

Is Louisiana Miss-leading the Public About Corona Virus Numbers?

On July 11 2020, Governor John Bell Edwards of Louisiana, by proclamation orders a state wide mask mandate and a prohibition of on premises alcohol consumption for businesses.

The statewide mask mandate, which will allow for parishes without high COVID-19 incidence to opt out if they choose, and bar closures go into effect Monday, July 13 at 12:01 a.m., per a revised Phase Two proclamation signed today. The order will also limit the size of gatherings to 50. The new order is set to expire July 24, 2020, but could be extended.

“Cases in Louisiana continue to increase, including setting a record-high number of new cases reported in one day, today and yesterday. More than two thousand new COVID infections reported each of these days and increased hospitalizations are signs that we continue to go in the wrong direction in our work to control COVID-19 in our state. While I had hoped to avoid going backwards on restrictions, it is obvious that it is necessary to slow the spread of infection in our state, as COVID-19 has spread to every corner, at a level higher than we have previously seen. This is why I am now mandating face coverings statewide and also closing all bars in Louisiana to on-premises consumption, in addition to putting in limits on the size of indoor gatherings,” Gov. Edwards said. “Right now, all Louisianans need to work together to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by wearing their face masks, keeping social distance, washing their hands frequently and staying at home when they are feeling sick. These are reasonable expectations while we fight to reduce the spread of the illness in our state. This approach also gives us the best possible chance to again flatten the curve without moving back to Phase One.”

<https://www.gov.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/newsroom/detail/2591>

On July 23 2020, Gov. Edwards Signs Orders Extending Phase Two and the Statewide Mask Mandate.

“Today, we are reporting 2,408 new cases, which means that the state has now surpassed 100,00 total cases. And of course, these are only the cases we know about. There are undoubtedly more,”

*“For anyone out there minimizing the seriousness of this situation, you are doing yourself and this state a terrible disservice. The same is true for anyone **questioning the validity of the data** that we’re using and releasing every day,”*

<https://www.gov.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/newsroom/detail/2609>

The Data

Early on in this epidemic I started closely monitoring the situation out of a need for a greater understanding above what is reported from the media. This involves more than just viewing charts, maps and views as presented by others. I collect the data, review the data and form my own opinions. The data is downloaded locally where it can be analyzed fully.

I source my data from three main collection points:

1. COVID-19 Data Repository by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University

<https://github.com/CSSEGISandData/COVID-19>

Johns Hopkins experts in global public health, infectious disease, and emergency preparedness have been at the forefront of the international response to COVID-19.

2. The COVID Tracking Project

<https://covidtracking.com/data>

The COVID Tracking Project is a volunteer organization launched from The Atlantic and dedicated to collecting and publishing the data required to understand the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States.

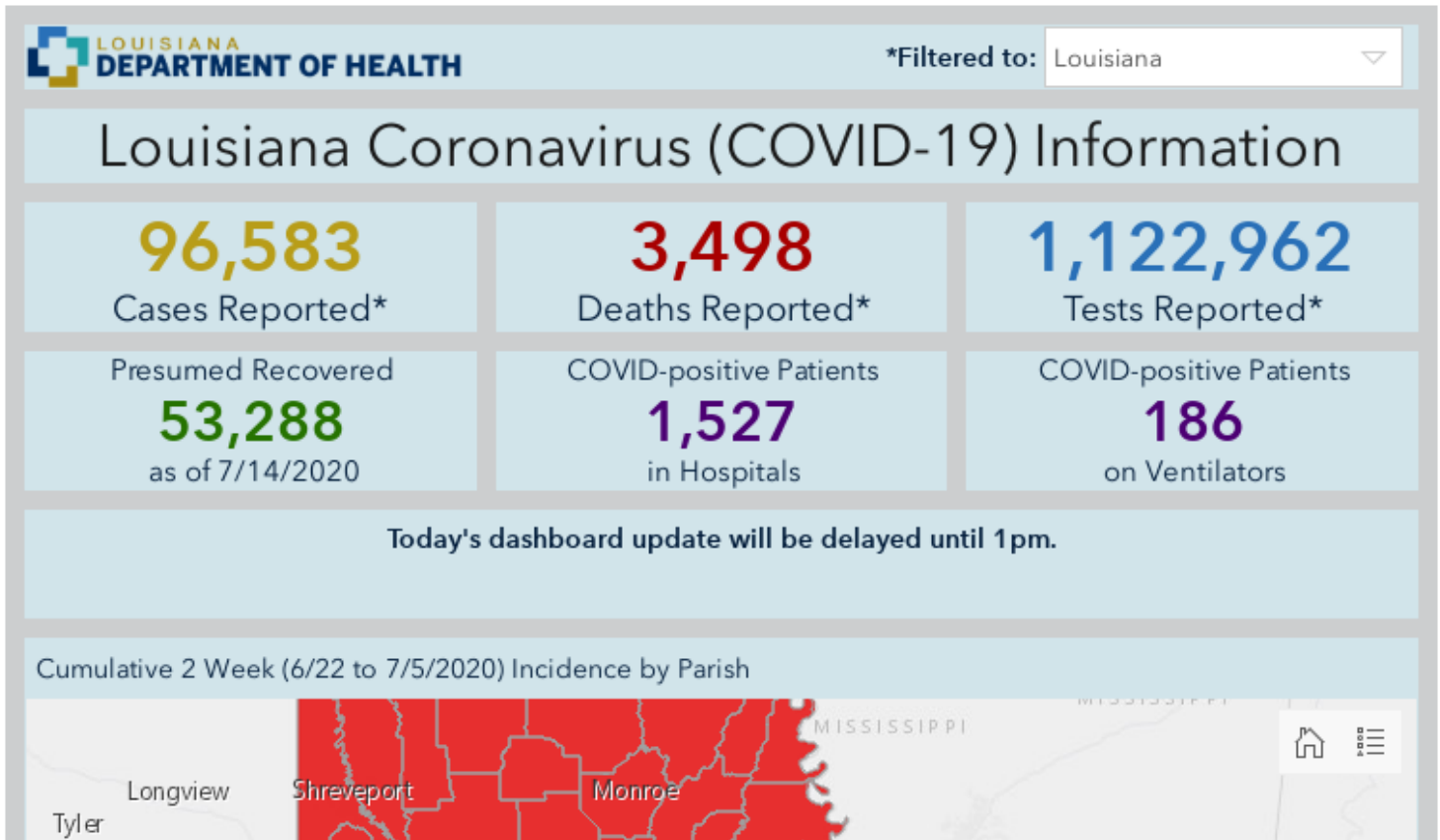
3. Various state government web sites dedicated to reporting statistics for public consumption

<http://ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus/> (Louisiana)

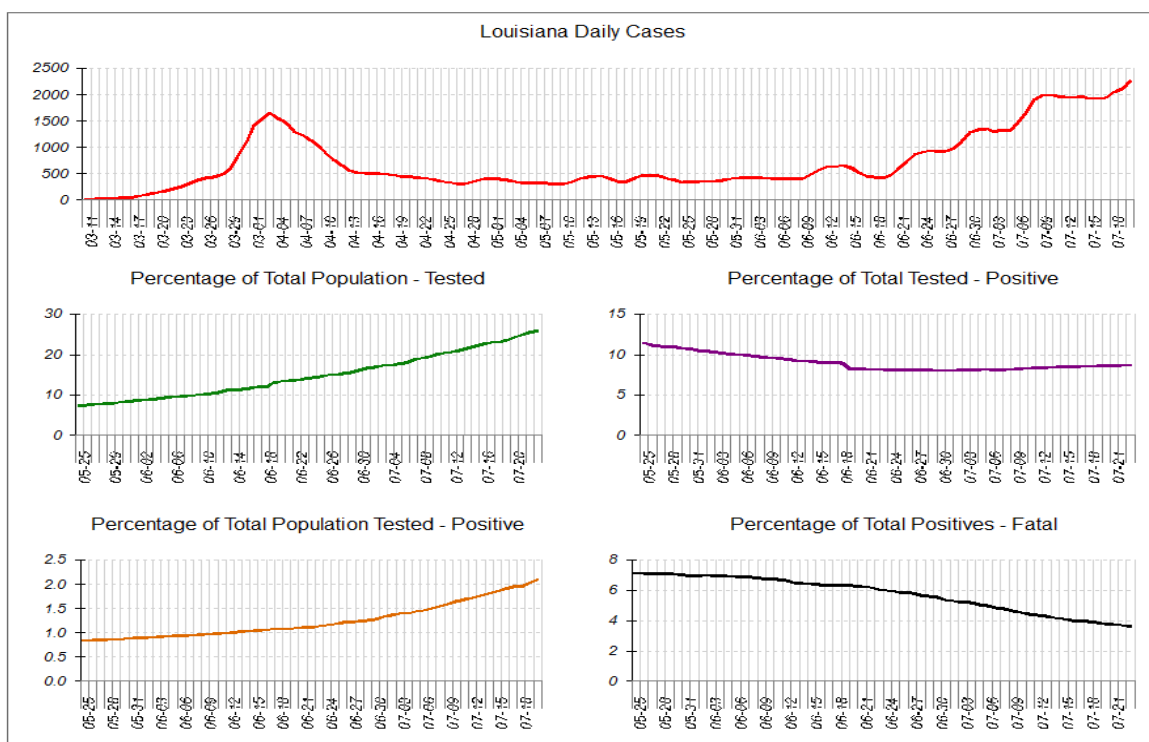
The CDC, as well as the Office of Public Health, have been proactively preparing for the introduction of this virus since it was first identified in China earlier this year.

The data sets harvested from these sources are cross checked against each other to ensure their validity.

The COVID Tracking Project also maintains screen shots of the various state websites from when they harvest their data. This one is from July 22.



After I have verified and cross checked the data I produce my charts which I use to help analyze the data.



To the point

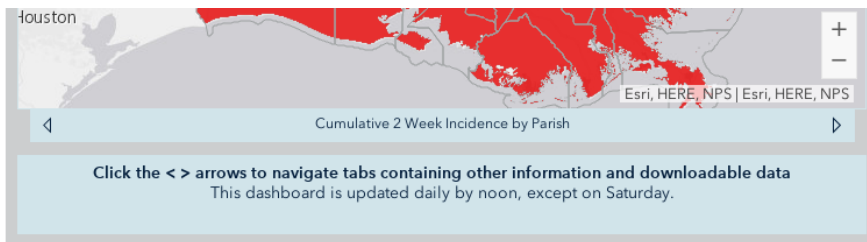
Remember that on July 11, a mask mandate was released to be re-evaluated two weeks later and on July 23, that mandate was extended for another two weeks.

During that press conference, reasons were given as to why the the state would remain in this lock down for another two weeks. Among the reasons given was an increase in the “positivity rating” to over 10%. In a later statement made by Dr. Birx it was said that over 70% of the parishes in Louisiana had a “positivity rating” over 10%.

The “positivity rating” is a ratio of the number of positive test within a group of tests given, that is the number of positives divided by the number of tests given multiplied by 100.

On or about July 23, something was added to the state web site.

<https://covidtracking.com/screenshots/LA/LA-20200722-121240.png>



July 22

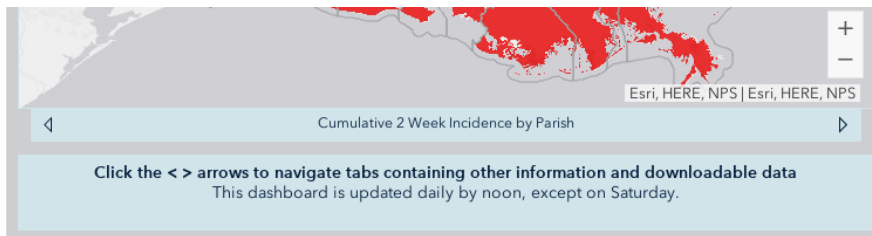
Information in the dashboard above will be updated at noon daily, except on Saturdays.

Additional Data on COVID-19 Deaths in Louisiana

Race

Underlying Conditions

<https://covidtracking.com/screenshots/LA/LA-20200723-181325.png>



July 23

Files for download:

[Historical case and testing data by parish by day](#)

[Historical case and testing data by census tract by week](#)

Additional Data on COVID-19 Deaths in Louisiana

Historical case and testing data by parish by day

Following this link downloads an xls data file with cases by date and parish.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Lab Collection Date	Parish	Daily Test Count	Daily Negative Test Count	Daily Positive Test Count	Daily Case Count
2	6/8/2020	East Baton Rouge	876	821	55	36
3	6/9/2020	East Baton Rouge	1415	1300	115	74
4	6/10/2020	East Baton Rouge	694	630	64	42
5	6/11/2020	East Baton Rouge	516	449	67	40
6	6/12/2020	East Baton Rouge	570	515	55	44

Let's compare the old data to the new

The positivity rating July 10 – July 23

JHU, The Atlantic, and LDH Dashboard data

Tested 294,458
Positives 29,658
Positivity Rating 10.07%

NEW

Historical case and testing data by parish by day data

Tested 73,914
Positives 11,153
Positivity Rating 15.09%

The total event positivity rating March 7 – July 23

JHU, The Atlantic, and LDH Dashboard data

Tested 1,174,598
Positives 101,652
Positivity Rating 8.65%

NEW

Historical case and testing data by parish by day data

Tested 1,059,102
Positives 131,906
Positivity Rating 12.45%

There is an obvious difference in the data within these two data sets. One has been reported and used for the last four months. The other has just been released within the last four days.

Why would someone create a second set of books? I know why a business would.

They said that anyone **questioning** the **validity of the data** that they're using are doing themselves and this state a terrible disservice.

Yeah right ... these are not the droids you're looking for.