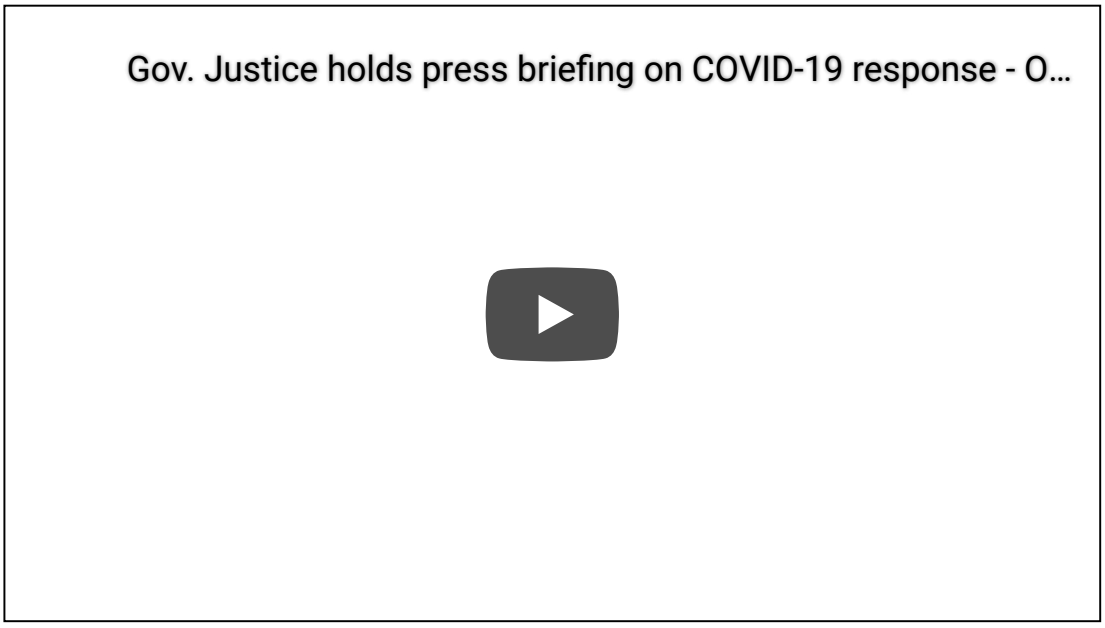
# *COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice pledges to further enhance testing efforts across West Virginia*

10/26/2020




**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.

## GOVERNOR PLEDGES TO FURTHER ENHANCE TESTING EFFORTS STATEWIDE

During Monday's briefing, Gov. Justice announced that he will meet with leaders from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, the West Virginia National Guard, and other state health experts and members of his administration to discuss options to further bolster free COVID-19 testing efforts across the state.

"I just really get the feeling in my gut that we need to step it up one more notch regarding our testing," Gov. Justice said. "We need to continue expediting our tests and we need to do more and more.

"Today, I'm going to give you my pledge that we are going to do more," Gov. Justice continued. "I'm going to get with the powers that be and we're going to work through it. I'm not yet sure exactly what it's going to look like, all I know is that we're going to do even more than we have been doing."

West Virginia has been among the top half of states in the nation in terms of testing per capita since Gov. Justice first **unveiled** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-activates-Aggressive-Testing-efforts-in-all-Red-and-Orange-counties.aspx) and later **expanded** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-reports-West-Virginia-transmission-rate-remains-among-nation%e2%80%99s-best.aspx) his "Aggressive Testing" initiative.

**Click here to view photo album**

(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157716625590898)

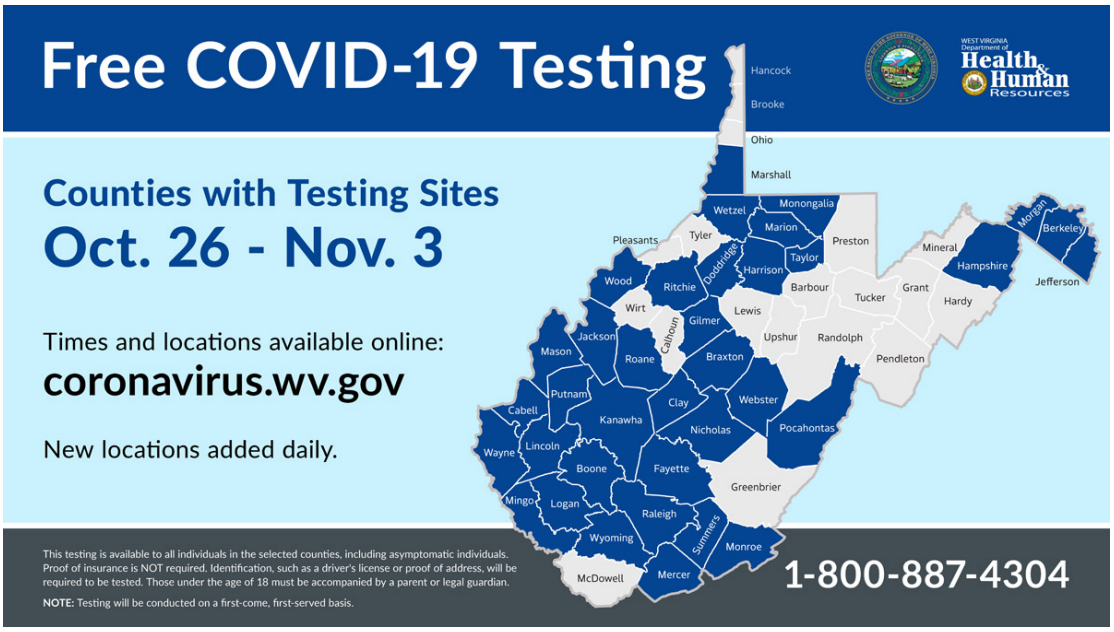
## AGGRESSIVE TESTING CONTINUES ACROSS STATE

Also on Monday, Gov. Justice offered a reminder that free testing events are now scheduled over the coming weeks in 36 counties across West Virginia.

As part of the Governor's Aggressive Testing initiative, each county reaching Red or Orange status in the **DHHR's County Alert System map** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx) **(Click "County Alert System" tab)** is required to set up at least one free testing site within the same day. Each county reaching Gold status is required to set up at least one free testing site within 48 hours. As of Monday, the only Red county was Wyoming County. Orange counties included Boone, Braxton, Mingo, Monroe, Morgan, Wayne, and Wetzel counties. Gold counties included Berkeley, Logan, and Webster counties.

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.

**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 now offering free testing at 40 locations statewide, including several new testing sites. Locations include stores in Berkeley, Boone, Cabell, Clay, Fayette, Gilmer, Hampshire, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mercer, Monongalia, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Putnam, Raleigh, Summers, Wayne, and Wyoming counties.

Fruth Pharmacy is also 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

Additionally Monday, Gov. Justice reported that the number of active COVID-19 cases across the state is now 5,031.

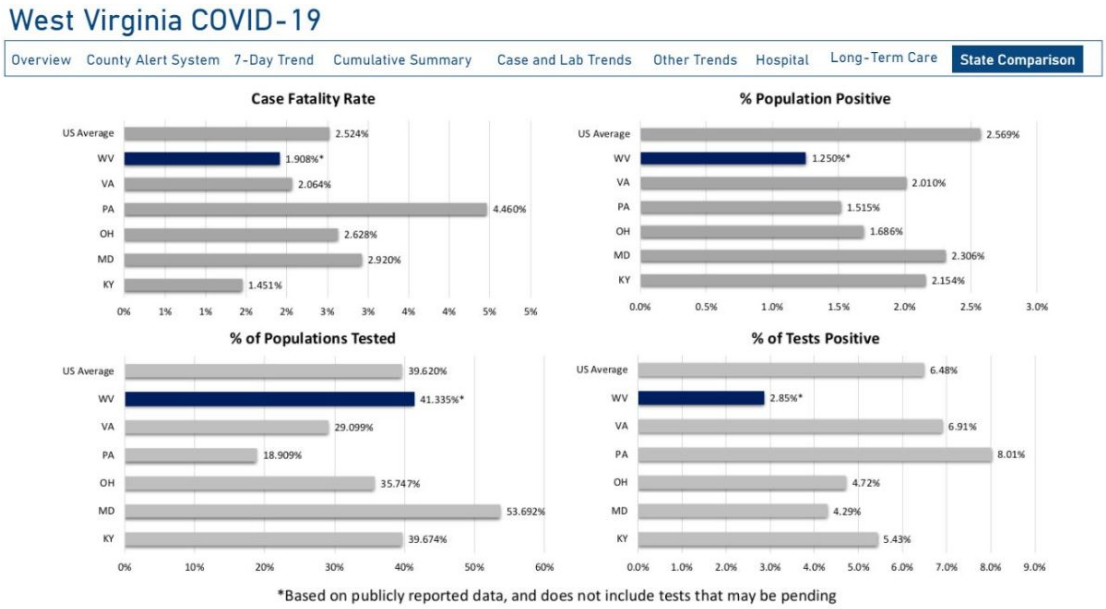
The daily percent positivity rate is 1.28%, down from 3.85% last Friday, and the cumulative percent of positive cases is 2.85%, down from 2.86% last Friday. However, the Governor added that a record high of 215 people have been hospitalized and the **statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission** (https://rt.live/) – also known as Rt – has increased to 1.08.

"What does all this tell us? What this tells is is, in this nation right now, things are heating up and getting tough," Gov. Justice said. "West Virginia is not immune. This disease is right with us. As this thing races across the country again, and as we race to try to get that vaccine and try to get a better grip on what's going on here on a national basis, we've got to do our part in West Virginia.

"I know it's tough. I know that the wearing of the masks is a nuisance but, for crying out loud, compared to people dying, how much of a nuisance is it?" Gov. Justice said. "Absolutely, West Virginia, we've got to buckle up just a little bit here for a short period of time and hopefully a vaccine will come very soon."

West Virginia continues to outperform the national average – as well as the rates of all of its bordering states – in 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)



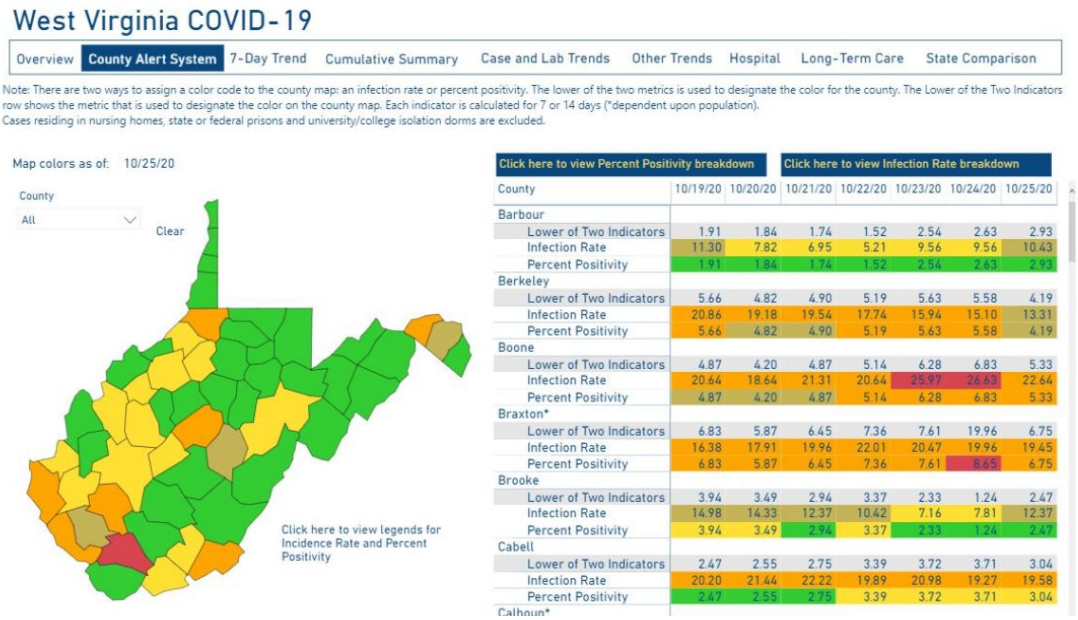

(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx)

## MONDAY MAP UPDATE

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

**Red** counties: 1 (Wyoming)
**Orange** counties: 7 (Boone, Braxton, Mingo, Monroe, Morgan, Wayne, Wetzel)
**Gold** counties: 3 (Berkeley, Logan, Webster)
**Yellow** counties: 13 (Cabell, Clay, Jackson, Doddridge, Kanawha, Lincoln, Mercer, Randolph, Ritchie, Roane, Summers, Tyler, Wirt)
**Green** counties: 31 (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)

## GOVERNOR CONGRATULATES WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS RETURNING FROM DEPLOYMENT

Additionally Monday, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks regarding COVID-19 to offer his congratulations to more than 160 members of the West Virginia National Guard, who recently returned from a nine-month deployment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"We're very, very happy to have these brave members of our National Guard back," Gov. Justice said Monday. "We pray all the time for those who are deployed and who continue to look after all of us each and every day."

Soldiers were welcomed back by family and friends at various locations throughout West Virginia, including Martinsburg and Charleston.

"If you step back and think about what these brave men and women of our National Guard sacrifice on behalf of all of us, it's amazing. We owe these brave West Virginians and their families everything we have," Gov. Justice said. "I could never be more proud of how they represent our great state in defense of our nation's freedom and I'm excited beyond belief to welcome them back home."

**Click here to read more** (https://www.wv.ng.mil/News/Article/2393320/157th-military-police-company-returns-from-nine-month-deployment-to-guantanamo/)

## $25 MILLION IN CARES ACT DOLLARS BEING PROVIDED TO HELP QUALIFYING WEST VIRGINIANS PAY UTILITY BILLS

Once again Monday, Gov. Justice provided a reminder that $25 million of CARES Act relief funds allocated to assist qualifying West Virginians pay their utility bills is being distributed across the state.

The money will go to local Public Service Districts so they can pass it along to customers.

Customers of electric, natural gas, water, and sewer utility companies who have experienced economic hardship and/or uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, causing them to have unpaid utility bills from the period of March 1 – July 31 of this year, may receive financial assistance to pay those bills.

"We have $25 million that's absolutely out there to help people who have a bill that's unpaid," Gov. Justice said. "We're happy to give help to those West Virginians who need it most and I'm hopeful that this money will do just that."

Qualifying customers will receive a letter and application in the mail. Customers must complete and return the application by Thursday, November 12, 2020.

## OUTBREAK REPORT

Additionally Monday, Gov. Justice reported that the Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) is now reporting 12 active cases of COVID-19 among inmates across the state. There remain just seven 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)

West Virginia now has active church-related outbreaks across 12 counties: Doddridge, Fayette, Mason, Mercer, Monroe, Nicholas, Putnam, Upshur, Wayne, Wetzel, Wood, and Wyoming counties.

Other recent church-related outbreaks in Berkeley, Harrison, and Logan counties are no longer considered active at this time.

The Governor reported there are now 49 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, up from 43 last Friday.

Gov. Justice also reported that, per the West Virginia Department of Education, there are 22 active outbreaks in public schools across the state. These outbreaks account for 74 confirmed cases.

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

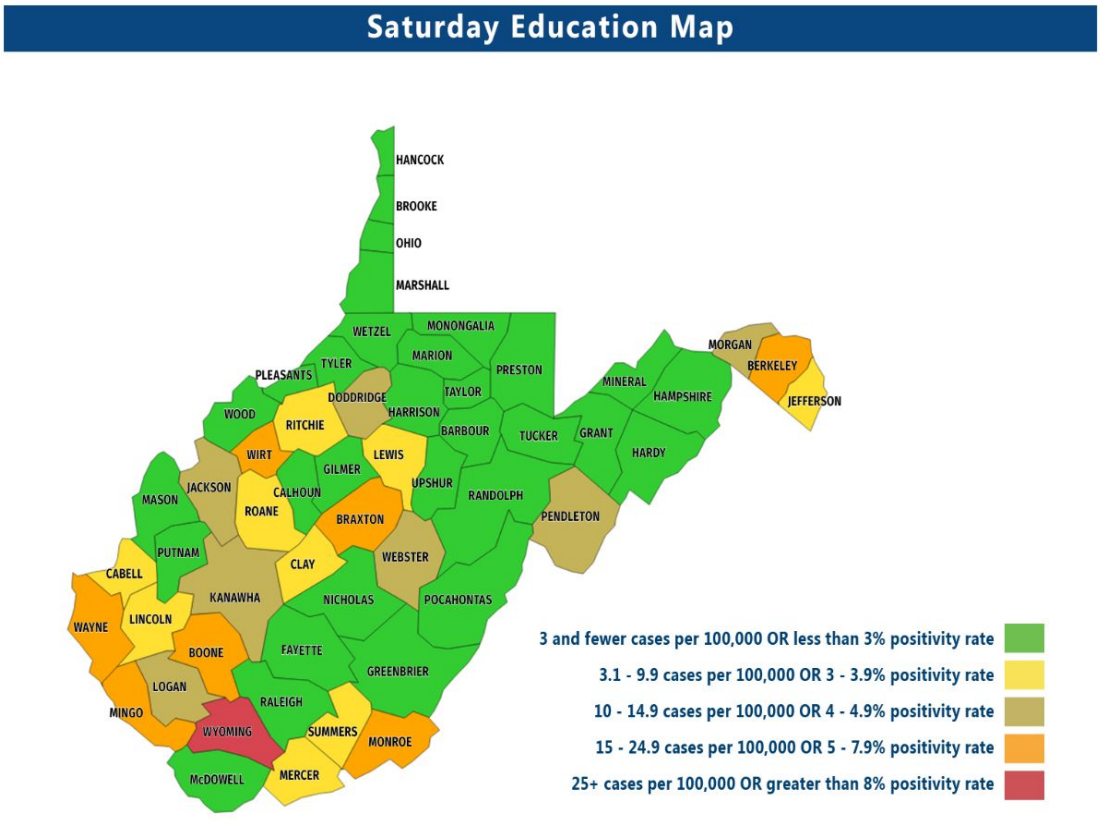
## REVIEW OF LATEST DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SATURDAY MAP UPDATE

Also on Monday, Gov. Justice reviewed this past Saturday's 5 p.m West Virginia Department of Education color-coded **School Alert System map update** (https://wvde.us/school-reentry-metrics-protocols/), which determines the level of scholastic, athletic, and extracurricular activities permitted in each county for the following week.

The results of the update on Saturday, Oct. 24, 2020, were as follows:

**Red** counties: 1 (Wyoming)
**Orange** counties: 7 (Berkeley, Boone, Braxton, Mingo, Monroe, Wayne, Wirt)
**Gold** counties: 7 (Doddridge, Jackson, Kanawha, Logan, Morgan, Pendleton, Webster)
**Yellow** counties: 9 (Cabell, Clay, Jefferson, Lewis, Lincoln, Mercer, Ritchie, Roane, Summers)
**Green** counties: 31 (All others)

State health leaders who make up the COVID-19 Data Review Panel verified the data to ensure the map was a true indication of the safety level in each county.



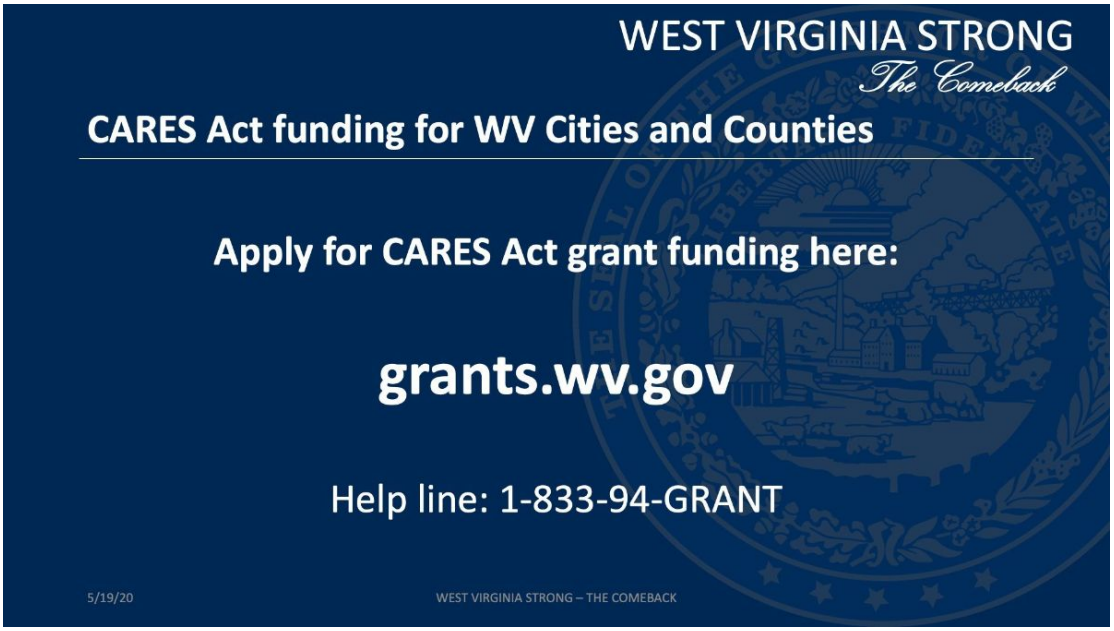

(https://wvde.us/school-reentry-metrics-protocols/)

## CITIES/COUNTIES GRANT FUNDING: OVER $161 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 $161 million has now been awarded all across the state. To date, 191 cities and counties have applied for this grant funding.

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)

**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.

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?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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