

News Release

Gov. Ricketts Urges Continued Precautions To Slow The Spread Of Coronavirus

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Governor's Media Release:

LINCOLN – This morning, Governor Pete Ricketts held a press conference at the State Capitol to provide an update on the State's work to slow the spread of the coronavirus and protect hospitals and long-term care facilities. The Governor reported that coronavirus hospitalizations decreased in Nebraska over the past week. Nebraska remains in the "orange" phase of its pandemic response, which is the second most restrictive phase. The Governor urged Nebraskans to continue taking precautions to slow the spread of the virus as the weather grows colder and people spend more time indoors.

Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs (NDVA) Director John Hilgert joined Gov. Ricketts for today's press briefing. Director Hilgert tested positive for the coronavirus in May, and he described his experience recovering from it. He also provided an update on the protocols that have been put in place to slow the spread of the virus at Nebraska's veterans' homes.

Gov. Ricketts: Health Reminder

- To slow the spread and limit hospitalizations, we need every Nebraskan to stay committed to good health habits.
- We're urging all Nebraskans to avoid the Three Cs:
 - **Crowded Places**
 - Avoid gathering in groups where you can't maintain six-foot distance from others.
 - **Close Contacts**
 - Wear a mask or maintain six-foot distance when you're with people you don't live with.
 - **Confined Spaces**
 - Avoid enclosed spaces with poor ventilation.
- Now that the weather is getting colder, we're spending more time inside. Take steps to ensure good ventilation, and wear a mask when you cannot avoid close contacts.

NDVA Director Hilgert: Coronavirus Survivor Testimonial

- I had COVID-19 in May, as did my family.
- My family members had relatively minor illnesses, though my wife's taste has been slow to come back.

- I had worse symptoms, including a very high temperature, shakes, and muscular and joint pain.
- I self-isolated and monitored my fever. It was hard for me to get sleep. Thankfully, I got better after a few days and did not need to be hospitalized.
- My experience with the virus has given me greater perspective on the steps we must take to protect Nebraskans in long-term care.


NDVA Director Hilgert: Nebraska's Veterans' Homes

- The Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs has four veterans' homes in the state.
- We've taken action to fight the spread of the coronavirus.
 - At our veterans' homes, we've retrofitted some of our HVACs with UV-C lighting to help kill the virus.
 - Where possible, we've boosted our humidity to approximately 60%, which we're told helps reduce the likelihood of transmission.
 - Everyone who comes to our facilities goes through a screening prior to entry.
- Even for Nebraskans who are young and healthy, it's still important to take precautions against the spread of the virus.
- You may have a friend working as a housekeeper, a CNA, or dietary specialist at a long-term care facility.
- We need to avoid exposing these healthcare workers to the virus. We're seeing the virus enter facilities through workers who are asymptomatic.
- We all have a part to play in helping to protect our veterans and others in long-term care facilities.

- Whenever a worker at our veterans' homes tests positive or is exposed, they have to leave the facility. This creates a hardship for the remaining staff members, who have to work overtime and deal with the stress of added responsibilities.
- These workers are feeling the strain of having a high operational tempo.
- Let's help out our neighbors over the next few months. Practicing good health habits will protect our veterans in long-term care as well as our healthcare workers caring for them.


Gov. Ricketts: Cyber Monday

- Over the weekend, we celebrated Small Business Saturday and Small Brewery Sunday.
- Today is Cyber Monday, and people are encouraged to shop online.
- When you do, please consider supporting your local businesses.
- Many businesses are offering deals in addition to their Black Friday promotions.
- Our support for Nebraska's businesses during the holiday season will make a difference as they close out the year.

Video from today's press conference is available by [clicking here](#) .

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