COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice renews offer to assist counties with processing of COVID-19 case data

10/28/2020

CHARLESTON, WV – Gov. Jim Justice joined West Virginia health leaders and other officials today for his latest daily press briefing regarding the State's COVID-19 response.

GOVERNOR RENEWS OFFER TO ASSIST COUNTIES WITH INFORMATION PROCESSING

During Wednesday's briefing, Gov. Justice once again encouraged any local health departments in counties across West Virginia that may be in need of assistance when it comes to processing information and data about COVID-19 cases to reach out to the West Virginia National Guard for further support.

The renewed offer for assistance comes after the number of active cases statewide dropped by 11.9% in one day.

"We were at about 5,000 active cases and then we went to 4,500 just like that," Gov. Justice said. "What happened was that we had about 500 cases from one of our counties that were active until their paperwork was finally processed, and all of a sudden it all came in at once.

"I would say to any county, if we're having trouble processing paperwork, I've said it over and over, we are pleading with you, if you need the additional assistance, the National Guard is standing ready for whatever you may need to process paperwork in a timely way," Gov. Justice continued. "Any way we can make things happen in a more efficient manner, we'll do it. You've just got to let us help you. We want to help. We're standing ready to help anytime.

"If you need help and it will expedite things, please let us help you, because there are people that are impacted in every way."

Click here to view photo album

(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157716653466458)

COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

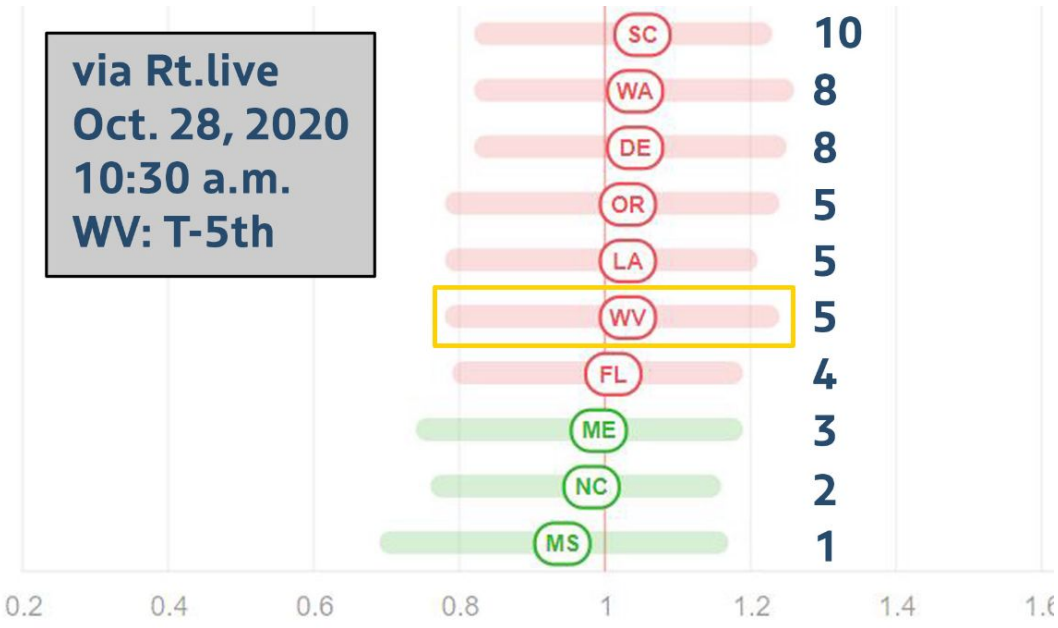
Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that the daily percent positivity rate is 4.29%, up from 1.28% on Monday, and the cumulative percent of positive cases is 2.88%, up from 2.85% on Monday. The Governor added that a record high of 226 people have been hospitalized.

However, Gov. Justice also noted that West Virginia's statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission – also known as Rt – came in at 1.03 Wednesday morning. Despite being over the 1.00 threshold, that mark was still good enough to be tied for the **5th-best such rate** (https://rt.live/) of any state in the country.

"Just think, your percent positivity rate for the day is 4.29%, it's way too high, and yet, we are the 5th-best in the country when it comes to our transmission rate," Gov. Justice said. "What does that tell us? It tells us that this disease is running across America in a really tough way. So we've just got to tighten up even more, West Virginia, by wearing our masks and trying to do better."

West Virginia continues to outperform the national average – as well as the rates of all of its bordering states – in percentage of population positive, and percentage of positive test results.

Click here to view the latest COVID-19 data (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx)



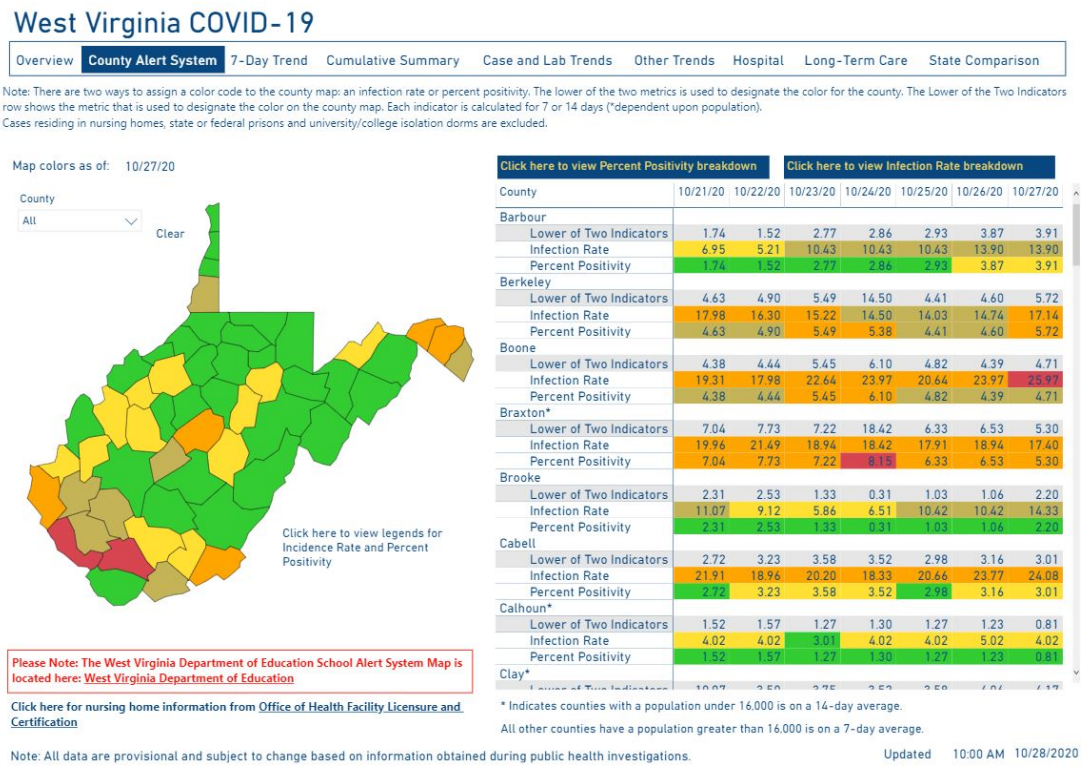
(https://rt.live/)

WEDNESDAY MAP UPDATE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice provided a look at West Virginia's latest mid-week County Alert System map update.

Red counties: 2 (Mingo, Wyoming)
Orange counties: 5 (Berkeley, Braxton, Monroe, Morgan, Wayne)
Gold counties: 7 (Boone, Clay, Jefferson, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, Mercer)
Yellow counties: 12 (Barbour, Cabell, Jackson, Mineral, Putnam, Raleigh, Ritchie, Roane, Summers, Upshur, Webster, Wirt)
Green counties: 29 (All others)

The map is updated live on the **DHHR's COVID-19 Dashboard** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx) **(Click "County Alert System" tab)** throughout the week for informational purposes and to provide an indication of how each county is trending ahead of each Saturday at 5 p.m.; the time when each county is assigned its official color designation for the next week, which determines the level of scholastic, athletic, and extracurricular activities permitted in each county for that particular week.



(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx)

DHHR's COVID-19 Dashboard **(Click "County Alert System" tab)** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx)

OUTBREAK REPORT

On Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that, per the West Virginia Department of Education, there are 22 active outbreaks in public schools across the state. These outbreaks account for 82 confirmed cases.

Click here to view the WVDE's Current Outbreaks in Schools chart (https://wvde.us/schooloutbreaks)

West Virginia now has 16 active church-related outbreaks across 14 counties: Cabell, Doddridge, Kanawha, Mason, Mercer, Monroe, Nicholas, Putnam, Raleigh, Ritchie, Wayne, Wetzel, Wood, and Wyoming counties.

The Governor reported there are now 46 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state.

The Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) is now reporting 10 active cases of COVID-19 among inmates across the state, all of which are located within Martinsburg Correctional Center in Berkeley County.

There now remain just four active cases among DCR employees across West Virginia.

Click here to view the latest corrections facility update (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Correctional-Facilities.aspx)

Also Wednesday, Gov. Justice announced that the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation has confirmed its third inmate death linked to COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. An 83-year-old inmate at Mount Olive Correctional Complex in Fayette County died Sept. 9 while receiving care at an outside hospital. DCR received findings from the Medical Examiner yesterday that confirmed the death as COVID-related.

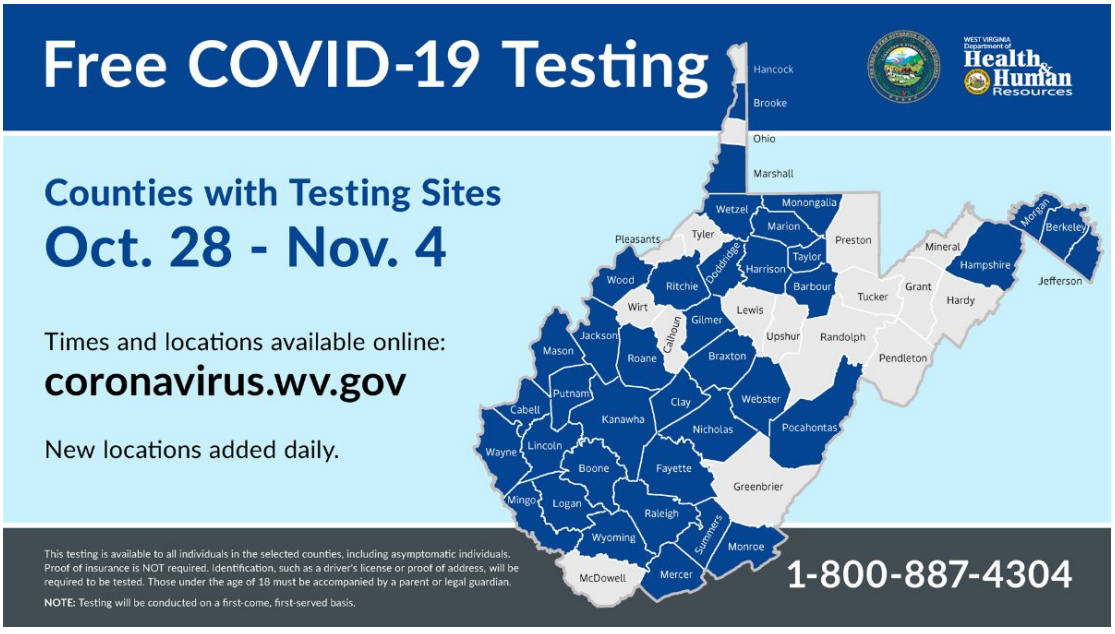
AGGRESSIVE TESTING CONTINUES ACROSS STATE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice offered a reminder that free testing events are now scheduled over the coming weeks in 38 counties across West Virginia.

As part of the Governor's Aggressive Testing initiative, each county reaching Red or Orange status in the **DHHR's County Alert System map** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx) **(Click "County Alert System" tab)** is required to set up at least one free testing site within the same day. Each county reaching Gold status is required to set up at least one free testing site within 48 hours. As of Wednesday, Red counties included Mingo and Wyoming counties. Orange counties included Berkeley, Braxton, Monroe, Morgan, and Wayne counties. Gold counties included Boone, Clay, Jefferson, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, and Mercer counties.

This testing is available to all residents in selected counties, including asymptomatic individuals. Proof of insurance is not required. Attendees should bring identification, such as a driver's license or proof of address, to help in returning test results. Those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

Click here to view all locations, dates, times and more details
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)



(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)

Gov. Justice also offered a reminder that, as part of his administration's efforts to expand free COVID-19 testing throughout West Virginia, the State is now partnering with Walgreens and West Virginia-based company Fruth Pharmacy to offer dozens of new free testing sites at several of their pharmacy drive-thrus.

Walgreens is now offering free testing at 40 locations statewide, including several new testing sites. Locations include stores in Berkeley, Boone, Cabell, Clay, Fayette, Gilmer, Hampshire, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mercer, Monongalia, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Putnam, Raleigh, Summers, Wayne, and Wyoming counties.

Fruth Pharmacy is also offering free testing at 12 of their locations statewide, including stores in Cabell, Jackson, Kanawha, Mason, Putnam, Roane, and Wood counties.

Click here to find the testing location closest to you (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)

(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)

BUREAU OF SENIOR SERVICES RECOGNIZED BY GOVERNOR

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice took time to recognize the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services and its employees for their work serving 2.4 million meals to seniors all across West Virginia so far this year alone.

This year the Bureau has also added over 3,000 new seniors they have not served before.

"I want to thank the Director Robert Roswall and his staff for all their work," Gov. Justice said. "I also want to thank all our County Senior Programs for all their great work.

"It is unbelievable what great work they've done," Gov. Justice continued.

Last month, Gov. Justice and leaders with the Bureau of Senior Services debuted two fleets of new vehicles for use in senior nutrition meal delivery programs, including 27 new 2020 Ford Explorer meal delivery vehicles and 16 new Ford F-150 trucks that utilize hot and cold food storage systems, for a total of 43 brand-new food delivery vehicles are now on West Virginia roadways, helping more senior citizens receive more meals faster than ever.

"Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our seniors have been affected the most," Gov. Justice said. "They don't see a smiling face or a friendly hand as much as they should in the first place. But, with all that's gone on with this pandemic, a lot of them haven't even seen their children or their grandchildren.

"This program is so important," Gov. Justice continued. "Not only are they delivering nourishing food, they're also delivering hope. These people should be so commended.

"I want to encourage all West Virginians, this week, to reach out to our seniors. That doesn't mean go see them. But call them on the phone, send them a letter or an email, something, show them that you love them and that you're thinking about them."

$25 MILLION IN CARES ACT DOLLARS BEING PROVIDED TO HELP QUALIFYING WEST VIRGINIANS PAY UTILITY BILLS

Once again Wednesday, Gov. Justice provided a reminder that $25 million of CARES Act relief funds allocated to assist qualifying West Virginians pay their utility bills is being distributed across the state.

The money will go to local Public Service Districts so they can pass it along to customers.

Customers of electric, natural gas, water, and sewer utility companies who have experienced economic hardship and/or uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, causing them to have unpaid utility bills from the period of March 1 – July 31 of this year, may receive financial assistance to pay those bills.

Qualifying customers will receive a letter and application in the mail. Customers must complete and return the application by Thursday, November 12, 2020.

CITIES/COUNTIES GRANT FUNDING: OVER $164 MILLION HAS NOW BEEN AWARDED

Also today, Gov. Justice provided an update on cities and counties throughout West Virginia applying for funds through the federal CARES Act, reporting that more than $164 million has now been awarded all across the state.

A **web portal** (https://grants.wv.gov/en) is available for city and county government officials to apply. Interested parties can also call the helpline: **1-833-94-GRANT**.

Each of the recipients of CARES Act funding, along with grant amounts, are now available to view through the West Virginia State Auditor's Office **COVID-19 transparency website** (https://stories.opengov.com/westvirginia/published/mnOzKr2wB).

(https://grants.wv.gov/en)

FLU VACCINE REMINDER

Once again today, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks on COVID-19 to remind and encourage all West Virginians to get their flu vaccine.

According to health officials, everyone 6 months and older should receive this vaccine.

Locate a flu vaccine near you through the **DHHR website** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx).

(https://dhhr.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Click here to view all Executive Orders and other actions (https://governor.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d525ab9ade4d860d2b5772468&id=3029d4fcc4&e=5c140b96bc) taken by Gov. Justice to combat the spread of COVID-19 in West Virginia.

For more information about COVID-19 prevention and more, call the State's toll-free hotline at **1-800-887-4304** or visit **Coronavirus.wv.gov** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx).

(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157716653466458)

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