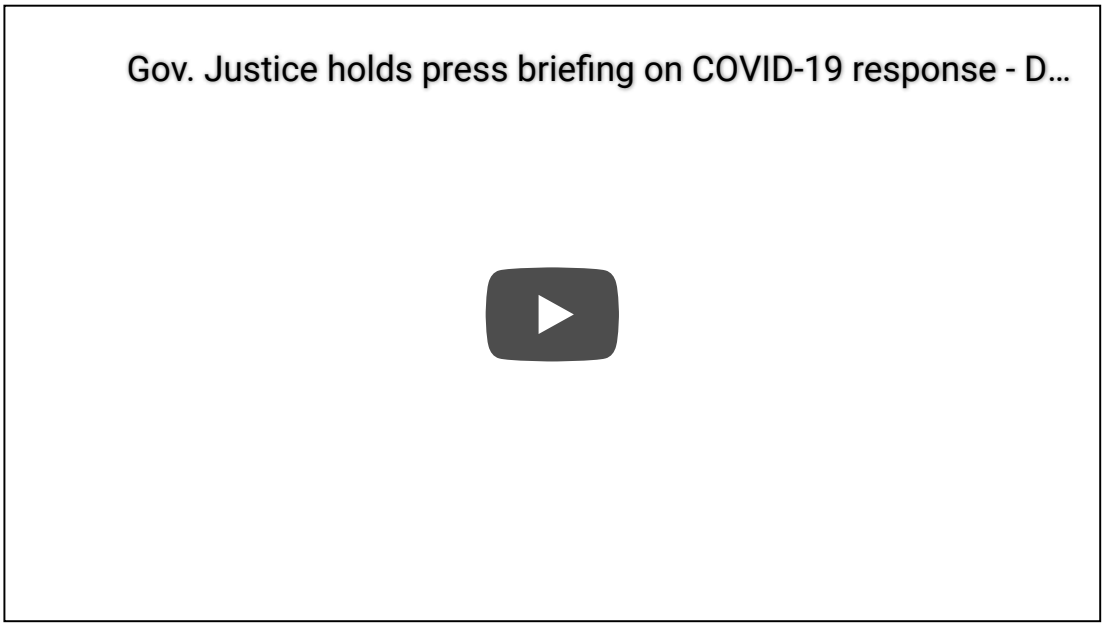
COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice announces aggressive vaccination plan for long-term care facilities; provides details on Phase 2 of allocation plan

12/16/2020



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.

GOVERNOR VACCINE UPDATE

During Wednesday's briefing, Gov. Justice provided a personal update after he and members of the state's pandemic leadership team received the COVID-19 vaccine Monday.

"Lots of people are wondering how I'm feeling," Gov. Justice said. "It didn't hurt me a bit in the world. I've felt great. If this vaccine becomes available to you, please get vaccinated. It was painless, there was nothing to it.

"We're pushing the vaccines out the door as fast as we possibly can," Gov. Justice continued. "We're distributing them all across our state. Our National Guard and all our health experts are doing a phenomenal job. But I'm going to push them and push them and push them. To be perfectly honest, if they got out 93.9 percent, that would be great, I'd pat them on the back, and I'd say it's not good enough. We've got to get them all out."

Click here to view photo album

(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157717364866631)

AGGRESSIVE VACCINATION PLAN FOR LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice announced that West Virginia has already vaccinated 2,000 residents and staff members at various long-term care facilities across the state.

"CVS and Walgreens have an agreement with the federal government to vaccinate nursing home residents across the country through a voluntary program. They have said they expect to administer the first Pfizer vaccines on December 21st. That's five days from now. But I know that our nursing home community in West Virginia is moving ahead even quicker than this," Gov. Justice said. "We decided to use a different approach for our program, because over 40 percent of our pharmacies are not chain-affiliated. We have instead partnered with all the pharmacies in West Virginia. We felt that, from a state perspective, we would be limiting our ability to rapidly distribute and administer the vaccine to the population in need if we had gone with the federal program.

"Where our data indicates nearly 50 percent of deaths in West Virginia come from an assisted living or nursing home, our intent is to within the next 30 days – and we're going to beat this, because 30 days is too long – we will have vaccinated all the nursing home and assisted living facility staff and their residents," Gov. Justice continued.

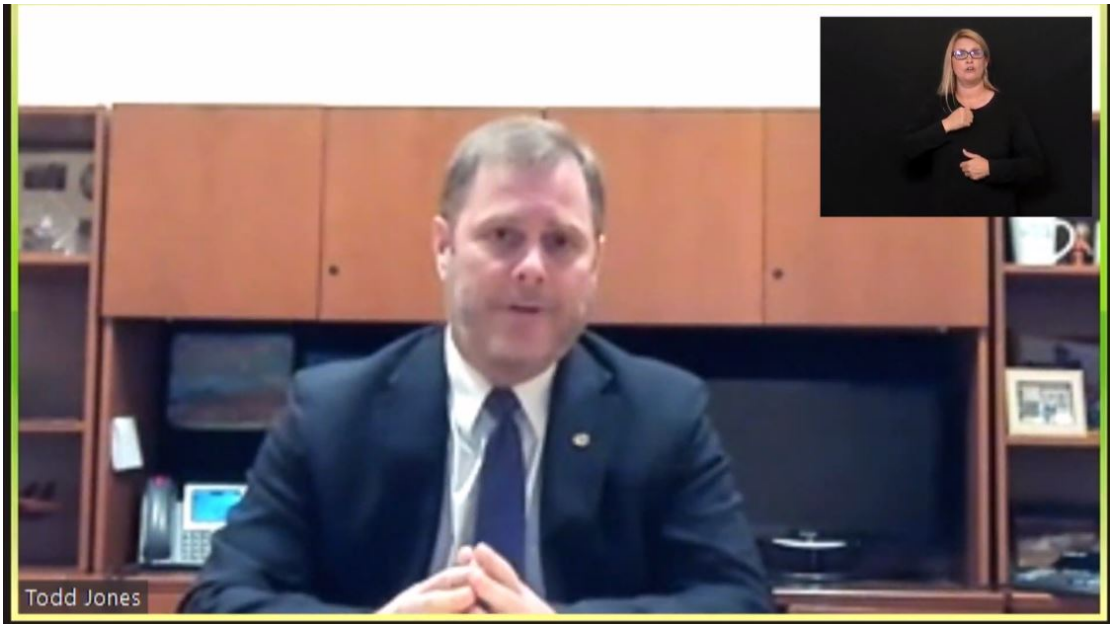
"We were the first state in the nation to step up and test all of the people in our nursing home, the first in the nation to test all the assisted living facilities, we want to stay right on top of that curve and we want to be the first again."

The Governor was also joined virtually Wednesday by Todd Jones, President of AMFM Nursing and Rehabilitation Centers in West Virginia, who provided insight as to the progress that has been made so far delivering vaccines to long-term care facilities.

"The speed with which this is happening is amazing. We are hoping to be done before most other states even start," Jones said. "Yesterday, we vaccinated 1,830 people in 16 of our 19 AMFM facilities.

"I have to admit that yesterday was the best day that I've had at work in nine months, to see the residents and the employees so happy to see the end of this in sight." Jones continued. "But people have to get the vaccine. It is a safe vaccine. We need to urge people to take it at the first opportunity that you have to take it.

"I just want to thank Governor Justice, Secretary Crouch, Dr. Amjad, Dr. Marsh, and General Hoyer. They've been excellent to work with throughout this pandemic. They realized, really early on, that this is a very contagious virus that has a disproportionately high death rate for elderly with underlying medical conditions, and that is the exact profile of folks that are in our skilled nursing facilities and assisted living facilities."



DETAILS ON PHASE 2 OF VACCINE ALLOCATION PLAN, REGARDING GENERAL POPULATION

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice went into more detail on the state's plan for Phase 2 distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

CLICK HERE: COVID-19 VACCINE PLAN (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx)

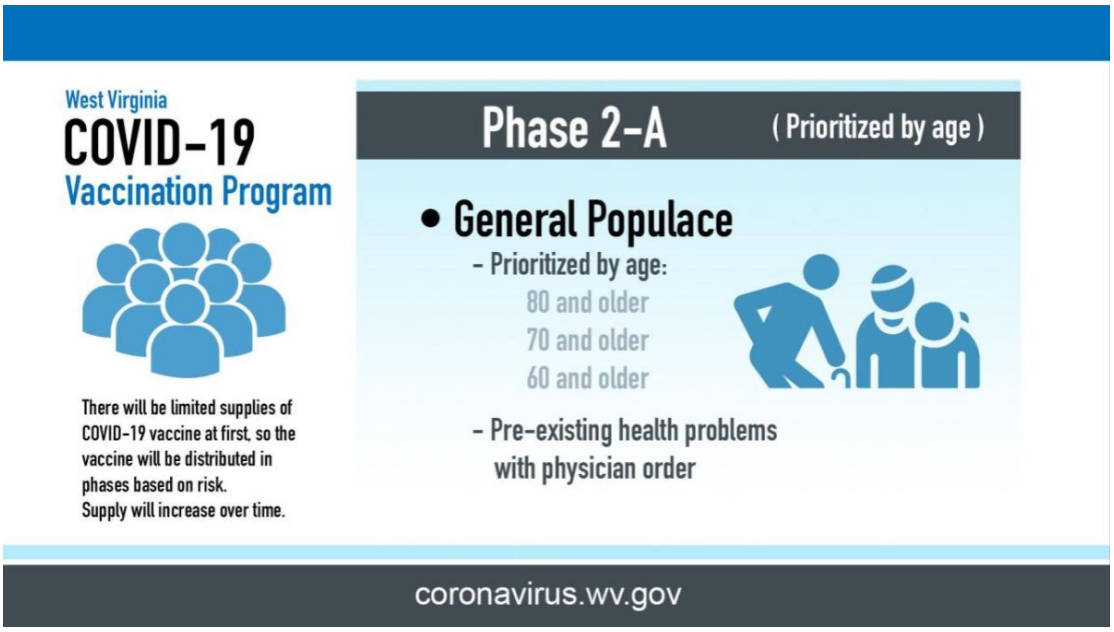
As previously announced, Phase 1 of vaccine distribution includes those at the highest risk of serious complications from COVID-19, as well as individuals who are essential frontline workers fighting this pandemic. Phase 1 is broken down into four subsections:

Phase 1-A: Hospital, long-term care facility and staff, and pharmacies.
Phase 1-B: Community infrastructure and emergency response, public health officials, and first responders.
Phase 1-C: Other healthcare workers, like home health providers (Initial emphasis on individuals age 50 and above).
Phase 1-D: Teachers and education staff in higher education and K-12 and other sectors for critical services for our state, such as utility and transportation workers (Initial emphasis on individuals age 50 and above).

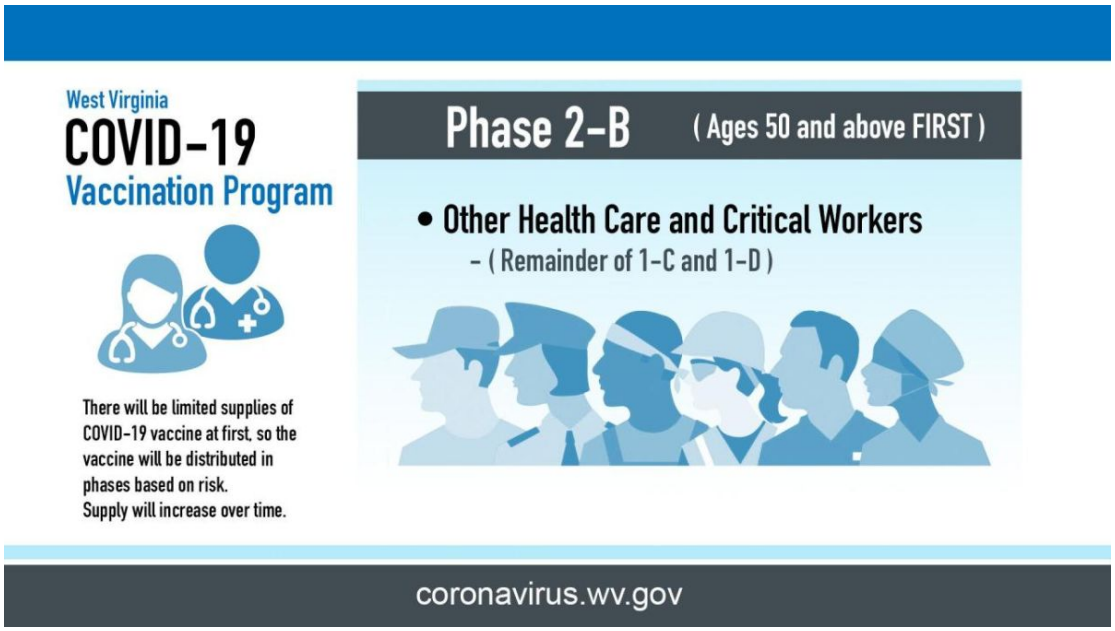
Phase 2 of vaccine distribution includes the general populace. Current estimates indicate that Phase 2 may begin as early as March 2021.

Phase 2 is broken down into three subsections:

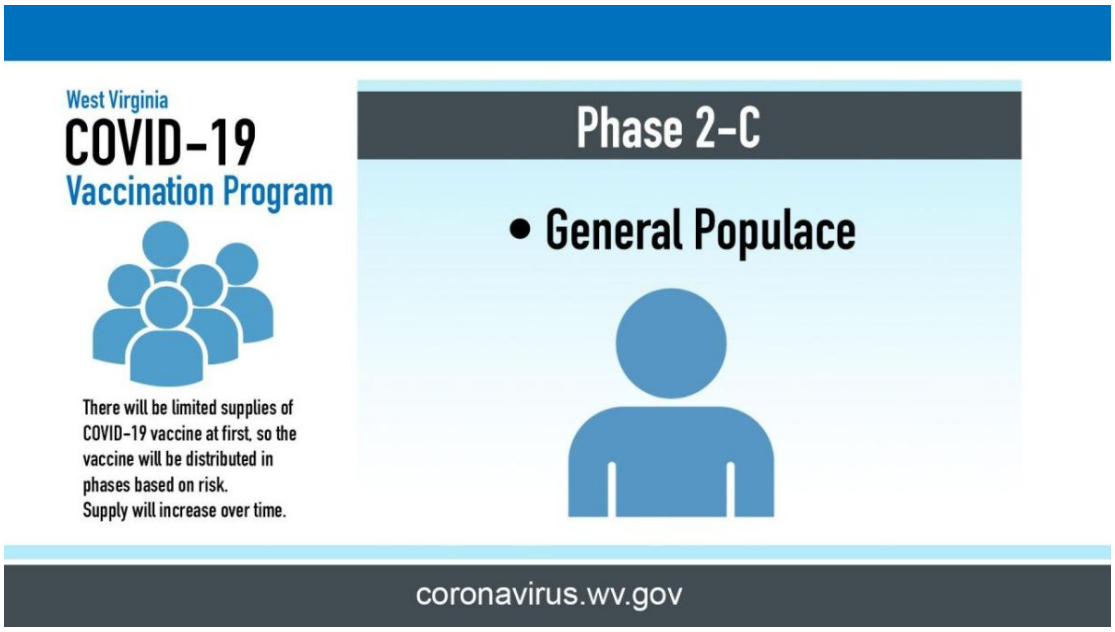
Phase 2-A will include those who are most vulnerable in the general population. An initial emphasis will be placed on individuals over age 60, beginning with the oldest and working backward. From there priority will then be given to those over age 50 with pre-existing health problems with a note from a physician.



Phase 2-B will focus on those who did not receive a vaccine in Phase 1-C and Phase 1-D, again prioritizing those age 50 and above.



Phase 2-C will be the point in time where all West Virginians who want a vaccine will be able to receive one.



HEALTHCARE LEADERS SIGN LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR VACCINE

Gov. Justice also announced that yesterday, a letter was published that was signed by over 30 West Virginia health leaders from diverse healthcare fields, including medicine, pharmacy, nursing, physical therapy, public health, hospitals, and long-term care.

The letter says, in-part: "We want to be clear: We will get vaccinated as soon as it is our turn, and we will recommend it as soon as possible to our family members and patients based on guidance from the CDC. We trust the process, and we think you should, too."

Click here to view the letter (/Documents/1216-Open-Letter-From-WV-Healthcare-Leaders-Trust-COVID19-Vaccine.pdf)

COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that West Virginia has now officially exceeded 1,000 COVID-19-related deaths.

"I never, ever would've dreamt in a million years that I would be sitting in front of you reading the 1,000th death in West Virginia," Gov. Justice said. "I surely to goodness hate like crazy that I have sat here and have read, now, West Virginia's 1,000th death."

The current number of active cases in the state is now 21,260, which is up slightly from 21,076 active cases during the Governor's previous COVID-19 briefing on Monday.

West Virginia has recorded 1,141 new positive cases over the past 24 hours, and 8,448 new positive cases in the past seven days.

A new record high of 766 hospitalizations has been reached, with 197 of those patients currently in the ICU.

The cumulative percent of positive cases is now 4.18%, up from 4.10% on Monday and the highest such rate seen in West Virginia since April 21, 2020.

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

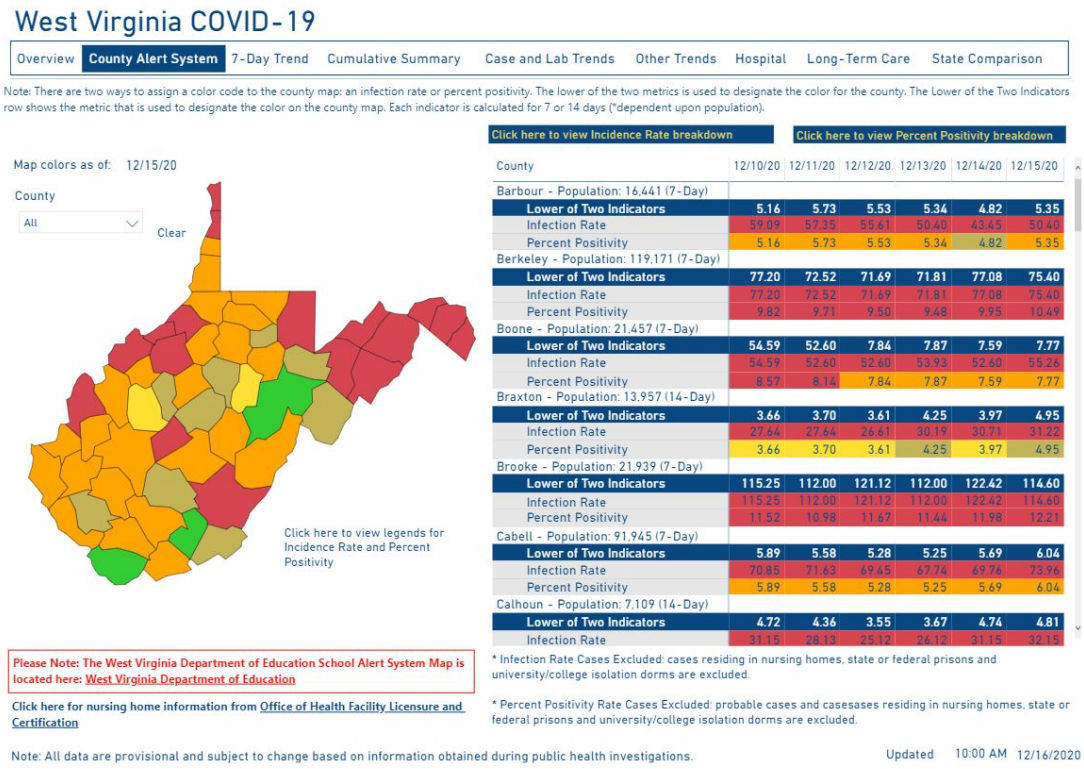
Meanwhile, as of Wednesday morning, the **statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission** (https://rt.live/)– also known as Rt – was 1.11; the 10th-worst such rate of any state in the country.

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: **17** (Berkeley, Brooke, Clay, Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Jefferson, Mason, Mineral, Morgan, Pleasants, Preston, Ritchie, Tyler, Wood)
Orange counties: **24** (Barbour, Boone, Cabell, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Marion, Marshall, Mercer, Mingo, Monongalia, Nicholas, Ohio, Pocahontas, Putnam, Raleigh, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, Wyoming)
Gold counties: **9** (Braxton, Calhoun, Fayette, Lewis, Logan, Monroe, Pendleton, Taylor, Tucker)
Yellow counties: **2** (Roane, Upshur)
Green counties: **3** (McDowell, Randolph, Summers)

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.



County	12/10/20	12/11/20	12/12/20	12/13/20	12/14/20	12/15/20
Barbour - Population: 16,441 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	**5.16**	**5.73**	**5.53**	**5.34**	**4.82**	**5.35**
Infection Rate	59.09	57.35	55.61	50.40	43.45	50.40
Percent Positivity	5.16	5.73	5.53	5.34	4.82	5.35
Berkeley - Population: 119,171 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	**77.20**	**72.52**	**71.69**	**71.81**	**77.08**	**75.40**
Infection Rate	77.20	72.52	71.69	71.81	77.08	75.40
Percent Positivity	9.82	9.71	9.50	9.48	9.95	10.49
Boone - Population: 21,457 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	**54.59**	**52.60**	**7.84**	**7.87**	**7.59**	**7.77**
Infection Rate	54.59	52.60	52.60	53.93	52.60	55.26
Percent Positivity	8.57	8.14	7.84	7.87	7.59	7.77
Braxton - Population: 13,957 (14-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	**3.66**	**3.70**	**3.61**	**4.25**	**3.97**	**4.95**
Infection Rate	27.64	27.64	26.61	30.19	30.71	31.22
Percent Positivity	3.66	3.70	3.61	4.25	3.97	4.95
Brooke - Population: 21,939 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	**115.25**	**112.00**	**121.12**	**112.00**	**122.42**	**114.60**
Infection Rate	115.25	112.00	121.12	112.00	122.42	114.60
Percent Positivity	11.52	10.98	11.67	11.44	11.98	12.21
Cabell - Population: 91,945 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	**5.89**	**5.58**	**5.28**	**5.25**	**5.69**	**6.04**
Infection Rate	70.85	71.63	69.45	67.74	69.76	73.96
Percent Positivity	5.89	5.58	5.28	5.25	5.69	6.04
Calhoun - Population: 7,109 (14-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	**4.72**	**4.36**	**3.55**	**3.67**	**4.74**	**4.81**
Infection Rate	31.15	28.13	25.12	26.12	31.15	32.15

(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 67 confirmed cases, down from 68 on Monday.

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

West Virginia now has 16 active church-related outbreaks across 15 counties: Braxton, Greenbrier, Harrison, Jackson, Lewis, Marion, Mineral, Mingo, Monongalia, Nicholas, Raleigh, Summers, Taylor, Webster, and Wyoming counties. These outbreaks account for a total of 119 cases, up from 117 on Monday.

There currently remain 116 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state.

The Governor also reported that there are now 254 active inmate cases across the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) system, down significantly from 358 such cases on Monday.

There are 46 active staff cases across the DCR system, down from 78 on Monday.

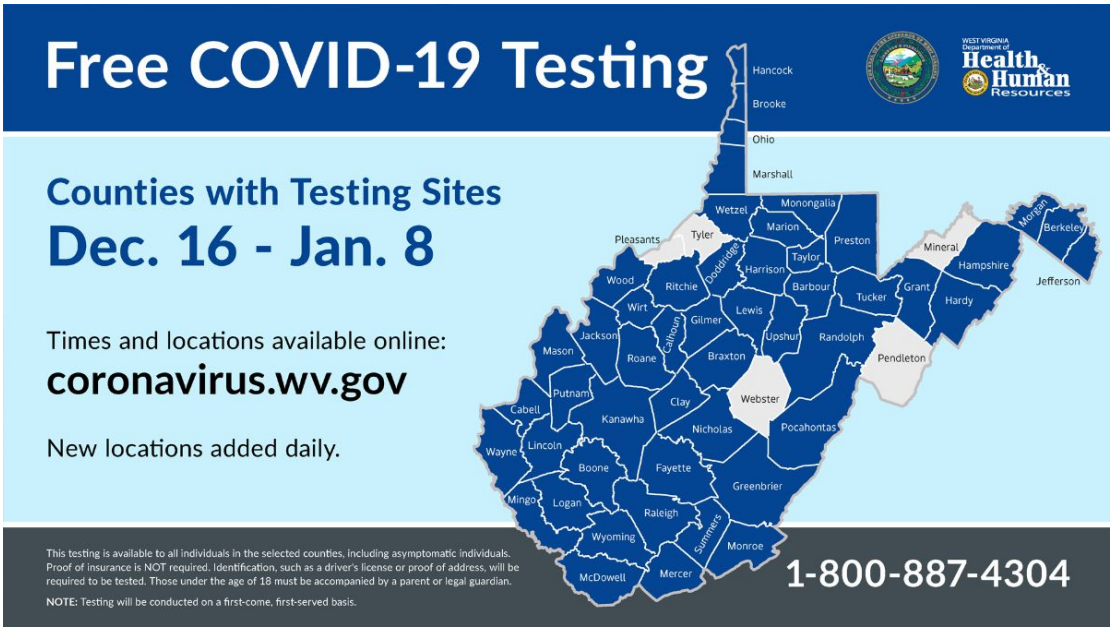
Click here to view the latest corrections facility update
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Correctional-Facilities.aspx)

AGGRESSIVE TESTING CONTINUES ACROSS STATE

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice provided an overview of the 50 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.

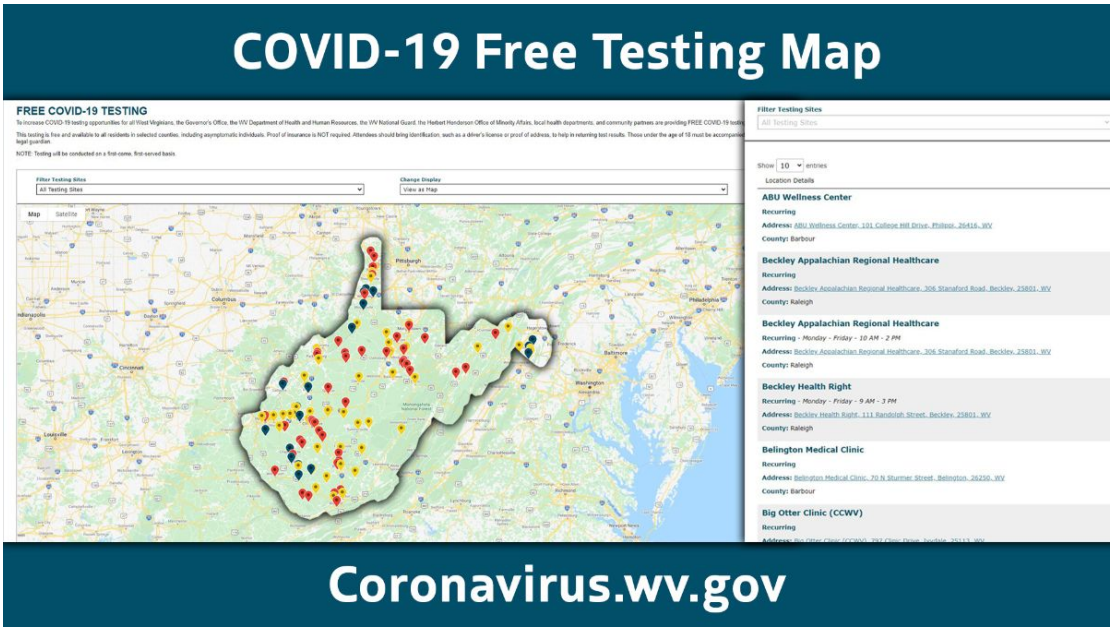
Click here to view all locations, dates, times, and more details
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)



(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)

UPDATED FACE COVERING REQUIREMENT IN EFFECT; SIGNS AVAILABLE FOR BUSINESSES

Additionally 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)

WEST VIRGINIA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DROPS FOR 7TH CONSECUTIVE MONTH

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice announced that West Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the month of November dropped to 6.2 percent, despite the effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the state's workforce. The number of unemployed state residents decreased by 1,600.

"This marks the seventh consecutive month that our unemployment rate has gone down," Gov. Justice said.

Total employment in West Virginia was up 6,400 over the month.

Meanwhile, the national unemployment rate decreased to 6.7 percent in November. West Virginia's unemployment rate has been lower than the national average for five of the past seven months.

Click here to to read more via WorkForce West Virginia
(http://lmi.workforcewv.org/DataRelease/StateRelease.html)

(http://lmi.workforcewv.org/DataRelease/StateRelease.html)

HOLIDAY TROUT STOCKING: DNR TO STOCK 30,000 ADDITIONAL TROUT OVER THE NEXT WEEK

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks on COVID-19 to offer a reminder of his recent announcement that, at his request, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources will stock 30,000 trout over the next week in streams around the state so anglers and their families can enjoy fishing opportunities during the holiday season.

"I've been a fisherman forever. I love all the aspects of it," Gov. Justice said. "Go out over the Christmas holiday and enjoy some great fishing."

This special Holiday Trout Stocking includes over 15,000 pounds of trout at 15 streams across the state. The stockings follow a great production year that resulted in an abundance of trout at the state's hatcheries.

Click here to find stocking locations (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/Gov.-Justice-announces-WVDNR-to-stock-30%2c000-additional-trout-for-holidays.aspx)

(/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/Gov.-Justice-announces-WVDNR-to-stock-30%2c000-additional-trout-for-holidays.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**.

(https://www.redcross.org/)

CITIES/COUNTIES GRANT FUNDING: OVER $233 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 $233 million has now been awarded all across the state.

Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020, marked the deadline for cities and counties to apply for this funding.

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).

FLU VACCINE REMINDER

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice took time 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).

(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157717364866631)

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