New York reports lowest virus death toll in two weeks

April 18 2020

NY Governor Andrew Cuomo, in a March 27, 2020 file image, said 540 people had died in his state of 20 million inhabitants in the preceding 24 hours

New York state, the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic in the United States, has experienced its lowest one-day death toll in two weeks,

Governor Andrew Cuomo announced Saturday.

Cuomo said 540 people had died in his state of 20 million inhabitants in the preceding 24 hours, and he suggested New York may now be on the downslope after a recent plateau in deaths.

That would be the lowest total since 432 deaths were registered on April 2, according to data from the authoritative Covid Tracking Project.

On April 3, the state logged 562 deaths, and six days later it reached a peak of 799 deaths.

But Cuomo, who has extended the state's stay-at-home rule to May 15, said the recent improvement should be viewed with some caution.

No fewer than 2,000 people were hospitalized in the past day in connection with the virus, he told reporters in a daily briefing.

"We're not at the plateau anymore," he said, "but we're still not in a good position."

Cuomo, who in recent days has engaged in a war of words with President Donald Trump, called Saturday for an end to division.

"It's no time for politics," said Cuomo, who is a Democrat.

"How does this situation get worse and get worse quickly? If you politicize all that emotion. We cannot go there."

"Let's just stay together," he added, "and let's work it through."

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