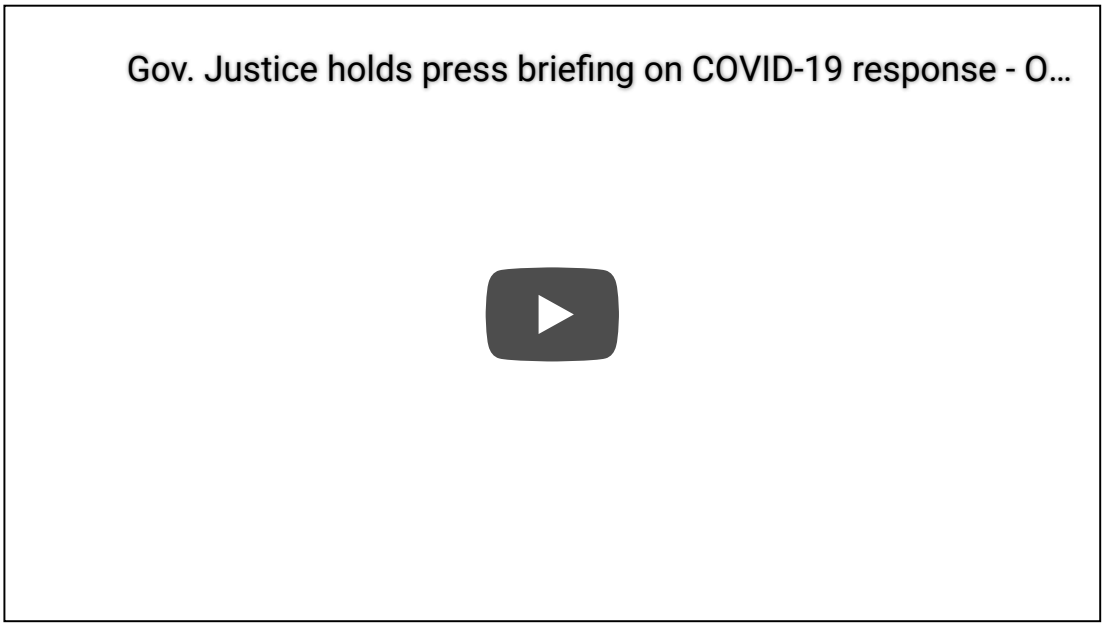
COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice announces completion of West Virginia COVID-19 Vaccination Plan, submission to CDC

10/16/2020



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.

WEST VIRGINIA COVID-19 VACCINATION PLAN

During Friday's briefing, Gov. Justice announced that the State of West Virginia has completed its **COVID-19 Vaccination Plan** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Documents/vaccineplan.pdf) and submitted the plan today to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for their review and approval.

"We've had so many of our great experts collaborate on this plan – from our DHHR, our National Guard, our medical experts, our Office of Minority Affairs, and countless others – and they've all done really, really good work," Gov. Justice said. "They've worked on this plan for months so that we are ready when a vaccine becomes available."

The Governor went on to add that, once a vaccine is ready, West Virginia's medical experts will be prepared to review data on its safety.

"I want to thank everyone involved for their fantastic work on our plan," Gov. Justice said. "Dr. Marsh, Dr. Amjad, Secretary Crouch, General Hoyer, and so many others have worked nonstop throughout this pandemic. They've adjusted to something new and fluid, and they were still able to pull this off. We should all be thankful for their great service to our state.

"I'd like to see West Virginia strive to be the best in the nation in our vaccination rates," Gov. Justice added.

Click here to view photo album
(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157716491922828)

REVIEW OF CARES ACT ALLOCATIONS

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice took time to provide a detailed breakdown of the State's allocation of the $1.25 billion in discretionary funds appropriated to the state by Congress through the CARES Act.

The funds have been allocated as follows:

- $40 million: West Virginia CARES Act Small Business Grant Program
- $200 million: Local governments
- $50 million: National Guard – Testing and PPE
- $50 million: Broadband projects
- $50 million: Medical access highways
- $287 million: Unemployment benefits (Prior to July 1, 2020)
- $300 million: Unemployment benefits (July 1, 2020 through Dec. 30, 2020)
- $10 million: Fairmont Hospital
- $25 million: Public service districts
- $57 million: State expense reimbursement (FY2020: Q4)
- $96 million: State expense reimbursement (FY2021: Q1 & Q2)
- $25 million: Emergency fund reimbursement

TOTAL: $1.19 BILLION

"Anybody who's out there saying that there's money that's just sitting there, unobligated is flat wrong," Gov. Justice said. "These dollars are pledged and they're pledged in a way that's as rock solid as can be.

"We have $60 million of buffer because, think about it for a second, what if our city and county governments come in above $200 million? What if we have some level of additional outbreak? There's all kinds of things that could very well happen here to eat up that $60 million really fast," Gov. Justice continued. "I'm hoping and praying that there'll be an additional stimulus package and we'll be able to do more goodness for West Virginia. But, as it stands right now, I'm really proud of our plan.

"The other flip side of it is just this: what if we would have just come up with the most frivolous spending under the sun? What if we would have rerouted the Kanawha River? All the money would be gone right now. So we came up with something absolutely rock solid and I'm very proud."

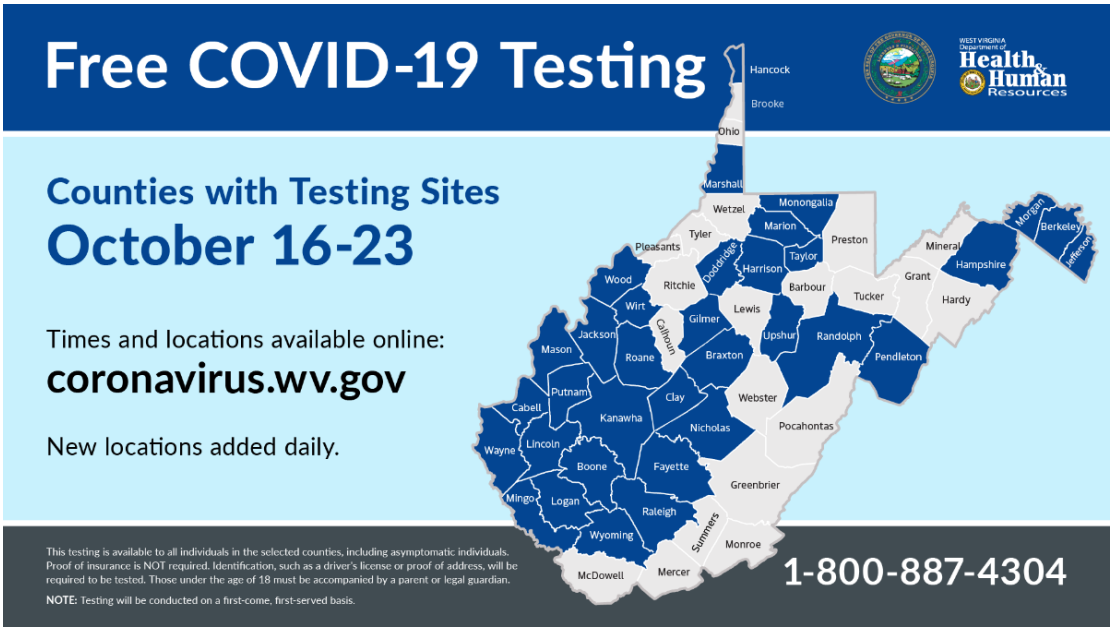
AGGRESSIVE TESTING CONTINUES ACROSS STATE

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice offered a reminder that additional free testing events are scheduled in the upcoming weeks for several counties all across West Virginia.

This testing is available to all residents in selected counties, 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.

Each county reaching Red or Orange status is required to set up free testing sites within the same day. Each county reaching Gold status is required to set up free testing sites within 48 hours. According to Friday's **DHHR County Alert System map** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx), the only Red county was Doddridge County. Orange counties included Berkeley, Mingo, Morgan, Randolph, Wirt, and Wyoming counties. Gold counties included Clay, Jefferson, Gilmer, Marshall, Pendleton, Upshur, and Wood counties.

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 also offered a reminder that, as part of his administration's efforts to expand free COVID-19 testing throughout West Virginia, the State is now partnering with Walgreens and West Virginia-based company Fruth Pharmacy to offer dozens of new free testing sites at several of their pharmacy drive-thrus.

Walgreens is offering free testing at 29 locations statewide, including stores in Boone, Cabell, Fayette, Jackson Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Monongalia, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Putnam, Raleigh, Summers, Wayne, and Wyoming counties.

Fruth Pharmacy is offering free testing at 12 of their locations statewide, including stores in Cabell, Jackson, Kanawha, Mason, Putnam, Roane, and Wood counties.

Click here to find the testing location closest to you
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)

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

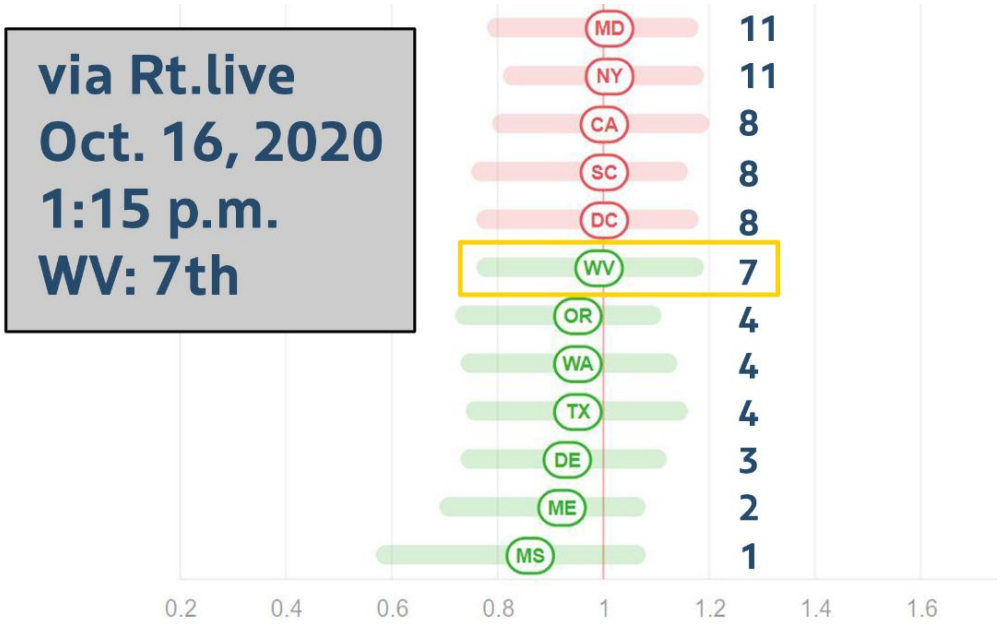
COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice reported that the number of active COVID-19 cases across the state is now 4,915, up from 4,612 on Wednesday. The cumulative percent of positive cases also increased slightly to 2.83 percent, up from 2.81 percent on Monday.

Meanwhile, West Virginia's statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission – also known as Rt – was 0.99 Friday afternoon; the **7th-best such rate** (https://rt.live/) of any state in the country.

West Virginia continues to outperform the national average – as well as the rates of all of its bordering states – in percentage of population tested, percentage of population positive, and percentage of positive test results.

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



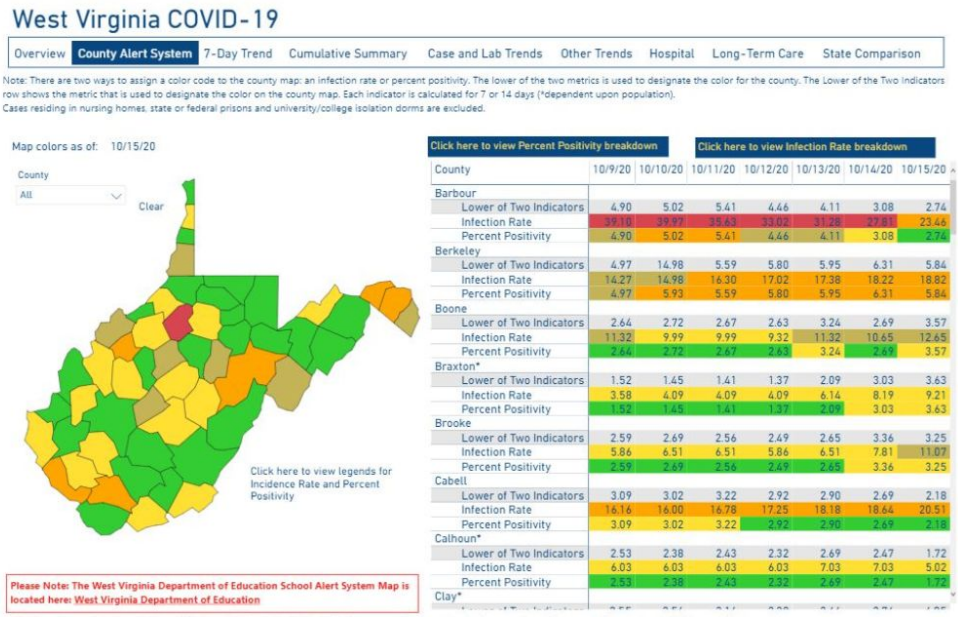
(https://rt.live/)

FRIDAY MAP UPDATE

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice provided a look at West Virginia's latest mid-week County Alert System map update, which continues to show significant improvement with Aggressive Testing efforts underway in several regions.

Red counties: 1 (Doddridge)
Orange counties: 6 (Berkeley, Mingo, Morgan, Randolph, Wirt, Wyoming)
Gold counties: 7 (Clay, Jefferson, Gilmer, Marshall, Pendleton, Upshur, Wood)
Yellow counties: 16 (Braxton, Boone, Brooke, Harrison, Jackson, Logan, Mercer, Mineral, Monroe, Nicholas, Putnam, Ritchie, Roane, Tyler, Wayne, Webster)
Green counties: 25 (All others)

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.



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

OUTBREAK REPORT

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice reported that, per the West Virginia Department of Education, there are 21 active outbreaks in public schools across the state. These outbreaks account for 57 confirmed cases.

Click here to view the WVDE's Current Outbreaks in Schools chart
(https://wvde.us/schooloutbreaks)

West Virginia now has active church-related outbreaks across 13 counties: Doddridge, Fayette, Harrison, Logan, Mason, Mercer, Monroe, Nicholas, Putnam, Tucker, Upshur, Wayne, and Wood counties.

The Governor reported there remain 43 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state.

Gov. Justice also reported that across the Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) system, there are now eight active cases of COVID-19 among inmates: four within Martinsburg Correctional Center in Berkeley County, one within Mount Olive Correctional Complex in Fayette County, one within McDowell County Correctional Center in McDowell County, one within North Central Regional Jail in Doddridge County, and one within Lorrie Yeager Jr. Juvenile Center in Wood County.

There are now 14 active cases among DCR employees across West Virginia.

Click here to view the latest corrections facility update
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Correctional-Facilities.aspx)

GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES CHRISTIANSEN TO LEAD OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL POLICY

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice announced the appointment of Dr. Matthew Christiansen as director of the DHHR Office of Drug Control Policy.

Dr. Christiansen replaces Bob Hansen who retired effective today.

"Even as we continue our efforts to respond to the ongoing pandemic, our fight against the terrible drug crisis in our state has not stopped," Gov. Justice said. "Dr. Christiansen is familiar with West Virginia's battle against opioids and substance use, and he has worked closely with Bob Hansen. I'm confident that he'll do great work in this important role."

Dr. Christiansen practices primary care and addiction medicine at Marshall Health and PROACT and is an associate professor in the Department of Family and Community Health, Division of Addiction Sciences, at Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine. Additionally, he is the medical director and board president of Ebenezer Medical Outreach, a free clinic in Huntington.

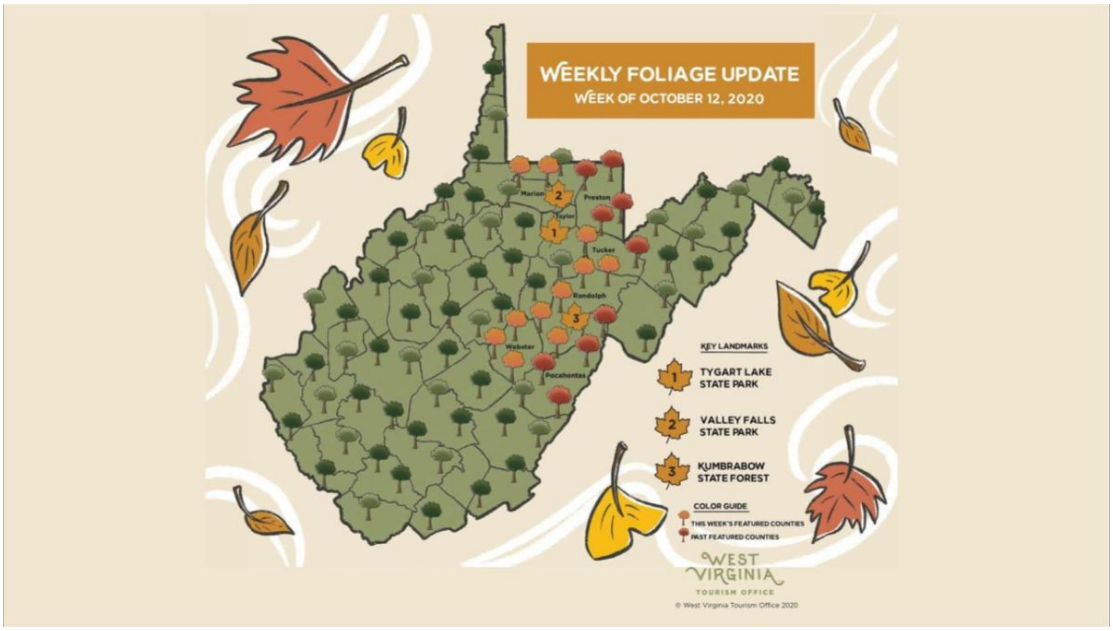
Click here to read more (https://dhhr.wv.gov/News/2020/Pages/Christiansen-Named-Director-of-DHHR%e2%80%99s-Office-of-Drug-Control-Policy.aspx)

FALL COLOR AND TROUT STOCKING UPDATE

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks on COVID-19 to urge West Virginians to get outside for a beautiful fall weekend in the Mountain State.

"It's going to be a beautiful fall weekend in West Virginia," Gov. Justice said. "Our experts tell us that this is one of the best years for fall color in the past decade, and I agree. The colors are spectacular."

The West Virginia Tourism Office releases a **Fall Color map** (https://wvtourism.com/seasons/fall/) every week. Currently, the map shows a lot of places in higher elevations with tremendous fall color.



(https://wvtourism.com/seasons/fall/)

The Governor also offered a reminder that he has directed the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources to implement additional improvements to its fall trout stocking method.

Anglers will have more opportunities than ever to enjoy West Virginia fishing trips this year, with the addition of two lakes to the stocking schedule, and with trout being stocked in state parks and forests so families and children have more opportunities to get outside and fish for trout.

"We have so many families with young children getting out and exploring, seeing just how spectacular West Virginia is in the fall, and they're visiting our state parks and forests in record numbers," Gov. Justice said. "This is an exciting way for our children to make memories that will last a lifetime by giving them more opportunities to catch a big fish in one of our beautiful lakes."

Traditional trout stocking will begin in streams across West Virginia on Monday, Oct. 19. Then, on Saturday, Oct. 24, the WVDNR will stock additional trout in lakes at state parks and forests. These waters include the new locations of Pendleton Lake at Blackwater Falls State Park and Pipestem Lake at Pipestem Resort State Park, as well as the following lakes:

- Coopers Rock Lake at Coopers Rock State Forest
- Seneca Lake at Seneca State Forest
- Watoga Lake at Watoga State Park
- Cacapon Lake at Cacapon Resort State Park

During the two-week season, WVDNR fisheries staff will stock trout in a total of 39 lakes and streams around the state.

Click here to read more (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/Gov.-Justice-announces-additional-improvements-to-fall-trout-stocking-method%3b-directs-WVDNR-to-add-lakes-to-stocking-list.aspx)

FLU VACCINE REMINDER

Once again today, 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.

GOVERNOR SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice issued **Executive Order 76-20** (/Documents/2020%20Executive%20Orders/EO-76-20-October-16-2020.pdf), relating to the suspension of CSR § 143-1-14.3a as it applies to employees of the West Virginia Military Authority.

CITIES/COUNTIES GRANT FUNDING: OVER $152 MILLION HAS NOW BEEN AWARDED

Also today, Gov. Justice provided an update on cities and counties throughout West Virginia applying for funds through the federal CARES Act, reporting that more than $152 million has now been awarded all across the state.

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).

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

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).

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