continues to spread throughout Asia and the rest of the world. It has caused 2,700 illnesses in China and claimed 82 lives. Nearly 60 million people have been affected by partial or full quarantines in Wuhan and two adjacent cities.

There are more than 60 confirmed cases in 16 nations, including five in the United States. In the Bay Area, hospitals say they are preparing for cases and are vigilant for patients with recent travel in Wuhan, where the coronavirus is believed to have originated.

Even before the official recommendation, travelers were canceling their plans. An increasing number of China's tourist attractions have closed, and transportation is interrupted.

Late last week, the night before her flight to Shanghai, Oakland's Cynthia Gorney got word that her two-week teaching job was cancelled. The school's main concern was for its students, who travel there from other parts of the country, she said.

She had already packed her bags, making extra room for two big boxes of surgical masks and latex gloves.

"I was emotionally derailed for about an hour. Discombobulated," said Gorney, a contributing writer at National Geographic and professor emeritus at UC Berkeley's School of Journalism. "But my friends and family were quite relieved."

China is currently the fourth most popular tourist destination in the world behind France, the United States, and Spain, with most of its visitors from Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. Tourism accounted for 11 percent of China's economy in 2017, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council. It projects that by 2028, China's economy will benefit from travel and tourism more than any other country, contributing \$2,731.5 billion to its gross domestic product.

Many airlines are offering changes and cancellations for flights to, from and through mainland China, for travel through early February, with terms varying by carrier. Hotels are also making it easier to change plans. Hilton, Accor, InterContinental Hotels and Hyatt are easing restrictions. Policies vary among tour operators. Some are altering their itineraries.

So far, the outbreak pales in comparison to the number of people killed every year from flu, said Gorney.

But travel warnings are warranted due to uncertainty about the virus, the lack of a vaccine and growing evidence that asymptomatic people may carry the virus, she said.

"It'll prevent travelers from bringing it back to the U.S., and that's legitimate," she said. "I don't want to come home and transmit it to someone with a compromised immune system, or a baby."

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/travel/news/coronavirus-cancel-travel-to-china-say-health-officials/ar-BBZnZuD?ocid=hplocalnews>

Coronavirus: U.S. diplomats evacuated from China to California

Lisa M. Krieger, Bay Area News Group / The Mercury News

Posted: January 27, 2020, 2:23 pm

To help protect Wuhan-based Americans from exposure to the mysterious coronavirus, the United States government announced on Monday afternoon that it will fly diplomats and staff to southern California's Ontario Airport, about 38 miles east of downtown Los Angeles, on Wednesday morning.

The embassy employees will not be flown to San Francisco International Airport, as previously reported.

A chartered flight will evacuate the entire staff, as space is available, from the U.S. Consulate General in Wuhan, one of the seven American diplomatic and consular posts in the People's Republic of China.

All travelers will be screened for symptoms at the airport prior to departure and will be monitored upon arrival.

"The Department of State has ordered U.S. Consulate General Wuhan personnel to depart for the United States," according to a State Department statement issued Monday afternoon.

First established in 1861, the consulate provides emergency services to U.S. citizens in the region and promotes economic and cultural exchanges.

The move is a sign of how seriously U.S. officials take the outbreak, which continues to spread throughout Asia and the rest of the world. It has caused 2,700 illnesses in China and claimed 82 lives. Nearly 60 million people have been affected by partial or full quarantines in Wuhan and two adjacent cities.

There are more than 60 confirmed cases in 16 nations, including five in the United States.

In the Bay Area, hospitals say they are preparing for cases and are vigilant for patients with recent travel in Wuhan, where the coronavirus is believed to have originated.

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/01/27/coronavirus-u-s-diplomats-evacuated-from-china-to-southern-california/>

Coronavirus outbreak: US urges Americans to 'reconsider' China travel, plans to move personnel out of Wuhan

Louis Casiano, Fox News

Posted: January 27, 2020

The State Department on Monday urged Americans to reconsider traveling to Wuhan, China, the epicenter of the coronavirus, and said it ordered the departure of all non-emergency U.S. personnel and their families out of the country.

The travel advisory increase from Level 2 to Level 3 comes as Chinese authorities continue to impose quarantines and travel restrictions in and around Wuhan, where the virus was first reported last year.

HOW DANGEROUS IS CORONAVIRUS?

At least 80 people have died and nearly 2,000 have been infected. The warning said travelers should avoid non-essential travel to China. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also issued a Level 3 warning to avoid all travel to China.

The agency said it has chartered a flight for American government personnel in Wuhan for Wednesday morning. The flight will depart Wuhan Tianhe International Airport and ultimately arrive in Ontario, Calif., a State Department official said.

Passengers will be screened for symptoms at the airport in Wuhan before leaving. Some U.S. citizens will be offered space on the flight but will have to reimburse the government.

SILICON VALLEY SCRAMBLES TO STOP CORONAVIRUS MISINFORMATION

The government has limited ability to provide "emergency services" to American citizens in the Hubei province, where Wuhan is located and at least 76 people have died, the State Department said.

China authorities have been grappling with how to contain the pneumonia-like virus, known as 2019-nCoV. The government has banned the trade of wild animals, restricted travel in and around Wuhan and locked down 17 cities -- impacting 50 million people.

Wuhan also banned most vehicle use, including private cars, in downtown areas.

Other countries are also taking precautions. Mongolia has closed its border with China and Malaysia has halted the issue of visas to people visiting from Wuhan.

Five confirmed cases of the virus have been reported in the U.S. Health officials said there are 110 cases under investigation. The CDC said in an update on Monday that five of the cases in the U.S. tested positive for the novel coronavirus, or 2019-nCoV, and 32 so far had produced negative results.

<https://www.foxnews.com/health/coronavirus-outbreak-us-reconsider-china-travel-plans-to-move-personnel-out-of-wuhan>

Ontario Airport is a designated Repatriation Center and prepared for Wuhan, China flight

Hugo Valdez, Victor Valley News Group

Posted: January 28, 2020

ONTARIO, Calif. (VVNG.com) — An evacuation flight carrying hundreds of U.S. Citizens traveling from Wuhan, China, where the Coronavirus originated, will possibly land at Ontario International Airport (ONT) this week.

The U.S. government is chartering the flight carrying up to 240 American Citizens, including nine children that will first arrive in Alaska, where occupants will be examined by personnel from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The occupants of the aircraft consist entirely of U.S. State Department employees, U.S. contractors who have been working in China, and other U.S. citizens, officials said.

“No occupants who present symptoms of illness will be allowed to proceed into the continental United States. Upon arrival in the continental U.S., possibly ONT, aircraft occupants will again be screened by CDC personnel and monitored for up to two weeks,” stated a county of San Bernardino news release.

Officials are focused on ensuring the arriving citizens are free of any illness before clearing them to proceed to their respective U.S. destinations and protecting the San Bernardino County community from the possibility of exposure to any contagions.

What is Coronavirus?

A coronavirus is a kind of common virus that causes an infection in your nose, sinuses, or upper throat. There is no coronavirus vaccine which is spread the same way other cold-causing viruses do and can infect both animals and humans. The Coronaviruses were first identified in the 1960s, but their origin is unknown.

In early January 2020, the World Health Organization identified a new type: 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in China. By late January, there were 300 confirmed cases in China and a death count that was still in the single digits, but rising. And despite airport screenings, a traveler had brought the first case to the U.S.

WebMD.com reports that most coronaviruses are not dangerous and almost everyone gets a coronavirus infection at least once in their life, most likely as a young child.

What is a repatriation center?

Repatriation is the return of a U.S. citizen from a foreign country. The U.S. Repatriation Program (Program) exists to provide temporary assistance to citizens and their dependents that have repatriated and are in need of assistance.

Why Ontario Airport?

The Ontario and Oakland Airports were designated by the federal government as the official repatriation centers for California, about a decade ago. Various County departments have participated in numerous comprehensive repatriation exercises with state and federal agencies during the past several years to ensure the County and all other agencies are prepared for this type of event.

The Ontario Airport will proceed under normal operations during this period. A reception area and temporary living quarters will be established on the airport away from the passenger terminals and other public areas. Ontario police and other public safety personnel are prepared to ensure no unauthorized persons enter or exit the area.

Ontario international airport

What to do about Coronavirus?

In most cases, you won't know whether you have a coronavirus or a different cold-causing virus, such as rhinovirus.

In a worst-case scenario, the virus infection can spread to the lower respiratory tract (windpipe and lungs) resulting in pneumonia, especially in older people or people with weakened immune systems.

Health officials suggest washing your hands **THOROUGHLY** with soap and warm water or with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Keep your fingers away from your eyes, nose, and mouth!

According to WebMD, “even when a coronavirus causes MERS or SARS in other countries, the kind of coronavirus infection common in the U.S. isn’t a serious threat for an otherwise healthy adult. If you get sick, treat your symptoms and contact a doctor if they get worse or don’t go away.”

<https://www.vvng.com/ontario-airport-is-a-designated-repatriation-center-and-prepared-for-wuhan-china-flight/>

Americans flee Wuhan: Coronavirus deaths, infections boom in China

John Bacon, USA Today

Posted: January 28, 2020

U.S. Consulate staffers and other Americans in Wuhan will be evacuated to California on Wednesday as the death toll rose to 106 from a new coronavirus racing through China.

In the U.S., Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said Tuesday that the number of cases remained at five, with no deaths. Researchers are still trying to determine the incubation period of the virus and how easily it can be spread by infected people who are not yet experiencing symptoms, he said.

"This is a potentially very serious threat, but at this point Americans should not worry for their own safety," Azar said. "This is a very fast-moving, constantly changing situation."

Azar said U.S. health officials have repeatedly offered to send a team from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to China to help. He said talks with Chinese health officials had been positive and he was hopeful that an arrangement could be made.

He may get his wish. The World Health Organization announced that China has agreed to allow international experts to visit China "as soon as possible" to help advance understanding of the outbreak and to guide global response.

"More cooperation and transparency are the most important steps you can take toward a more effective response," Azar said.

Wuhan, a city of 11 million in the central China province of Hubei, is the epicenter of the outbreak. The city is one of more than a dozen under tight lockdown as the government struggles to contain the virus.

The State Department said some private, paying U.S. citizens would be added to the charter flight leaving Wuhan Tianhe International Airport bound for Ontario, California.

"This capacity is extremely limited and if there is insufficient ability to transport everyone who expresses interest, priority will be given to individuals at greater risk from coronavirus," the department said in a statement.

About 1,000 Americans are believed to be in Wuhan, although not all want to leave. Some are married to Chinese nationals, who are not eligible for the flight, which is scheduled to carry about 240 passengers and crew.

The State Department said it was working with Chinese officials to identify alternative routes for U.S. citizens to depart Wuhan over land.

Those provided seats on the plane will face health screenings before boarding. The flight will refuel in Anchorage, Alaska, and the state's Health Department said anyone who appears ill won't be allowed on the plane. Passengers then will be screened "numerous times" during the flight and again in Alaska before continuing to California, the department said in a statement.

Azar said it had not yet been determined whether the passengers would face quarantine upon arrival in California.

The European Union said it would send two planes to evacuate Europeans, mostly French, from the Wuhan areas. Britain was arranging flights for some of its citizens, and Japan and South Korea were among other nations organizing or considering evacuation flights for their citizens.

Death toll rises to more than 100

The new coronavirus has sickened more than 4,500 people across China, and 106 people have died. China's National Health Commission said more than 1,700 cases and 26 deaths were reported Tuesday alone, including the first death in Beijing.

More than 70 cases have been confirmed outside China, including the five in the U.S. None of those patients have died.

Symptoms of the illness include fever, cough and shortness of breath, and they may appear two to 14 days after exposure. Older people and those with compromised immune systems are most vulnerable to symptoms.

Nancy Messonnier, director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said 110 people in the U.S. are "under investigation" for the virus but added that human-to-human transmission of the virus has not been documented in the U.S.

There is no vaccine, although drugmakers are scrambling to create one.

ates Foundation gives \$10 million to fight virus

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced that it is immediately committing \$10 million in emergency funds and "corresponding technical support" to help first responders in China and Africa accelerate their efforts to contain the global spread. The foundation said it is already working with a Chinese public and private sector partners to help identify and confirm cases, safely isolate and care for patients and develop treatments and vaccines.

Hong Kong cuts rail links to mainland

Hong Kong has confirmed eight cases. Chief Executive Carrie Lam, during a news conference in which she and her staff wore surgical masks, said Tuesday that train service to the mainland will be halted and flights and bus service drastically reduced.

Lam was forced to drop a plan to use two empty public housing blocks as a quarantine site for coronavirus patients after protesters clashed with police and set fire to the buildings.

US expands China travel advisory

On Monday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the State Department expanded their travel advisories to cover all of China because of the coronavirus outbreak.

The CDC issued a Level 3 travel warning, its highest level, recommending travelers avoid all nonessential travel to China. Previously only Wuhan was at a Level 3. The rest of China was rated Level 2, which recommends "practice enhanced precautions."

The broader travel alerts come as the U.S. plans to expand screening for the virus to 20 airports from the current five.

Coronaviruses look like crowns

Coronaviruses get their name from their appearance under a microscope – they look something like a crown, a sphere with spikes jutting out. They are part of a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to pneumonia. The best way to treat symptoms is to take pain and fever medications, use a room humidifier or take a hot shower to help ease a sore throat and cough, drink plenty of liquids and rest, the CDC says. Because this virus is new and no vaccine has been formulated for it yet, there is concern that it could prove difficult to control.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/01/28/coronavirus-americans-evacuated-wuhan-hong-kong/4595206002/>

240 evacuees from Chinese coronavirus epicenter to land in California, officials say

Maddie Capron, The Sacramento Bee

Posted: January 28, 2020, 2:35 pm

A plane traveling from a region of China where the coronavirus has killed at least 100 people will land this week at a California airport, officials say.

Up to 240 U.S. citizens are leaving Wuhan, China, and are scheduled to land at Ontario International Airport in San Bernardino County on Wednesday, according to CBSLA.

The U.S. is moving to evacuate government employees and other U.S. citizens who have been working in China from areas where coronavirus is breaking out, CBSLA reported.

The airport says it is working closely with officials to prepare for the flight.

“Ontario International is an official repatriation center for the West Coast and has conducted extensive training in managing situations such as this,” the news release said. “In the event that the returning passengers do arrive at ONT, preparations are being made to ensure that proper health, safety and security procedures are followed.”

Passengers will be screened multiple times before, during and after the flight. They will first be screened for symptoms before boarding the plane in China, KTLA reported.

When the plane stops for fuel in Anchorage, Alaska, passengers will be screened again by personnel from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CBSLA reported.

“No occupants who present symptoms of illness will be allowed to proceed into the continental United States,” David Wert, a public information officer for San Bernardino County, said in a statement to KTLA.

Passengers who land in California would be screened and monitored by CDC personnel, CBSLA said.

County officials told KTLA that passengers would be ““far removed from the passenger terminals and other public areas,” and they could be housed “in temporary living quarters at the airport for up to two weeks.”

“The airport will proceed under normal operations during this period,” the airport said. “The safety and security of our facilities are of utmost importance to ONT, and we are taking whatever steps are necessary to minimize the risk to our customers, our staff and the community at large.”

<https://www.sacbee.com/news/california/article239733453.html>

Coronavirus screening expands to 15 more US airports

Evie Fordham, FOXBusiness

Posted: January 28, 2020



A pilot wearing a protective suit parks a cargo plane at Wuhan Tianhe International Airport in Wuhan in central China's Hubei Province, Tuesday. (Cheng Min/Xinhua via AP)

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has expanded monitoring for coronavirus among travelers to 15 more U.S. airports with quarantine stations, the CDC said on Monday.

The CDC had already implemented "enhanced health screenings" for travelers who had passed through Wuhan, China, and landed in San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York City last week. The practice has now been expanded to a total of 20 airports with quarantine stations in the U.S.

George W. Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston is one of them.

"At this time, there are no confirmed cases of the Coronavirus in Texas," the airport wrote on Twitter. "As a preventative measure, the CDC has announced it will expand screenings to 15 additional airports which includes George W. Bush Intercontinental Airport."

The United States and several other nations prepared Tuesday to airlift citizens out of the Chinese city at the center of a virus outbreak that has killed more than 100 people.

The U.S. government chartered a plane to fly out diplomats from the U.S. Consulate in Wuhan, where the outbreak started, and other Americans. The plane will make a refueling stop in Alaska before flying on to Ontario, California, the U.S. Embassy said.

The quarantine stations are in:

Anchorage, Alaska
Seattle, Washington
San Francisco, California
Los Angeles, California
San Diego, California
Honolulu, Hawaii
El Paso, Texas

Dallas, Texas
Houston, Texas
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Chicago, Illinois
Detroit, Michigan
Atlanta, Georgia
Miami, Florida
San Juan, Puerto Rico
Washington, D.C.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Newark, New Jersey
New York, New York
Boston, Massachusetts

U.S. health officials expanded their recommendation for people to avoid non-essential travel to any part of China rather than just Wuhan and other areas most affected by the outbreak.

<https://www.foxbusiness.com/lifestyle/coronavirus-outbreak-cdc-illness-airports>

Flight Evacuating US Citizens From Wuhan May Land at Ontario Airport

Katabella Roberts, The Epoch Times

Posted: January 28, 2020

A flight evacuating U.S. citizens from the coronavirus-stricken city of Wuhan may land at an airport in San Bernardino County, California, officials said on Jan. 27.

Ontario International Airport (ONT) said it is preparing for the possibility of the flight carrying U.S. government officials and private citizens who have been in the Chinese city to arrive this week.

In a statement, the airport said it is “working closely with our federal, state, county, and city partners to plan for the possibility of a flight carrying U.S. government officials and private citizens returning this week from Wuhan, China.”

“Ontario International is an official repatriation center for the West Coast and has conducted extensive training in managing situations such as this. In the event that the returning passengers do arrive at ONT, preparations are being made to ensure that proper health, safety, and security procedures are followed.”

“In coordination with our state partners, we are aware that the Medical and Health Coordination Center (MHCC) at the state Department of Public Health in Sacramento has been activated. The MHCC is coordinating with all state health agencies and emergency services.”

The statement added that the airport will continue to operate as normal and that the “safety and security of our facilities are of utmost importance.”

“We are taking whatever steps are necessary to minimize the risk to our customers, our staff, and the community at large,” it said.

There will be around 240 passengers on the flight which will first arrive in Alaska, where they will be screened by officials before proceeding with their journey, and possibly landing at ONT. Anyone who shows symptoms of the virus, including a fever and respiratory issues, won't be allowed onto the plane.

Fox News reported that those onboard consist of U.S. State Department employees, U.S. contractors who have been working in China, and other U.S. citizens as well as nine children.

So far, five people in the United States have been diagnosed with coronavirus, including one in Washington, one in Illinois, one in Arizona, and two in California.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed in news reports Monday that approximately 110 people in the United States have been tested for the virus.

An alert issued on Jan. 27 by the U.S. Department of State urged Americans to consider not traveling to China amid the outbreak of the potentially deadly coronavirus.

“A Novel (new) Coronavirus is causing an outbreak of respiratory illness that began in the city of Wuhan, Hubei province, China. This outbreak began in early December 2019 and continues to grow. Chinese health officials have reported thousands of cases throughout China,” the bulletin said.

The CDC also issued a Level 3 Warning: Avoid all nonessential travel to China. Chinese authorities are imposing quarantines and restricting travel throughout the country.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some of which cause the common cold. Others have evolved into more severe illnesses, such as SARS and MERS, although so far the new virus does not appear to be nearly as deadly.

One public health official said as many as 100,000 people may have been infected with the coronavirus as it spreads around the globe, reaching as far as France and Germany. The virus, which has no vaccine and no known cure has killed 56 people in China, the majority of which were older patients.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/flight-evacuating-us-citizens-from-wuhan-may-land-at-ontario-airport_3218449.html

Death toll from Wuhan coronavirus tops 100 as infection rate accelerates

Staff Writer, CNN Wire / WREG Memphis Channel 3 News

Posted: January 28, 2020

Hong Kong announced Tuesday that it was closing many of its border crossings with mainland China in a bid to contain the Wuhan coronavirus, as the death toll from the outbreak topped 100, with more than 4,500 cases in the mainland.

Carrie Lam, chief executive of the semi-autonomous Chinese city, told a news conference that the closures would be “temporary,” adding the city was also slashing the number of tourist visas it issues to visitors from mainland China, and halving the number of inbound flights from the mainland.

Authorities in Hubei, the Chinese province at the center of the outbreak, earlier said an additional 1,300 cases had been confirmed, bringing the total in the region to over 2,700. The majority of those are still in hospital, with more than 125 in critical condition. Between Sunday and Monday, there was a 65% jump in the number of reported cases in mainland China, from around 2,700 to over 4,500.

Elsewhere in China, cases have been confirmed in every province and territory except for Tibet, which this week announced the indefinite closure of all tourist attractions and a mandatory two-week quarantine for all travelers entering the region.

The move to close off Hong Kong comes after intense pressure from lawmakers and medical unions, one of which had threatened to strike if the border was not shut.

On Monday, the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued a level 3 alert warning against “all nonessential travel to China” — its highest alert on a scale of 1 to 3.

“There is an ongoing outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that can be spread from person to person,” the CDC said in a statement, warning “there is limited access to adequate medical care in affected areas.”

More than a dozen countries around the world have confirmed cases of the Wuhan virus, as authorities struggle to stop its spread.

Across Asia, numerous countries have put in extra screening at airports and warned citizens to avoid travel to China. To China’s north, neighboring Mongolia has imposed stringent border checks on travelers coming into the country, while Hong Kong earlier banned all visitors from Wuhan.

Indonesia and the Philippines have both introduced extra restrictions on Chinese tourists, while Japan has upgraded its response, allowing authorities to “force the suspicious cases for hospitalization and testing.”

Speaking at a meeting with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres Monday, China’s ambassador to the UN said the country has “full capability and confidence in winning the battle against the epidemic.”

“Putting the interests of the people first, China has taken rapid and strong measures, putting in place a nationwide prevention and control mechanism,” Ambassador Zhang Jun said.

“China has been working with the international community in the spirit of openness, transparency and scientific coordination. With a great sense of responsibility, China is sparing no effort in curbing the spread of disease and saving lives. Now is a crucial moment, and China has full capability and confidence in winning the battle against the epidemic.”

Some 60 million people have been placed under travel restrictions in Hubei, with almost all movement in and out of Wuhan itself stopped and much of the city on lockdown.

Officials have also cracked down on the trade of wild animals, after the Wuhan coronavirus was linked to a seafood market selling exotic live mammals, including bats and civet cats, which have previously been linked to the 2003 SARS outbreak.

The first cases of the coronavirus were detected in Wuhan in mid-December. Since then the number of confirmed cases has increased a thousandfold, and infections have been reported worldwide.

Hospitals in Wuhan are already massively overstretched, and hundreds of emergency medical personnel have been dispatched to the city to help. Two new hospitals are also being built on the city's outskirts, due to be operational by next week.

Wuhan and Hubei officials have faced criticism for apparently downplaying the danger of the virus in the early weeks of the outbreak. There was a marked shift in the handling of the crisis once the national government got involved on January 22.

Despite the colossal effort — and potential social and economic cost — of effectively quarantining Hubei, it appears that this has come too late to stop the virus' spread. By the time Wuhan introduced even basic screening of travelers leaving the city, the virus had been reported in Japan, Thailand and South Korea, and spread to most of the rest of China.

Part of the problem is that the virus can apparently be spread before symptoms appear, according to China's health minister, Ma Xiaowei.

“It means the infection is much more contagious than we originally thought,” William Schaffner, a longtime adviser to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told CNN. “This is worse than we anticipated.”

While the current outbreak does not appear to be as deadly as SARS, which killed over 700 people worldwide, it may be spreading more rapidly. That could be due to being more contagious, or the increased interconnectedness of both China and the world than in 2003.

As of mid-March 2003, roughly a month after the World Health Organization (WHO) was alerted to SARS by Chinese authorities, and three months after the first cases were detected in China, the number of confirmed cases worldwide stood at around 3,200, with 159 confirmed deaths.

Fears of the virus' spread have led to calls for increased action in multiple countries and territories, not least in Hong Kong, where memories of SARS still run deep.

Effective midnight on Thursday until further notice, Lam said Hong Kong's measures also include decreasing the number of inbound buses from the mainland, and the suspension of cross-border coach services at the Hong Kong-Zuhai-Macau Bridge. All cross-border ferry services will also be suspended.

Operations at Hong Kong's West Kowloon Train Station — which operates high speed rail services to the mainland — will shut. Passenger services will also be temporarily suspended at the border crossings of Hung Hom, Sha Tau Kok, and Man Kam To.

In addition to the closing many of its borders with China, the city's government announced that government workers would be encouraged to work from home when the Lunar New Year holiday ends on Wednesday. The directive, which excluded emergency service workers and people who work for essential public services, urged the private sector to enforce similar arrangements.

The sweeping moves follow calls from one of the city's leading health experts for “substantial draconian measures” to limit population mobility in order to rein in the virus. Speaking at a news conference Monday,

Gabriel Leung, chair of public health medicine at the University of Hong Kong, warned that the number of cases could potentially double every six days in the absence of decisive government action.

“This epidemic is growing at quite a fast rate and it’s accelerating,” said Leung, who is also the founding director of the WHO Collaborating Center for Infection Disease Epidemiology and Control in Hong Kong. He predicted the actual number of cases — including those who are incubating the virus but not yet showing symptoms — could be 10 times what has been reported.

Leung’s team modeled two scenarios — one with a population quarantine as has been seen in Wuhan and one without — but found more or less identical results, because the virus has already spread to other major population centers in China, which could soon see their own self-sustaining epidemics.

Leung said the findings had concerned the team enough that it felt the need to alert the authorities and the public, predicting a peak of cases between April and May.

He added people need to prepare for a potential global pandemic — though “not a certainty by any stretch of the imagination ... we must prepare better for it,” he said.

CDC: US is monitoring airports

The Centers for Disease Control is monitoring for symptoms of the Wuhan coronavirus at 20 US airports, the agency said on its website Monday.

The CDC had previously announced enhanced screening of passengers from Wuhan, China, at five airports: John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, San Francisco International Airport, Los Angeles International Airport, Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

The move to monitor more airports comes as the coronavirus continues to spread and the State Department prepares to evacuate US government personnel and private American citizens from Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak.

The US State Department on Monday ordered personnel working at the US Consulate General in Wuhan to depart for the United States, a State Department official told CNN in a statement.

A California-bound flight chartered by the State Department is scheduled to depart Wuhan Tianhe International Airport on Wednesday morning local time, the State Department official said. It will stop to refuel at Ted Stevens International Airport in Anchorage, Alaska, before arriving in Ontario, California, about 35 miles east of downtown Los Angeles.

About 240 Americans are expected to arrive in Anchorage, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services spokesman Clinton Bennett said. About three dozen US diplomats and their families are expected to be on board, a US official with knowledge of the matter told CNN Saturday.

Priority has also been given to US citizens who are “most at risk for contracting coronavirus” if they stay in city, the State Department official said. There are about 1,000 Americans living in Wuhan.

“All passengers will be subject to CDC screening, health observation, and monitoring requirements,” the State Department said in a statement.

The State Department issued a Level 4 advisory for Wuhan, meaning “no American should travel to Wuhan while this virus continues to have impact,” Vice President Mike Pence said Monday.

<https://wreg.com/2020/01/28/death-toll-from-wuhan-coronavirus-tops-100-as-infection-rate-accelerates/>

Hong Kong Is Closing its Borders to Keep Coronavirus Out

David Gilbert, VICE

Posted: January 28, 2020

The death toll from the coronavirus outbreak has topped 100 as Hong Kong begins to close its borders with China in a bid to stop the spread of the infectious disease.

China’s National Health Commission updated the official figures for the outbreak on Tuesday, revealing that in the 24 hours up to midnight on Monday, almost 2,000 new confirmed cases had been reported.

The total number of infections is now almost 4,600 globally, up from 2,744 on Monday — though experts say the true figure is much, much higher.

The updated death toll also includes the first reported death in Beijing, with the remainder of the new deaths occurring in central Hubei province, the epicenter of the current outbreak.

The disease continues to spread internationally. Germany reported its first case on Tuesday after a 33-year-old man who had not been to China became infected after a business meeting with a Chinese national last week.

Governments around the world are stepping up measures to limit the spread of the virus. Carrie Lam, Hong Kong’s embattled chief executive, appeared at a press conference on Tuesday wearing a mask, months after she banned protesters from wearing them. She announced that the city-state would be severely restricting travel to and from the mainland.

Effective from midnight Thursday and until further notice, Hong Kong is closing many of its border crossings with mainland China, suspending cross-border ferries and high-speed rail links, decreasing the number of inbound buses from the mainland, and suspending cross-border coach services at the Hong Kong-Zuhai-Macau Bridge.

Mongolia has also closed its vast border with China and North Korea said it was strengthening quarantine measures.

The U.S. is taking steps to protect its citizens and its borders.

On Monday, the Center for Disease Control issued a level 3 alert — its highest level — warning against “all nonessential travel to China.” The agency also announced it was expanding airport checks on inbound passengers to 20 locations.

Some 240 Americans, including three dozen diplomats and their families, will be evacuated out of Wuhan on Wednesday on a chartered flight that will land in Anchorage, Alaska before flying on to Ontario, California, CNN reported.

South Korea, Japan, India, Australia, the U.K., and France have indicated they are investigating similar options for their citizens.

In China, the government continues to play catch up after a much-delayed response to the outbreak which was first reported in December.

Tens of millions of citizens in Hubei province are in lockdown after authorities severely curtailed travel throughout the region. In Wuhan, authorities are scrambling to cope with the huge numbers presenting with symptoms. To fix the problem, they are building two new hospitals in Wuhan, the first of which will have 1,000 beds and is set to be completed in just six days.

In Beijing, authorities are reopening the Xiaotangshan Hospital, which was built in seven days in 2003 to deal with the Sars outbreak.

On Tuesday the Beijing government announced that 6,000 medical staff have been sent to Hubei, but a shortage of supplies is slowing their deployment.

But many in China are unhappy at the government's response, and the outbreak has given them a rare opportunity to voice their anger relatively openly online.

Typically censored by China's vast censorship and surveillance apparatus, known as the Great Firewall, citizens are criticizing authorities in Wuhan for their failure to deal with the crisis.

When Wuhan's mayor spoke to the media on Monday, one social media commenter said: "If the virus is fair, then please don't spare this useless person."

https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/n7jebz/hong-kong-is-closing-its-borders-to-keep-coronavirus-out

As US rescues some from virus in China, others left behind

Dake Kang, Associated Press / yahoo! lifestyle

Posted: January 28, 2020

BEIJING (AP) — As hundreds of Americans prepare to evacuate Wuhan, the central Chinese city at the heart of a new virus outbreak that has killed over 100, San Francisco native Doug Perez is staying behind.

It's not that he's unconcerned. Perez, 28, and his girlfriend have hunkered down in their apartment for the past five days. They've argued. They've fretted over missed food deliveries. They've dubbed their Labrador, Chubby, "Apocalypse Dog," venturing out for short walks on deserted streets only after fitting him with a mask.

But Perez won't leave because his girlfriend, a Chinese citizen, won't be allowed on the plane.

"A lot of foreigners are stuck here," Perez said. "There is no way on Earth many of us, including myself, are going to leave our loved ones."

As China rolls out containment measures unprecedented in modern history, locking down more than 50 million people in 17 cities, foreigners trapped in the quarantine zone are wondering when they can return home.

The U.S. government is chartering a flight on Tuesday night to take several hundred diplomats, family members and other Americans out of the country to Ontario, California. The plane will refuel in Anchorage, Alaska, where the passengers will be rescreened, according to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

But Americans in Wuhan estimate there are more than a thousand U.S. citizens in the city, meaning most will be left behind.

“It’s like a sinking ship,” Perez said.

The day the lockdown was announced, Perez and his girlfriend got in a fight — “a plate was destroyed” — over whether to venture to a supermarket to buy food. His girlfriend, who doesn’t want to be named, won the argument, and the couple began ordering food online. The streets went quiet. They stay in every night, spending hours a day on social media checking up on the latest news and fielding calls from worried relatives.

On Monday evening, guards barred him from leaving his apartment compound, leaving him wondering what’s next.

“That’s kind of dawned on me, like how bad this could get,” Perez said. “Who knows what will be next week. Will it be police, will it be soldiers? Will we physically not be able to leave our building?”

Japan, South Korea, France and other wealthy governments are also planning evacuations. But for many from other countries, there are no plans for evacuations at all, leaving them totally stranded.

Another American, who declined to be identified out of fear of online and government harassment, said she was choosing to stay behind because she has a cough and was told she would likely be quarantined at the Wuhan airport by Chinese authorities.

But for Priscilla Dickey, 35, from South Burlington, Vermont, trying to get on the plane was a no-brainer because of her 8-year-old daughter, Hermione, who she worries could be vulnerable to the virus. On Monday afternoon, the consulate phoned Dickey and told her she and her daughter had seats.

After packing a bag with three shirts and a pair of pants, Dickey stayed up until two in the morning trying to figure out how she would get to the airport amid a transportation shutdown. She “stress cleaned” her apartment in the morning, she said, before getting in an airport-bound car, waves of emotion washing over her.

“I was feeling guilt,” Dickey said, speaking by phone on her way to the airport. “Excitement, guilt, stress — all of it.”

Dickey plans to stay with relatives in the Cincinnati area after a 3- to 14-day quarantine, she says, adding that she was “very grateful” to be on her way out.

Meanwhile, Perez is still mulling whether to venture to a supermarket, weighing the risks of getting infected.

But despite the worsening conditions, Perez says there are moments of hope. On Monday evening, residents set off fireworks, and cries of “Go Wuhan!” echoed around his apartment compound.

Perez joined in, shouting “We are all Wuhan people!” His girlfriend cheered and his dog barked, making them feel they were “all in this together.”

“We needed that,” Perez said. “It lifted us up a bit and gave us some hope.”

<https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/us-rescues-virus-china-others-095939607.html>

China coronavirus death toll climbs to 106 as government scrambles to contain outbreak

Yuliya Talmazan, Eric Baculinao, Leou Chen and Mo Abbas, NBC News

Posted: January 27, 2020, 3:27 am

The death toll from the new coronavirus outbreak in China rose Monday as the government, scrambling to contain the epidemic, extended the Lunar New Year holiday to try to stop people from traveling.

The death toll stood at 106, according to health officials who have warned that the spread of the virus was accelerating.

Officials with China’s National Health Commission said there were 4,515 confirmed cases — up from 2,744 confirmed cases — of which 976 are considered severe.

Health officials in the capital, Beijing, said Sunday that the youngest patient was just nine months old.

Cases of the virus have been reported on four continents, including the United States, where a fifth case was confirmed Sunday. All the U.S. cases are patients who have recently traveled from Wuhan in Hubei province.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said it expected many more cases in the coming days, likely including person-to-person spread; but the CDC said that the immediate risk to the U.S. general public is low.

No deaths have been reported outside China.

The city of Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak, was still on lockdown with more than a dozen neighboring cities facing similar severe transport restrictions to help stop the spread of the virus.

Health officials are asking anyone who had traveled to Wuhan or other affected areas recently to register and quarantine themselves for 14 days.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong, which has had eight confirmed cases, has barred residents of Hubei province and anyone who visited the area in the past 14 days from entering the city.

John McGory, a teacher at Jiangnan University in Wuhan, told NBC News over the weekend that the city felt “like the twilight zone” as the lockdown continued.

“Today, I went out to get some bottled water and there's absolutely nobody on the streets. And this is a city of 11 million people,” McGory, 65, said.

The limitations on movement for millions of people come amid one of the busiest times of the year for travel — the Chinese Lunar New Year. Chinese officials extended the week-long holiday until Feb. 2 to reduce mass gatherings and slow down the spread of the virus.

Local authorities in Wuhan have also announced they were suspending all passport and visa services for Chinese citizens until at least Jan. 30 to help control the spread of the virus.

Chinese health officials have warned that people who are carrying the virus but not showing any symptoms may still be contagious, which could complicate early detection and isolation efforts.

The U.S. Department of State said Monday that it ordered U.S. Consulate General Wuhan personnel to leave for the United States, and that a chartered plane for those people as well as other U.S. citizens was procured.

The plane is bound for Ontario, California, a State Department spokesperson said. It is scheduled to leave Wednesday local time.

As part of what is called the “repatriation effort” around 240 U.S. citizens are scheduled to arrive this week at the airport in Anchorage, Alaska, for refueling, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services said.

The terminal in Anchorage is not open to the public. Everyone on board will be screened by Chinese and U.S. officials before leaving Wuhan, the Alaska health department said, and no one with symptoms will be allowed to leave on the plane.

Other countries, including France, Australia, Spain, Iraq and Japan, were also said to have been looking into moving their citizens out of the city.

The head of the World Health Organization was due to hold a special meeting with officials in Beijing on Monday to discuss how to contain the virus. WHO officials ruled last week that the outbreak did not yet constitute a global health emergency.

Reuters reported Monday that China has allocated nearly \$9 billion to help contain the virus. Over the weekend, President Xi Jinping said the country was facing a "grave situation."

State media reported that Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, who has been “entrusted” personally by Xi to visit Wuhan and inspect the ongoing efforts to contain the epidemic, arrived in the city Monday.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/china-coronavirus-death-toll-climbs-80-government-scrambles-contain-outbreak-n1123561>

CDC expands coronavirus screenings to 15 more airports | Airlifts begin in China

Tim Darnell, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Posted: January 27, 2020

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has increased the number of American airports screening for the deadly Wuhan coronavirus to 20, the Atlanta-based organization said late Monday evening.

Previously, only five airports — including Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International — were screening for the disease, which has killed more than 100 people worldwide. The airports that are adding screenings have not been identified by the CDC.

On Tuesday, the U.S. and several other nations began airlifting citizens out of a Chinese city at the center of a virus outbreak that has killed more than 100 people.

Hong Kong's leader said it will cut all rail links to mainland China and halve the number of flights as authorities in China and overseas sought to stem the spread of the new virus. The number of confirmed cases rose to more than 4,500.

The U.S. government chartered a plane to fly out diplomats from the U.S. Consulate in Wuhan, where the outbreak started, and other Americans. The plane will make a refueling stop in Alaska before flying on to Ontario, California, the U.S. Embassy said.

A Japanese-chartered Boeing 767 departed for Wuhan to fly out its citizens, the first of two possible flights, and South Korea also said it will send a plane to the city in central China. France, Mongolia and other governments also planned evacuations.

China has cut off access to Wuhan and 16 other cities in Hubei province to prevent people from leaving and spreading the virus further. The lockdown has trapped more than 50 million people in the most far-reaching disease control measures ever imposed.

The Japanese flight was bringing 20,000 face masks as well as protective gear, all in short supply as hospitals grapple with a growing number of patients. The city is building two hospitals in a matter of days to add more than 2,000 beds.

U.S. health officials expanded their recommendation for people to avoid non-essential travel to any part of China, rather than just Wuhan and other areas most affected by the outbreak.

Asian stock markets tumbled for a second day, dragged down by worries about the virus's global economic impact.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam, wearing a green surgical mask, told a news conference that train service would stop at midnight Thursday and that the two stations connecting to the mainland would be closed.

She stopped short of a total closing of the border, as North Korea and Mongolia have done, but said ferry and bus service to the mainland would also be suspended. China's death toll from the new viral disease rose to 106, including the first death in Beijing, the Chinese capital, and 24 others in Hubei province, where the first illnesses were detected in December.

There were 1,771 new cases confirmed in China, raising the national total to 4,515, according to the National Health Commission. It said 976 people were in serious condition.

Experts worry that the new virus may spread more easily than originally thought, or may have mutated into a form that does so. It is from the coronavirus family, which also can cause the common cold as well as more serious illnesses such as SARS.

China has reported eight cases in Hong Kong and five in Macao, and more than 45 cases have been confirmed elsewhere in the world. Almost all involve mainland Chinese tourists or people who visited Wuhan.

Thailand reported six members of a family from Hubei were new cases, raising its total to 14. Taiwan confirmed three new cases Tuesday, including two 70-year-old tourists from Wuhan, raising its total to eight.

Infections also have been confirmed in the United States, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Nepal, France, Germany, Canada, Australia and Sri Lanka.

The five American cases — two in southern California and one each in Washington state, Chicago and Arizona — are people who had recently arrived from central China.

The virus is thought to have spread to people from wild animals sold at a Wuhan market. China on Sunday banned trade in wild animals and urged people to stop eating meat from them.

<https://www.ajc.com/news/china-reports-more-virus-deaths-prepares-evacuation/OCQiNJR5N8cEsqNfKBW36I/>

More than 100 tested for coronavirus in the U.S.; just 5 cases confirmed so far, CDC says

Erika Edwards, NBC News

Posted: January 27, 2020, 10:58 am

As the coronavirus outbreak rages on in China, at least 110 people in the United States are undergoing testing for the new respiratory illness, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Monday.

Five people in the U.S. have been hospitalized with confirmed cases of the coronavirus: one in Washington, one in Illinois, one in Arizona and two in California.

All of those patients had traveled to Wuhan, China, the epicenter of the outbreak. Cases in China have now surpassed 2,700, and at least 80 deaths have been reported. People most severely affected have generally been older adults with underlying health conditions.

"Our thoughts are with the people on the front lines of this emerging public health threat in China," Dr. Nancy Messonnier, director of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said during a call with journalists.

"This is a rapidly changing situation, both here and abroad," she added.

A handful of cases have been reported in other countries as well, including Australia, Japan, Thailand, France, South Korea, Vietnam and Canada.

Of the 110 people in the U.S. undergoing testing, the five cases in Arizona, California, Illinois and Washington are the only ones to come back positive. Thirty-two have tested negative. The rest of the results are pending at the CDC.

The 110 samples for testing have come from 26 states, though the CDC declined to say which states.

Right now, blood and respiratory samples from suspected patients are all sent to the CDC to test for the new virus. The CDC is working to make test kits available to state health departments, but it's going to be at least another week or two before those are ready, Messonnier said.

The U.S. government is working to help evacuate some of the American citizens in Wuhan, as early as Tuesday. The flight is scheduled to make two stops: in Anchorage, Alaska and in Ontario, California, which is east of Los Angeles.

The CDC is "intricately involved in coordinating the planning" of the flight, Dr. Martin Cetron, the director of CDC's Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, said Sunday during a call with reporters.

He added that the passengers' health will be screened multiple times, including during the flight.

Health officials have been screening passengers traveling from Wuhan and arriving at five major airports: New York's John F. Kennedy International, San Francisco International, Los Angeles' LAX, Hartsfield-Jackson in Atlanta, and O'Hare in Chicago.

So far, around 2,400 passengers have been screened.

The purpose of the screenings is not just to identify ill passengers; they're also an opportunity for health officials to provide information about what symptoms to watch for, as well as what people should do if they start developing a fever or a cough.

That education is key, as at least two of the confirmed patients in the U.S. weren't ill when they flew home from China. They developed symptoms after getting home.

Health officials are also monitoring dozens of people who've had close contact with the five patients in the U.S. The incubation period, that is, the time from when a person is exposed to the virus to the time they become ill, is anywhere from two to 14 days, according to the CDC.

Officials said the health risk to the general American public remains low. "We're being aggressive and cautious in tracking those close contacts," Messonnier said. "So far, we have not seen any human-to-human transmission in the U.S."

The agency suggests people avoid all nonessential travel to Hubei Province in China, where Wuhan is located. Messonnier suggested talks are ongoing about changing that travel guidance, but declined to elaborate.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/more-100-tested-coronavirus-u-s-just-5-cases-confirmed-n1123401>

US evacuees from China expected to get virus screening in Anchorage during refueling stop

Tess Williams, Anchorage Daily News

Posted: January 27, 2020

A chartered jet evacuating Americans from China amid the outbreak of a new and potentially deadly virus is expected to be refueled in Anchorage this week, health officials said Monday.

The approximately 240 passengers on the flight will undergo a coronavirus screening before they leave Wuhan, China, and are expected to get off the plane for a second screening at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, said the state's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Anne Zink.

The airport has had six cargo flights land in Anchorage from Wuhan since the beginning of the month, according to a statement from the airport. All other cargo flights from the city were suspended indefinitely last week.

The coronavirus was first documented in Wuhan in late December, with at least 106 deaths and over 4,500 cases reported since then. In the U.S., there have been five confirmed cases of coronavirus but no deaths.

There are 73 cases under investigation nationwide in 26 states, the CDC reported Sunday. Alaska does not have any suspected cases of the virus.

The virus shows symptoms similar to those of flu or upper-respiratory infection. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports it can spread from person to person, although it's unclear how contagious the virus is.

The single flight is expected to transport American citizens who were living in Wuhan, including U.S. consulate staff, back to the Lower 48. It's unclear what day this week the flight will leave. The plane will fly on to Ontario, California, the U.S. Embassy said. It's unclear if passengers will be quarantined when they reach their final destination.

The plane will be refueled at the Anchorage airport's north terminal, which is closed to the public. Officials from the CDC's Anchorage Quarantine Station will be re-screening passengers in the closed terminal. Zink said the passengers will also be monitored throughout the flight.

"Any flights suspected of carrying passengers with communicable diseases will be isolated," airport manager Jim Szczesniak said in a statement. "All international flights and flights suspected of carrying passengers with a communicable disease are processed in the North Terminal where CDC staff and quarantine facilities are located."

The Department of Health and Social Services activated the Emergency Operations Center over the weekend as a precautionary measure. Zink said the center is routinely activated before diseases reach Alaska as a preventative measure.

"It's the same system that we set up when there's an earthquake or there's any sort of other risk to the population or to the health of Alaskans," she said.

Hospitals in Anchorage and the Mat-Su have been notified about the plane's landing and are prepared to treat or quarantine anyone potentially infected, Zink said. Officials from Providence Alaska Medical Center said Monday that they are equipped and ready to handle any possible infections.

The hospital began screening all incoming patients for coronavirus on Wednesday, said Rebecca Hamel, the manager of infectious disease prevention at Providence.

The hospital has more than 35 specialized isolation rooms that will prevent the spread of infectious diseases. If a patient is diagnosed with coronavirus, they would be quarantined in the room so that their symptoms could be monitored and to prevent the spread of the illness. Staff wears special protective gear to prevent transferring any illness to the rest of the hospital.

Chief Medical Officer Michael Bernstein said the coronavirus ranges from appearing like a cold to severe pneumonia. There are no medicines to attack the virus, so Bernstein said the care is mainly supportive.

Providence hospital and others in the area are fully prepared to handle a coronavirus patient, if needed, officials said Monday.

“We do this everyday,” said Providence’s leadership team manager Christine Winn. “We have respiratory illnesses that require people to be in isolation and have people in contact that require them to be in isolation. So for this, this is an everyday thing for us.”

<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2020/01/27/us-evacuees-from-china-expected-to-get-virus-screening-during-refueling-stop-in-anchorage/>

Limited number of U.S. citizens to be evacuated from Wuhan, China amid coronavirus outbreak

Staff Writer, FOX KTVU News

Posted: January 27, 2020

OAKLAND, Calif. - The U.S. Embassy in Beijing said it plans to evacuate a “limited capacity” of staff and an unknown number of private citizens from the Chinese city of Wuhan — the epicenter of the growing coronavirus outbreak.

The flight will leave Wednesday from the Wuhan Tianhe International Airport and expected to arrive in Ontario, California, according to the U.S. State Department.

Initially the U.S. Embassy in Beijing said in a statement on Sunday that the flight was headed to San Francisco International Airport. On Monday San Francisco Mayor London Breed said the flight was not headed to SFO.

All travelers will be screened for symptoms in Wuhan prior to departure. The deadly disease has killed 81 people and sickened nearly 3,000 worldwide.

In the United States, five people — two in Southern California and one each in Arizona, Washington state and Illinois — have been diagnosed with the respiratory virus. There have been no confirmed cases in the Bay Area.

“This capacity is extremely limited and if there is insufficient ability to transport everyone who expresses interest, priority will be given to individuals at greater risk from coronavirus,” the embassy posted on its website.

U.S. authorities believe that roughly 1,000 American citizens live in and around Wuhan, a sprawl of 11 million people with a manufacturing-based economy that includes a number of major American companies. Such an evacuation from China is unusual but reflects growing international alarm at the fast-spreading virus that first appeared in Wuhan late last year, the Wall Street Journal reported.

The U.S. government also agreed to having medical workers aboard the plane to ensure that the evacuation effort doesn’t inadvertently further spread the virus and to accept responsibility for the risk of moving people who may be sick or carrying the disease, the Journal reported.

Officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been screening airplane travelers arriving from Wuhan at five international airports in the United States: San Francisco, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Chicago's O'Hare and New York's John F. Kennedy.

<https://www.ktvu.com/news/limited-number-of-u-s-citizens-to-be-evacuated-from-wuhan-china-amid-coronavirus-outbreak>

Countries evaluate evacuation of citizens in virus epicenter

Mari Yamaguchi, Associated Press / abc News

Posted: January 27, 2020

TOKYO -- Countries with citizens in the central Chinese city that's the epicenter of a viral outbreak are planning evacuations as the number of illnesses grow and China takes drastic measures to try to stop the spread of the virus.

A look at steps being taken:

— CHINA: The government cut transportation links to and from the city of Wuhan on Jan. 22 and has since expanded those controls to several nearby cities. Anyone traveling from Wuhan is required to register and quarantine themselves for 14 days — the virus' maximum incubation period. Hong Kong barred entry to travelers from Hubei province and told Hong Kong residents returning from the area to quarantine themselves at home.

— JAPAN: Chief government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said 560 Japanese citizens are confirmed in Hubei and chartered evacuation flights are being prepared to leave "as soon as possible." The Japanese Embassy in Beijing said the initial evacuation is limited to those in Wuhan. Evacuees are expected to include employees of Honda Motor Co., Tokyo Electron, Aeon Co. and other Japanese companies operating in Wuhan. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said his Cabinet will designate the new coronavirus as an infectious disease subject to forced hospitalization and isolation. Such preventative measures appear to be preparation for the evacuation.

— UNITED STATES: The U.S. Consulate in Wuhan plans a charter flight to Southern California to for its personnel and some other Americans. The State Department said the flight will leave Wednesday morning for Ontario, California. The plane will refuel in Anchorage, Alaska, where the passengers will be rescreened, according to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

— FRANCE: Health Minister Agnes Buzyn said French citizens who want to leave Wuhan will be taken on a direct flight to France in the middle of the week, and then held in quarantine for 14 days. France has some 800 citizens in Wuhan. French automaker PSA, which produces Peugeot and Citroen cars, said it was evacuating its expatriate employees and their families from Wuhan and quarantining them in another city. It didn't elaborate.

— SRI LANKA: The embassy in Beijing has applied for a Sri Lankan Airlines plan to be allowed to land at the Wuhan airport to airlift home 32 Sri Lankan students and their family members. The foreign ministry also said it was working to bring back all other Sri Lankan students throughout China. About 860 Sri Lankan students are in China.

— GERMANY: Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said that his country is considering evacuating its citizens from Wuhan, with a government crisis response committee meeting soon with medical experts to evaluate the

situation. He said the number of German citizens in Wuhan is in the double digits. The foreign ministry currently advises Germans to refrain from or postpone "non-essential travel" to China.

— EUROPEAN UNION: Portugal says it has joined with other smaller European Union countries to organize a possible evacuation of their citizens from Wuhan. Foreign Minister Augusto Santos Silva said 14 Portuguese have asked to be taken out of the city. Santos Silva says other EU countries with low numbers of potential evacuees are considering a joint operation and have approached Chinese health authorities about gaining clearance for it. He did not identify the other countries. French health official Jerome Salomon says France may take non-French people on the flight it's trying to arrange.

— THAILAND: Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said his country's Defense Ministry was ready to evacuate its citizens from affected areas in China, but hadn't yet received permission from the Chinese government. The Thai Foreign Ministry says there are 64 Thais in Wuhan and 18 elsewhere in Hubei province.

— AUSTRALIA: Foreign Minister Marise Payne said her government is "exploring all opportunities" to help with evacuation of a number of Australians reportedly in Wuhan. She didn't elaborate. Australia doesn't have a consular presence in Wuhan.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/countries-evaluate-evacuation-citizens-virus-epicenter-68556467>