

# *COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice provides update on vaccine distribution efforts; reviews CARES Act funding allocation*

12/18/2020

Gov. Justice holds press briefing on COVID-19 response - D...



**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.

## **VACCINE DISTRIBUTION UPDATE: PROGRESS BEING MADE VACCINATING LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES**

During the briefing, Gov. Justice announced that, as of Friday morning, a total of 15,885 vaccines have been delivered to various distribution points across West Virginia, including numerous hospitals, long-term care facilities, and local health departments.

“Over 11,000 of those vaccines have been given and we’re ordering more vaccines today,” Gov. Justice said, adding that approximately 5,450 of the individuals who have been vaccinated so far include residents and employees of 42 long-term care facilities.



**Click here to view photo album**

(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157717405294332>)

"West Virginia is leading the nation in distributing COVID vaccines to our nursing homes and assisted living facilities," Gov. Justice said. "We were the first state in the country to require nursing homes and assisted living facilities to test 100 percent of their residents and staff, and I badly want to be the first state in the country to get all of our nursing home residents and staff vaccinated.

"The federal government had a national plan to distribute to long-term care facilities, but it didn't start until December 28th. That just isn't going to cut it in West Virginia," Gov. Justice continued. "West Virginia took a slightly different plan than the rest of the country. I told my team that I wanted long-term care residents and staff prioritized, and wanted the first doses completed within the first 30 days."

Gov. Justice announced that, based on current projections, the first round of vaccinations will be completed in all long-term care facilities just over two weeks after the first shipment arrived in West Virginia.

"Quite literally, we may be finishing our vaccination to long-term care facilities before some states even start," Gov. Justice said. "By Saturday morning, we will have completed giving out around 8,000 doses to more than 50 facilities."

The Governor added that, so far, approximately 85-90 percent of nursing home and assisted living facility residents are opting to get the vaccine. Approximately 60 percent of staff members are choosing to be vaccinated as well.

One of the first nursing home residents to receive the vaccine, 93-year-old Pat John of Sundale Nursing Home in Morgantown, joined the Governor during Friday's briefing to describe her experience.

"I'm very happy to be here this morning and I just wanted to tell everyone, please, after all of the expenses that they have taken to get us all a vaccination, do not hesitate, it doesn't hurt," John said. "Please, don't wait."



Sundale Medical Director Dr. Carl Schrader and Michael Hicks, the Administrator of Sundale, also provided remarks Friday.

"I just want to extend a thank you to the Governor and the leadership team for all that you've done for us from March through today," Dr. Schrader said. "I mean, really, we've never been alone, you've been with us every step of the way, Governor, to really push us to the front and be one of the states to administer [vaccines] with a focus on the long-term care facilities. I couldn't think of a better way to end the year and head into the holiday season, so our sincerest thank you to all of you."

"We've now vaccinated over 80 percent – I think it's close to 85 percent – of the residents that we have here at Sundale," Hicks said. "I'm just so thankful that we were able to be in the first week. Governor, I thank you for all of your efforts."

"The work that you've done is phenomenal," Gov. Justice said. "Sundale Nursing Home had one of the first major outbreaks in West Virginia back in March. Now, nine months later, Sundale was one of the first facilities in this nation to receive doses of the vaccine."

After receiving the first dose of the vaccine himself on Monday, Gov. Justice once again provided a report on how he has been feeling.

"I feel great; no side effects whatsoever," Gov. Justice said. "I encourage everybody, please take your vaccine when it becomes available. It's as safe as can be."

The Governor also celebrated the recent news that the second COVID-19 vaccine by Moderna is getting closer to receiving Emergency Use Authorization by the U.S. Food

and Drug Administration. The state has placed an initial order for 32,600 doses of the Moderna vaccine; the maximum ordering cap allowed for West Virginia at this time.

However, the Governor also reported that West Virginia pandemic response officials have been made aware that the state's maximum weekly ordering cap for the Pfizer vaccine has been reduced from 16,575 to 11,700 for next week.

"They cut everybody back, all across the country," Gov. Justice said. "They had some kind of hiccup. Hiccups aren't really permissible – when people are dying – in my world.

"I'm sure Pfizer will catch up," Gov. Justice continued. "I haven't been very happy about this. As soon as I heard this, I was on the phone with the federal government saying, 'What in the world are we doing and what's going on here?' We'll stay on top of this in every way."



## **CARES ACT FUNDING ALLOCATION REVIEW**

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice was joined by West Virginia Department of Revenue Secretary Dave Hardy to provide a detailed review and update on the state's allocation of \$1.25 billion in discretionary funds appropriated to the state by Congress through the CARES Act.

"Under the current law, we're supposed to have expended all of our CARES funds by December 30th, or the alternative is we can hold back a small amount for expenses that were incurred prior to December 30th," Sec. Hardy said. "So December 30th is the 'red letter day' and I cannot explain to the public how much we've appreciated the Governor's leadership as we've tried to navigate our way through this process and be sure to maximize the recovery of the people of West Virginia.

"We met with the Governor, on average, three times per week since early April," Sec. Hardy continued. "And so, this is all culminating today with what I would call our final plan for how to expend our \$1.25 billion. This is a process that's been going on for a long time and it wasn't done lightly."

Sec. Hardy listed the total amounts expended to-date in several categories, including \$30 million for the West Virginia CARES Act Small Business Grant Program; \$50 million for the Medical Access Roads Program; \$32.3 million for broadband development; \$253 million in relief for cities and counties, which is expected to reach approximately \$265 million once all applications are processed; \$10 million in support of Fairmont Hospital; \$16.5 million to assist Public Service Districts supporting customers with past due bills; \$40 million in testing, sanitation supplies, and more for the West Virginia National Guard; a total of \$240 million in State expense reimbursement; over \$502.2 million in unemployment benefits expended since March 1; \$74 million for COVID-19 testing efforts through the Department of Health and Human Resources; and several smaller expenditures.

In total, Sec. Hardy said that, other than a \$39 million cushion, all of the \$1.25 billion in CARES Act funding has been expended.

"We have met the mission," Sec. Hardy said. "The mission was, as outlined by the Governor, to hold on to the dollars, commit what we have to commit, be sure that we keep up with the guidelines and be sure that, before we make any final decisions, there hasn't been additional money allocated or additional changes to the law or the guidelines. We've done all of the above in consultation with the Governor, and our plan – if the law does not change – is to expend all but less than \$40 million of these funds by December 30th, as required by the law."





**Click here to jump to Sec. Hardy's comments** (<https://youtu.be/FCzzKPkwLE?t=2445>)

"This is a miracle as far as I'm concerned," Sec. Hardy continued. "This was very difficult. Many times we told the Governor we don't have enough money, we can't pull this off, and he said 'Let me take you through this' over and over, and we met with him over and over. We researched, we worked hard, and we followed his lead all the way through.

"I feel like this is a miracle for West Virginia."

Following Sec. Hardy's report, Gov. Justice went on to announce four additional funding allocations, including \$2.73 million to support the 911 network in Hancock County; \$500,000 to support each of the state's four largest convention centers – the Beckley-Raleigh County Convention Center in Beckley, the Charleston Coliseum & Convention Center in Charleston, Mountain Health Arena in Huntington, and Wesbanko Arena in Wheeling – totaling \$2 million; \$800,000 for a mobile testing unit for CAMC; and \$350,000 initially to help support disabled individuals through the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council.





## **EXTRACURRICULAR EQUITY FUND ANNOUNCED**

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice announced that he and the West Virginia Department of Education are dedicating a combined total of \$4 million to establish a new Extracurricular Equity Fund, which will help support extracurricular programs such as sports, band and choir, and countless other student organizations in every public high school across the state.

The amount distributed to each high school will be based on enrollment. The funding will go toward helping make up for the loss in revenue these schools have encountered with the loss of fans attending games.

"I'm a coach myself, and I can really identify with this," Gov. Justice said. "Our schools have been impacted phenomenally bad from what's happened with COVID and they're all in danger of just a terrible situation, from the standpoint that you can't have enough selling of donuts, or pizzas, or whatever it may be to raise enough money; from attendance, to concessions, to everything throughout the year that we haven't been able to do."

The \$2 million provided by the Governor's Office will come out of West Virginia's portion of Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds, provided by the U.S. Department of Education to support educational needs in each state related to COVID-19. The GEER funds, approved by Congress through the CARES Act, are a separate allocation from the \$1.25 billion in discretionary funds appropriated to the state.

"This really ought to go a long way toward helping our schools and our athletic departments," Gov. Justice said. "And I'm really happy to be able to do that."

**Click here to read more** (<https://wvde.us/extracurricular-equity-fund-means-more-relief-for-west-virginia-high-schools/>)



### **COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE**

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice reported that the current number of active cases in the state has now reached a record high of 22,028, up from 21,260 active cases during the Governor's previous COVID-19 briefing on Wednesday.

West Virginia has recorded 1,266 new positive cases over the past 24 hours, and 8,841 new positive cases in the past seven days.

The number of active hospitalizations dropped to 753, with 193 of those patients currently in the ICU.

The cumulative percent of positive cases is now 4.27%, up from 4.18% on Wednesday and the highest such rate seen in West Virginia since April 21, 2020.

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

As of Friday afternoon, following the Governor's briefing, the **statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission** (<https://rt.live/>)— also known as  $R_t$  — was 1.13; tied for the 3rd-worst such rate of any state in the country.

## **FRIDAY MAP UPDATE**

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

**Red** counties: **24** (Berkeley, Boone, Brooke, Doddridge, Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Jackson, Lincoln, Marshall, Mason, Mineral, Mingo, Monongalia, Morgan, Ohio, Pleasants, Preston, Ritchie, Tyler, Wayne, Wood)

**Orange** counties: **23** (Barbour, Braxton, Cabell, Clay, Fayette, Gilmer, Harrison, Jefferson, Kanawha, Logan, Marion, Mercer, Nicholas, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Putnam, Raleigh, Taylor, Upshur, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, Wyoming)

**Gold** counties: **4** (Calhoun, Lewis, Monroe, Tucker)

**Yellow** counties: **3** (Randolph, Roane, Summers)

**Green** counties: **1** (McDowell)

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.

West Virginia COVID- 19

Overview

County Alert System

7-Day Trend

Cumulative Summary

Case and Lab Trends

Other Trends

Hospital

Long-Term Care

State Comparison

Note: There are two ways to assign a color code to the county map: an infection rate or percent positivity. The lower of the two metrics is used to designate the color for the county. The Lower of the Two Indicators row shows the metric that is used to designate the color on the county map. Each indicator is calculated for 7 or 14 days (\*dependent upon population).

Map colors as of: 12/17/20

County

All

Clear

Click here to view legends for Incidence Rate and Percent Positivity

Click here to view Incidence Rate breakdown

Click here to view Percent Positivity breakdown

County	12/12/20	12/13/20	12/14/20	12/15/20	12/16/20	12/17/20
Barbour - Population: 16,441 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	5.60	5.30	4.75	5.16	4.72	5.52
Infection Rate	56.48	49.53	46.05	48.66	46.05	46.92
Percent Positivity	5.60	5.30	4.75	5.16	4.72	5.52
Berkeley - Population: 119,171 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	74.20	73.24	78.76	75.52	82.71	82.71
Infection Rate	74.20	73.24	78.76	75.52	82.71	82.71
Percent Positivity	10.00	9.77	10.30	10.58	11.54	11.76
Boone - Population: 21,457 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	53.93	57.26	7.62	58.59	61.92	59.92
Infection Rate	53.93	57.26	53.26	58.59	61.92	59.92
Percent Positivity	8.10	8.45	7.62	8.41	9.12	9.21
Braxton - Population: 13,957 (14-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	3.66	4.32	4.12	5.13	5.24	6.43
Infection Rate	26.10	29.68	30.19	32.24	30.71	33.78
Percent Positivity	3.66	4.32	4.12	5.13	5.24	6.43
Brooke - Population: 21,939 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	121.77	113.95	123.72	114.60	107.44	104.84
Infection Rate	121.77	113.95	123.72	114.60	107.44	104.84
Percent Positivity	11.68	11.51	12.05	12.30	11.44	12.37
Cabell - Population: 91,945 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	5.39	5.37	5.83	6.39	6.90	7.28
Infection Rate	70.85	68.99	70.85	77.22	78.31	78.62
Percent Positivity	5.39	5.37	5.83	6.39	6.90	7.28
Calhoun - Population: 7,109 (14-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	3.76	3.88	4.97	5.04	4.78	4.28
Infection Rate	25.12	26.12	31.15	32.15	32.15	28.13

Please Note: The West Virginia Department of Education School Alert System Map is located here: [West Virginia Department of Education](#)

Click here for nursing home information from [Office of Health Facility Licensure and Certification](#)

Note: All data are provisional and subject to change based on information obtained during public health investigations.

Updated 10:00 AM 12/18/2020

\* Infection Rate Cases Excluded: cases residing in nursing homes, state or federal prisons and university/college isolation dorms are excluded.

\* Percent Positivity Rate Cases Excluded: probable cases and caseses residing in nursing homes, state or federal prisons and university/college isolation dorms are excluded.

(<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**

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice reported that, per the West Virginia Department of Education, there are 14 active outbreaks in public schools across the state. These outbreaks account for 79 confirmed cases, up from 67 on Wednesday.

### **Click here to view the WVDE's Current Outbreaks in Schools chart**

(<https://wvde.us/schooloutbreaks>)

West Virginia now has 15 active church-related outbreaks across 14 counties: Braxton, Greenbrier, Harrison, Jackson, Lewis, Marion, Mineral, Mingo, Monongalia, Nicholas, Raleigh, Summers, Webster, and Wyoming counties. These outbreaks account for a total of 119 cases.

There are now 114 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, down from 116 such outbreaks as of Wednesday.

The Governor also reported that there are now 112 active inmate cases across the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) system, down significantly from 254 such cases on Wednesday and 358 on Monday.

Currently, there are 50 active inmate cases at the Eastern Regional Jail, 26 inmate cases at the Central Regional Jail, and 25 inmate cases at Saint Marys Correctional Center. These three facilities are all on lockdown and are continuing to test all inmates.

There are 48 active staff cases across the DCR system, up from 46 on Wednesday.

### **Click here to view the latest corrections facility update**

(<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Correctional-Facilities.aspx>)


Also on Friday, Gov. Justice provided an overview of the 50 counties that have upcoming free testing events scheduled for the near future through the Governor's Aggressive Testing initiative.

This testing is available to all residents, 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.

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

# Free COVID-19 Testing

**Counties with Testing Sites  
Dec. 18 - Jan. 8**



A map of West Virginia showing all 50 counties. The counties are color-coded: blue indicates they have COVID-19 testing sites from Dec. 18 to Jan. 8; light green indicates they will have sites starting Jan. 11; and light orange indicates they will have sites starting Jan. 18. Counties highlighted in blue include Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, Wirt, Tyler, Pleasants, Wood, Mason, Putnam, Cabell, Wayne, Lincoln, Mingo, Logan, Boone, Fayette, Raleigh, McDowell, Mercer, Nicholas, Braxton, Gilmer, Roane, Kanawha, Clay, Boone, Greenbrier, Monroe, Summers, Pocahontas, Randolph, Tucker, Grant, Mineral, Hampshire, Morgan, Berkeley, Jefferson, Pendleton, and Webster.

Times and locations available online:  
**[coronavirus.wv.gov](https://coronavirus.wv.gov)**

New locations added daily.

This testing is available to all individuals in the selected counties, including asymptomatic individuals. Proof of insurance is NOT required. Identification, such as a driver's license or proof of address, will be required to be tested. Those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

NOTE: Testing will be conducted on a first-come, first-served basis.

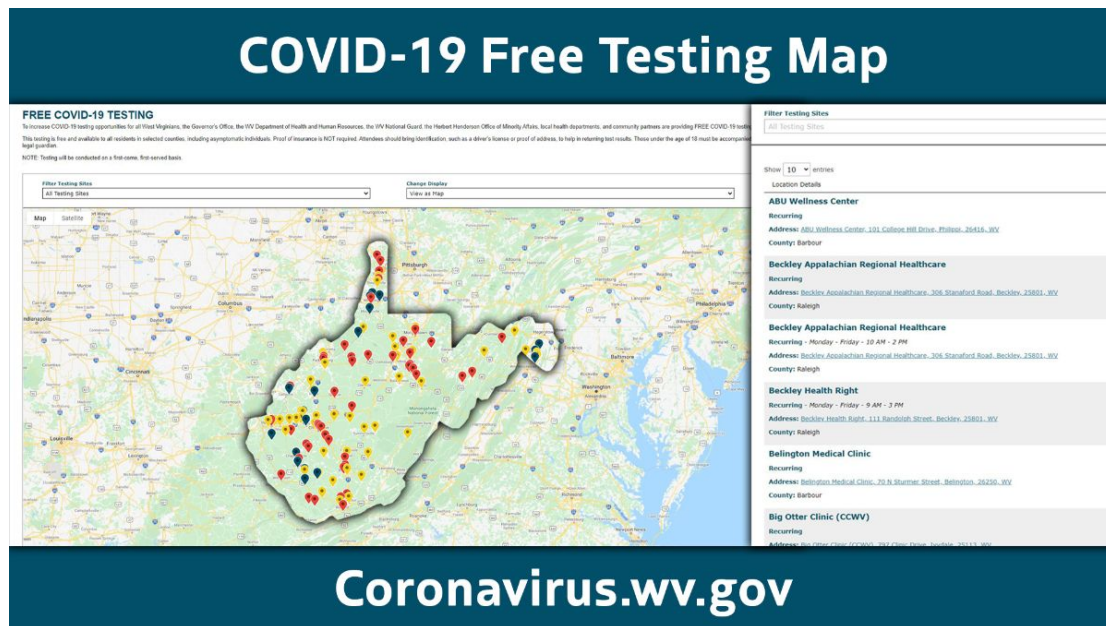
**1-800-887-4304**

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

An interactive online map of all free testing locations across West Virginia is available on the state's **COVID-19 website** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>). Users can filter the map by type of testing site, including daily testing events, recurring testing events, as well as Walgreens and Fruth Pharmacy testing locations. Each location is marked on the map with a pin. After finding a testing location nearby, users are able to click on the pin for more information about that particular testing site, including the specific location and timeframe during which testing will be held.

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





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

## **UPDATED FACE COVERING REQUIREMENT IN EFFECT; SIGNS AVAILABLE FOR BUSINESSES**

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice provided a reminder that his broadened Statewide Indoor Face Covering Requirement remains in effect.

The order requires all West Virginians age 9 and older to wear a face covering at all times inside all indoor public places, regardless of whether or not they are able to maintain proper social distance. The order requires that all businesses and organizations that invite the public into their facilities must post adequate signage advising guests of the requirement and are also responsible for enforcing the requirement to ensure it is being followed.

**Click here to read more details about the face covering requirement**  
(</Pages/Statewide-Indoor-Face-Covering-Requirement.aspx>)

Posters are available on the DHHR's **online Face Covering Toolkit** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Face-Covering-Toolkit.aspx>) for businesses or organizations to print and display. Social media graphics are also available for download and use by the general public.



(<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Face-Covering-Toolkit.aspx>)

Gov. Justice also took time today to highlight a **video**

(<https://twitter.com/GovChristie/status/1339339901704302592>), recently posted on social media by former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, advocating for everyone to wear face coverings. Christie was hospitalized in early October after contracting COVID-19.

### **WEST VIRGINIANS CALLED UPON TO DONATE BLOOD AND PLASMA**

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice once again encouraged all West Virginians to consider donating blood and plasma through the American Red Cross.

In the Governor's recent call with the White House Coronavirus Task Force, Vice President Mike Pence said that there is still a shortage of plasma and blood all across the nation.

Those fully recovered from a verified COVID-19 diagnosis may have plasma in their blood containing COVID-19 antibodies that can attack this virus. This plasma is being evaluated as a possible treatment for currently ill COVID-19 patients.

For more information, visit **redcross.org** (<https://www.redcross.org/>) or call the local American Red Cross offices at **304-340-3650**.



**American  
Red Cross**

**Give Blood or Plasma** 

**redcross.org**  
**304-340-3650**

**Your donation could save a life!**

(<https://www.redcross.org/>)

### **FLU VACCINE REMINDER**

Additionally Friday, 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.

In addition to providing protection from the flu, this vaccine helps reduce the burden on hospitals and healthcare systems.

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



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

### **HOLIDAY TROUT STOCKING: DNR TO STOCK 30,000 ADDITIONAL TROUT OVER THE NEXT WEEK**

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks on COVID-19 to offer a reminder of his recent announcement that, at his request, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources will stock 30,000 trout over the next week in streams around the state so anglers and their families can enjoy fishing opportunities during the holiday season.

This special Holiday Trout Stocking includes over 15,000 pounds of trout at 15 streams across the state. The stockings follow a great production year that resulted in an abundance of trout at the state's hatcheries.

"Enjoy catching some really wonderful trout over the Christmas holiday," Gov. Justice said. "If you're fortunate enough to be able to have a little turkey and ham, a really nice trout would be good too."

**Click here to find stocking locations** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/Gov.-Justice-announces-WVDNR-to-stock-30%2c000-additional-trout-for-holidays.aspx)



(/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/Gov.-Justice-announces-WVDNR-to-stock-30%2c000-additional-trout-for-holidays.aspx)

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Click here to view all Executive Orders and other actions**

([https://governor.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?](https://governor.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d525ab9ade4d860d2b5772468&id=3029d4fcc4&e=5c140b96bc)

[u=d525ab9ade4d860d2b5772468&id=3029d4fcc4&e=5c140b96bc](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>).





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