

COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice announces West Virginia's initial Moderna vaccine allocation to increase; new rapid testing lab established at WVU

12/9/2020

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.

INITIAL MODERNA VACCINE ALLOCATION TO INCREASE

During Wednesday's briefing, Gov. Justice announced that the initial allocation of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine that will be received in West Virginia has been increased to 32,600 doses.

While **announcing the state's initial allocation plan** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-announces-initial-allocation-plan-for-COVID-19-vaccine.aspx) last week, Gov. Justice reported that West Virginia was supposed to receive 26,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine.

"Our cries are working as far as moving the number and bumping us up with more and more vaccine," Gov. Justice said.



Click here to view photo album

(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157717232527242>)

The Governor also provided an update on the timeline for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, which is currently the first such vaccine expected to arrive in West Virginia.

"The FDA is scheduled to have an all-day regulatory meeting tomorrow, where it is expected that they will discuss the Emergency Use Authorization for the Pfizer vaccine," Gov. Justice said. "FDA officials have said they plan to make a decision on approving this emergency authorization within four days of the meeting, though I hope to the good Lord above that they can approve it even faster than that.

"The federal government tells us that, within 24 hours of receiving the FDA approval, West Virginia will begin receiving shipments of the vaccine," Gov. Justice continued. "Within 24 hours of receiving the vaccine, we will be vaccinating people."


Gov. Justice **announced Monday** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-announces-initial-vaccine-order-of-more-than-16%2c000-doses-submitted-to-CDC.aspx) that West Virginia officials have submitted the state's initial Pfizer vaccine order to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, requesting the state's maximum-allowed weekly ordering cap of 16,575 doses.

West Virginia plans to receive an initial allocation of approximately 60,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine.

There will be a limited supply of the COVID-19 vaccine when it first becomes available, so the vaccine will be distributed in phases, based on risk for contracting COVID-19.

In accordance with U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, the first-available vaccine doses will be distributed to healthcare workers, long-term care facility staff and residents, individuals critical to community infrastructure and emergency response, public health officials, and first responders.

West Virginia
COVID-19
Vaccination
Program
Phase 1






The first WV group to receive the COVID-19 vaccine will be health care personnel due to their risk of exposure to COVID-19.

There will be limited supplies of COVID-19 vaccine at first, so the vaccine will be distributed in phases based on risk. Supply will increase over time.

Phase 1

- Healthcare workers
- Long-term Care Facility staff & residents
- Community Infrastructure and Emergency Response, Public Health Officials and First Responders



Coronavirus.wv.gov

(/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-announces-initial-allocation-plan-for-COVID-19-vaccine.aspx)

NEW RAPID COVID-19 TESTING LAB ESTABLISHED AT WVU

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice followed up on **West Virginia University's announcement** (<https://wvutoday.wvu.edu/stories/2020/12/09/wvu-dhhr-establish-new-covid-19-testing-laboratory-in-morgantown>) this morning that they have teamed up with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources to create a new Rapid Development Lab at the WVU Health Sciences Center in Morgantown.

This new lab will be used to develop, validate, and implement complex diagnostic testing for COVID-19.

The lab will provide quicker test results, and it will reduce costs to the state because it can process tests more inexpensively than commercial laboratories.

"We funded the lab out of our CARES Act dollars, we've waited for this to become a reality, and now it's here," Gov. Justice said. "West Virginia, this is your CARES money at work right here. I thank the DHHR and WVU for all their great work."

"I cannot thank Gov. Justice enough for his vision and leadership on this vital component in our continued battle against the coronavirus," WVU President Gordon Gee said. "By directing CARES Act funding to make this lab a reality, we will be able to facilitate better health outcomes for thousands of West Virginians."



COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that the current number of active cases in the state has also reached a new record high of 20,059. A new record high of 650 hospitalizations has been reached, with 180 of those patients currently in the ICU.

The cumulative percent of positive cases is now 3.95%, up from 3.88% on Monday and the highest such rate seen in West Virginia since April 22, 2020.

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

Meanwhile, as of Monday morning, the **statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission** (<https://rt.live/>)– also known as Rt – had risen to 1.13; the 10th-worst such rate of any state in the country.

WEDNESDAY MAP UPDATE

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

Red counties: **14** (Berkeley, Boone, Brooke, Grant, Hampshire, Hancock, Jackson, Marshall, Mason, Mineral, Mingo, Wirt, Wood, Wyoming)

Orange counties: **22** (Barbour, Cabell, Calhoun, Clay, Doddridge, Hardy, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Monongalia, Morgan, Nicholas, Ohio, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Putnam, Ritchie, Tyler, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel)

Gold counties: **5** (Gilmer, Greenbrier, Harrison, Marion, Roane)

Yellow counties: **8** (Fayette, Lewis, McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Raleigh, Taylor, Tucker)

Green counties: **6** (Braxton, Logan, Pendleton, Randolph, Summers, Upshur)

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). Cases residing in nursing homes, state or federal prisons and university/college isolation dorms are excluded.

Map colors as of: 12/8/20

County

All

Clear

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](#)

Click here to view Percent Positivity breakdown

Click here to view Infection Rate breakdown

| County | 12/2/20 | 12/3/20 | 12/4/20 | 12/5/20 | 12/6/20 | 12/7/20 | 12/8/20 |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Barbour | | | | | | | |
| Lower of Two Indicators | 72.12 | 78.20 | 87.76 | 89.50 | 7.28 | 7.32 | 6.14 |
| Infection Rate | 72.12 | 78.20 | 87.76 | 89.50 | 86.02 | 86.28 | 72.99 |
| Percent Positivity | 8.56 | 10.13 | 8.52 | 8.37 | 7.28 | 7.32 | 6.14 |
| Berkeley | | | | | | | |
| Lower of Two Indicators | 67.85 | 65.33 | 76.00 | 74.44 | 78.40 | 74.56 | 79.36 |
| Infection Rate | 67.85 | 65.33 | 76.00 | 74.44 | 78.40 | 74.56 | 79.36 |
| Percent Positivity | 8.71 | 8.96 | 9.68 | 9.76 | 10.02 | 10.37 | 10.49 |
| Boone | | | | | | | |
| Lower of Two Indicators | 7.07 | 7.40 | 7.42 | 6.64 | 7.69 | 7.66 | 55.93 |
| Infection Rate | 51.27 | 51.93 | 49.93 | 45.94 | 51.93 | 51.27 | 55.93 |
| Percent Positivity | 7.07 | 7.40 | 7.42 | 6.64 | 7.69 | 7.66 | 8.84 |
| Braxton* | | | | | | | |
| Lower of Two Indicators | 1.65 | 1.81 | 2.04 | 2.25 | 2.38 | 2.20 | 2.17 |
| Infection Rate | 18.42 | 20.47 | 23.54 | 25.08 | 26.61 | 25.59 | 25.08 |
| Percent Positivity | 1.65 | 1.81 | 2.04 | 2.25 | 2.38 | 2.20 | 2.17 |
| Brooke | | | | | | | |
| Lower of Two Indicators | 7.79 | 7.61 | 7.57 | 98.98 | 110.05 | 106.79 | 118.51 |
| Infection Rate | 86.60 | 86.60 | 94.42 | 98.98 | 110.05 | 106.79 | 118.51 |
| Percent Positivity | 7.79 | 7.61 | 7.57 | 9.05 | 9.87 | 10.10 | 12.14 |
| Cabell | | | | | | | |
| Lower of Two Indicators | 5.91 | 5.67 | 6.16 | 6.69 | 7.19 | 7.33 | 6.61 |
| Infection Rate | 54.56 | 60.28 | 67.74 | 73.34 | 77.84 | 80.48 | 76.60 |
| Percent Positivity | 5.91 | 5.67 | 6.16 | 6.69 | 7.19 | 7.33 | 6.61 |
| Calhoun* | | | | | | | |
| Lower of Two Indicators | 3.89 | 4.31 | 4.19 | 4.37 | 4.44 | 4.89 | 5.34 |
| Infection Rate | 32.15 | 37.18 | 36.77 | 37.18 | 37.18 | 33.16 | 32.15 |

* Indicates counties with a population under 16,000 is on a 14-day average.

All other counties have a population greater than 16,000 is on a 7-day average.

Updated

10:00 AM

12/9/2020

(<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 Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that, per the West Virginia Department of Education, there are 18 active outbreaks in public schools across the state. These outbreaks account for 66 confirmed cases, down from 96 on Monday.

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

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

West Virginia now has 20 active church-related outbreaks across 13 counties: Berkeley, Braxton, Cabell, Fayette, Harrison, Marion, Mineral, Mingo, Nicholas, Raleigh, Taylor, Webster, and Wyoming counties. These outbreaks account for a total of 227 cases, down from 279 on Monday.

There are now 116 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, down from 117 such outbreaks as of Monday.

The Governor also reported that there are now 321 active inmate cases across the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) system, including 288 combined cases between the Northern Regional Jail and the Northern Correctional Facility, plus 28 others at the Pruntytown Correctional Center. All inmates have recovered at the Denmar Correctional Center, where there had been 61 cases.

DCR has also confirmed fifth COVID-19 inmate death. The inmate was a 54-year-old from Mount Olive Correctional Complex in Fayette County, who died on Sept. 13 at an outside hospital. He had underlying health conditions.

There are 78 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>)

GOV. JUSTICE PAYS TRIBUTE TO LEGENDARY WEST VIRIGNIAN CHUCK YEAGER

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks on COVID-19 to discuss several significant developments that had occurred since his previous briefing on Monday.

First, the Governor paid his respects to the late Brig. Gen. Charles "Chuck" Yeager, who passed away Monday night.

Born in Myra, West Virginia, Yeager was the first human to fly faster than the speed of sound in level flight, accomplishing the barrier-breaking feat in 1947. He also flew in dozens of combat missions in World War II.

"We lost a West Virginia superstar and an all-out American patriot beyond belief when we lost General Chuck Yeager," Gov. Justice said. "I had the pleasure of meeting him, not on many occasions, but enough. We talked an awful lot...and I'll ever get over how frank he was about things and how proud he was about how hard he worked. He didn't want to just be known as the guy who took the most risks, or the guy who had the most courage, he also wanted to be known as the guy who worked the hardest.

"He worked hard in every aspect of his life," Gov. Justice continued. "He brought so much notoriety to West Virginia, it's unbelievable. Please join Cathy and I in praying for the great General, his family, and all his loved ones."

The Governor went on to announce that he will be signing a proclamation to lower all United States and West Virginia flags to half-staff statewide in Gen. Yeager's honor. The proclamation will be issued once the date of his services is announced.



BELLE CHEMICAL PLANT EXPLOSION UPDATE

Additionally, Gov. Justice took time to provide an update on the explosion and chemical fire Tuesday night at the Chemours Chemical Plant in Belle. A two-mile radius shelter-in-place was ordered and then was lifted around 4:30 a.m. Wednesday after the situation had been stabilized

The Governor reported during Wednesday's briefing that, according to emergency management officials, the likely cause of the incident was chlorinated dry bleach and methanol.

The Governor also announced that one of the four people injured in the incident had died.

"We're keeping everyone in our prayers, but the outcome could have been much worse if not for all our first responders who were trained and ready to respond to these types of incidents," Gov. Justice said. "They ran to the fire last night and we can never thank them enough."



GREENBRIER COUNTY FATAL FIRE

Also, Gov. Justice took time to provide additional details about a tragic house fire near Williamsburg in Greenbrier County Tuesday afternoon.

Nine volunteer fire departments responded, including fire crews from Clintonville, Frankford, Williamsburg, Lewisburg, Ronceverte, Tri-County, Smoot, Rainelle, and Fairlea. In addition, the State Fire Marshal, West Virginia State Police, and the Fairlea Ambulance Service also responded.

So far, there have been four bodies that have been located and removed from the home, which was totally destroyed. A fifth body was found outside the home, and crews are still searching for a possible sixth body, according to the Governor.

Four of the known victims were children, including at least three who attended school in the area: a second-grader, a kindergartner, and a pre-K child.

Investigators have developed a timeline and sequence of events leading up to the deaths.

The investigation is continuing as evidence at the scene is being examined and processed.

Specific details of the investigation, including the manner and cause of death, will not be released, pending confirmation by the State Medical Examiner.

The Greenbrier County Sheriff is coordinating the investigation.



BLUE LIGHTS AT CAPITOL HONOR OFFICER CASSIE JOHNSON

Additionally, Gov. Justice took time to once again reflect upon the life of Charleston Police Officer Cassie Johnson, who passed away in the line of duty last week.

Yesterday marked the day of services for Officer Johnson. As a tribute to her sacrifice and in honor of the selfless service of all West Virginia law enforcement officers, Gov. Justice requested that the dome of the Capitol Building and the front of the Governor's Mansion in Charleston be lit in blue last night.

"We did it after dark, and you could see the Mansion and the Capitol – the way they were lit up – it was beautiful," Gov. Justice said. "I talked to her family yesterday morning and I asked for their permission to do this. They were super-kind and they said that Cassie would love that and they know that she could see it; she was there, and I know that in my heart too."



Image captured evening of Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020

UPDATED FACE COVERING REQUIREMENT IN EFFECT; SIGNS AVAILABLE FOR BUSINESSES

Also on Wednesday, 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>)

AGGRESSIVE TESTING CONTINUES ACROSS STATE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice provided an overview of the 51 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.

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 9 - 30**

Times and locations available online:
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

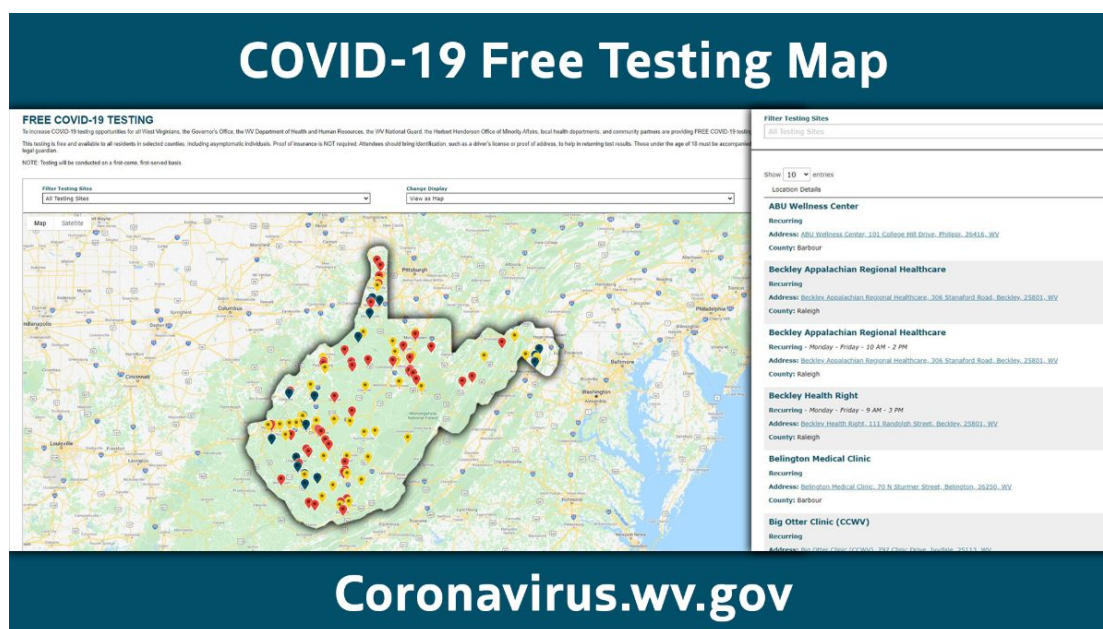
The banner features a map of West Virginia with 51 counties labeled. The counties are color-coded: blue for counties with testing sites and light blue for counties without. The counties with testing sites are: Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, Wetzel, Monongalia, Marion, Taylor, Preston, Mineral, Berkeley, Morgan, Jefferson, Hampshire, Grant, Tucker, Randolph, Upshur, Barbour, Harrison, Taylor, Ritchie, Wirt, Wood, Pleasants, Tyler, Doddridge, Calhoun, Gilmer, Lewis, Braxton, Clay, Mason, Jackson, Roane, Putnam, Cabell, Wayne, Lincoln, Boone, Kanawha, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Greenbrier, Raleigh, Summers, Monroe, Mercer, McDowell, Logan, Mingo, and Wyoming. The counties without testing sites are: Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, Wetzel, Monongalia, Marion, Taylor, Preston, Mineral, Berkeley, Morgan, Jefferson, Hampshire, Grant, Tucker, Randolph, Upshur, Barbour, Harrison, Taylor, Ritchie, Wirt, Wood, Pleasants, Tyler, Doddridge, Calhoun, Gilmer, Lewis, Braxton, Clay, Mason, Jackson, Roane, Putnam, Cabell, Wayne, Lincoln, Boone, Kanawha, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Greenbrier, Raleigh, Summers, Monroe, Mercer, McDowell, Logan, Mingo, and Wyoming.

(<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.

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>)

WEST VIRGINIANS CALLED UPON TO DONATE BLOOD AND PLASMA

Also on Wednesday, 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/>)

CITIES/COUNTIES GRANT FUNDING: OVER \$214 MILLION HAS NOW BEEN AWARDED

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice provided an update on cities and counties throughout West Virginia applying for funds through the federal CARES Act, reporting that more than \$214 million has now been awarded all across the state.

The total amount of CARES Act funding allocated for these grants has been adjusted from \$200 million to \$225 million to ensure that applicants are able to receive all necessary grant funds before the Dec. 15 deadline.

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>).

WEST VIRGINIA STRONG
The Comeback

CARES Act funding for WV Cities and Counties

Apply for CARES Act grant funding here:

grants.wv.gov

Help line: 1-833-94-GRANT

5/19/20 WEST VIRGINIA STRONG - THE COMEBACK

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

FLU VACCINE REMINDER

Also on Wednesday, 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?](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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