



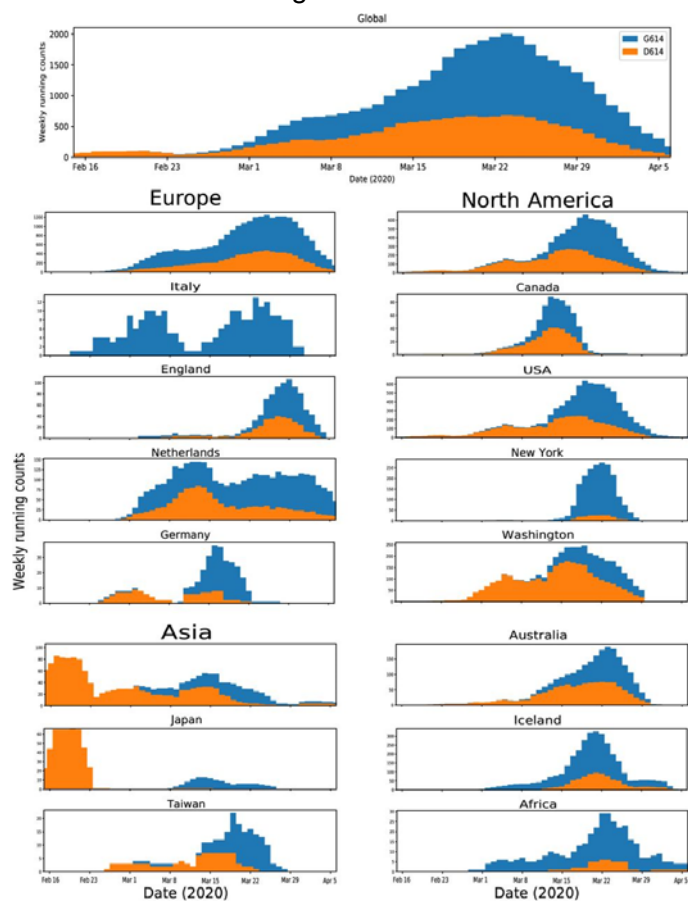
May 5, 2020

To: All Domestic Employees

From: Pandemic Working Group

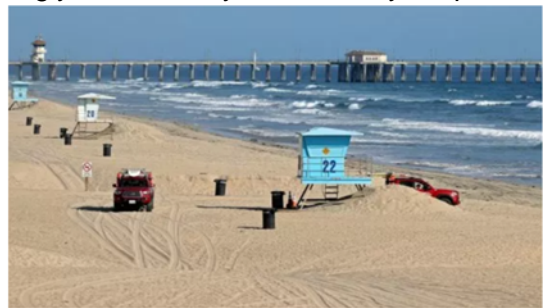
Re: **COVID-19: Mutations ~ Nursing Homes ~ OC Beaches ~ CA Dreamin' ~ Task Force**

COVID-19 is Mutating. As reported in the L.A. Times, according to a study led by the Los Alamos National Laboratory (“Spike mutation pipeline reveals the emergence of a more transmissible form of SARS-CoV-2” by Korber, et al. at www.biorxiv.org), based upon a computational analysis of over 6,000 coronavirus gene sequences from around the world collected on the GISAID database, a strain that originated in China quickly became a springboard for the pandemic in February, spreading far more quickly than prior strains and within weeks becoming the only prevalent strain in many nations. That strain, known as D614, featured a modified spike (the apparatus that gives the virus its foothold on its host) and is depicted in orange by region. That strain eventually gave way to another mutation, known as G614, depicted in blue, which, over time, assumed dominance in every region where it appeared. The significance of this study is that it gives researchers direction on how best to seek to defeat the virus by focusing on the unique attributes of the most dominant strains. On a related note, CDC has announced that it is hosting a consortium of national laboratories to advance genome sequencing of this virus in order to better understand the transmission, evolution and treatment of the disease.



Nursing Homes & Transmission. As reported by The Conversation on April 27, the impact of the coronavirus in nursing homes within the U.S. has likely been woefully underestimated. In New York state, 19 nursing homes have reported 20 or more cases. A nursing home in New Jersey reported 70 deaths out of its 500 residents. And in a recent review of COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts, over a six-day period in late April, the number of fatalities in nursing homes in that state exceeded those occurring outside of such homes. As we have reported in past advisories, it is thought that the R factor (rate of transmission) without restrictive controls for COVID-19 is between 2 and 3 (that is, each infected person will likely transmit the disease to 2 or 3 others). However, according to the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the rate of transmission in nursing homes may be closer to 6. Until recently, only 23 states were reporting nursing home fatalities in their COVID data. Interestingly, when France started including its nursing home data, its daily mortality count doubled. In short, persons in elder care facilities are among the most vulnerable populations and continue to deserve special attention from our policymakers.

A Tale of Four Cities and One Councilman. It occurs to me that California Governor Gavin Newsom's beach closure order may have been unwittingly foreseen by Don Henley as per the first line of his wistful ballad, "Boys of Summer" – to wit, "Nobody on the road/Nobody on the beach." In response to the governor's order, four Orange County cities have responded in different fashions. As reported by the L.A. Times, after having submitted proposed reopening plans to the governor, both San Clemente and Laguna Beach are being permitted to reopen for "swimming, surfing and running on the sand," provided that overcrowding restrictions are also observed. By contrast, as reported in Newsweek, the city councils of both Huntington Beach and Dana Point have voted to sue the governor for injunctive relief from the closures. The matter is set for hearing on May 11. On a related note, Newport Beach Councilman Kevin Muldoon has brought an individual action against Governor Newsom for depriving him of his "ability to enjoy and access to the beach." This photo (courtesy of Newsweek) shows Huntington Beach post closure order, still looking as though the boys of summer have gone.



California Dreamin'. This just in. We told you yesterday that open stretches of highway – particularly in California – have been luring speeders in great numbers during the pandemic, but this next story takes it to a new level. As reported by CBS News (and virtually every other outlet), a Utah state trooper pulled over a five-year old boy driving a Dodge Journey on the interstate. When the officer asked what he was doing (as one typically does with five-year-olds driving SUVs), the boy explained that he was going to his sister's house in California to buy a Lamborghini for \$3. The driver was returned home safely but with a stern admonition. Hopefully this will serve to keep other penniless kindergartners from flooding the state in search of \$400,000 sports cars.



White House Task Force. On a closing note, as reported today by Politico, Vice President Mike Pence stated that the White House is having conversations about winding down its Coronavirus Task Force (staffed by the likes of Drs. Anthony Fauci and Deborah Birx) possibly around

Memorial Day and transitioning its work to FEMA and other agencies. By contrast, you may take some comfort in knowing that the Pandemic Working Group has no current plans to wind down. You will be equally comforted in knowing that, with this line, we are signing off for today.

If you have any questions or comments on this advisory, please contact either kellyw@amvac.com or timd@amvac.com .