



## NEWS RELEASE

### **InvestigateTV's Online Tracking Tool Reveals Latest Coronavirus Hotspots Users of the COVID-19 Tracker See Trends and Areas of Concern by County**

**Atlanta, Georgia – April 9, 2020.** InvestigateTV announced today that its COVID-19 Tracker has surpassed one million views as it provides real-time updated vital information on the coronavirus pandemic on a county-by-county basis. InvestigateTV developed the easy-to-navigate interactive, innovative, and online tool in-house. The COVID-19 Tracker allows users to see cases, hospitalizations, deaths, hospital beds, and other relevant data on a more granular level than that provided by virtually all other public sources. For the past month, InvestigateTV has been able to use this tool in its online and on-air reports to discover and report on the local impact of the coronavirus in specific communities. The tool has allowed reporters to identify emerging hotspots of the deadly virus before they become that day's national story.

The [COVID-19 Tracker](#) works by monitoring positive tests results by county. By analyzing jumps per capita in these daily figures, rising hotspots can be identified. The information is then packaged into special reports that are delivered to local television stations owned by Gray Television, which also owns InvestigateTV. The COVID-19 Tracker allowed InvestigateTV to break the news that New Orleans had emerged as a national hotspot for the deadly virus in early March before any national news outlets. Using the COVID-19 Tracker, InvestigateTV also raised early warnings about the dangerous spread of the virus in Michigan and southwestern Georgia. Identifying areas as hotspots early allows local public health and government officials to adjust important mitigation protocols early.

"The idea was born while in a 14-day, self-isolation," said Gray's Director of Investigations Lee Zurik. "My team had just learned that a fellow attendee at the Investigative Reporters and Editors Convention (IRE) tested positive for COVID-19, so we decided the safe bet was for all of us to go into quarantine for two weeks. We realized pretty quickly at that point that reporting the numbers in a crisis of this magnitude just wasn't enough. We needed to get ahead of the information."

"The color-coded mapping on the COVID-19 Tracker allows us to capture how the virus is spreading by population around the country," said Sandy Breland, Gray Senior Vice President-Local Media. "The data in the tracker allows the InvestigateTV team to examine critical issues with comparative analysis such as the number of ICU beds in a given area, compared to the number of positive cases and growth rate. InvestigateTV will continue to deliver this kind of timely and valuable content to our stations until this crisis is over."

InvestigateTV has similar technology that is being used to track other important trends in this pandemic, such as unemployment numbers, stay-at-home restrictions by state, even the availability of the drug hydroxychloroquine. According to Ms. Breland, Gray's InvestigateTV team understands that while this pandemic is a global crisis, many people are especially concerned about what's happening in their own backyards. She says this information helps the local audience understand those trends, which is vital.

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Moreover, it allows Gray Television's Washington, DC News Bureau to follow up with lawmakers on these critical local concerns that are being underreported nationally during this crisis. "Thanks to the COVID-19 Tracker, our Washington D.C. Bureau was able to highlight the plight of rural Georgia to Senator Loeffler and ask how federal resources will be directed to other underreported hotspots in Georgia and elsewhere," added Ms. Breland.

For this project, InvestigateTV has also teamed up with Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE), Indiana University's Arnolt Center for Investigative Journalism and Loyola University New Orleans.

InvestigateTV launched in 2018 and provides innovative, original journalism from a dedicated investigative team and partners, including ProPublica, News21 at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, and NerdWallet. It is available on Roku, Amazon Fire, at InvestigateTV.com and across Gray broadcast and digital media properties.

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