

COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice details new COVID-19 economic relief bill; West Virginia continues to lead nation in vaccine distribution

12/28/2020

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.

NEW COVID-19 ECONOMIC RELIEF BILL TO BENEFIT WEST VIRGINIANS

During Monday's briefing, Gov. Justice discussed the new COVID-19 economic relief bill, signed by President Donald J. Trump last night, which will provide \$900 billion in aid across the country for those affected by the pandemic.

While Gov. Justice expressed disappointment that individuals and businesses struggling because of the pandemic were not given more in the package, he also added that he appreciates that a deal finally got done.

Some of the most significant components of the stimulus bill include:

- CARES Act spending extension to Dec. 31, 2021 for state and local governments.
- Direct payment of \$600 for individuals making up to \$75,000 per year, and \$1,200 for couples making up to \$150,000 per year, plus an additional \$600 per child.
- Enhanced unemployment benefits of \$300 per week for 11 weeks.
- \$319 billion for small businesses, including \$284 billion through the Paycheck Protection Program.
- \$25 billion in rental assistance with an extension of the eviction moratorium.
- \$82 billion for schools and universities, with \$10 billion dedicated to childcare.
- \$7 billion for increased access to broadband.
- Additional funding to support vaccine distribution.

(Figures via capito.senate.gov (<https://www.capito.senate.gov/news/press-releases/capito-votes-in-favor-of-fy2021-government-funding-covid-relief-package>))

WorkForce West Virginia announced today it is awaiting guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor on the CARES Act unemployment extension provisions contained in the bill.

"While we wait on additional federal guidance, I have directed WorkForce West Virginia to be prepared to respond as quickly as possible and deliver this much-needed relief to eligible West Virginians," Gov. Justice said. "As we always have been, we are all in, and will be a leader in turning this legislation into resources for West Virginia."



Click here to view photo album

(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157717590446643>)

Until WorkForce receives this guidance from the federal government, WorkForce West Virginia recommends eligible claimants do not file a new claim. Filing a new claim may delay eligible claimant benefit payments.

"We are diligently working to build additional programs and adjust our unemployment computer system to deliver these benefits," said Scott Adkins, Acting Commissioner for WorkForce. "Until we receive additional clarification and guidelines, those who feel they are eligible for these benefits should pause until Workforce West Virginia provides additional information."

When implemented, these provisions will bring additional unemployment compensation to tens of thousands of West Virginians. These programs use existing funding structures already established by labor agencies. As a result, WorkForce West Virginia expects most claimants will avoid an interruption in benefits.

Click here to read more via WorkForce West Virginia

(<https://workforcewv.org/workforce/entry/as-west-virginia-awaits-cares-act-guidance-workforce-west-virginia-recommends-eligible-claimants-continue-weekly-certifications-but-not-file-a-new-claim>)



(<https://workforcewv.org/workforce/entry/as-west-virginia-awaits-cares-act-guidance-workforce-west-virginia-recommends-eligible-claimants-continue-weekly-certifications-but-not-file-a-new-claim>)

VACCINE DISTRIBUTION UPDATE

Once again, Gov. Justice reported that West Virginia continues to lead the nation in the rate of COVID-19 vaccine distribution and administration.

As of Monday, 30,737 of 60,875 total doses delivered in West Virginia to date have been administered. This 50.49% vaccination rate is the highest of any state in the nation **according to Bloomberg.com** (<https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/covid-vaccine-tracker-global-distribution/>), with Maine ranking 2nd in the nation at approximately 37%.

"The closest state to us, as far as getting it done fast, is Maine, and they're so far behind we can't even see them back there," Gov. Justice said.

West Virginia also continues to lead the nation in terms of distributing the COVID-19 vaccine to nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

"We are making significant progress in our plan to offer vaccination to all long-term care facility residents and staff, and we should be complete with all 214 facilities in the state today," Gov. Justice said. "It's amazing and it's far ahead of any other state in the nation. That's 100 percent of our long-term care facilities that we will have offered vaccines to in our state and before some other states have even gotten started."

The Governor noted that a combined total of 25,925 additional doses of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are expected to be delivered in West Virginia this week.

"When these vaccines are offered to you, you've got to take them," Gov. Justice said. "We want, absolutely, to get all of you vaccinated."



GOV. JUSTICE HONORS FALLEN WEST VIRGINIA HERO

Also on Monday, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks on COVID-19 to offer his condolences and to honor the life and legacy of Senior Airman Logan Young of the West Virginia National Guard, who was fatally injured on Sunday during a mutual aid response call to a structure fire with the 167th Airlift Wing Fire Department.

Young was 30 years old.

"He was a combat veteran that was previously deployed to the Middle East, a resident of Martinsburg, and survived by his mom and dad, a brother, and a fiancée that is having a little baby in not very long," Gov. Justice said. "Logan and this beautiful girl have been together a long time. I talked to his dad yesterday and his dad talked about that they'd been together for six years and they'd been planning so many things for their life ahead."

The State Fire Marshal's Office has determined the cause of the fire to be arson and continues to investigate with the help of the West Virginia State Police.

Anyone with any information is urged to call the West Virginia Arson Hotline. There is a reward of up to \$5,000 for any information that leads to the arrest and conviction of those responsible.

"It's just plain terrible," Gov. Justice said. "I've said this so many, many times; we cannot let these people – Logan and his family – go unnoticed and we cannot let them feel alone.

"We can't think about him for just a day and then forget about him in the weeks and weeks to come," Gov. Justice continued. "We can't do that. They've got to know that we'll be here, on our watch, trying to help them in any way we possibly can. What an incredible young man that served our nation."

Click here to read more via the West Virginia National Guard

(<https://www.wv.ng.mil/News/Article/2457116/west-virginia-national-guard-update-on-167th-airlift-wing-service-member-death/>)



COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

Additionally Monday, Gov. Justice reported that the current number of active cases in the state are now up to 24,273, including 726 new positive cases over the past 24 hours.

The number of active hospitalizations is now 720, with 200 of those patients currently in the ICU.

The cumulative percent of positive cases is now 4.66%; the second-highest such percentage since the beginning of the pandemic, trailing only the state record of 4.83% set on April 18, 2020.

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

As of Monday morning, the **statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission** (<https://rt.live/>)—also known as R_t —was 1.13; the 2nd-highest such rate of any state in the country.

MONDAY MAP UPDATE

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

Red counties: **38** (Barbour, Berkeley, Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Cabell, Clay, Doddridge, Fayette, Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, Mason, Mercer, Mingo, Morgan, Nicholas, Ohio, Pendleton, Pleasants, Preston, Ritchie, Taylor, Tyler, Upshur, Wayne, Wetzel, Wirt, Wood, Wyoming)

Orange counties: **14** (Gilmer, Kanawha, Lewis, Marion, McDowell, Mineral, Monongalia, Monroe, Pocahontas, Putnam, Raleigh, Roane, Summers, Webster)

Gold counties: **0**

Yellow counties: **2** (Calhoun, Tucker)

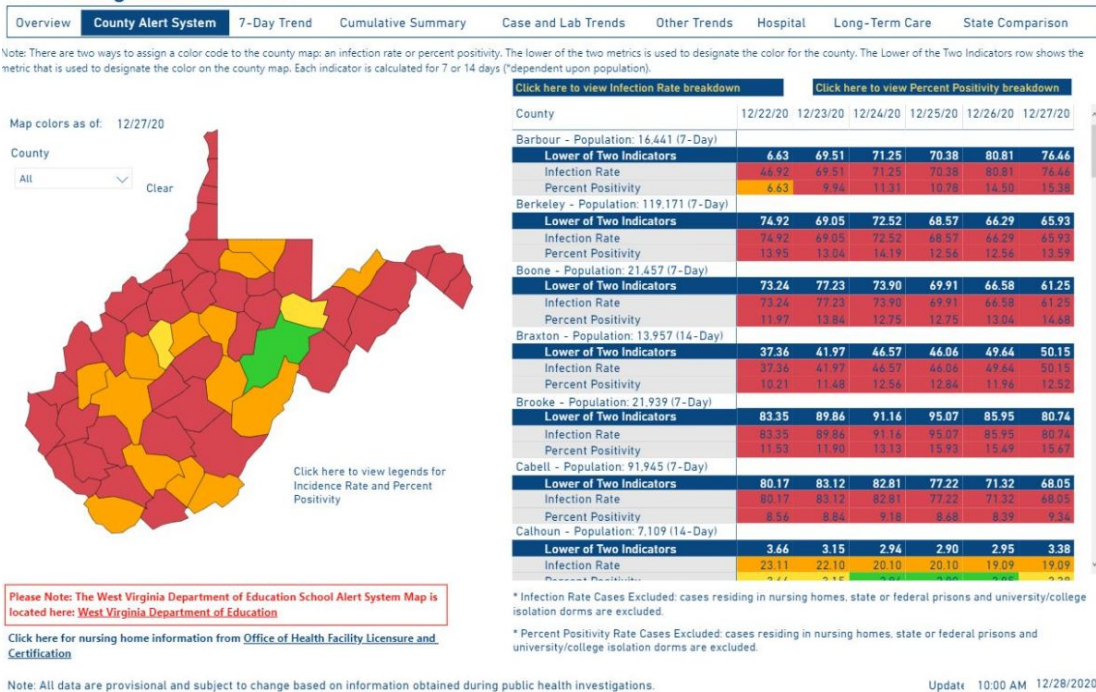
Green counties: **1** (Randolph)

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



(<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 Monday, Gov. Justice reported that per the West Virginia Department of Education, there are nine active outbreaks in public schools across the state. These outbreaks account for 35 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: Greenbrier, Harrison, Jackson, Lewis, Marion, McDowell, Mineral, Mingo, Monongalia, Nicholas, Raleigh, Summers, Webster, and Wyoming counties. These outbreaks account for a total of 160 cases.

There are now 113 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state.

The Governor also reported that there are now 488 active inmate cases across the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) system. Among the cases that are currently active, 285 are at Saint Marys Correctional Center, 77 are at Eastern Regional Jail, 55 are at Central Regional Jail, and 50 are at Tygart Valley Regional Jail.

There are 49 active staff cases across the DCR system.

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

AGGRESSIVE TESTING CONTINUES ACROSS STATE

Also on Monday, Gov. Justice provided an overview of the 49 counties across the state that have free testing events scheduled 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.

Click here to view all locations, dates, times, and more details

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

Free COVID-19 Testing

Counties with Testing Sites December 28

Times and locations available online:
coronavirus.wv.gov

New locations added daily.

1-800-887-4304

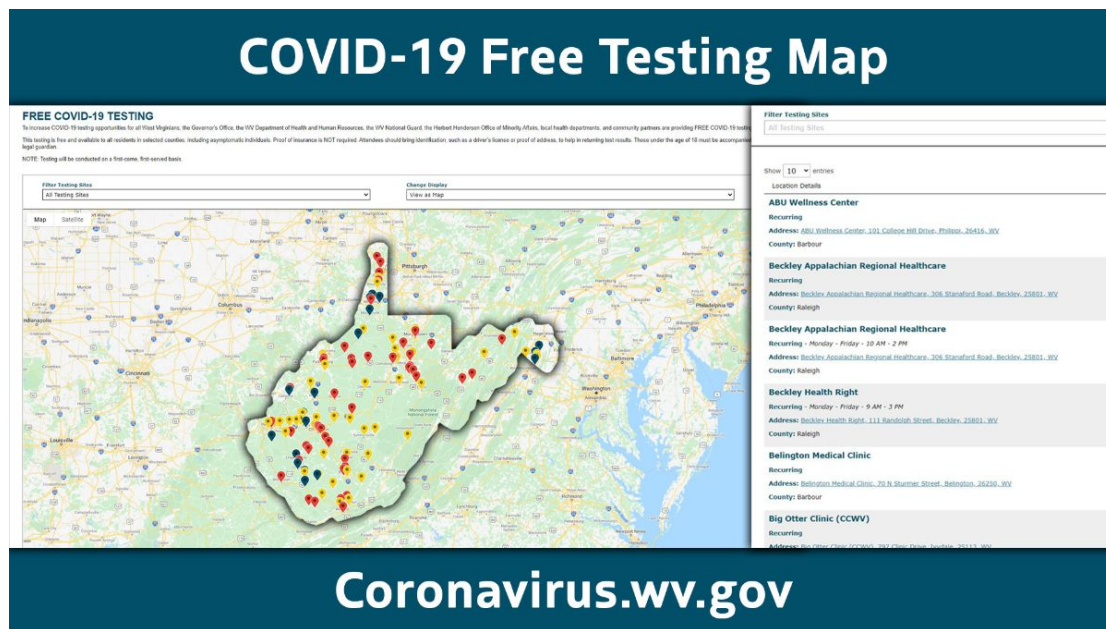
This testing is available to all individuals in the selected counties, including asymptomatic individuals. Proof of insurance is NOT required. Identification, such as a driver's license or proof of address, will be required to be tested. Those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal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

(<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. Users can also filter by county. 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.

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>)

UPDATED FACE COVERING REQUIREMENT IN EFFECT; SIGNS AVAILABLE FOR BUSINESSES

Additionally Monday, 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>)

MONOCLONAL ANTIBODY TREATMENT REMINDER

Also on Monday, Gov. Justice offered a reminder that West Virginia plans to begin utilizing monoclonal antibodies to treat COVID-19 more frequently, following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's recent emergency authorization of the treatment.

West Virginia has 1,400 doses of monoclonal antibodies on-hand, with 600 more doses expected to arrive shortly.

Monoclonal antibodies are laboratory-made proteins that mimic the immune system's ability to fight off viruses.



WEST VIRGINIANS CALLED UPON TO DONATE BLOOD AND PLASMA

Additionally Monday, 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 Monday, 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>)

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>).



(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157717590446643>)

Contact Information

Jordan Damron, jordan.l.damron@wv.gov
(<mailto:jordan.l.damron@wv.gov>)