

# *COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice, pandemic response leaders to discuss lifting certain restrictions for schools and businesses while maintaining safety*

2/17/2021

Gov. Justice holds press briefing on COVID-19 response - February 17, 2021



**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.

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## **GOVERNOR, PANDEMIC RESPONSE LEADERS DISCUSSING POSSIBILITY OF LIFTING SOME SCHOOL AND BUSINESS RESTRICTIONS WHILE MAINTAINING SAFETY**

Gov. Justice announced during today's briefing that, as part of his commitment to continue evaluating ways to refine and improve the State's COVID-19 response, he will be meeting with members of the West Virginia pandemic response leadership team and State Superintendent of Schools Clayton Burch today and tomorrow to discuss the possibility of lifting certain restrictions related to schools and businesses across the state while maintaining a high level of safety for all West Virginians.

"We continue to meet; we've been in a bunch of discussions regarding some ideas to lessen restrictions on our businesses and on our schools so we can move forward," Gov. Justice said. "I think we can move in that direction now."

The Governor added that he plans to provide a more detailed update during his next COVID-19 media briefing on Friday this week.



**[CLICK HERE TO VIEW PHOTO ALBUM](https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157718333396972)**

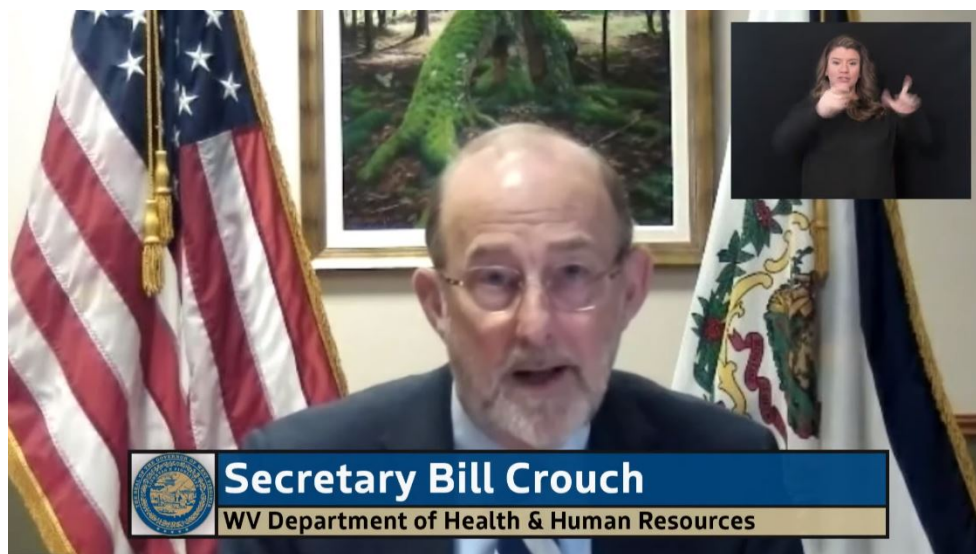
**[. \(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157718333396972\)](https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157718333396972)**

## **VACCINE DISTRIBUTION DASHBOARD UPDATED**

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice and leaders of West Virginia's nationally renowned COVID-19 vaccine distribution and administration program announced upgrades to the state **Vaccine Distribution Dashboard** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>) (**Click "Vaccine Summary" tab**).

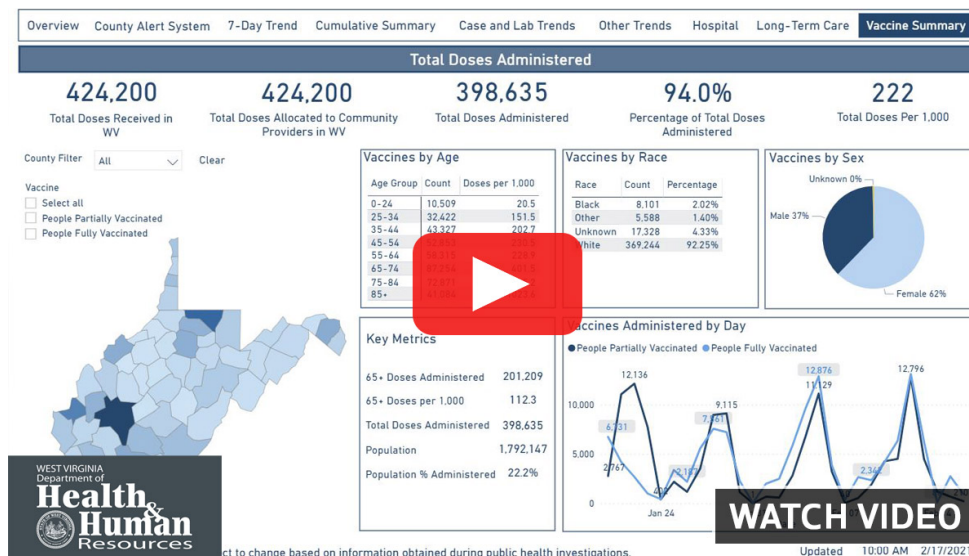
The improved dashboard now features an interactive map of the state, allowing users to view vaccine data for each individual county as well as all of West Virginia.

"We've had a lot of requests for that information," DHHR Secretary Bill Crouch said. "The revisions to the dashboard also offers a breakdown of vaccine data by age, race, and gender for each county."



"This is part of our commitment and the Governor's commitment to be transparent and to make sure that we provide information as quickly and in the best manner that we can," Sec. Crouch continued.

Sec. Crouch added that a **video tutorial** ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyb\\_3NVKpTE&ab\\_channel=DHHR-DepartmentofHealthandHumanResources](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyb_3NVKpTE&ab_channel=DHHR-DepartmentofHealthandHumanResources)) on how to use the new dashboard layout is now available.



([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyb\\_3NVKpTE&ab\\_channel=DHHR-DepartmentofHealthandHumanResources](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyb_3NVKpTE&ab_channel=DHHR-DepartmentofHealthandHumanResources))

"We've heard a lot of concerns about inequities of distribution in counties. But please understand that, based on our principle of saving as many lives as possible, early on in our process our focus was on healthcare workers, nursing home facilities, and nursing home staff," said Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Jim Hoyer, Director of the Joint Interagency Task Force on vaccine distribution. "So, where there were concentrations of those facilities, you're going to see greater concentrations initially.

"I want to make sure people understand, we are focused on all of West Virginia," Hoyer continued. "But we know, based on what we have done in our strategy, we have almost a 70 percent reduction in deaths in this state over the first six weeks of 2021. So we've got to continue to focus on that path."

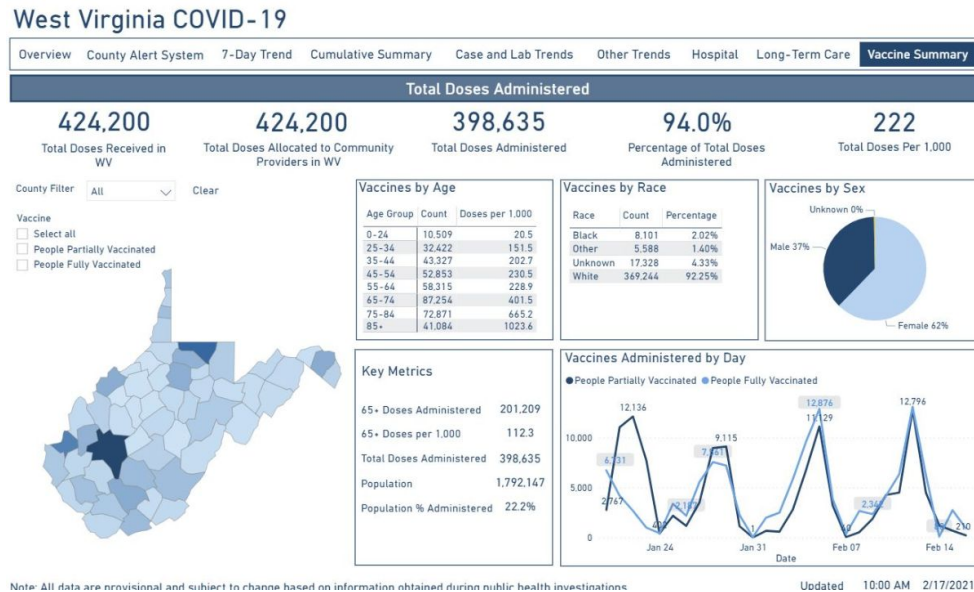


## VACCINE DISTRIBUTION UPDATE

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

To date, West Virginia has administered 252,901 first doses and 145,734 second doses, totaling 398,635 doses administered overall statewide out of a total allotment of 424,400 doses from the federal government; an overall administration rate of 94 percent.

**West Virginia COVID-19 Dashboard** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>) (Click "Vaccine Summary" tab)



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



West Virginia boasts a first dose administration rate of 97.2 percent and a second dose administration rate of 88.9 percent.

- First doses: 252,901 administered / 260,200 allotted
- Second doses: 145,734 administered / 164,000 allotted

As of Wednesday morning, 8 percent of West Virginia's entire population has received both doses of the vaccines. West Virginia's percentage remains among the **highest such rates** (<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/01/28/960901166/how-is-the-covid-19-vaccination-campaign-going-in-your-state>) of **fully vaccinated residents** (<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations>) of any state in the nation.

The Governor also announced that, after being told by the federal government last week that West Virginia's vaccine allocation through the federal pharmacy partnership program with Walgreens would be increased to 7,300 doses per week, West Virginia officials have now learned that this allocation has been decreased back to the original number of 5,800 doses per week.

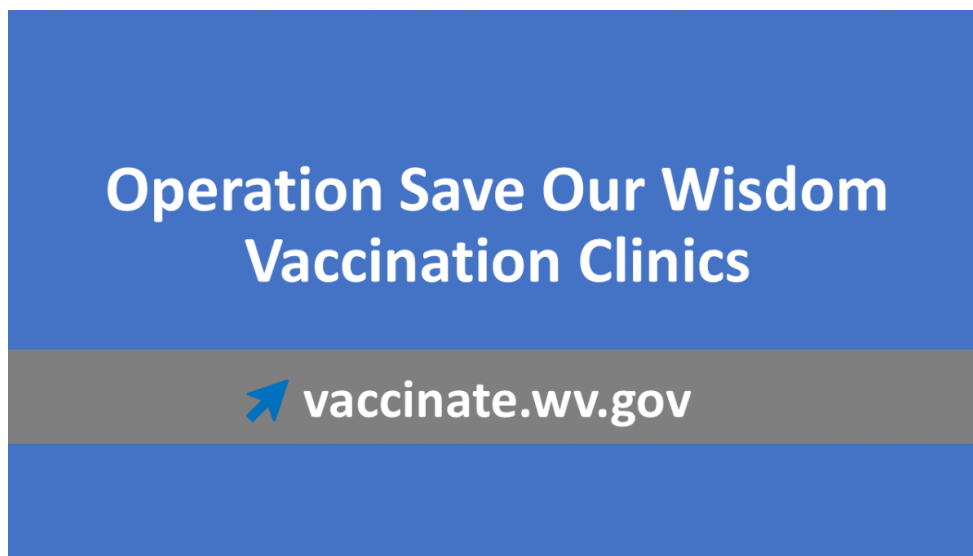
"We're very, very hopeful that this is going to go back up," Gov. Justice said. "There are rumbles in the jungle that we're going to get another 7 000 doses and, absolutely, we thank our Congressional team. We thank everybody that's working on this.

"I will promise you this – all those in Washington D.C. are hearing from West Virginia in every way," Gov. Justice continued. "We continue to ask them to push more and more vaccines to the state that learned how to do it and do it right."



The Governor also offered 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."

The clinics are currently available for West Virginians who are 65 years of age and older. To date, 137,456 West Virginians age 65 and older have chosen to be vaccinated, including 63,753 who are now fully vaccinated.



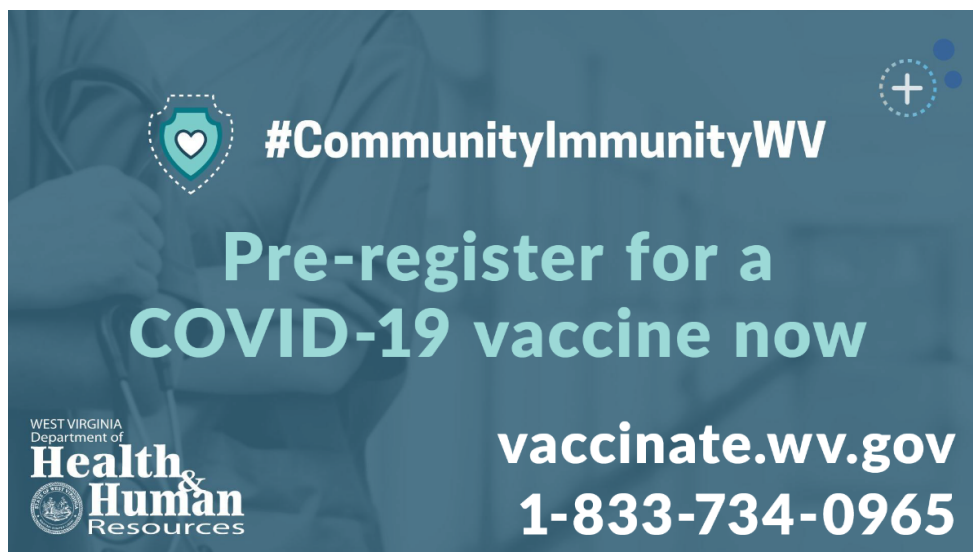
(<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>)

Each clinic location has its own, unique schedule. Names are being pulled from the **West Virginia COVID-19 Vaccine Registration System** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>) to fill out appointments after waitlists are exhausted. All clinics require appointments and walk-ins will not be accepted.

West Virginia was the first state in the nation 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 261,000 West Virginians have signed up to be added to the pre-registration list.

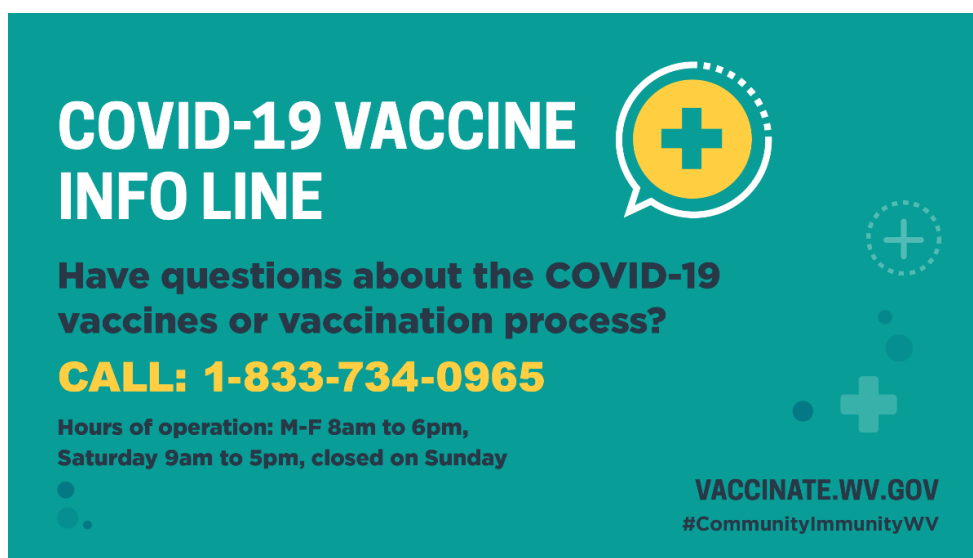
All West Virginians over the age of 16 are encouraged to pre-register at **[vaccinate.wv.gov](https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx)** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>).



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

Vaccine supplies are limited, so pre-registration does not mean immediate access to vaccination. Pre-registration offers West Virginians the opportunity to receive real-time updates on vaccine availability and schedule an appointment when available as vaccine supplies allow. The vaccine registration system allows people to select their preferences for communication through text, email, or voicemail over regular phone lines.

West Virginians who need assistance with registration for any reason should call the COVID-19 Vaccine Info Line for help at **1-833-734-0965**. The info line is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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

## **GOV. JUSTICE SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER CLARIFYING RESTRICTIONS ON LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCES**

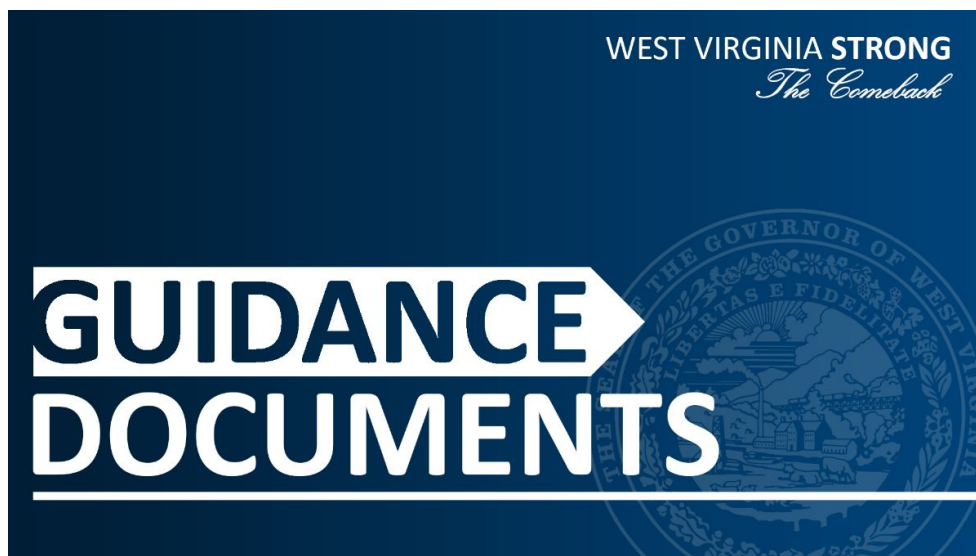
Following his briefing Wednesday, Gov. Justice signed **Executive Order 5-21** (</Documents/2021%20Executive%20Orders/EO-5-21-February-17-2021.pdf>), which clarifies the existing prohibition of live indoor music performances.

The new order allows live music performances, except for those incorporating vocals or using wind instruments, to take place indoors, so long as the event is held in accordance with all applicable guidance documents.

- **UPDATED: A Guide to Safely Hosting Live Performances**  
(</Documents/Covid%20Additional%20Guidances/2020.10.5%20Guidance%20for%20Live%20Performances.pdf>).
- **UPDATED: A Guide to Safely Opening Restaurants and Bars**  
(</Documents/Covid%20Week%205/2020.05.29%20Restaurants%20and%20Bars%20Guidelines.pdf>).

Live music incorporating vocals or using wind instruments may be performed indoors only for simulcast or other broadcast to remote audiences where no audience is physically present.





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### **GOV. JUSTICE SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER 4-21**


Following his briefing Wednesday, Gov. Justice also signed **Executive Order 4-21** (</Documents/2021%20Executive%20Orders/EO-4-21-February-17-2021.pdf>), which sets the temporarily suspended deadline for renewal of licenses and permits from the West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration for brewers, importers, resident brewers, brewpubs, Class A retail dealers - taverns, and distilleries, mini-distilleries, wineries, farm wineries, multi-capacity licensees, private wine restaurants, private wine bed and breakfasts, private wine spas, and private wine stadiums to March 15, 2021.



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### **GOVERNOR AGAIN CALLS FOR WEST VIRGINIANS TO EXERCISE CAUTION WITH ADDITIONAL SEVERE WINTER WEATHER FORECAST**

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks on COVID-19 to once again urge all West Virginians to remain cautious, with severe winter weather expected to continue.

"There is a Winter Storm Warning that is happening, for most of our state, tonight through Friday morning," Gov. Justice said.

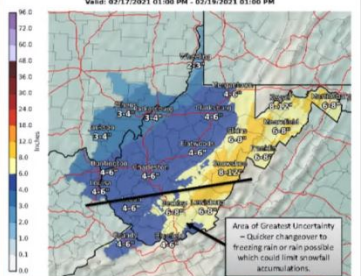
[coronavirus.wv.gov](https://coronavirus.wv.gov)



**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**  
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  


### Snow Accumulation Forecast and Impacts

**Expected Snowfall - Official NWS Forecast**  
Valid: 02/17/2021 01:00 PM - 02/18/2021 01:00 PM



Weather Forecast Office  
Charleston, WV

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Presentation Created 2/17/2021 9:32 AM

- ✓ Snow will start this evening and quickly ramp up in intensity. The bulk of the snowfall with this system will occur tonight into Thursday morning.
- ✓ For the Tri-State (OH/KY/WV) – heavy wet snow accumulations on already heavily laden trees will cause additional tree damage and power outages
- ✓ Main area of uncertainty is southern WV and southwest VA where a quicker transition from snow to freezing rain and rain may occur, limiting snowfall accumulations.
- ✓ Precipitation should transition back to snow Thursday night and as upslope showers linger in the mountains on Friday
  - ✓ Light accumulations anticipated Thursday through Friday but falling temps could cause additional travel impacts.

Yesterday, Gov. Justice **declared a State of Emergency** (</News/press-releases/2021/Pages/Gov.-Justice-declares-State-of-Emergency-for-four-western-WV-counties%2c-State-of-Preparedness-for-remaining-51-counties.aspx>) for Cabell, Lincoln, Putnam, and Wayne counties after winter storms occurring over the past week caused numerous power outages and road blockages in those areas. The Governor also declared a State of Preparedness for the state's remaining 51 counties with further winter storms forecast for the days ahead.

"This is expected to be a heavy, wet snow, which will cause additional tree damage and power outages," Gov. Justice said. "I have asked my Emergency Management Division to continue to be on high-alert to coordinate response to this storm."

The Governor urged any West Virginians who need information on Warming Centers to call 211 for assistance.

He also announced that the West Virginia Division of Highways is once again making preparations to combat the next wintry blast expected to strike the state.

"Crews will be on the roads before the storm hits, during the storm, and after the storm until all roads are cleared," Gov. Justice said. "The salt sheds have been replenished and are full. Our snow plow drivers will be working 12 hour shifts. So, really, if you're out on the road, and you see a snow plow that's doing great work, don't crowd it, don't run right up on it."

Motorists encountering a snow plow should stay back 100 feet to give the driver space and to avoid salt that may be coming from the back of the plow.

"These guys and ladies are doing a phenomenal job, and you've got to be really respectful and cautious and try to help them do this great job," Gov. Justice said.

The Governor went on to add that 911 centers across the state have received a lot of welfare check requests for elderly West Virginians over the past week, and he urged more West Virginians to remember to check on their neighbors.

"You know it's going to get really cold, you know we're going to have a lot of snow, you know people are going to lose power, and you know your neighbor may be sitting alone with no one to check on them," Gov. Justice said. "Come on, West Virginia. Check up on people. We can't have neighbors, especially our elderly, with nobody checking on them. Step up and try to help your neighbors."



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

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that the current number of active cases in the state is now 10,522 down from 11,683 as of his previous COVID-19 briefing on Monday.

The number of daily active cases in West Virginia has now decreased for 32 straight days.

The number of active hospitalizations is now 320, up slightly from 319 on Monday, with 74 of those patients currently in the ICU.

The cumulative percent of positive cases has decreased to 5.54 percent, down from 5.56 percent on Monday.

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

## West Virginia COVID-19



Overview County Alert System 7-Day Trend Cumulative Summary Case and Lab Trends Other Trends Hospital Long-Term Care Vaccine Summary



Note: Data posted on dashboard is from 12:00 midnight the previous day. All data are provisional and subject to change based on information obtained during public health investigations.

[Click here to view CDC's definition on Confirmed and Probable cases](#)

Updated 10:00 AM 2/17/2021

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

### WEDNESDAY MAP UPDATE

Also on Wednesday, 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: **0**

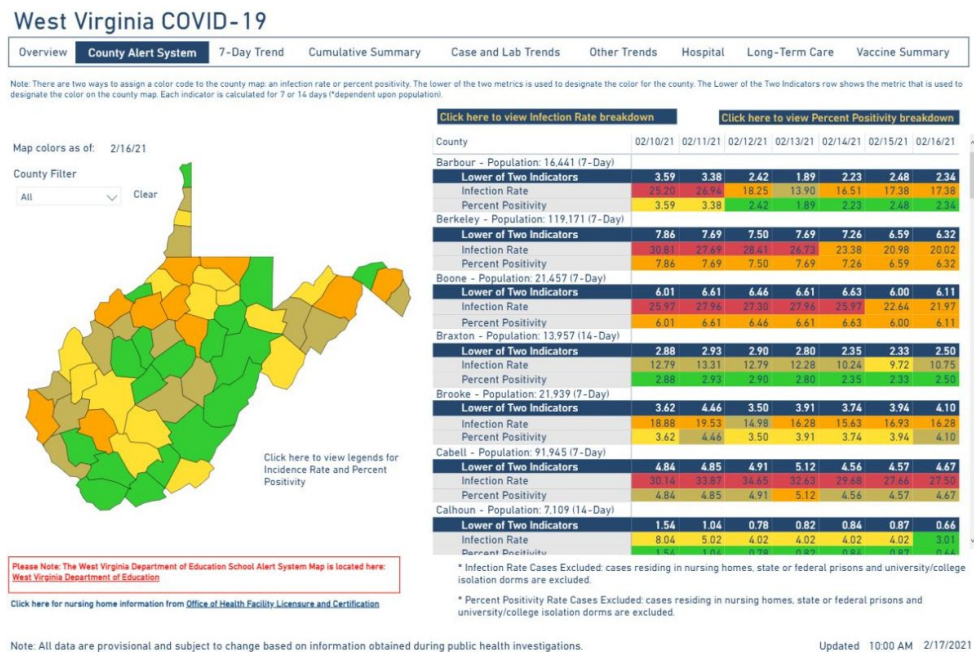
**Orange** counties: **10**

**Gold** counties: **13**

**Yellow** counties: **14**

**Green** counties: **18**





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

## OUTBREAK REPORT

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that there remains just one church-related outbreak in all of West Virginia. The outbreak is in Fayette County and accounts for a total of 10 cases.

There are now 25 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, down from 28 such outbreaks as of the Governor's previous briefing on Monday.

The Governor also reported that there are now 20 inmate cases across the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) system, down significantly from 43 on Monday. Meanwhile, there are now just three active staff cases across the DCR system, down from 14 on Monday. 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>).

## **AGGRESSIVE TESTING CONTINUES ACROSS STATE**

Also on Wednesday, 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 17**

Times and locations available online:  
**coronavirus.wv.gov**

New locations added daily.

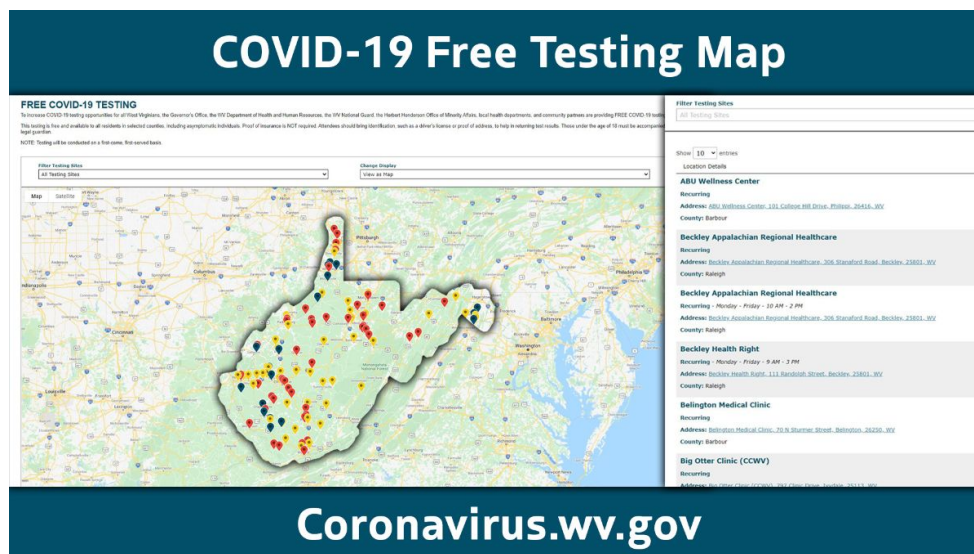
This testing is available to all individuals in the selected counties, including asymptomatic individuals. Proof of insurance is NOT required. Identification, such as a driver's license or proof of address, will be required to be tested. Those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal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

**1-800-887-4304**

(<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>)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Click here to view all Executive Orders and other actions** (<https://governor.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d525ab9ade4d860d2b5772468&id=3029d4fcc48&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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