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President tests positive for COVID-19

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House said Friday that President Donald Trump was suffering “mild symptoms” of COVID-19, making the stunning announcement after he returned from an evening fundraiser without telling the crowd he had been exposed to an aide with the disease that has killed a million people worldwide.

The announcement that the president of the United States and first lady Melania Trump had tested positive, tweeted by Trump shortly after midnight, plunged the country deeper into uncertainty just a month before the presidential election. However, White House aides said he was in good spirits and working in quarantine in the family quarters.

Trump has spent much of the year downplaying the threat of a virus that has killed more than 205,000 Americans.

His diagnosis was sure to have a destabilizing effect in Washington and around the world, raising questions about how far the virus has spread through the highest levels of the U.S. government. Hours before Trump announced he had contracted the virus, the White House said a top aide who had traveled with him during the week had tested positive.

“Tonight, @FLOTUS and I tested positive for COVID-19. We will begin our quarantine and recovery process immediately,” Trump tweeted just before 1 a.m. “We will get through this TOGETHER!”

White House chief of staff Mark Meadows on Friday tried to assure the public that Trump was conducting business as usual, even as he confirmed that the White House knew Hope Hicks, the aide, had tested positive before Trump attended a Thursday fundraiser

in New Jersey.

“I can tell you in terms of Hope Hicks, we discovered that right as Marine One was taking off yesterday,” said Meadows. Several staffers were pulled from the trip, but Trump did not cancel, even after having been exposed to Hicks.

Vice President Mike Pence tested negative for the virus on Friday morning and “remains in good health,” his spokesman said.

Many White House and senior administration officials were undergoing tests Friday, but the full scale of the outbreak around the president may not be known for some time as it can take days for an infection to be detectable by a test. Officials with the White House Medical Unit were tracing the president’s contacts.

Trump was considering how he might address the nation or otherwise communicate with

the American people Friday, an official added.

Trump was last seen by reporters returning to the White House on Thursday evening and did not appear ill. He is 74 years old and clinically obese, putting him at higher risk of serious complications from a virus that has infected more than 7 million people nationwide.

The president’s physician said in a memo that Trump and the first lady, who is 50, “are both well at this time” and “plan to remain at home within the White House during their convalescence.” Their son Barron, who lives at the White House, tested negative.

It is unclear where the Trumps and Hicks may have caught the virus, but in a Fox interview, Trump seemed to suggest it may have been spread by someone in the military or law enforcement in greetings.

Trump promises to undo gender-neutral SEAL statements

Stars and Stripes

President Donald Trump promised in a tweet Thursday to undo gender-neutral language inserted recently into the official Navy SEAL ethos and combatant crewmen creed.

Trump’s 7 a.m. announcement on Twitter was brief: “I will be overturning this ridiculous order immediately!” and included a link to another tweet by The Columbia Bugle, an account for self-described conservative political commentary.

The Columbia Bugle, in turn, linked back to a report Sept. 28 in the online American Military News that the Naval Special Warfare Command had edited those statements, replacing words like “man” in the Navy SEAL ethos, and “brotherhood” in the creed of special warfare combatant-craft crewmen.

The creed and the ethos underwent sev-

eral changes and are both posted online on the Naval Special Warfare Command website.

For example, an archived version of the SEAL ethos states, “I am that man.” The new version states, “I am that warrior.”

The Navy Sea, Air, and Land Teams, also known as SEALs, are the primary special operations force in the Navy. Of U.S. military special operators, they are among the most celebrated in popular culture and among the most familiar to the American public.

American Military News quoted a special warfare spokesman, Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Stroup, as saying the previous versions of the SEAL ethos and the combatant crewman creed were written prior to changes in law permitting women to service as special operators.

“The changes do not in any way reflect a lowering of standards of entry,” accord-

ing to Stroup’s statement to the news site, “rather they ensure that all those who meet the requirements to train to become a SEAL or a [special warfare combatant crewman] are represented in the ethos or creed they live out.”

Attempts by Stars and Stripes to reach Stroup on Friday were unsuccessful.

Stroup told the American Military News that no women have thus far completed SEAL or combatant-craft crew training.

Special warfare combatant-craft crewmen, according to the command website, “provide covert insertion capabilities in coastal areas while operating specialized craft used to deliver operators and provide heavy weapons and other critical support.”

Its creed, according to the Sept. 28 report, originally referred to a brotherhood, which in the new version is changed to “an elite group of maritime warriors.”

Report: Nearly 500 military suicides in 2019

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Nearly 500 service members in 2019 died by suicide, with young enlisted men more likely to take their own lives, according to an annual Defense Department report released Thursday.

However, the overall number of military suicides, including active duty, National Guard and Reserve troops, has dropped from 541 in 2018 to 498 in 2019, according to the report.

The Pentagon released the report days after The Associated Press reported military suicide numbers have increased as much as 20% this year compared with the same period last year. The Army's leaders said they have seen about a 30% "jump" in the number of active-duty suicides so far this year and the increased numbers coincide with the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Karin Orvis, director of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office at the Pentagon said Thursday the Pentagon is concerned about suicide risks among service members and their families during the pandemic, but it would be too early to determine whether there will be a statistical increase in suicides during the pandemic until they had a full year's worth of data.

"What may be looking like an increasing or decreasing trend in raw counts may not be statistically meaningful once we have all the data. While this delay can understandably be frustrating, it is industry standard to provide enough time to allow investigations to complete and data to be gathered and rigorously analyzed," Orvis said.

The report on 2019 data provides the official count and rates of service member

suicides per calendar year going back to 2014. The data is organized by troops serving in the National Guard, Reserve, and service members who are on active duty in the Army, Marines Corps, Navy and Air Force.

The annual suicide count by service for 2019, according to the report:

■ Army: 178 soldiers, with 142 active duty and 36 Reserve.

■ Air Force: 96, with 83 from active duty and 13 Reserve.

■ Navy: 79, with 72 active duty and seven Reserve.

■ National Guard: Army Guard had 74; Air Guard had 15.

■ Marine Corps: 56, with 47 active duty and nine Reserve.

Active-duty service members had the highest rate of suicide at 25.9 per 100,000, which is similar to its rates in 2017 and 2018. However, when compared for five years from 2014 to 2019, the rate of suicide showed a statistical increase. This was due to an increase in the rate of suicide across all of the military service branches, the report states.

The National Guard had a rate of suicide at 20.3 per 100,000 and for Reserve forces, it was 18.2 per 100,000. The National Guard and Reserve suicide rates are consistent with those during the last five years from 2014 to 2019, Orvis said.

Active-duty enlisted male service members under the age of 30 had the highest risk of suicide, according to the report. Young enlisted men also had the highest risk in last year's report. While 42.7% of the military population in 2019 was enlisted men younger than 30 years old, they made up 61% of the military suicides for the year, according to the report.

Firearm use was still the most common method of suicide for service members, followed by hanging. More than 90% of the firearms used are personally owned, according to the report.

Last year was the first time that the Pentagon published suicide data on military dependents such as spouses and family members ages 12 to 23. Spouse numbers include service members married to another service member.

For 2018, the most recent year for this data, the number of suicides for military dependents increased from 2017, from 186 to 193, according to the report.

The military family suicide rate, using data from 2018, was 7.1 per 100,000, consistent with the rate from 2017. The rate of suicide for military families of the National Guard was the highest at 8.5 per 100,000 and the families of active duty was 6.9 per 100,000. The dependent rate is similar to or lower than the U.S. population when accounting for age and sex, with the exception of male spouses, according to Orvis.

There were 128 spouses who died by suicide in 2018, a rate of 12.1 per 100,000. Of those spouses, 32 were also service members at the time of their death. The majority of spouses who died were female (58%) and younger than 40 years old (86%). This reflects the demographics of the overall military spouse population, which is mostly made up of women younger than 40.

Within the services, spouses of National Guard service members had the highest rate — 13.4 per 100,000. The rate for spouses of active-duty service members was 12.1. The counts and rate for the Reserve were not reported due to low counts, according to a presentation on the report.

Midshipman sues over discipline for Taylor tweets

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — A midshipman is suing the U.S. Naval Academy after he was disciplined for tweeting that Breonna Taylor received "justice" when she was fatally shot by police.

Midshipman 1st Class Chase Standage, 21, says in the lawsuit that the academy is violating his constitutional rights of free speech and a fair and impartial hearing, the Capital Gazette reported Thursday.

In addition to the tweet about

Taylor, a Black woman who was fatally shot by officers who barged into her Kentucky home, Standage was also accused of tweeting racist messages against Black people.

In the lawsuit, Standage's attorneys write that Standage's June tweets were responses to heated exchanges on Twitter. They also said Standage "has never exhibited racial animus towards anyone."

Standage, who lives in California and is the son of police officers, was at home watching the protests against racial

injustice in Los Angeles when he sent his tweets, the lawsuit said.

An investigation ended last week with Standage receiving "appropriate administrative action," but an academy spokesperson didn't elaborate on the specific nature of the action, citing the Privacy Act. The Naval Academy said it is aware of the lawsuit but would not comment on pending litigation.

In his lawsuit, first reported by Courthouse News, Standage said Superintendent Vice Adm. Sean Buck plans to recommend

to the secretary of the Navy that Standage be separated from the Naval Academy. Both Buck and Navy Secretary Kenneth J. Braithwaite are named in the lawsuit.

The basis of separation is that Standage's tweets violate the Naval Academy's policies against political activities and "constituted conduct unbecoming a midshipman," according to the lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland.

The U.S. Attorney's Office will represent the Navy.

Dozens of military families told to repay GI Bill benefits

BY STEVE BEYNON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Nearly 200 dependents of veterans in the last three years have had to repay GI Bill benefits after the service members failed to complete contract requirements, sometimes unknowingly, leaving them tens of thousands of dollars in debt.

Service members who serve at least six years can transfer Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to a dependent, typically a child or spouse. To transfer the benefits, the service member must agree to serve an additional four years. As of July 2019, service members who have served more than 16 years are not eligible to transfer benefits. Only those currently serving can transfer benefits.

Some troops have left the service before completing their four extra years, without receiving a warning on the financial consequences. Dependents can use transferred education benefits right away, meaning if a service member later falls short with the military, the dependent must repay the Department of Veterans Affairs for the money used for schooling.

When troops sign over their education benefits to others, it becomes their responsibility to serve the extra four years. Those years are not automatically added to their official military contract. If that commitment is short even a few days, it is possible dependents will owe the VA.

In some cases, the dependents say they did not totally grasp the technical details of the GI Bill transfer. The confusion often comes when the VA approves a transfer before the service member completes his or her service obligation.

“VA is paying out these benefits expecting that DOD is going to hold the service member to the extent of the contract,” said Aniela Szymanski, senior director for legal affairs and military policy at Veterans Education Success, an advocacy group. “It isn’t until later when VA is going through their records and [they] realize this person wasn’t eligible at all.”

MilConnect, the online portal for personnel files, has a large section detailing the process for transferring Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. It explains that once benefits are transferred, service members have an “obligation end date,” but it doesn’t detail the specifics. It does not make it clear that the “obligation end date” is four years beyond the contract with the military.

MilConnect links to a VA webpage that

gives a short explanation of how service members or their dependents can fall into debt with the agency. Also on the VA’s site is a clear explanation of what “obligation end date” means. However, that is not shared on MilConnect.

A surprise debt

Jimmy Heustis was shocked when the VA asked him to repay \$32,000 after he was given GI Bill benefits from his father, who served in the Army for over 20 years.

Heustis, 27, said VA approved him for the benefits and he earned an associate degree from the University of Alaska Anchorage in computer and information technology. He used his dad’s GI Bill benefits to pay for most of his schooling. But a year after graduation, in 2019, the VA demanded the money back, saying his father came up one year short of his service obligation when he retired in 2015.

“Those benefits have long been used,” he said. “My dad was shocked. He didn’t know what the heck the VA was talking about.”

Heustis said he doesn’t have the money. He has filed an appeal with the VA and is trying to figure out his legal options. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the VA has ceased debt collections through the end of the year. For now, the agency is trying to negotiate a payment plan: “I still refuse to set up a repayment plan,” Heustis said.

For the reserve forces and National Guard, time commitments can get even murkier. Just missing a few weekend training events can put benefits into jeopardy — which can be difficult for service members to easily track.

“The service puts the entire onus on the member to keep track of that time,” Szymanski said. “For reservists, this is hyper-technical; it’s counting drill periods and days. We had one circumstance where a reservist left four drill periods shy of completing the obligation” and is now \$70,000 in debt.

While the debts are shocking and some of the details are unclear, the number of debts collected by VA for erroneous benefits are low and have been declining over the past three years.

In 2019, the VA started collecting debts against 22 dependents out of 127,354 beneficiaries who received transferred benefits, according to the most recent data from the department. In 2017 and 2018, debts were collected against 62 out of 119,602 and 103 dependents out of 128,466 beneficiaries, respectively.

“If service members do not fulfill that contract, VA is required by federal law

GI Bill info

- To apply to transfer Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, go to:
www.va.gov/education/apply-for-education-benefits/application/1990E/introduction
- To learn more about the details of transferring education benefits, go to:
www.va.gov/education/transfer-post-9-11-gi-bill-benefits/

to stop the benefit and attempt to collect any previous funds that were issued to the beneficiary,” Christina Noel, a VA spokeswoman, said in a statement. “This is the way Congress wrote the law, and VA is required to adhere to it.”

Uncertain futures

The VA has sometimes had to halt benefits to dependents at the last minute, causing problems for families who had always planned to use the GI Bill to pay for college for their children.

Valdon Daniel, who retired from the Army after 25 years as a lieutenant colonel in 2013, said he was never told he would have to serve an additional four years if he wanted to transfer benefits, even after multiple retirement briefings. VA officials told him his GI Bill benefits to his three kids were set, he said.

Now he and his wife, Maria, are struggling to figure out what’s next.

“No one has indicated to me, ever, that upon transferring these benefits to my kids that I owe another four years of service,” Daniel said, adding he could have retired later or transferred the benefits earlier if he had had accurate information.

The VA approved his benefits transfer in 2013, right before he retired. He also received a letter of eligibility from VA confirming his benefits.

It wasn’t until July this year that he was notified by the DOD that his service obligation end date was in June 2017, four years after he retired. Meaning his kids are no longer eligible, despite the transfer already being approved by VA. He filed an appeal with the Army requesting a reconsideration of benefits denial, saying the sudden reversal put him in undue hardship, and claiming poor communication from Army personnel.

One of Daniel’s daughters just started her first year of school. The family does not owe the VA, because the department ceased a payout to the school before the semester started. The only thing keeping her enrolled is the initial letter of approval from VA, which shows the school she will be using GI Bill benefits.

“Right now we are scrambling to get money together to pay for the schooling,” Daniel said.

Last known US followers of ISIS in Syria return

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The United States has repatriated the last four Americans held by Kurdish allies in Syria who were accused of supporting the Islamic State, the Justice Department said Thursday.

The transfers come as Washington has been pressing allies, particularly in Western Europe, to take back their own citizens who traveled to Iraq and Syria to fight with the militant group.

Since 2016, the United States has repatriated 27 Americans from Syria and Iraq, 10 of whom were charged with terrorism-related offenses, Justice Department officials said. Of the rest, 15 were minors at the time of repatriation and two were women who were not charged.

As of this week, “the United States has brought back every American supporter of ISIS, known to be held by the Syrian Democratic Forces against whom we have charges,” said John Demers, assistant attorney general for national security.

The news drew praise from terrorism experts: “The United States has been pretty forward-leaning on this and have practiced what they preached,” said Seamus Hughes, deputy director of George Washington University’s Program on Extremism.

Hughes noted that the United States has the advantage of having fewer foreign fighters overseas and strong terrorism laws that make prosecutions easier.

“But putting all that aside, it’s still an impressive feat,” he said.

Hughes, who keeps a database on foreign fighters, said there are at least three Americans who traveled overseas to fight for the Islamic State who are still detained in Iraq or Syria, though he does not know if all are being held by the SDF.

National Guard taps units for rapid response to civil unrest

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The National Guard has designated military police units in two states to serve as rapid reaction forces so they can respond quickly to any potential civil unrest around the country, following violent protests that rocked the nation’s capital and several states this summer.

Military leaders don’t explicitly tie the changes to concerns about possible election-related violence, but the nation is bracing for unrest surrounding the tumultuous presidential campaign, particularly if voting results are not known for days or weeks because of the increase in mail-in ballots.

According to the Guard, about 600 troops — 300 in both Alabama and Arizona — will be ready to deploy within 24 hours

if requested by a governor in another state. And Guard leaders have also bought more than \$200,000 in new protective equipment, and have increased troop training on proper procedures in dealing with protests.

The moves come as Defense Department and National Guard leaders work to address shortfalls that were identified in the military response to the June protests triggered by the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Military reviews of the response to the protests found problems with coordination between various state and federal government and law enforcement agencies — which at times slowed down troop movements.

“Coordination and communication were the probably the things that we’ll look back on and see very challenging,”

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said in an interview with The Associated Press. He said that as the protests escalated in D.C., and the call for help went out to governors around the country, 11 states said they were willing to provide support.

“But the problem with that is how quickly can you marshal them together, ensure they have the appropriate training, ensure they have the appropriate equipment, understand the task you’re going to give them?” said McCarthy. “It’s American streets. It could turn violent. It was an incredibly challenging thing.”

Governors can use National Guard troops for a variety of things, ranging from natural disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires to assisting with border security and civil unrest.

Traffic deaths dropped again in 2019

Associated Press

DETROIT — Traffic deaths in the U.S. fell for the third consecutive year in 2019, the government’s road safety agency reported.

The downward trend is continuing into this year with people driving fewer miles due to the pandemic, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said Thursday.

The agency says deaths fell 2% last year, to 36,096. That’s 739 fewer than the 36,835 fatalities reported to the agency in 2019.

The decrease came even though vehicle miles traveled increased by nearly 1%, reducing the fatality rate to 1.1 per 100 million miles traveled. That was the lowest since 2014.

The agency says pedestrian deaths fell 2.7%, bicyclist fatalities dropped 2.9% and motorcycle deaths dropped 0.5%. Deaths in passenger vehicles fell 2.8%.

But deaths in crashes involving heavy trucks fell by just one, from 5,006 in 2018 to 5,005 last year.

Estimates by the agency show that traffic deaths in the first half of this year fell 2% from the same period in 2019, to 16,550. But traffic volumes fell more than the number of fatal crashes, increasing the fatality rate per 100 mil-

lion vehicle miles traveled to 1.25. That’s up from 1.06 for the first half of 2019.

James Owens, NHTSA’s deputy administrator, said the agency is encouraged by the overall declines, but concerned because of a trend since April of increased fatality rates.

“Now more than ever we should be watching ourselves for safe driving practices and encouraging others to do the same,” Owens said in a statement.

The increased fatality rate brought criticism of NHTSA from safety advocates who said there is proven technology such as automatic emergency braking, blind spot warning and lane departure warnings that should be required on vehicles to make roads safer.

“The U.S. Department of Transportation continues to rely on ineffective voluntary agreements,” Cathy Chase, president of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, said in a statement.

NHTSA issued a report saying that during the height of the coronavirus restrictions with less traffic on the roads, drivers took more risks including speeding, failing to wear seat belts, and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Average speeds increased, and incidents with people caught driving at extreme speeds rose, NHTSA said.

Hiring still slow despite jobless rate drop

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — America's employers added 661,000 jobs in September, the third straight month of slower hiring and evidence from the final jobs report before the presidential election that the economic recovery has weakened.

With September's hiring gain, the economy has recovered only slightly more than half the 22 million jobs that were wiped out by the viral pandemic. The roughly 10 million jobs that remain lost exceed the number that the nation shed during the entire 2008-2009 Great Recession.

The unemployment rate for September fell to 7.9%, down from 8.4% in August, the Labor Department said Friday. Since April, the jobless rate has tumbled from a peak of 14.7%.

The September jobs report coincides with other data that suggests that while the economic picture may be improving, the gains have slowed since summer. The economy is under pressure from a range of threats. They include the expiration of federal aid programs that had fueled rehiring and sustained the economy — from a \$600-a-week benefit for the unemployed to \$500 billion in forgivable short-term loans to small businesses.

Alabama

TUSCALOOSA — Officials in Tuscaloosa say they will enforce strict limits on bar capacities as University of Alabama football returns to town Saturday for the first time during the coronavirus pandemic.

Police and fire officials will monitor how many people are inside establishments, Mayor Walt Maddox said, and places with too many people inside will get tickets and orders to shut down, The Tuscaloosa News reported.

Maddox said businesses that violate rules aimed at slowing the spread of the new virus, which causes COVID-19, could risk having their business license revoked for a second offense.

California

LOS ANGELES — California will begin to require counties to bring down coronavirus infection rates in disadvantaged communities that have been harder hit by the pandemic, a move that could slow the methodical reopening of the nation's most populous state.

The complex new rules set in place an "equity metric" that will force larger counties to control the spread of COVID-19 in areas where Black, Latino and Pacific Islander groups have suffered a disproportionate share of the cases because of a variety of socioeconomic factors.

"We can't allow transmission rates to be so disproportionately impacting those communities without significant effort to really reduce that disparity and reduce the burden on those communities," Dr. Mark Ghaly, the state's health secretary, said Thursday.

Connecticut

HARTFORD — An independent review of the impact the coronavirus outbreak has had in Connecticut's nursing homes found that those with more staff have had a significantly lower percentage of cases and deaths per bed.

The report from the Princeton, N.J., research firm Mathematica, and ordered by Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont in June, reviewed how the state, nursing homes and assisted living centers prepared for and responded to the pandemic.

It found that the state neglected the needs of nursing homes at the start of the pandemic, concentrating more on making sure hospitals were prepared for the outbreak.

The 157-page report makes numerous recommendations, including that all homes have a full-time staff member dedicated to preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

Dr. Deidre Gifford, the acting DPH commissioner, said the state has already begun instituting many of the suggestions.

Louisiana

NEW ORLEANS — Starting this weekend, New Orleans bars will be allowed to sell drinks to go and restaurants may operate at 75% indoor capacity instead of 50% since a number of coronavirus indicators have stayed low, Mayor LaToya Cantrell said.

The limit for restaurants and other businesses matches the state limit set weeks ago. If all goes well, New Orleans could match all state reopening levels by Oct. 31, with two more possible groups of changes, Cantrell said Thursday at a livestreamed news conference.

Those will depend on public response "ensuring we are a healthy city not only to live in but to visit," she said.

Maryland

ANNAPOLIS — Maryland child care providers can return to the full teacher-to-child ratios for which they are licensed, state officials said Thursday, and some nursing homes will be able to resume indoor visits.

The announcement came on the same day that Maryland reported zero deaths from the coronavirus in a 24-hour period for the first time since March 28.

"Today's announcement means that child care centers can now serve up to 20 3- and 4-year-olds in a room with a ratio of one teacher to 10 students, and up to 30 school-age students with a ratio of one teacher to 15 students," State Superintendent of Schools Karen Salmon said at a news conference with Gov. Larry Hogan.

Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN — Puerto Rico's government has extended measures to fight COVID-19 for two more weeks, meaning that restaurants, gyms and theaters across the U.S. territory will keep operating at limited capacity.

In addition, a 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew will remain in place until Oct. 16, and face masks continue to be manda-

tory, according to an executive order that the interim governor signed late Thursday. The extension was not publicly announced, and no press conference with health experts was held as has been customary since the pandemic began. Gov. Wanda Vazquez is on an official trip to the U.S. mainland until next week.

The extension also means bars and clubs will stay closed, and public school classes will continue to be held online.

Texas

AUSTIN — Texas health officials reported 3,223 new coronavirus cases Thursday, along with 112 more deaths due to COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus.

That brought the total number of Texas cases since tracking of the pandemic began in March to 752,501 with a death toll of 15,823, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported.

The health department also estimated 69,597 active cases of the virus, including 3,190 current hospital patients.

Wisconsin

MADISON — Three business groups filed a lawsuit Thursday seeking to block Gov. Tony Evers' administration from releasing the names of more than 1,000 businesses with employees who have tested positive for COVID-19, saying the release would blacklist those operations as the disease surges across the state.

Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce along with the Muskego and New Berlin chambers of commerce filed the lawsuit in Waukesha County, a Republican stronghold. They allege that Evers is preparing to release on Friday a list of more than 1,000 businesses that have had two or more employees test positive in response to media requests.

Waukesha County Circuit Judge Lloyd Carter issued an injunction blocking any release for five days pending a hearing.

Broncos beat bumbling Jets for 1st win

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — It was sloppy and downright ugly at times. It was a victory, though, and Vic Fangio and the Denver Broncos are relieved to finally get one — no matter how it looked.

Melvin Gordon sealed the Denver Broncos' first win of the season with a 43-yard touchdown run with 1:48 remaining, and the defense made just enough plays in the fourth quarter to beat the bumbling — and still winless — New York Jets 37-28 on Thursday night.

"Winning has cured more ills than penicillin," said Fangio, who was feeling the heat along with his team while facing the prospect of a second straight 0-4 start.

But the Broncos (1-3) came out on top in a penalty-filled but strangely entertaining game between two of the NFL's worst teams.

"It just makes you hungry for the next win," said Bradley Chubb, who had 2½ of Denver's six sacks.

And this one swung with a late mistake by New York's defense, which was plagued by bad plays all night.

On third-and-6 and with the Jets leading by one in the fourth quarter, Quinnen Wil-

liams sacked Brett Rypien — but grabbed the quarterback's helmet and prolonged the drive. Seven plays later, Brandon McManus kicked a 53-yard field goal to give Denver a 30-28 lead with 3:08 remaining.

The Jets couldn't do anything on their next possession, and Sam Darnold was sacked by Chubb on fourth-and-3 at the two-minute warning. Gordon ended New York's chances with his long rumble that sent the Jets to consecutive 0-4 starts for the first time in franchise history.

The heat on coach Adam Gase's seat will surely be turned up after this latest embarrassment, but no coaching change is imminent. New York was penalized 11 times, including six personal fouls.

"We had multiple chances to get off the field," Gase said. "We beat ourselves. The penalties are just ... they're brutal."

Fangio directed some of his players to head to the locker room as the game ended, and the coach didn't meet with Gase for the customary postgame handshake.

"There was just a couple of personal fouls there at the end and our sideline was getting (ticked) off about it," Fangio said. "I just wanted to avoid any confrontation at the end of the game and having it get ugly there."

Rypien rippin' it

Rypien, the nephew of 1992 Super Bowl MVP Mark Rypien, became the first quarterback to win his first start with three interceptions since San Francisco's Jim Druckenmiller beat the St. Louis Rams 15-12 in 1997. Rypien finished 19-for-31 for 242 yards and two TDs, along with the three picks.

Rypien put the Broncos on top 10-7 in the second quarter with a 48-yard throw to Jerry Jeudy. The rookie wide receiver reached in front of Desir, snatched the football and then walked into the end zone for his first NFL TD. That drive was kept alive by another defensive penalty when Williams was called for roughing the passer.

"Well, it was up and down," Fangio said of Rypien's night, declining to commit to him starting the next game. "I thought there was some good things. We hit some big plays, which is always important. Throwing three interceptions, you're not going to win many times in this league. But we found a way to win tonight in spite of that."

Air Force set to host rival Navy in opener

Associated Press

For the first time in school history, Air Force opens a season in October and by facing fellow service academy Navy.

Ask Navy, that's advantage Air Force since the Falcons had weeks to prepare.

Ask Air Force, that's advantage Navy since the Midshipmen have played two games.

One thing both schools can agree on: It will be an opening leg of the annual Commander-in-Chief's Trophy competition like no other Saturday, with only the Air Force cadets allowed into Falcon Stadium due to COVID-19 restrictions.

"It's definitely a very emotional game, this first game," Falcons senior linebacker Grant Donaldson said.

The Falcons weren't even sure if they would be taking the field this fall after the Mountain West postponed the season in August. Then, they

learned they would play the two service academy games.

Later, the league announced its resumption, with the intent to play eight games.

It's been a roller coaster of emotions for Air Force, which won eight straight to close out last season, including the Cheez-It Bowl.

This isn't the same team, though. The Falcons have been hit by graduation and military turnbacks (an option a cadet has to leave the academy for up to two semesters). In addition, quarterback Donald Hammond III is currently a cadet not in good standing, meaning he can practice but can't represent the school.

The Falcons defense appears to have been particularly hit hard by players opting for turnbacks (the exact figure isn't released due to the privacy codes). Not that Donaldson is giving it much thought.

"We're here to compete re-

gardless of who we have," Donaldson said. "We're going to be ready and prepared to go."

With two games under their belt, the Midshipmen (1-1) are starting to find their rhythm. They lost 55-3 to BYU in the opener, then bounced back to win 27-24 at Tulane.

But this is always a different sort of test. Navy enters as the defending champion in the round-robin Commander-in-Chief's Trophy competition between the service academies. Navy beat Air Force 34-25 at home last season and knocked off Army 31-7.

This competition is a big deal, which may have been why Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo voiced his feelings when the Midshipmen had a full slate of games, while the Falcons at the time had only the service academy contests on the docket.

"Once I vented and got that frustration out, it's all about football," Niumatalolo said.

"They're a good program, great coaches, great players."

But the Midshipmen really don't know that much about this version of Air Force. The Falcons could be starting sophomore Haaziq Daniels at quarterback or maybe junior Warren Bryan. Both are listed on the depth chart.

Air Force coach Troy Calhoun was hoping to schedule a tune-up game last weekend, but it didn't work out.

"Naturally, you want to play as much football as you can play," Calhoun said.

Respect that option

From one option team to another, Navy respects how Air Force runs its version.

"Very creative," Niumatalolo said. "They come from the Fisher DeBerry option school, very varied in what they can do. They run every option known to man."

Thiem rolls into French Open 4th round

Associated Press

PARIS — Waking up early Friday for his third-round match at the French Open, Dominic Thiem was surprised to see the morning skies were still dark.

Yup, Roland Garros in autumn, when the sun is slower to rouse itself than during the usual May-June slot, takes some getting used to. But, on court, the U.S. Open champion is adjusting just fine to the peculiarities of what is the last Grand Slam tournament in a pandemic-hit year.

The runner-up last year and in 2018, both times to Rafael Nadal, advanced to the fourth round for the fifth consecutive time, with another straight-set victory in this week's first encounter in Paris between seeded men.

The victim of the third-seeded Austrian's fierce backhand and super-quick court coverage under the new roof on Court Philippe Chatrier was No. 28 Casper Ruud, 6-4, 6-3, 6-1.

In the women's draw, top-seeded Simona Halep defeated Amanda Anisimova 6-0, 6-1. The 19-year-old Anisimova beat the 2018 champion in straight sets in the quarterfinals last year.

Halep, a Romanian riding a career-best winning streak of 17 matches, will next face another rematch against another teenager: Iga Swiatek.

Thiem, bidding to become the first Austrian with multiple Grand Slam titles, has said he loves the chilly autumnal conditions that other players have grumbled about at this pushed-back French Open.

Still, waking up in the players' bio-secured hotel at 7 a.m. for the first match on Friday on Chatrier, he was taken aback that dawn had to yet to break, as it would have done in May.

"Everything dark. Winter is almost coming," he said. "That was a little bit weird."

Thiem was broken only once, when he sent a forehand wide to give Ruud a 3-1 lead in the first set. He immediately broke

back and converted six of his 15 break points in all. He also saved seven of the eight break points he faced.

Ruud was bidding to become only the second Norwegian to reach the fourth round of a Grand Slam.

The first was his father and coach, Christian Ruud, in 1997 at the Australian Open. He watched on Friday on Chatrier.

Chatrier was again largely empty for that match, the victim of a daily limit of 1,000 spectators imposed on the clay-court Grand Slam tournament. The arena built for 15,000 rang out later in the day to shouts of "Bravo!" and "Merci!" and saw fans in face masks jumping up and down in waves as Caroline Garcia of France beat 16th-seeded Elise Mertens 1-6, 6-4, 7-5.

"There are not many of you but you make as much noise as when it's full," Garcia told the crowd, which sheltered under the arena's new roof from a storm that interrupted play on the outside courts. The 45th-

ranked Garcia advanced to a fourth-round match against third-seeded Elina Svitolina, who beat the last of 12 Russians in the women's draw, Ekaterina Alexandrova, 6-4, 7-5.

Also advancing in a rain-interrupted match was Sebastian Korda, the son of 1998 Australian Open champion Petr Korda. Korda and Spanish opponent Pedro Martinez, beaten 6-4, 6-3, 6-1, reached the main draw via the qualifying tournament. Korda is the first qualifier to reach the men's fourth round since Alejandro Falla in 2011. Halep also played her third-round match in the dry under the Chatrier roof to set up her rematch against the 19-year-old Swiatek.

In the fourth round last year, Halep routed Swiatek 6-1, 6-0, ending the Polish player's Roland Garros debut.

Swiatek is a tougher prospect this time. She has lost only 13 games, not dropped a set and beat Canadian wild card Eugenie Bouchard 6-3, 6-2 in the third round.

Sports briefs

Source says Sixers are set to hire Rivers as coach

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — There's a new Doc in Philadelphia — one charged with reviving a 76ers organization that fell far short of NBA championship expectations.

The 76ers reached an agreement Thursday with Doc Rivers to become the latest coach to try to lead the Sixers to their first NBA championship since 1983, a person with direct knowledge of the negotiations told The Associated Press. The person spoke to the AP on Thursday on condition of anonymity because the Sixers had not formally announced the move.

Rivers takes over for Brett Brown, who was fired after the 76ers were swept in the first

round of the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Rivers was fired about two weeks after the Los Angeles Clippers wasted a 3-1 series lead and lost to the Denver Nuggets in the Western Conference semifinals.

Rivers spent seven seasons with the Clippers, making the playoffs in six of them — major success for a once-woebegone franchise. This season's team, with the additions of Kawhi Leonard and Paul George, was expected to compete for a championship.

But losing three closeout opportunities to the Nuggets cost the Clippers a chance to play the Los Angeles Lakers in the West finals, and likely played a role in Rivers not remaining as coach.

Munoz shares lead in Mississippi

JACKSON, Miss. — Defending champion Sebastian Munoz found happy memories Thursday at the Sanderson Farms Championship.

Munoz nearly holed a wedge on his opening hole as part of his fast start, ran in four straight birdies on the back nine and wound up with an 8-under 64 to share of the lead with Jimmy Walker, Kevin Chappell and Charley Hoffman.

The Country Club of Jackson was soft from recent downpours, though the greens were running fast and true, contributing to the good scoring.

Sixteen players were at 67 or better.

In other golf news:

■ Lauren Stephenson holed out from the rough from 137 yards for eagle on the par-4 14th and shot an 8-under 63 on Thursday for a share of the Shoprite LPGA Classic lead with Mi Hyang Lee.

Stephenson, the 23-year-old former Clemson and Alabama player in her second season on the LPGA Tour, birdied four of the first five holes and finished the morning round on Seaview's Bay Course in Galloway, N.J., with eight birdies and two bogeys.

Lee, the 27-year-old South Korean player who won the last of her two LPGA Tour titles in 2017, birdied the final two holes in a bogey-free afternoon round.

Braves break playoff slump

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Picture this: The Atlanta Braves winning a playoff series for the first time in nearly a generation.

That's certainly worth a few fake selfies.

"I'm overcome with joy," said slugging outfielder Ronald Acuna Jr., who was not yet 4 years old the last time it happened.

Acuna did his part to end Atlanta's 19-year run of playoff futility, driving in the first run — the only run that was needed, it turned out — to spark a 5-0 win over the Cincinnati Reds, completing a sweep of the best-of-three NL wild-card series.

"There's a lot of energy there that's contagious," Acuna said of his team.

There's also a lot of heart-break for this franchise, which is best known for managing only one World Series title — a quarter-century ago — during its unprecedented run of 14 straight division titles.

Kings of the regular season. Chokers of the postseason.

No matter where they played, whether it was Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium or Turner Field or their current home, Truist Park, the Braves always seemed to wind up hosting everybody else's playoff celebrations.

Finally, they got to hold one of their own, though it was certainly muted in this era of COVID-19.

There was no thunderous roar from a sellout crowd, though you could hear the cheers from a few hundred fans gathered in a plaza beyond the right-field stands to watch on a big screen. It was about as close as anyone could get, other than a small number of family and friends who were allowed to attend the series.

It didn't seem quite fair for a team that has endured so much postseason misery, but any complaints were quickly cast aside.

Padres force Game 3

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Fernando Tatis Jr. had been waiting for a breakout game, and boy did "El Nino" get it.

The 21-year-old budding superstar, who grew up in the game at the feet of his big league father, hit two home runs and drove in five to boost the San Diego Padres to an electrifying 11-9 victory against the St. Louis Cardinals on Thursday night that forced a deciding Game 3 in their NL wild-card series.

Wil Myers also homered twice and Manny Machado connected, but Tatis — with his signature exuberance and flair — was the one who carried the party at empty Petco Park.

With his blond dreadlocks bouncing around his helmet, Tatis danced down the first-base line and gestured animatedly toward his teammates after igniting the comeback by lining a three-run home run into the left-field seats in the sixth inning. Machado followed with a solo shot to tie the game at 6.

Four batters after Myers opened the seventh with a solo shot for a 7-6 lead, Tatis was more dramatic after his a two-run drive into the home run deck in right. Tatis flipped his bat, turned and glared at his teammates before beginning his trot and then gave several leaping high-fives after touching the plate.

Tatis and Myers are the second teammates in postseason history with multiple homers in the same game, joining Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees on Oct. 1, 1932 in Game 3 of the World Series — including Ruth's famed "called shot."

The Padres are the first team in postseason history with five home runs from the sixth inning onward in a game.

Motivated A's rally past White Sox

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Sure, most of these young Oakland Athletics might barely remember some of the gut-wrenching October losses over the past two decades.

Two recent defeats were plenty fresh enough to motivate manager Bob Melvin's slugging, happy-go-lucky A's.

Oakland finally ended 14 years of postseason futility, riding Chad Pinder's go-ahead, two-run single in the fifth inning and repeated costly walks by Chicago's relievers to rally past the White Sox 6-4 on Thursday and win the decisive third game of their AL wild-card round series.

"Not everybody's been part of all that," Melvin said. "We've had a couple of tough ones in the last two years."

The AL West champions lost the opener, then won on consecutive days at home and advanced to a Division Series against the rival Houston Astros starting Monday at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. The winner of that matchup faces the New York Yankees or Tampa Bay for a spot in the World Series. Sean Murphy hit a two-run homer in the fourth against Codi Heuer as A's wives and families cheered from suites high above the diamond.

Players held a subdued celebration afterward. No champagne showers.

"We're doing what we did all year, and that's following the protocols," Melvin said

Admirable restraint for a club that won 97 games each of the past two seasons only to lose the division to Houston and then the AL wild-card game both years.

Kershaw leads LA to division series

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Beat up in the postseason over the years, Clayton Kershaw orchestrated one of his best performances against the weakened Milwaukee Brewers.

Kershaw struck out 13 while delivering eight innings of three-hit ball, Mookie Betts hit a two-out, two-run double in the fifth, and the Los Angeles Dodgers won 3-0 to sweep their NL wild-card series on Thursday night.

"This was a fun night for me," said Kershaw, who displayed a rare smile on the mound. "Get the postseason off to a good start. It's a good first step for sure."

The eight-time West champion Dodgers advanced to the NL Division Series in Arlington, Texas, and will play either the St. Louis Cardinals or San Diego Padres, who met in a deciding Game 3 on Friday.

Kershaw's strikeouts were a playoff career high and the most by a Dodgers pitcher in the postseason since his mentor Sandy Koufax had 15 in Game 1 of the 1963 World Series against the Yankees.

"That was pretty spectacular, for sure," Betts said. "He gave us all the opportunities in the world to capitalize."

Kershaw issued his lone walk to Luis Urias in the eighth and promptly picked him off when a diving Urias couldn't get back to the bag. The Brewers lost their challenge of the call.

"Kershaw was just determined," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "He gave us all he had and all we needed."