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### Media Release:

## Gov. Ricketts Announces Upcoming Changes to Directed Health Measures, Deploys Additional Resources to Track Spread of Virus



Gov. Ricketts (podium), DHHS CEO Dannette R. Smith (standing, second from left), and Crime Commission Executive Director Don Arp, Jr. (standing, far left) at today's press event.

Video from today's briefing is available by clicking here (<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dropbox.com%2Fs%2Fs79v8ekzczydaio%2FPress%2520Conf%25204.24.2020.mp4%3Fd1%3D0&data=02%7C01%7Ccio.webm>)

Governor Press Release 4-24 - SPANISH.pdf (/sites/governor.nebraska.gov/files/doc/press/Governor%20Press%20Release%204-24%20-%20SPANISH.pdf)

**LINCOLN** – This afternoon, Governor Pete Ricketts announced upcoming changes that ease some restrictions on social gatherings and business operations in Nebraska as of May 4, 2020.

Maintaining the integrity of Nebraska's health care system has been the State's top consideration when making decisions about public health measures. Nebraska continues to have ample capacity to care for the state's residents. As of April 24<sup>th</sup>, 48% of hospital beds, 42% of ICU beds, and 74% of ventilators are

available for use statewide.

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) CEO Dannette R. Smith joined the Governor at today's press briefing. She spoke about the State's efforts to expand contact tracing to better track the spread of the virus.

Don Arp, Jr., Executive Director of the Nebraska Crime Commission, also participated in this afternoon's media event. He shared news that the Crime Commission has received \$4.3 million in a Department of Justice (DOJ) grant to respond to the public safety challenges posed by the outbreak of COVID-19.

### **Gov. Ricketts: Directed Health Measures (DHMs)**

- The current State DHM for Douglas County will be extended through May 3, 2020. The local DHMs from the Sarpy/Cass Health Department and the Douglas County Health Department will also be extended through May 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- The statewide closure until April 30<sup>th</sup> of all beauty/nail salons, barber shops, massage therapy services, gentleman's clubs, bottle clubs, indoor movie theatres, indoor theatres, and tattoo parlors/studios is extended to May 3<sup>rd</sup>.
  - That date will be extended further for some areas.
- As of May 4, 2020 the State will have 19 separate DHMs, one for each local health department (LHD). They will be effective through May 31, 2020.
  - Contact information for the state's LHDs, along with a map of the LHDs, is available at [dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Local-Health-Departments.aspx](http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Local-Health-Departments.aspx) (<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Local-Health-Departments.aspx>).

### **Gov. Ricketts: Statewide DHM Changes**

- Places of worship (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, etc.)
  - Places of worship will have relaxed DHM requirements statewide beginning on May 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - They will need to ensure six feet of separation between different household units.
  - It will not be permissible to pass items among worshippers.
  - A guidance document will be provided with the new DHMs to give instructions to faith communities on how to comply with the updated health measures.

### **Gov. Ricketts: Regional DHM Changes**

- Regional updates will apply to all of the following LHDs as of May 4, 2020:
  - Douglas County Health Dept.
  - Sarpy/Cass Dept. of Health
  - East Central District Health Dept.
  - Four Corners Health Dept.
  - Loup Basin Public Health Dept.
  - North Central District Health Dept.
  - Northeast Nebraska Public Health Dept.
  - Panhandle Public Health District
  - Southeast District Health Dept.
  - Southwest Nebraska Public Health District
- Salons

- o As of May 4<sup>th</sup>, beauty/nail salons, barber shops, massage therapy services, and tattoo parlors/studios in the above LHDs will be permitted to open. These establishments will be added to the list of gatherings subject to the 10-person rule.
- o The new DHM will require both workers and patrons of these establishments to wear masks.
- o For districts other than those listed above, these establishments will remain closed past May 3rd.
- Restaurants
  - o As of May 4th, restaurants will be allowed to serve dine-in customers if all of the following conditions are met:
    - The restaurant limits seating to 50% of the rated occupancy maximum at all times.
    - The restaurant seats parties at least six feet apart.
    - All dining parties are restricted to no more than six persons (groups larger than six will need to sit at separate tables).
    - Self-serve buffets and salad bars are prohibited. Restaurant staff must serve food directly to customers or implement buffet orders from the customer table. No customer self-service will be allowed.
    - Bar seating is not permitted.
    - Patrons may only consume alcohol on the premises if also consuming a meal.
  - o Bars that do not serve food will remain limited to carry-out sales and delivery only.
  - o For districts other than those listed above, restaurants will remain limited to delivery, drive-thru, or carryout past May 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Childcare Facilities
  - o As of May 4<sup>th</sup>, childcare facilities will be permitted to have up to 15 kids per room/space.
    - All other state provisions, statutes, and regulations (including child-to-staff ratios) still apply.
    - For districts other than those listed above, childcares will remain restricted to 10 children per room/space.
- Other Establishments
  - o Bars, gentlemen's clubs, bottle clubs, indoor movie theaters, indoor theaters/playhouses will remain closed statewide until May 31<sup>st</sup>, though the State may revise the DHM prior to that date.

### **Gov. Ricketts: Social Distancing**

- Leading up to these changes to our DHMs, I want to emphasize how important it is to continue following our Six Rules during the rest of the "21 Days to Stay Home and Stay Healthy" campaign.
- I also want to remind people that regardless of these changes we will still be doing some level of social distancing (at least the six foot rule) until we have a vaccine.
- Just because we are able to relax some measures, does not mean life returns to normal.
- We will continue to protect our healthcare system so that Nebraskans can receive the treatment they need if they become infected with coronavirus.

### **CEO Smith: Contact Tracing**

- Our Test Nebraska plan has three steps: assess, test, and track.
- Today, I want to talk about the final step.
- Contact tracing makes sure we're being proactive in monitoring and supporting individuals with potential infection from COVID-19.
- We want to immediately assess those individuals and track their contacts so that we can quarantine those persons at high risk of exposure.

- Gov. Ricketts challenged our department to mobilize 1,000 people to help with contact tracing.
- Over the next 30-60 days, we will deploy 325 teammates from DHHS to assist with contact tracing.
- 225 of these teammates are being trained by our epidemiologists from April 27<sup>th</sup> through May 5<sup>th</sup>.
- As they track the spread of the virus, these teammates will gather real-time data to guide our public health strategies.
- Our teammates will track demographics, on-site symptoms, and close contacts of those who are ill.
- Our teams will work in the days and evenings to reach all Nebraskans—particularly those still working.
- In our conversations, we're going to be particularly sensitive to cultural differences and linguistic needs.
- Our DHHS teams will be embedded within local health departments (LHDs).
- We see our job as supporting LHDs in their vital role of keeping citizens safe.
- As we're interviewing Nebraskans and tracing contacts, we'll also be educating Nebraskans on best practices to keep their families and communities safe.

### **Executive Director Arp: Grant Awarded to Crime Commission**

- Of the \$4.3 million DOJ grant, the Crime Commission will grant over \$3.9 million to applicants.
- Eligible entities include state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, prisons, jails, and criminal justice programs.
- These entities have considerable latitude in the use of these funds for dealing with COVID-19.
- Potential uses include hiring personnel, paying overtime, IT needs, and distributing resources to hard-hit areas.
- To avoid duplicating the efforts of other agencies such as DHHS and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, the Crime Commission will not fund the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- As with many federal grants, these funds are reimbursement-based. Agencies will have to expend their own money up front and then submit proof of purchase.
- The application process is live at [ncc.nebraska.gov/grant-apps](http://ncc.nebraska.gov/grant-apps) (<http://ncc.nebraska.gov/grant-apps>). We're accepting applications on a rolling basis.

### **Gov. Ricketts: Payroll Protection Program (PPP)**

- Today, Congress passed a bill, which the President signed into law, to allocate new funds for the Payroll Protection Program.
- If you have already applied for a PPP loan and been accepted by your lender, you do not need to apply again.
- If you have not applied through your lender for PPP already, do it immediately.
- These funds will go quickly.
- Nebraska was ahead of the curve on the first round of funding.
- We encourage Nebraskans who have not already applied to reach out to their community bank today.

Full video of today's press briefing is available by clicking here

([https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dropbox.com%2Fs%2Fs79v8ekzcyzdaio%2FPress%2520Conf%25204.24.20)

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