

# Coronavirus – contact tracing

An overview of developing contact tracing programs,  
partnerships, and congressional responses


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**Producer**

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# Roadmap

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- Contact tracing overview and developing applications
  - Congressional response
  - Legislation to watch

# The CDC has issued guidelines for local health departments developing contact tracing plans

## CDC contact tracing framework

- 1** **Rapid Notification of Exposure:** Involves notifying close contacts of positive COVID-19 patients within 24 hours of contact elicitation through a variety of channels without revealing the identity of the patient
- 2** **Contact Interview:** Interviewing all close contacts of a patient via all channels except in-person if possible, instructing self-isolation and testing for contacts with symptoms and 14-day self-quarantine for contacts without symptoms
- 3** **Medical Monitoring:** Follow self-quarantining close contacts with active monitoring or self-monitoring protocols through remote communication channels. Contacts who develop symptoms are to follow testing protocols and follow-up on status with a case investigator
- 4** **Contact Close Out:** Contacts who remain asymptomatic after 14 days since exposure are notified of their release of monitoring, while contacts who developed symptoms continue to self-quarantine and re-test if needed



### Key concepts for health departments

- **Trace and monitor contacts of infected people.** Notify them of their exposure.
- **Support the quarantine of contacts.** Help ensure the safe, sustainable and effective quarantine of contacts to prevent additional transmission.
- **Expand staffing resources.** Contact tracing in the US will require that states, tribes, localities and territorial establish large cadres of contact tracers.
- **Use digital tools.** Adoption and evaluation of digital tools may expand reach and efficacy of contact tracers.

# On April 10, Apple and Google announced a partnership to build contact tracing into smartphone software to track COVID-19



## Overview and rollout

- The two companies plan to have the feature built into most iPhones and Androids by mid-May, allowing those devices to wirelessly exchange anonymous health information and notify individuals of contact
- In the first iteration of this technology, users would need to opt in via an app controlled by public health authorities
- Future plans for rollout include adding the software directly into operating systems, allowing a larger share of users to participate



## Public response and privacy concerns

- Public official and regulators have criticized the technology in its sharing of sensitive health information alongside location information
- Members of the House Freedom Caucus in a letter to the president expressed concerns over data collection from these two companies
- The two companies have responded to these concerns by stressing that no location data is collected and all health data shared between phones is anonymous and unable to be accessed by Apple or Google

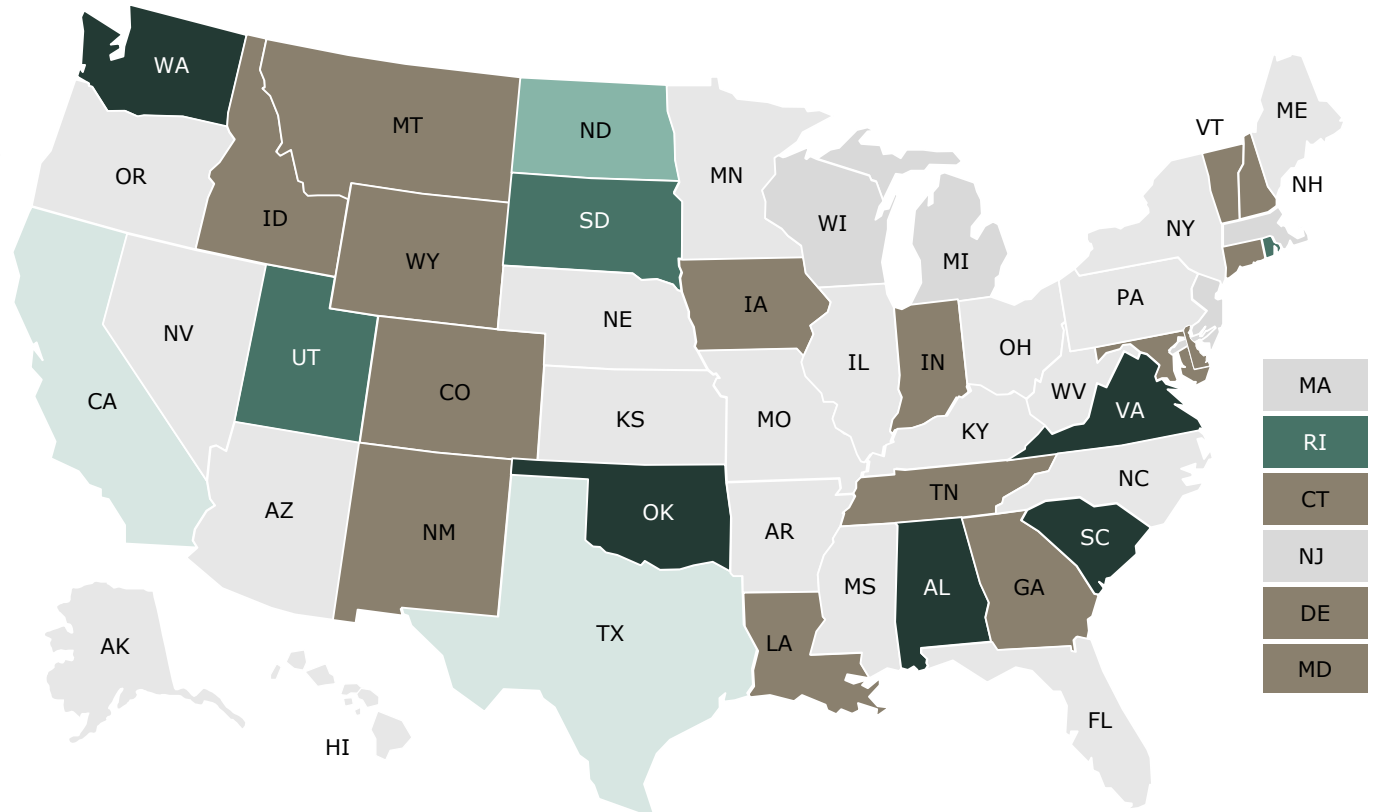
The partnership comes from two of the largest smartphone software manufacturers in the world, potentially reaching 3 billion users worldwide. These companies stress the **importance of contact tracing in containing a future outbreak** allowing authorities to track instances of contact.

# State plans to for using smartphone apps to trace the spread of COVID-19 vary

## State plans on using smartphone apps for COVID-19 contact tracing

AS OF JUNE 11, 2020

- Using Apple-Google tech
- Independent app
- Plan to use both
- No statewide app
- No app plan
- Undecided / No response



Sources: Politico.


# New York City's contact tracing development could provide insights into larger scale tracing programs



## Program overview and metrics

- As of June 21, the city has **hired 3,000 contact tracers** tasked with monitoring positive cases of COVID-19 as the city continues its rollout to re-open including outdoor dining, in-store shopping and some office work
- Tracers identify anyone who has **made contact with individuals** who have tested positive for the virus in the city.
- Beginning on June 1, 2020, the city's contact tracing program has begun to report back statistics from its efforts to trace and track the disease
  - The New York Times reports that **only 35% of the 5,347 residents** who tested positive or were presumed positive gave information about close contacts to tracers in the program's first two weeks
  - This metric saw growth as the program continued, **rising to 42%** by the third week of the program
- Remarking on this metric, Perry N. Halkitis, dean of the School of Public Health at Rutgers University noted that an ideal contact tracing program would be contacting **"75% of [a positive case's] contacts within a day"**

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# Lawmakers and privacy experts raise concerns over collection and applications of contact tracing data

*Support and opposition to Google and Apple's partnership to develop contact tracing technology*



## Support: Former national security experts, major tech companies

- Stewart Baker, former assistant secretary of Homeland Security for George W. and former general counsel of the National Security Agency has called for the development of this technology and urged for further monitoring systems similar to Singapore to expand tracking of citizens' movements and contacts
- Baker believes that the intrusion of privacy associated with this technology is "trivial" compared to other sacrifices made to fight the virus
- Countries such as France and Germany are drafting proposals for contact tracing apps that step around existing, stricter, privacy laws, concerning experts



## Opposition: Democratic lawmakers, privacy experts

- Lawmakers, including Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA) have expressed concerns that using this technology during a crisis will open the door for governments and corporations to easily access people's location and healthcare data even after the pandemic
- Some experts doubt that the technology can work if its entirely anonymous and voluntary or without a large surveillance database, leaving some privacy advocates worried that people will be pressured to use it
- Rep. Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA-18) took issue with the lack of guidelines from the Trump administration on the development of this technology, saying "Without a national privacy law, this is a black hole"

## Non-Privacy related concerns over the partnership and development of contact tracing technology

- Opponents have argued that, on a global scale, the lack of smartphone ownership will hurt the technology; the Global System for Mobile Communications estimates only 49% of the global population has used an internet enabled smartphone
- The divide of those with devices that can take advantage of this technology is argued to play into a larger divide in digital literacy in certain regions of the world
- India has the world's second-largest smartphone market after China, yet only half of its population have signed on to participate in the nation's contact tracing app program



## Health experts are calling for Congress to dedicate nearly \$50 billion for public safety measures needed to reopen the economy



The phase 3.5 aid package signed into law on April 24 provided \$25 billion for testing, but a bipartisan group of former health officials are calling for Congress to provide **\$46.5 billion** for three public health measures necessary to safely reopen the economy.



**\$12 billion to expand the contact tracing workforce**, with officials estimating that an additional 180,000 workers are needed until a vaccine reaches the market



**\$4.5 billion for vacant hotel rooms** to house infected and exposed people




**\$30 billion for 18 months of income support** in the form of a \$50 per-person per-day stipend for those in voluntarily self-isolation



The experts propose **distributing this funding through block grants** to states and territories twice annually

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# S. 3749– The Public Health Emergency Privacy Act

## Bill at a glance

Introduced  
5/14/20

Passed House

Passed Senate

To president

Signed into law



**Sen. Richard  
Blumenthal  
(D-CT)**

*Senate bill sponsor*

Cosponsors: 1

GOP 0

Dem 1

### Bill overview

- Would require that any data collected for public health purposes isn't used for unrelated situations and is deleted from the record of contact tracing deployment companies within 60 days of the ending of the public health emergency
- Also targets public agencies on data privacy grounds for public health data, giving the Federal Trade Commission enforcement provides while consulting with the Department of Health and Human Services on collection practices

### Status in Congress

- **Senate:** Introduced on 5/14/20



# S.3663 - COVID-19 Consumer Data Protection Act

## Bill at a glance



**Sen. Roger Wicker  
(R-MS)**  
*Senate bill sponsor*

Cosponsors: 4



### Bill overview

- Imposes a series of restrictions on companies aiming to assist public health departments with contact tracing programs
- Would require companies under the jurisdiction of the FTC to obtain consent from user to collect, transfer, and store their health data
- Companies would be required to disclose data handling, transfer, and retaining practices
- Allows consumers to opt out of the “collection, processing, or transfer of their personal health, geolocation, or proximity information.”

### Status in Congress

- **Senate:** Introduced on 5/7/20



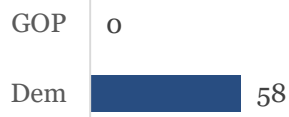
# H.R.6666 - COVID-19 Testing, Reaching, And Contacting Everyone (TRACE) Act

## Bill at a glance



**Rep. Bobby Rush**  
(D-IL-1)  
*House bill sponsor*

Cosponsors: 58



### Bill overview

- Authorizes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to award grants for testing, contact tracing, monitoring, and other activities to address COVID-19
- Entities such as federally qualified health centers, nonprofit organizations, and certain hospitals and schools are eligible to receive such grants, prioritizing applicants that operate in hot spots and medically underserved communities, and agree to hire individuals from the communities where grant activities occur

### Status in Congress

- **House:** Introduced on 5/1/20