

How is kids syndrome linked to COVID-19?

BY ZACHARY R. DOWDY
AND LISA L. COLANGELO
zachary.dowdy@newsday.com
lisa.colangelo@newsday.com

State health officials are increasingly concerned about a mysterious set of symptoms that seem to be linked to COVID-19 that has stricken children, a group thought to be the least likely to develop life-threatening symptoms from the novel coronavirus. As of Tuesday, about 100 young New Yorkers have been admitted to hospitals with inflammatory symptoms similar to Kawasaki disease and toxic shock syndrome. While some have recovered and been released, at least three youngsters have died and two more deaths are being investigated, state officials said.

What are the symptoms of the newly discovered coronavirus-related illness affecting children?

Young children who have what physicians are calling “pediatric multi-system inflammatory syndrome associated with COVID-19” are presenting a host of symptoms including persistent high fever, rash, belly pain, vomiting and diarrhea, said Dr. James Schneider, chief of pediatric critical care medicine at Cohen Children’s Medical Center.

Is it related to other illnesses?

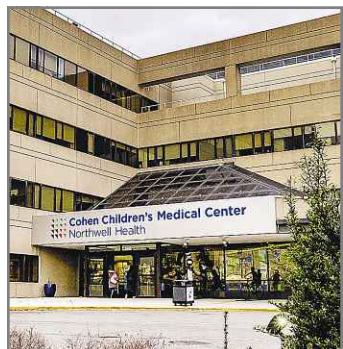
Some experts have said the new syndrome is related to coronavirus. They say symptoms show up a few weeks after infection starts and also appear similar to Kawasaki disease symptoms, including inflammation of the lips, tongue and eyes and rashes.

Do doctors know why this is happening?

Some experts speculate that the illness is an overreaction by the body’s immune system to COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

What do we know about it so far?

Authorities and local physicians say that it is a serious inflammatory disease they believe is linked to COVID-19, and that some patients have come into hospitals so ill that they must be immediately put in in-



The Cohen Children’s Medical Center in New Hyde Park has treated children with syndrome.
■ Video: newsday.com/health



More questions answered at newsday.com/virusfaq

tensive care. As many as 100 children have been reported having the syndrome in New York State as of Tuesday. It can cause inflamed muscles and breathing problems, state officials said.

Is the disease potentially fatal?

Yes. State officials have said a 5-year-old boy in New York City, a 7-year-old boy in Westchester County and a teenager in Suffolk County have died from the syndrome.

How do they know it’s related to coronavirus?

Officials have said that the young patients did not have the respiratory issues linked to coronavirus but that they either tested positive for COVID-19 or for its antibodies, which would mean their immune system had created antibodies in response to the virus infecting their bodies.

What should I do if my child is showing symptoms?

Doctors say, in addition to the more common symptoms of abdominal pain and persistent fever, some children with the syndrome can present rashes, red eyes or red lips and tongue, racing heart, trouble breathing and chest pain.

“We are still learning about this. When in doubt, call your pediatrician,” Schneider said.

FAUCI: U.S. MAY

Reopening too soon could add to suffering, deaths

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation’s top infectious disease expert, warned bluntly Tuesday of “really serious” consequences of suffering, death and deeper economic damage if state and local officials lift stay-at-home orders too quickly, even as President Donald Trump pushes them to act to right a free-falling economy.

Fauci’s testimony before a Senate committee came as more than two dozen states have begun to lift their lockdowns as a first step toward economic recovery.

Underscoring the seriousness of the pandemic that has reached Congress and the White House, Fauci and other experts testified by video from their homes. Sen. Lamar Alexander chaired the hearing in his cabin in Tennessee, though several members of the Health, Education, Labor and

Pensions Committee did attend at the Capitol.

Fauci and other health officials stressed that pandemic danger persists, even as testing increases and work toward a vaccine and a treatment continues.

More COVID-19 infections are inevitable as people again start gathering, but how prepared communities are to stamp out those sparks will determine how bad the rebound is, Fauci told the senators.

“There is no doubt, even under the best of circumstances, when you pull back on mitigation you will see some cases appear,” Fauci said.

And if there is a rush to reopen without following guidelines, “my concern is we will start to see little spikes that might turn into outbreaks,” he said. “The consequences could be really serious.”

In fact, he said opening too soon “could turn the clock back,” and that not only would cause “some suffering and death that could be avoided, but could even set you back on the road to try to get economic recovery.”

Fauci was among the health experts testifying Tuesday to the Senate panel. His testi-

mony comes as Trump is praising states that are reopening after the prolonged lockdown aimed at controlling the virus’s spread.

Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), chairman of the committee, said as the hearing opened that “what our country has done so far in testing is impressive, but not nearly enough.”

Worldwide, the virus has infected nearly 4.2 million people and killed over 287,000 — more than 80,000 in the United States alone. Asked if the U.S. mortality count was correct, Fauci said, “the number is likely higher. I don’t know exactly what percent higher but almost certainly it’s higher.”

Fauci, a member of the coronavirus task force charged with shaping the response to COVID-19, testified via video conference after self-quarantining as a White House staffer tested positive for the virus.

With the U.S. economy in free-fall and more than 30 million people unemployed, Trump has been pressuring states to reopen.

A recent Associated Press review determined that 17 states

Pelosi proposes \$3T virus

BY TOM BRUNE
tom.brune@newsday.com

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Tuesday unveiled a new, expansive \$3 trillion coronavirus federal aid package that could bring an estimated \$67 billion to New York state and local governments, but it quickly ran into Republican opposition.

Pelosi released the Democrats’ 1,815-page legislative package, which would be the largest emergency spending bill in history, with plans for a House vote on it Friday to lay down a marker for negotiations with the White House and congressional Republicans.

“We must think big for the people now, because if we don’t it will cost more in lives

and livelihood later,” Pelosi said at the Capitol. “We’re presenting a plan to do what is necessary to deal with a chronic crisis and make sure we can get the country back to work and school safely.”

Republicans gave a cool reaction to the bill, and Senate Republicans likely won’t take it up until June, after the Memorial Day recess that begins a week from Friday.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said the bill is “a liberal wish list that has no chance of becoming law.” Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), who has called for a pause in aid bills, said, “This is not a time for aspirational legislation.”

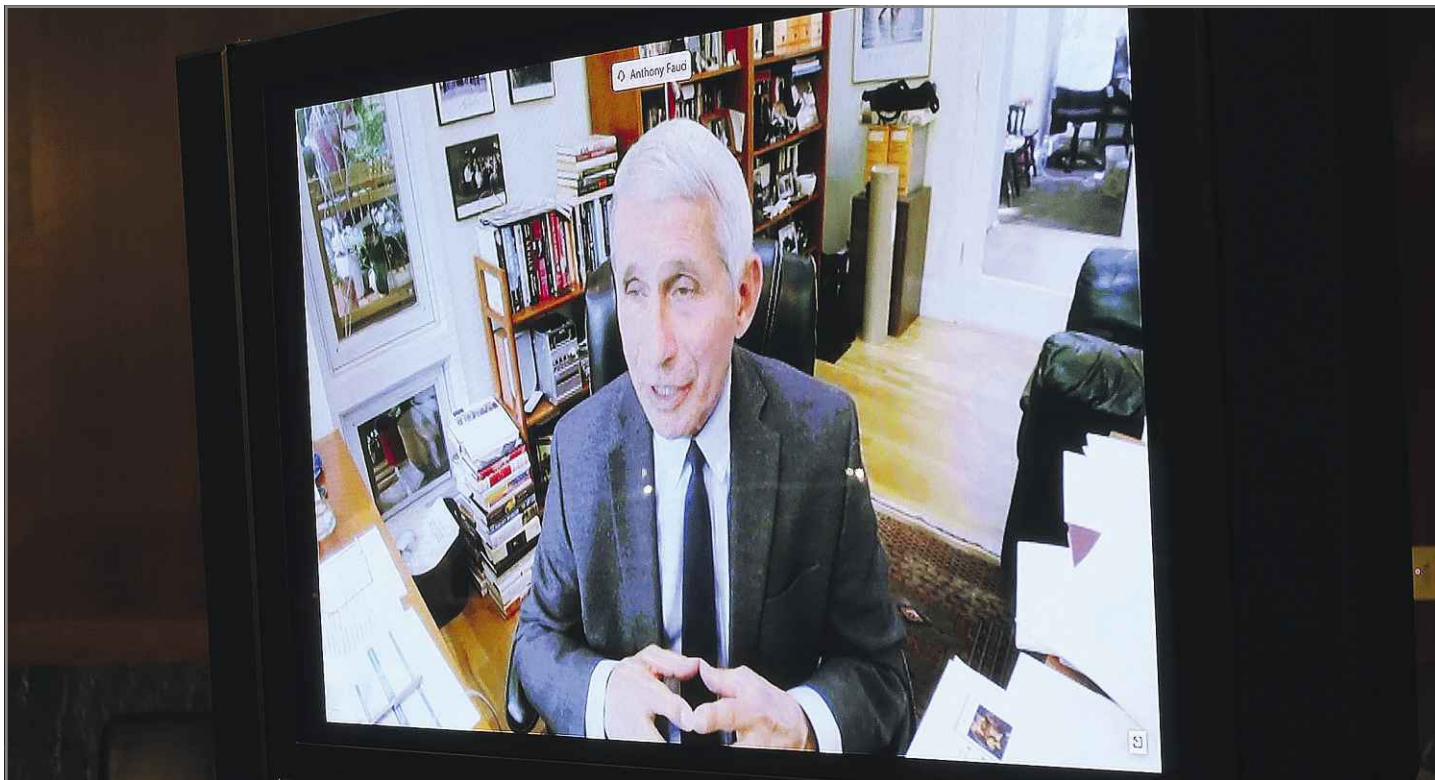
McConnell also will come to the table with his own proposal

— a Senate Republican bill he has championed to raise the threshold of liability for employers, manufacturers, health providers and schools against COVID-19-related lawsuits by affected workers and others.

The core of the Democrats’ new aid bill, dubbed the Heroes Act, lies in nearly \$1 trillion for state and local governments, many of them struggling with a sharp drop in revenues. A total of \$500 billion would go to state governments, according to the bill.

But the bill also would provide \$200 billion for hazard pay for essential workers, a measure pushed by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.); \$175 billion to aid struggling renters and home-

FACE DIRE RAMIFICATIONS



Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaks via remote video at Senate Committee hearing.

did not meet a key White House benchmark for loosening restrictions — a 14-day downward trajectory in new cases or positive test rates. Yet many of those have

begun to reopen or are about to do so, including Alabama, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Utah.

Of the 33 states that have had a 14-day downward trajectory of either cases or positive test rates, 25 are partially opened or moving to reopen within days, the

AP analysis found. Other states that have not seen a 14-day decline, remain closed despite meeting some benchmarks.

Besides Fauci, of the National

Institutes of Health, the other experts include FDA Commissioner Dr. Stephen Hahn and Dr. Robert Redfield, head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — both in self-quarantine—and Adm. Brett Giroir, the coronavirus “testing czar” at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The event Tuesday got underway in the committee’s storied hearing room, but that’s about all that remained of the pre-pandemic way of conducting oversight. The senators running the event, Alexander and Democrat Patty Murray of Washington, were heads on video screens as they isolated back home.

A few senators, such as Alaska Republican Lisa Murkowski and Connecticut Democrat Chris Murphy, personally attended the session in the hearing room. They wore masks, as did an array of aides buzzing behind them.

Eyeing the November elections, Trump has been eager to restart the economy, urging on protesters who oppose their state governors’ stay-at-home orders and expressing his own confidence that the coronavirus will fade away as summer advances and Americans return to work and other pursuits.

aid package with \$67B for NY governments

owners, and another \$100 billion for health care providers.

It also includes \$75 billion for testing and contact tracing, \$25 billion for the ailing U.S. Post Office and \$10 billion for small business economic injury disaster loans.

Other expensive measures carry no exact price tag, such as another round of direct cash payments to individuals and families, extension of current unemployment benefits with the \$600 bonus, a 15% boost to food stamps, and COBRA subsidies to people losing employer-provided health insurance.

And stuffed into the bill are nuggets for New York.

In addition to an estimated \$34.4 billion to New York State, \$17.2 billion for New York City

and \$15.1 billion for other New York municipalities and counties, it also contains the much-prized repeal of the \$10,000 cap on state and local government tax deductions for the next two years.

And it also includes what appears to be flexibility for Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo to cut Medicaid costs while still collecting extra federal aid, according to Bill Hammond of the fiscally conservative Empire Center.

Many of the bill’s measures face fierce opposition from Republicans — including the SALT cap repeal, an election law overhaul, and multi-employer and other pension fund bailouts — and may end up cut from the final legislation.

“We’re going to insist on doing narrowly targeted legisla-

tion, if and when we do legislate again,” McConnell said.

Earlier Tuesday, McConnell stressed his red line for passage of a fifth aid bill: a measure to raise the liability threshold and make it harder to file COVID-19-related lawsuits against employers large and small, manufacturers, schools and health care providers.

That proposal is popular with business groups such as Alliance for a Better Long Island. But Democrats call it a nonstarter. Schumer said, “Come on, stop the ideological issues.”

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) on Tuesday said the House, which is in recess because of the pandemic, will reconvene Friday morning for a vote on the Heroes Act and a bill to allow remote ses-

sions and votes in the future.

Rep. Peter King (R-Seaford) said he expects to support the bill in Friday’s House vote. Pelosi, King said, is passing the bill to put down a marker for negotiations, in which both sides will have to give up some of their measures to find a compromise both sides can support.

Rep. Tom Suozzi (D-Glen Cove) hailed the new legislation for including his priorities of a special fund for the hardest-hit states based on the rate of COVID-19 rate of infection, the repeal of the SALT deduction cap and funds for smaller governments.

Suozzi, who noted that many Republican governors and mayors also support the state and local government aid, said, “Let the negotiations begin.”



Pelosi speaks about the Heroes Act at the Capitol Building.

WIN/MCNAMER / POOL VIA AP