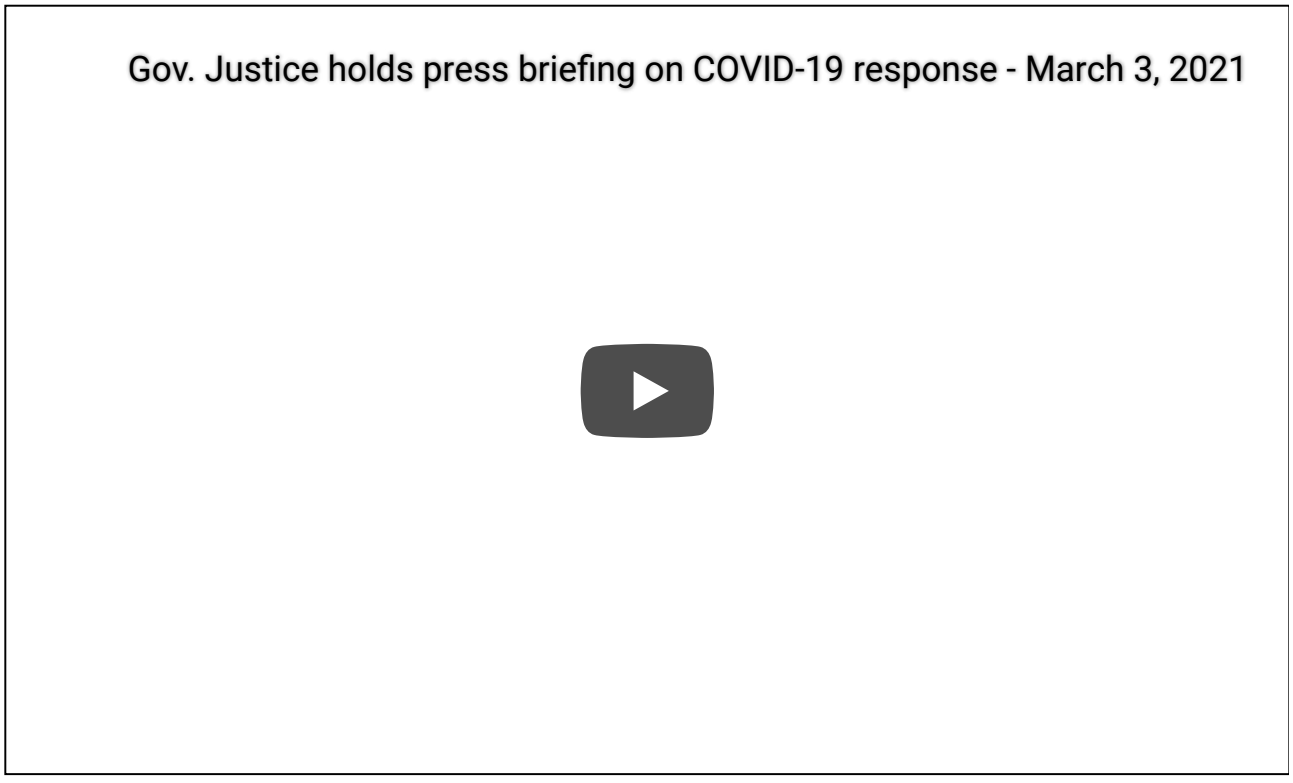
COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice makes vaccines available to residents age 50+, education workers age 40-50, and all 16+ with certain medical conditions

3/3/2021



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.

VACCINATIONS NOW AVAILABLE TO ALL WEST VIRGINIANS AGE 50+, EDUCATION WORKERS 40-50, AND ALL 16+ WITH CERTAIN MEDICAL CONDITIONS

During Wednesday's briefing, Gov. Justice announced that West Virginia will start offering COVID-19 vaccines to additional state residents beginning immediately.

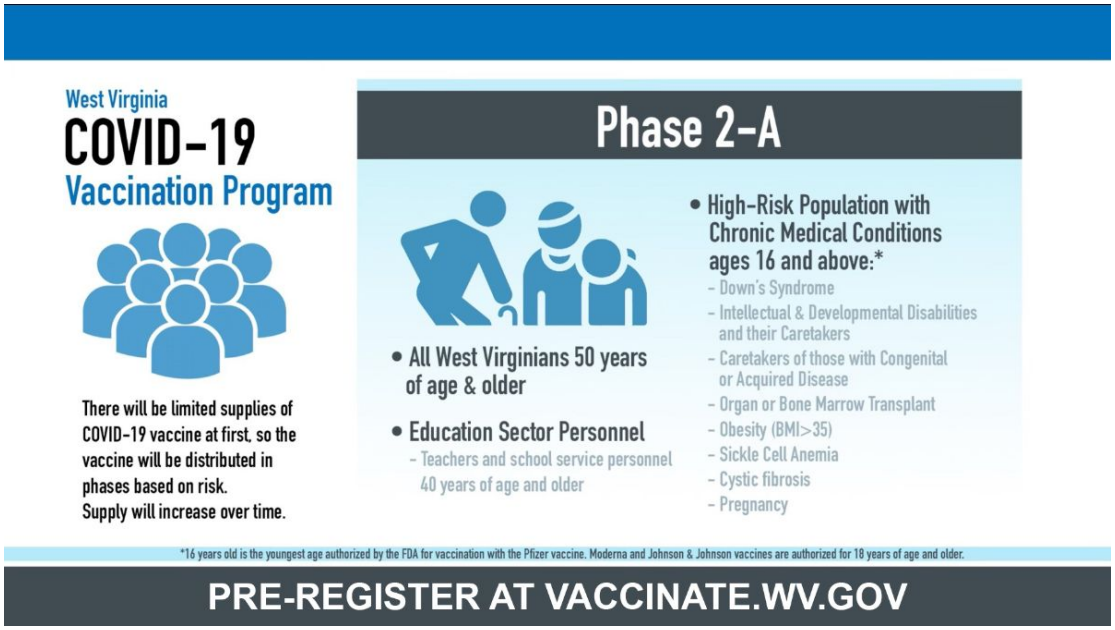
"We're going to move more aggressively to try to get more people vaccinated and widen the scope of our vaccination efforts because, at the end of the day, we're going to start having more vaccines available to us and we want to just keep pushing them out," Gov. Justice said. "Remember, the last thing we want in West Virginia is to have a bunch of vaccines just sitting on the shelf. So we're moving as quickly as we possibly can, West Virginia. We continue to run to the fire."

CLICK HERE TO VIEW PHOTO ALBUM

(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157718506613776)

Vaccinations are now available for all West Virginia residents age 50 and older, all West Virginia education workers from 40 to 50 years old, and all West Virginians age 16 and older with any of the following pre-existing medical conditions:

- Down syndrome
- Intellectual and developmental disabilities and their caretakers
- Caretakers of those with congenital or acquired disease
- Organ or bone marrow transplant
- Obesity (BMI > 35)
- Sickle cell anemia
- Cystic fibrosis
- Pregnancy



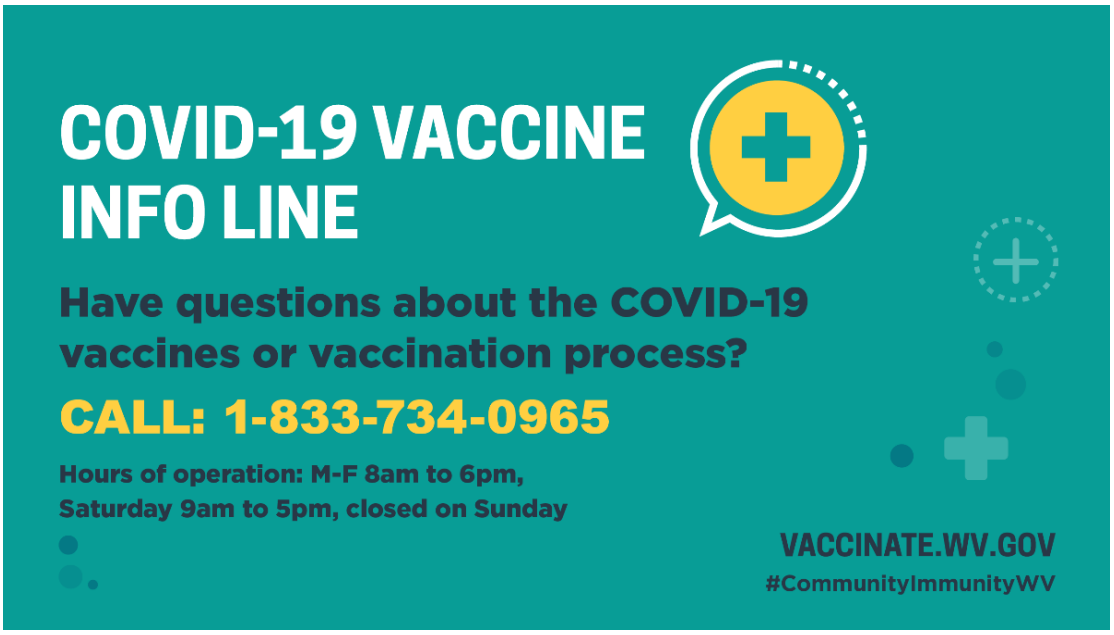
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx)

VACCINATE.WV.GOV (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx)

West Virginia Coronavirus Czar Dr. Clay Marsh said during his remarks that West Virginians who now qualify because of the listed medical conditions are encouraged to **pre-register at vaccinate.wv.gov** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx) or by calling **1-833-734-0965** so officials can ensure that all such individuals are properly prioritized and are able to be vaccinated as efficiently as possible. Dr. Marsh added that the Joint Interagency Task Force for Vaccines will coordinate with health systems across the state to reach out to all individuals with qualifying medical conditions to assist them in scheduling an appointment to be vaccinated.

All West Virginians need to pre-register to receive the vaccine. Individuals with an occupation or pre-existing medical condition that would qualify them for vaccination immediately under the newly expanded allocation protocols should note their occupation or condition upon registration.

West Virginians who are age 65 and older will continue to be prioritized first until all state residents in this age range who desire the vaccine have been vaccinated. Any West Virginians age 65 and older who are still waiting on an appointment are urged to call the **West Virginia Vaccine Info Line: 1-833-734-0965** to make sure that providers can schedule your vaccination.



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

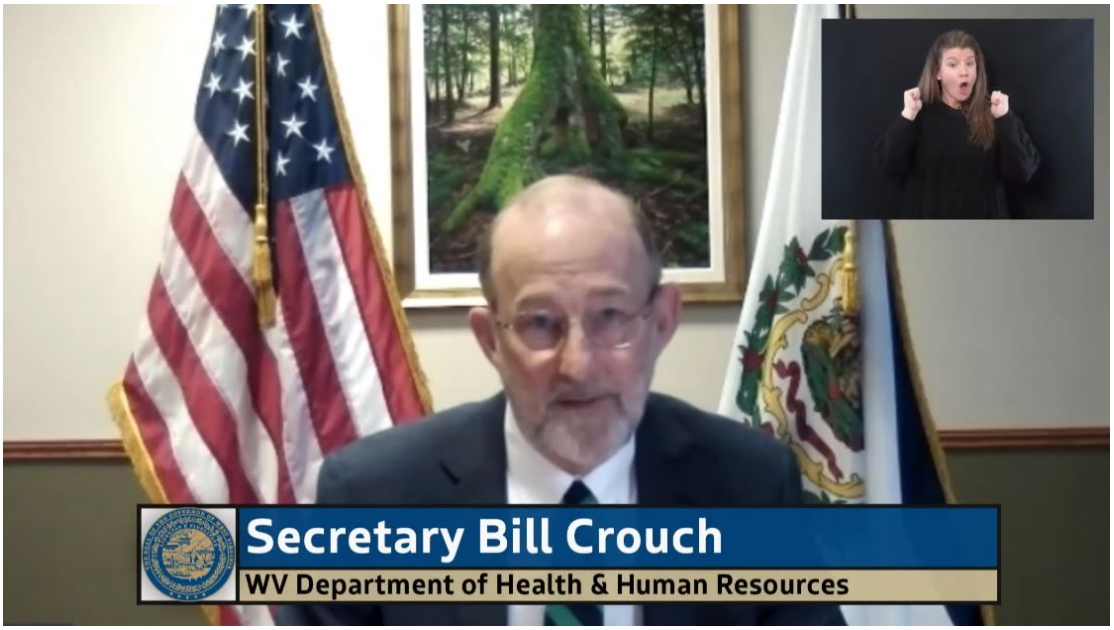
HEALTH SECRETARY RE-EMPHASIZES IMPORTANCE OF GETTING VACCINATED AMONG NURSING HOME POPULATION

Also on Wednesday, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Secretary Bill Crouch told the story of a recent nursing home outbreak in the state that highlighted how getting vaccinated, when it's your turn, can save your life and the lives of others.

"Several weeks ago, we had an outbreak at a facility in West Virginia," Sec. Crouch said. "All of the residents had been vaccinated and, as a result, zero residents were positive in that outbreak. This is a direct result of the Governor's priority for our elderly in West Virginia – making sure they were the first to be tested and the first to be vaccinated. Interestingly, of the 60 staff members, seven chose not to take the vaccine, and all seven of those individuals tested positive during this outbreak."

The Secretary noted that West Virginia has experienced a 93% reduction in the number of nursing home outbreaks reported from December, when vaccines first became available, to February.

"Vaccines work," Sec. Crouch said. "We're asking all nursing home staff who have not yet been vaccinated to please get your vaccination."



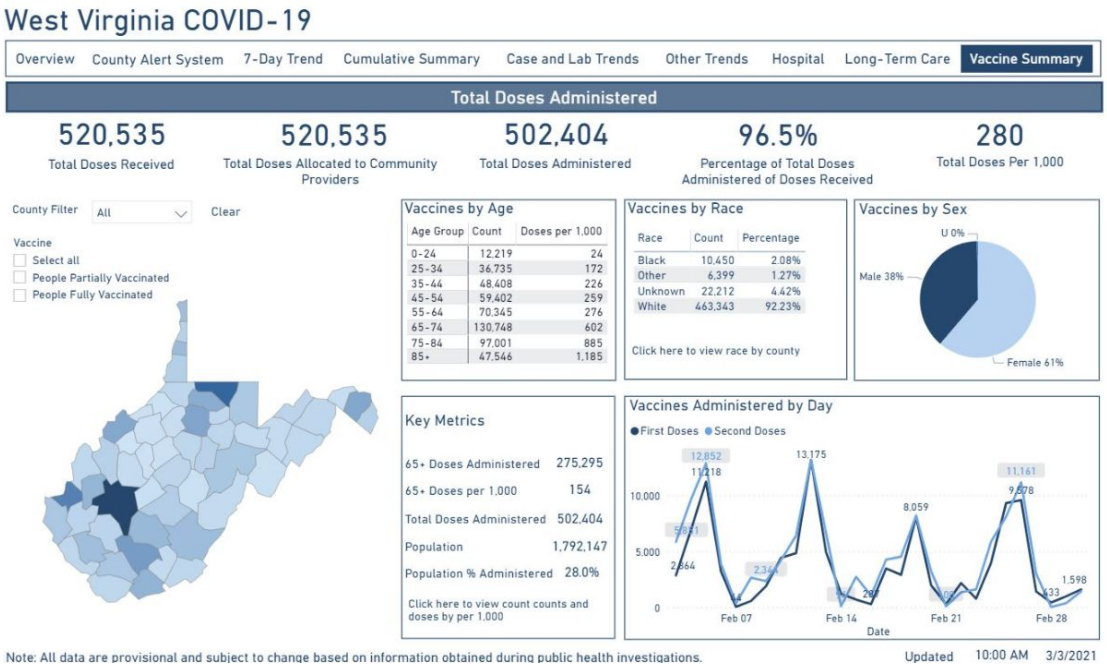
VACCINE DISTRIBUTION UPDATE

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

As of Wednesday morning, **11.8 percent of West Virginia's entire population has received both doses of the vaccines** (https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/01/28/960901166/how-is-the-covid-19-vaccination-campaign-going-in-your-state); a rate so high that, if West Virginia were its own country, it would rank as the 8th-best rate of any nation in the world.

West Virginia has successfully administered 502,404 doses after receiving a total allotment of 520,535 doses from the federal government to date; an overall administration rate of 96.5%.

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



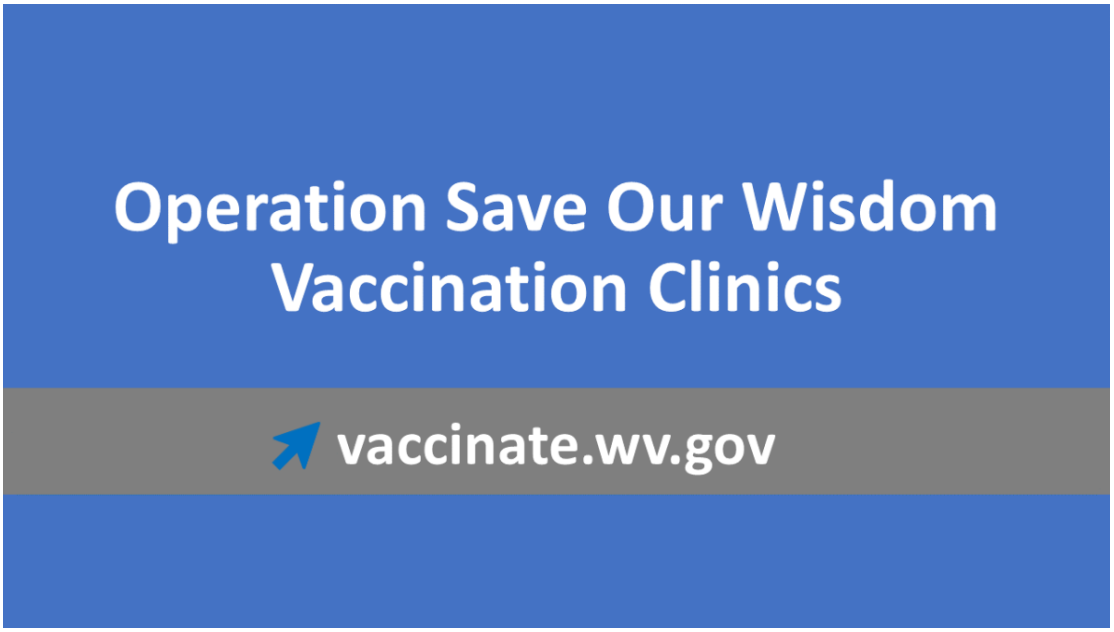
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx)

West Virginia boasts a first dose administration rate of 93.0% and a second dose administration rate of 102.5%, which exceeds 100% due to extra doses being extracted from vials of the vaccine.

- First doses: 302,793 administered / 325,745 allotted
- Second doses: 199,611 administered / 194,790 allotted

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, 173,979 West Virginians age 65 and older have chosen to be vaccinated, including 101,316 who are now fully vaccinated.



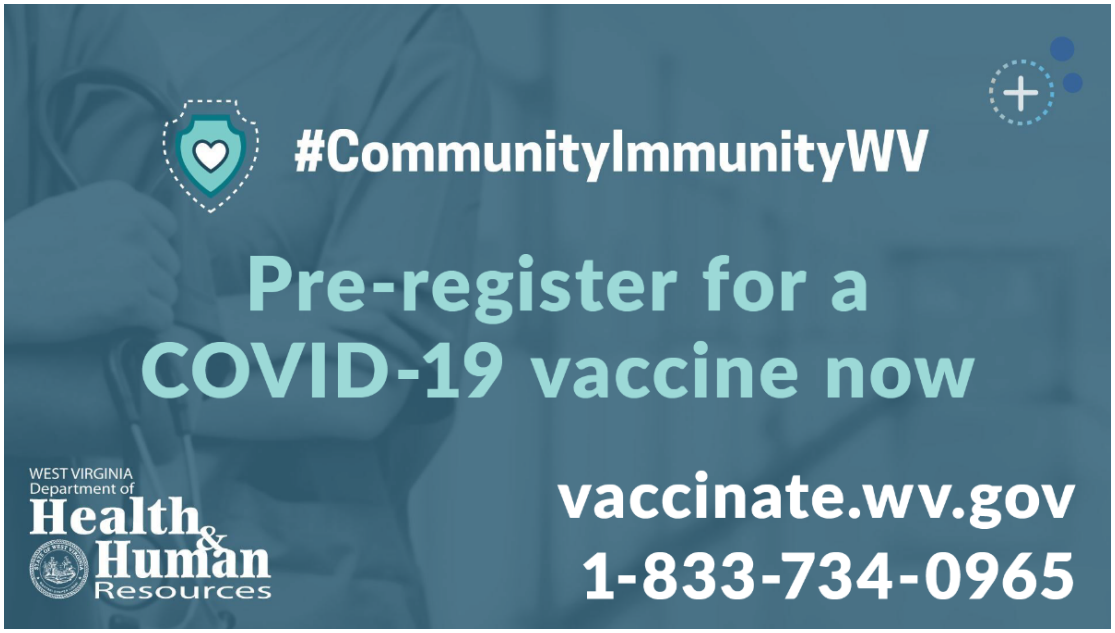
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx)

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 320,000 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)

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.

The Governor went on to say that increased emphasis on pre-registrations is needed in a handful of counties across the state, including Berkeley, Jackson, Jefferson, Mason, Mercer, Mineral, Mingo, Monongalia, Morgan, and Wayne counties. The Governor urged West Virginians in these counties with friends and family age 65 and older to help these individuals get pre-registered.

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

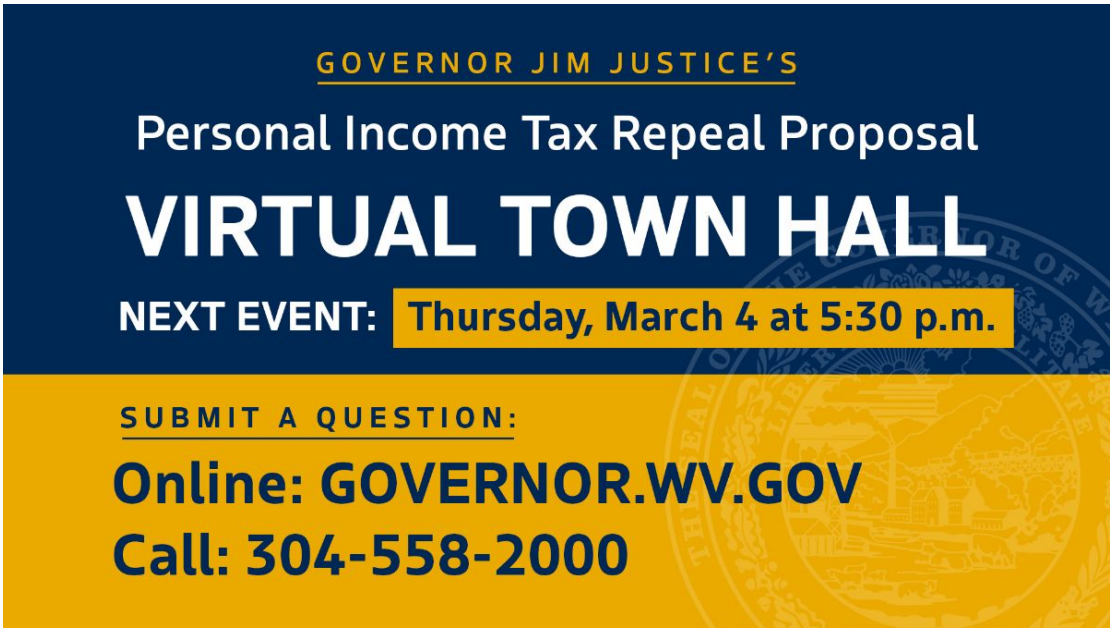
GOV. JUSTICE ANNOUNCES THIRD VIRTUAL TOWN HALL ON PLAN TO REPEAL STATE INCOME TAX TO TAKE PLACE TOMORROW AT 5:30 P.M.

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice took time to announce that he will hold his fourth virtual town hall on his Personal Income Tax Repeal Proposal tomorrow, Thursday, March 4, 2021, at 5:30 p.m., to answer West Virginians' questions about the plan.

CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT A QUESTION
(https://appengine.egov.com/apps/wv/governor/proposal)

All West Virginians are encouraged to watch the live stream of the virtual town hall on the Governor's social media accounts:
YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnpiAdBureU&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=GovernorJimJustice) | **Twitter** (https://www.twitter.com/WVGovernor) | **Facebook** (https://www.facebook.com/wvgovernor)

You can also submit a question and watch the live stream of the virtual town hall on the **Governor's website** (/News/press-releases/2021/Pages/Gov-Justice-to-hold-virtual-town-hall-on-plan-to-repeal-state-income-tax-today-at-3pm.aspx).



(/News/press-releases/2021/Pages/Gov-Justice-to-hold-virtual-town-hall-on-plan-to-repeal-state-income-tax-today-at-3pm.aspx)

COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that the current number of active cases in the state is now 6,451, down from 6,997 as of his previous COVID-19 briefing on Monday.

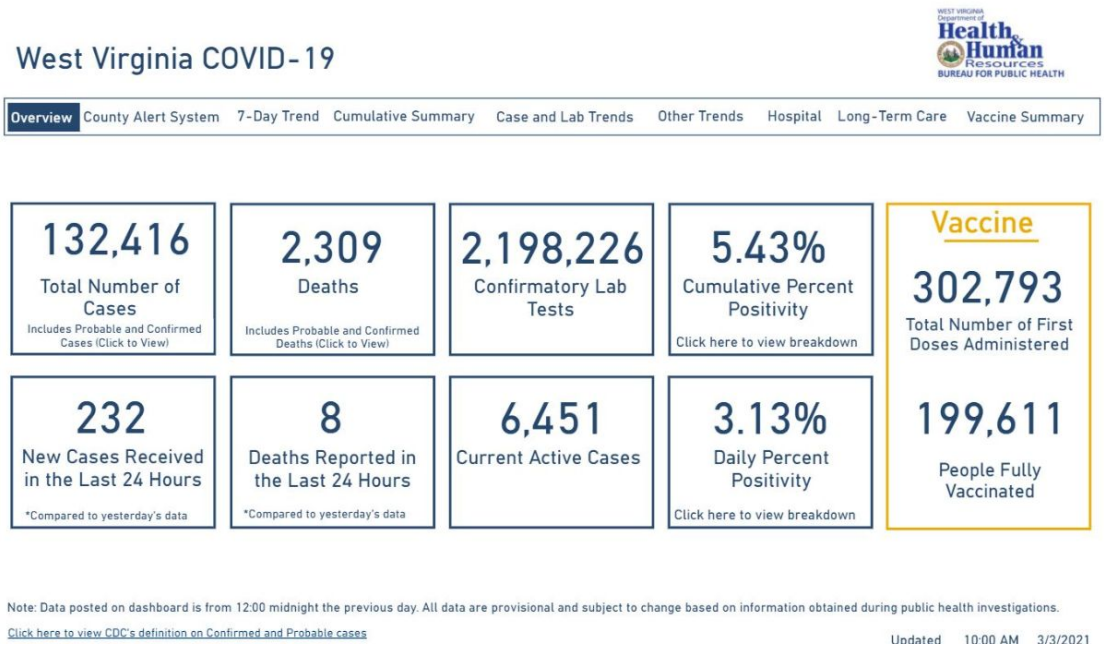
The number of daily active cases in West Virginia has now decreased for 46 straight days.

The Governor added that West Virginia has experienced an 85% decrease in average daily deaths over the past seven weeks.

The number of active hospitalizations is now 197, down from 225 on Monday. Of those currently hospitalized, 60 patients are in the ICU, up from 59 such patients on Monday.

The cumulative percent of positive cases has decreased to 5.43%, down from 5.46% on Monday.

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



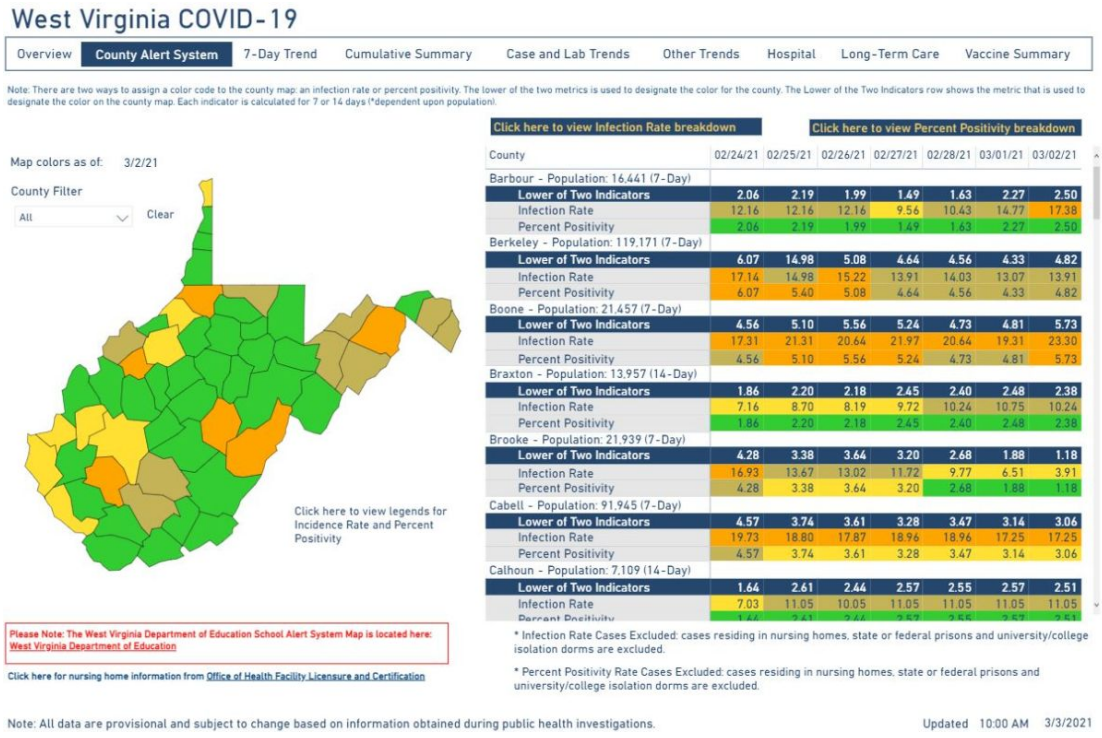
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx)

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: **6**
Gold counties: **9**
Yellow counties: **8**
Green counties: **32**



(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 West Virginia. This outbreak is in Webster County and accounts for a total of just five cases.

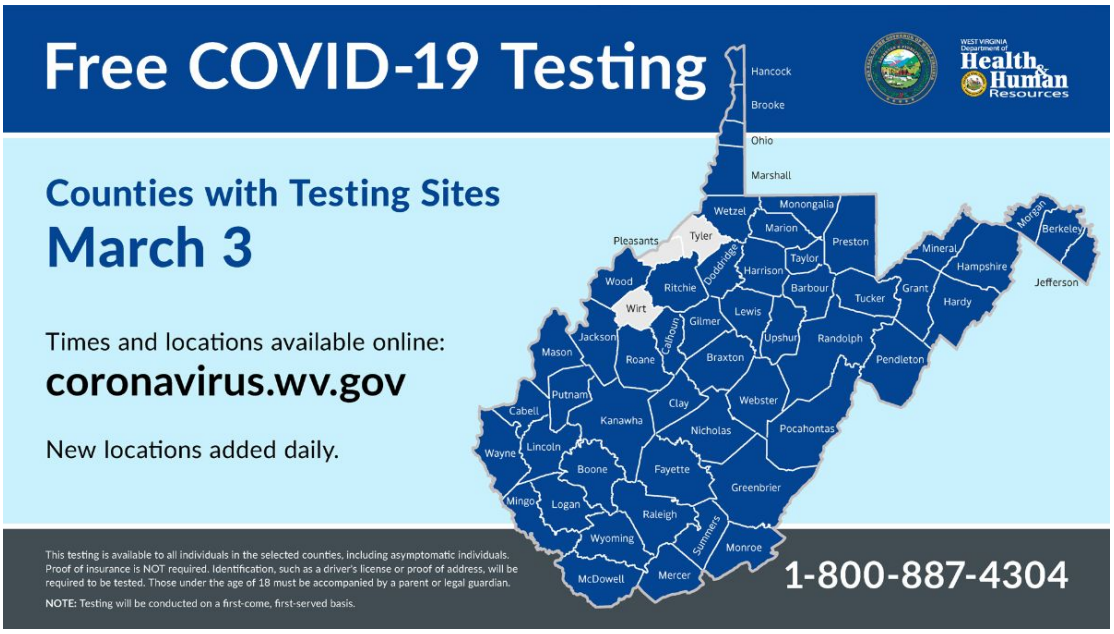
There are now 10 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, up from nine such outbreaks as of the Governor's previous press briefing on Monday.

The Governor also reported that there are now 170 inmate cases across the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) system, up from 83 on Monday, including 87 inmate cases at Western Regional Jail and 80 inmate cases at Southern Regional Jail.

Meanwhile, there are now 13 active staff cases across the DCR system, down from 17 on Monday. To view the latest DCR case update, **click here** (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 52 counties across the state that have free testing events scheduled through the Governor's Aggressive Testing initiative.

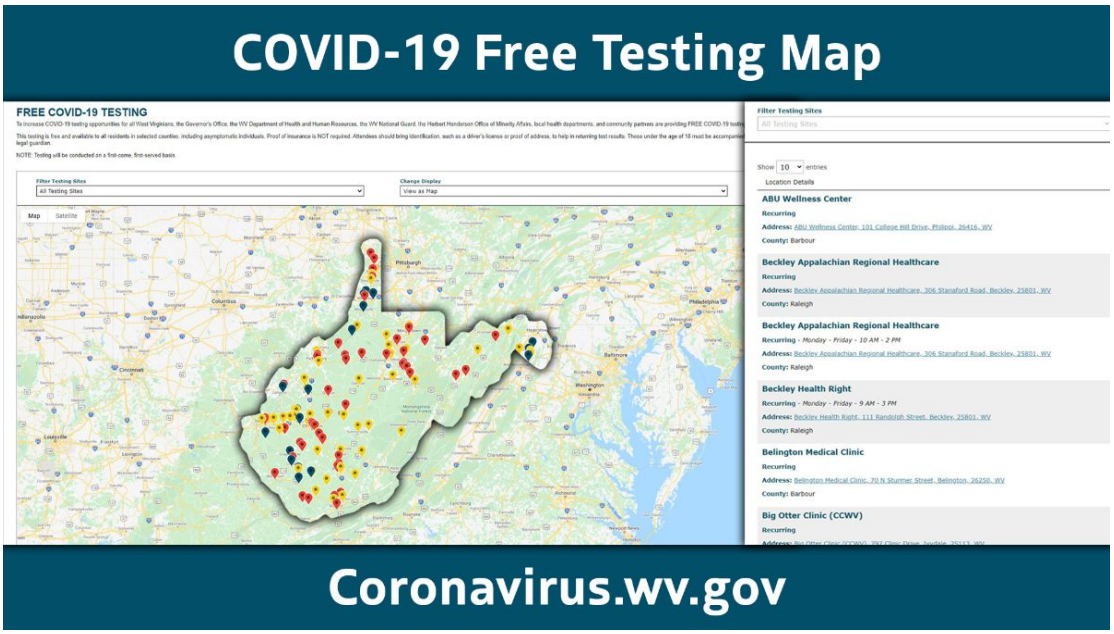


(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)

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.

An interactive online map of all free testing locations across West Virginia is available online. 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)

STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED FOR 18 COUNTIES AFFECTED BY FLOODING

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks regarding COVID-19 to report that yesterday he declared a State of Emergency for 18 counties due to heavy rainfall this week that caused significant flooding.

Click here to view the State of Emergency (/Documents/2021%20Proclamations/State-of-Emergency-Mar-2-2021.pdf)

The counties include Boone, Braxton, Cabell, Clay, Greenbrier, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, Pocahontas, Preston, Putnam, Randolph, Roane, Upshur, and Wayne counties.

As part of this State of Emergency, the Governor has directed the West Virginia Emergency Management Division to:

- Implement the West Virginia Emergency Operations Plan as it relates to flood response.
- Mobilize appropriate personnel and resources to respond to the emergency.

Click here to read more (/News/press-releases/2021/Pages/Gov.-Justice-declares-State-of-Emergency-for-18-counties-affected-by-flooding.aspx)

(/News/press-releases/2021/Pages/Gov.-Justice-declares-State-of-Emergency-for-18-counties-affected-by-flooding.aspx)

GOV. JUSTICE APPOINTS AKERS AS JUDGE FOR THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Also, Gov. Justice also took time to report that, earlier Wednesday, he announced his appointment Maryclaire Akers, of Charleston, WV, to the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, which serves Kanawha County. Akers is set to fill the seat vacated by the death of Judge Charles E. King, Jr.

Click here to view the appointment letter (/Documents/2021%20Appointments/Maryclaire%20Akers%20Appointment%20Letter.pdf)

Akers has practiced law in West Virginia for 21 years. Much of her career work has taken place in the Kanawha County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, where she has served as the Chief of Staff and is currently a Senior Assistant Prosecutor. She has also served the public as a Special Assistant United States Attorney, General Counsel for the West Virginia Ethics Commission, and as an Assistant Attorney General.

Click here to read more (/News/press-releases/2021/Pages/Gov.-Justice-appoints-Maryclaire-Akers-as-judge-for-Thirteenth-Judicial-Circuit-serving-Kanawha-County.aspx)

(/News/press-releases/2021/Pages/Gov.-Justice-appoints-Maryclaire-Akers-as-judge-for-Thirteenth-Judicial-Circuit-serving-Kanawha-County.aspx)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Click here to view all Executive Orders and other actions (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).

Contact Information

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