

COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice calls on federal government to supply more vaccine doses to West Virginia; announces renewal of school lunch program

2/5/2021

Gov. Justice holds press briefing on COVID-19 response - February 5, 2...



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.

GOV. JUSTICE AGAIN CALLS FOR MORE VACCINE DOSES IN WEST VIRGINIA

During Friday's briefing, Gov. Justice said that he and other state pandemic response leaders are "pushing as hard as we can" – urging the federal government to supply more doses of the COVID-19 vaccines to West Virginia.

"We're going through every channel we can go through," said Gov. Justice, who participated in a national COVID-19 leadership call on Wednesday with members of President Joe Biden's administration, other governors across America, United States COVID-19 Czar Jeff Zients, and others.

"One thing that I cannot get straight in my head is you have states all across this country that have hundreds of thousands or millions of vaccines that are not in somebody's arm, they're in a warehouse," Gov. Justice continued. "Hours mean something – not days, weeks, or months – hours mean something to try to save somebody's life."

According to the latest numbers posted to the **CDC's National Vaccination Tracker** (<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations>), out of the 57.4 million vaccine doses that have been delivered to states across America, only 35.2 million have been administered to date; an overall administration rate of 61.2 percent. Meanwhile, West Virginia has successfully **administered** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>) 294,059 of the 328,600 total doses that have been delivered in the state to date; an overall administration rate of 89.4 percent.

"There's more than 20 million vaccines in our nation, right now, that aren't in someone's arm," Gov. Justice said. "I just haven't been able to break through yet on the fact that we ought to be going and getting some of those vaccines and moving them around the chess board to states that are out of vaccines or states that are absolutely good at what they're doing, and there's none better than our health people, our national guard, and all the great people that are doing this in West Virginia.

"But we're pushing," Gov. Justice continued. "And we're going to keep pushing just as hard as we can."



SCHOOL LUNCH BENEFITS PROGRAM RENEWED

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice announced that there will be a second round of the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (P-EBT) allocated to eligible children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program will continue to be administered through the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR).

On Feb. 4, 2021, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved issuance of a second round of P-EBT for children who would have received free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program if their schools were not closed or operating at reduced attendance hours due to COVID-19.

"We are incredibly grateful that another round of these benefits will be allocated in West Virginia, even as the challenges posed by the pandemic continue," Gov. Justice said. "Our children are our greatest treasure in West Virginia and making sure our kids have enough to eat is absolutely the most important thing we can do – it's why, the moment we closed our schools last year, we went right to work delivering millions of meals all across the state. So, we appreciate the extra help this program will continue to provide."

P-EBT funding has resulted in more than \$72.6 million in food assistance support for West Virginia children, and an estimated \$200 million is expected as a part of the next round of benefits.

Click here to read more (<https://wvde.us/school-year-2020-21-benefits-approved-for-west-virginia-p-ebt/>).



VACCINE DISTRIBUTION UPDATE

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice once again reported that West Virginia remains among the national leaders in the rate of COVID-19 vaccine distribution and administration.

According to the latest vaccine numbers posted to the **COVID-19 Dashboard** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>) (**Click "Vaccine Summary" tab**), West Virginia now boasts a first dose administration rate of 99.1 percent and a second dose administration rate of 73.2 percent.

West Virginia has administered the highest rate of second vaccine doses per capita of any state in the nation, according to the **CDC's vaccination tracker** (<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations>).

West Virginia also remains among the best states in the nation for overall vaccine supply used, according to **Bloomberg.com's vaccination tracker** (<https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/covid-vaccine-tracker-global-distribution/>).

To date, West Virginia has administered 205,252 first doses and 88,807 second doses, totaling 294,059 doses administered overall statewide, including 15,088 administered in the past 24 hours alone.




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

The Governor went on to offer a reminder that free COVID-19 vaccination clinics either have been or will be held in all 55 counties across West Virginia by the end of this week through operation “Save Our Wisdom.”

Visit **[vaccinate.wv.gov](https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx)** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>) to view all current clinic locations and schedules.

Operation Save Our Wisdom

Vaccination Clinics

 **vaccinate.wv.gov**

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

The clinics are available for West Virginians who are 65 years of age and older. Residents from any county in West Virginia may access an appointment at any of the vaccination clinics listed, regardless of their county of residence.

The earliest of this week's clinics began Wednesday. However, different locations will be open on different days through Saturday, Feb. 6, 2021. Each location has its own, unique schedule.

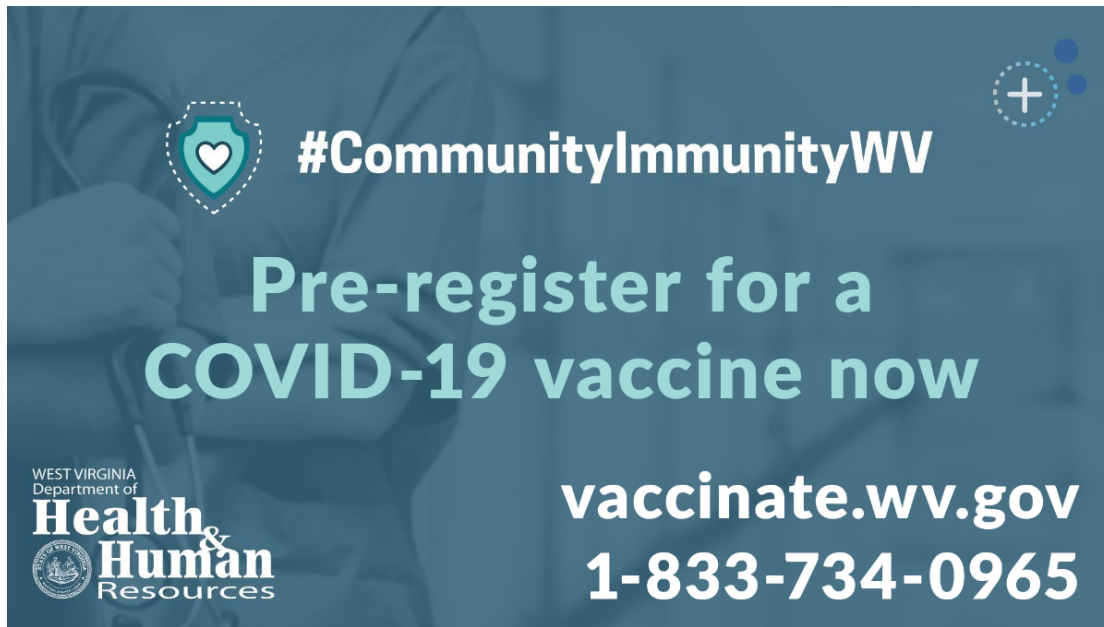
Many clinics are listed as full as they are utilizing existing waitlists. However, West Virginians can now pre-register for a COVID-19 vaccine through the West Virginia COVID-19 vaccine pre-registration system at **[vaccinate.wv.gov](https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx)** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>). All clinics require appointments and walk-ins will not be accepted.

Last week, West Virginia became the **first state in the nation** ([/News/press-releases/2021/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-announces-more-than-62%2c000-West-Virginians-have-pre-registered-to-be-vaccinated-after-launch.aspx](https://governor.wv.gov/News/press-releases/2021/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-announces-more-than-62%2c000-West-Virginians-have-pre-registered-to-be-vaccinated-after-launch.aspx)) to put a statewide vaccination pre-registration system in place. The new digital tool allows West Virginians to add themselves to a list of people who are interested in being vaccinated, and will notify those who sign up about the availability of vaccine doses to help streamline vaccination efforts.

To date, more than 199,000 West Virginians have signed up to be added to the pre-registration list.

West Virginians age 16 and older can **pre-register online** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>) or call the **COVID-19 Vaccine Info Line (1-833-734-0965)** to get help pre-registering.

Pre-registering in the system does not automatically grant users access to a vaccine appointment. Rather, users will receive a message from the system when there is a vaccine available. When that occurs, users will be notified by text, email, or phone call to set up an appointment.



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

MINNESOTA STATE SENATOR CALLS ON GOV. JUSTICE AND WEST VIRGINIA FOR ASSISTANCE WITH VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

Also, Gov. Justice announced that he received a letter yesterday from Minnesota State Senator Michelle Benson, thanking the West Virginia pandemic response team for being a national leader in COVID-19 vaccine distribution efforts and requesting advice on how to improve vaccine distribution in Minnesota.

Sen. Benson serves as the Chair of the Minnesota State Health and Human Services Committee.

The letter from Sen. Benson, who serves as the Chair of the Minnesota State Health and Human Services Committee, reads in part:

“West Virginia has been a leader in distributing vaccines in a safe, transparent, and effective manner. Minnesota would have great value in learning from you and your administration about how your state has been one of the most successful at getting the COVID-19 vaccine to those who need it most...In Minnesota, we have faced a myriad of problems with our vaccine rollout leading to confusion and frustration among many Minnesotans. Clearly, our state leaders have something to learn from your administration. I wish to invite you or someone from your administration to provide virtual testimony in our committee in the near future to talk about why West Virginia has been so successful in distributing the COVID-19 vaccine.”

Gov. Justice was overjoyed to offer West Virginia's assistance.

"We are absolutely happy to help," Gov. Justice said. "We will be responding to the letter – offering up our experts – because the bottom line that I've said a million times is that we're all in this together. We are all Americans. Absolutely, in any and every way we can help, we're going to help.

"All states have a ton to learn from all of the goodness that's going on all across this state," Gov. Justice continued. "You know, West Virginia, you have been so spectacular. All of us have stayed together. We've all pulled the rope, have we not? Really and truly, I could never be any more proud of you."



COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

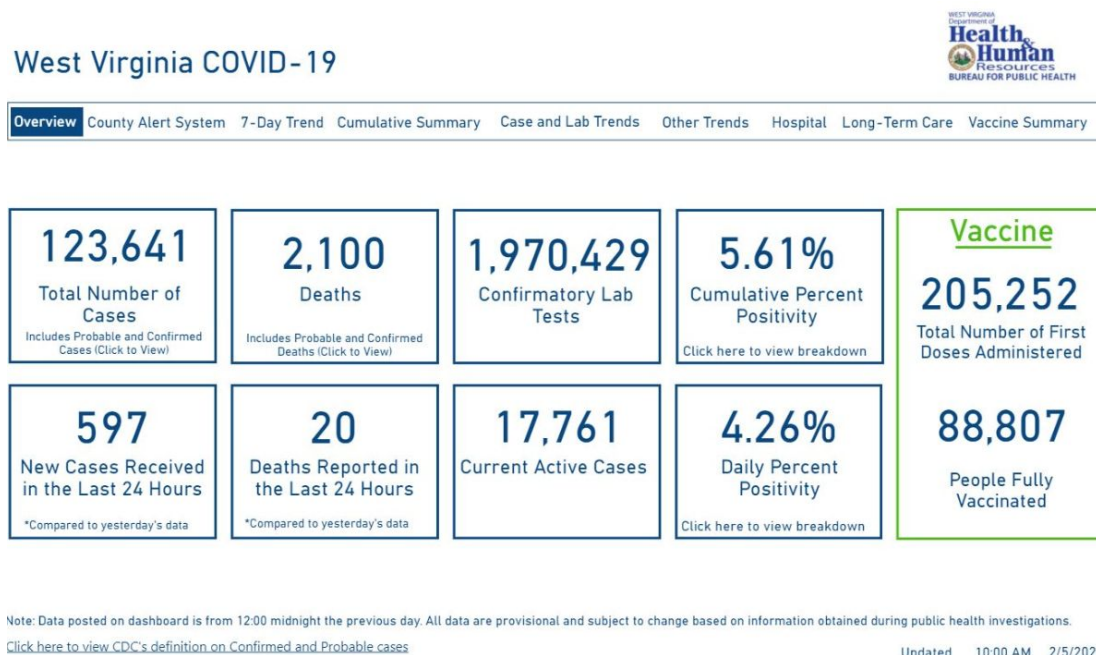
Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice reported that the current number of active cases in the state is now 17,761, down from 19,212 as of the Governor's previous COVID-19 briefing on Wednesday.

The number of daily active cases in West Virginia has now decreased for 20 straight days.

Meanwhile, the number of active hospitalizations is now 384, down from 456 on Wednesday, with 116 of those patients currently in the ICU.

The cumulative percent of positive cases is now 5.61 percent, down from 5.62 percent on Wednesday.

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



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

FRIDAY MAP UPDATE

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

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.

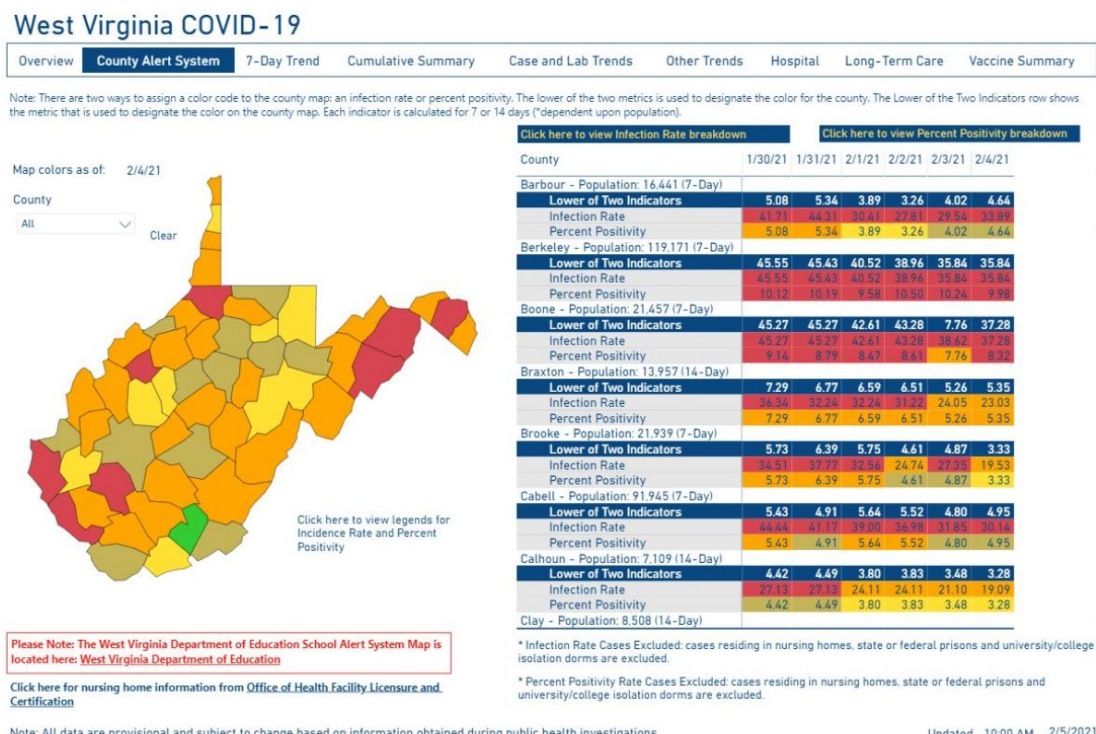
Red counties: **8**

Orange counties: **26**

Gold counties: **12**

Yellow counties: **8**

Green counties: **1**



(<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 there are now just three active church-related outbreaks across three counties: Clay, Fayette, and Summers counties. These outbreaks account for a total of 25 cases, down from 35 such cases as of Wednesday.

There are now 49 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, down from 57 outbreaks on Wednesday.

The Governor also reported that there are now 33 inmate cases across the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) system, up from 21 on Wednesday. Meanwhile, there are now 28 active staff cases across the DCR system, up from 24 on Wednesday. To view the latest DCR case update, **[click here](https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Correctional-Facilities.aspx)** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Correctional-Facilities.aspx>).

GOVERNOR SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice issued **[Executive Order 3-21](/Documents/2021%20Executive%20Orders/EO-3-21.pdf)** (</Documents/2021%20Executive%20Orders/EO-3-21.pdf>), suspending statutory regulations for the duration of the State of Emergency for the sole purpose of removing the technical requirement that public auctions for lands which are subject to sale under Article Three, Chapter 1 IA of the West Virginia State Code, be held “at the courthouse of the county” in which the property being auctioned sits, in order that such public auctions may take place in locations where adequate social distancing may be maintained by any desiring to attend such public auctions, and that the notice of such auctions may be amended accordingly.

AGGRESSIVE TESTING CONTINUES ACROSS STATE

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice provided an overview of the 51 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 February 5

Times and locations available online:
coronavirus.wv.gov

New locations added daily.

1-800-887-4304

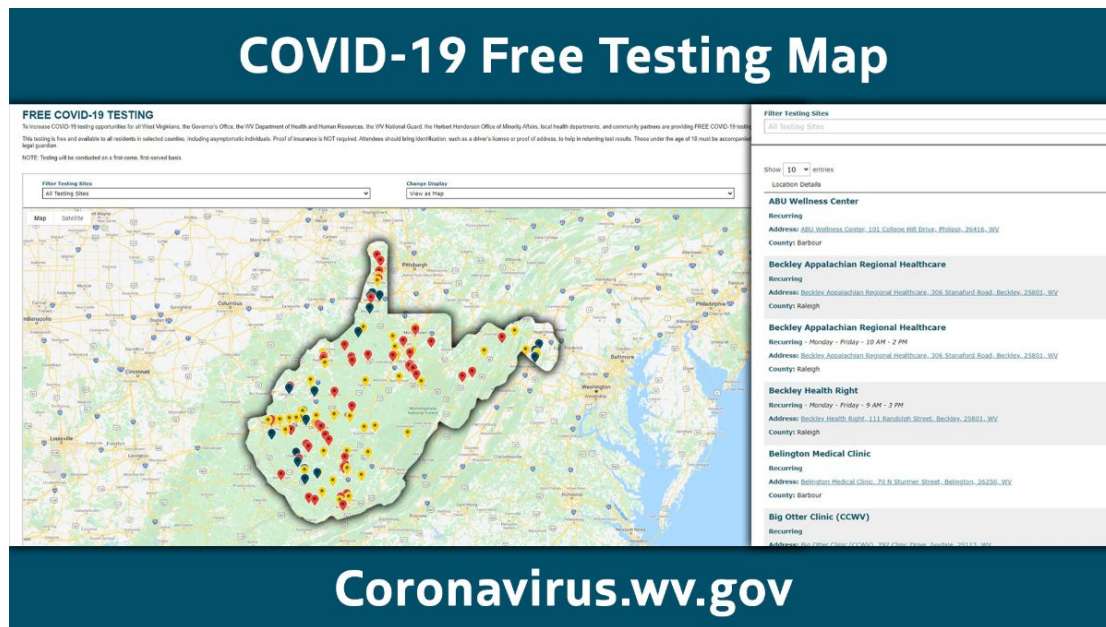
This testing is available to all individuals in the selected counties, including asymptomatic individuals. Proof of insurance is NOT required. Identification, such as a driver's license or proof of address, will be required to be tested. Those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal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

GOV. JUSTICE URGES WEST VIRGINIANS TO AVOID LARGE SUPER BOWL PARTIES; BABY DOG OFFERS SCORE PREDICTION

During Friday's briefing, Gov. Justice once again urged West Virginians to refrain from gathering at large Super Bowl parties this weekend.

"Everyone needs to stay the course," Gov. Justice said. "Things are getting a little bit better, but we've still got a long way to go."

The Governor went on to say that West Virginians did not need to concern themselves with the outcome of the Super Bowl. In fact, the Governor explained, he already knows what the score of the game will be, thanks to the predictive prowess of his bulldog, Baby Dog.

With the tap of her paws upon the Governor's briefing room desk, Baby Dog revealed to all West Virginians that the Tampa Bay Buccaneers will defeat the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl LV by a final score of 31-20.



(<https://youtu.be/oLSEvgShqw8?t=3696>)

CLICK TO WATCH: Baby Dog makes her Super Bowl prediction alongside Governor Justice (<https://youtu.be/oLSEvgShqw8?t=3696>)

"She's in charge," Gov. Justice said with a smile. "You don't need to watch the game."

The Governor's prognosticating pooch did not offer her thoughts on who would be named MVP of the big game. However, following the conclusion of the Governor's briefing, Baby Dog told the limited staff in attendance that she expected at least one "ruffing" the passer penalty to be called.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Click here to view all Executive Orders and other actions

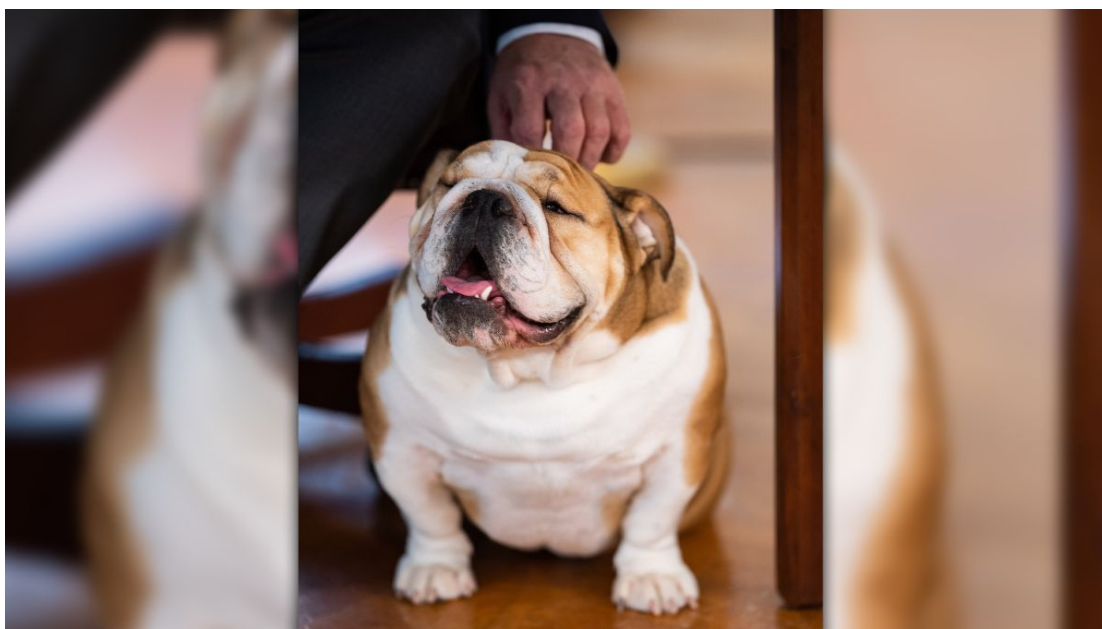
([https://governor.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?](https://governor.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d525ab9ade4d860d2b5772468&id=3029d4fcc4&e=5c140b96bc)

[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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