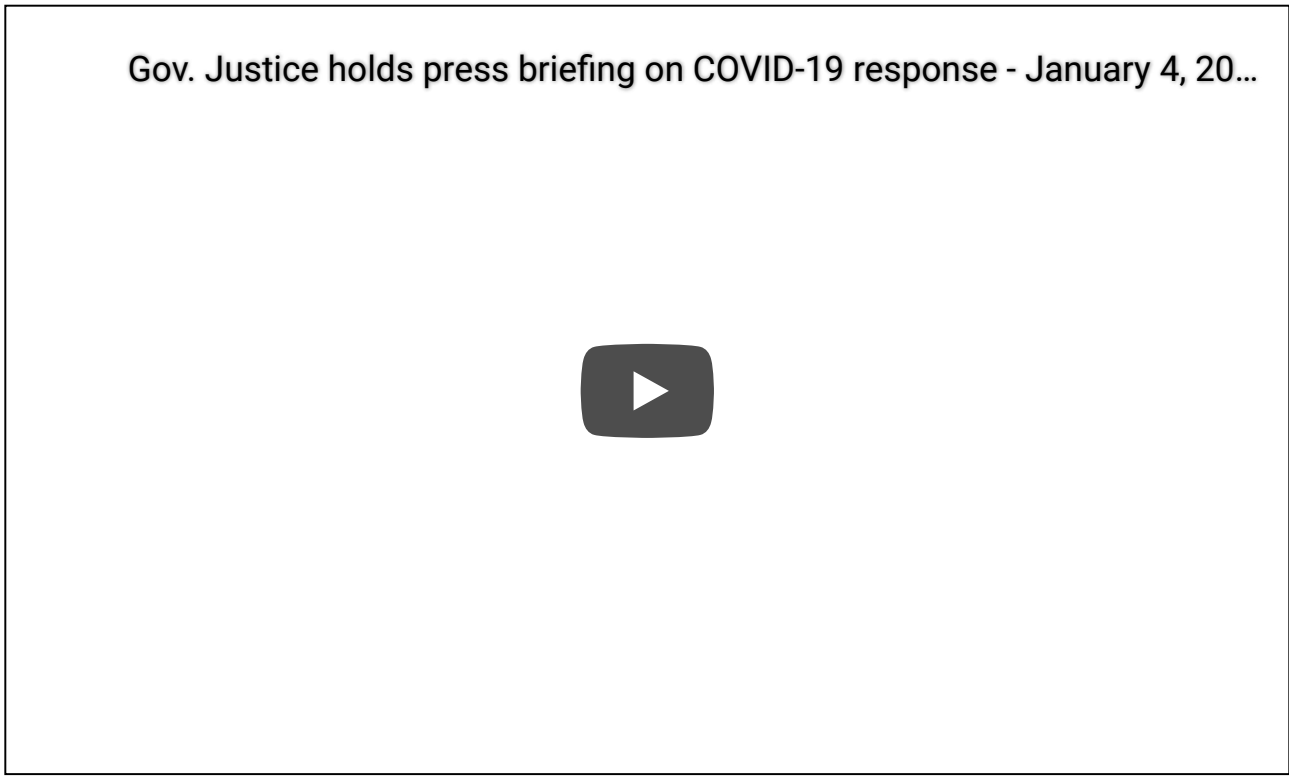
COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice provides update on State's progress vaccinating seniors age 80 and older; announces new vaccine info line

1/4/2021



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.

VACCINE DISTRIBUTION UPDATE

During Monday's briefing, Gov. Justice again provided an update on State pandemic response officials' progress distributing and administering COVID-19 vaccines.

As of Monday morning, 52,221 of 103,375 total doses delivered in West Virginia to date have been administered. This 50.5 percent vaccination rate remains among the highest of any state in the nation.

Last week, Gov. Justice **announced** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-announces-most-schools-to-return-to-in-person-classes;-more-vaccinations.aspx) that COVID-19 vaccines would start being distributed to individuals in the general population age 80 and older. In the time since, over 8,300 West Virginians age 80 and older in the general population have been vaccinated.

"We all know that every hour that goes by that somebody who's 80 years old isn't getting the vaccine, people are going to die, and those people were being told, over and over, they would not be getting the vaccine until, probably, April, and they were scared," Gov. Justice said. "I said we had to move right away to get these vaccines in the arms of our people."

This is in addition to nursing home and assisted living facility residents in this age range who have already been vaccinated. As of last week, residents of all ages in each of the state's 214 long-term care facilities have been offered the vaccine.

"I'll flat guarantee you, we've saved lives," Gov. Justice said. "Now the thing we've got to do – the doses that are sitting in storage – we've got to get them in arms now."

Click here to view photo album

(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157717725370003)

(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157717725370003)

There is a limited supply of vaccine doses at this time, based on what is received weekly from the federal government. Patience is urged while the West Virginia National Guard's Joint Interagency Task Force finalizes plans for the widespread distribution of vaccines for West Virginians in this age category.

There will be ongoing supply of vaccines available through local health departments for West Virginians in the general population age 80 and older. Health departments will individually announce availability and locations for vaccinations. If individuals in this age category are patients at a Federally Qualified Health Center, they will be contacted by that center regarding access to a COVID-19 vaccine.

As vaccine supply increases, there will be more vaccines available to the general population based on age. Once vaccines are available at locations throughout West Virginia, they will be distributed on a first come, first served basis.

Gov. Justice has directed the West Virginia National Guard to plan vaccination clinics at locations throughout the state, including at National Guard Armories. These clinics have not yet been scheduled. When they are scheduled, they will be announced accordingly.

West Virginians are urged not to show up at local health departments or National Guard armories for vaccination unless a vaccination clinic for those age 80 and older is scheduled. West Virginians are also urged against overwhelming pharmacies, clinics, hospitals, or the COVID-19 hotline by calling repeatedly.

Also last week, Gov. Justice **announced** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-announces-most-schools-to-return-to-in-person-classes;-more-vaccinations.aspx) that the COVID-19 vaccine will soon be offered to all teachers, service personnel, and other school employees age 50 and older.

Today, Gov. Justice noted that vaccinations for teachers and staff will begin this Thursday; Jan. 7, 2021. Information on where and when each school employee will be able to receive the vaccine will be distributed through the West Virginia Department of Education, directly to the superintendents of each county.

NEW COVID-19 VACCINE INFO LINE ANNOUNCED

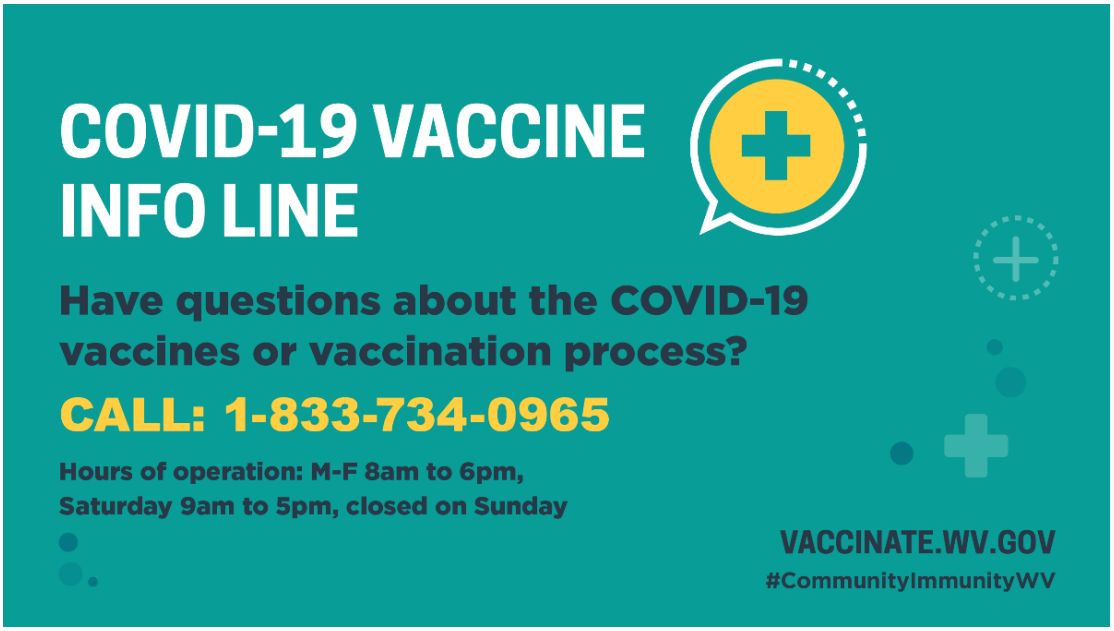
Also on Monday, Gov. Justice announced that, in order to help West Virginians get information on the distribution process and availability of COVID-19 vaccines, the state has launched a new COVID-19 Vaccine Info Line.

VACCINE INFO LINE: 1-833-734-0965.

The line will operate Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"It will serve as a point of reference for West Virginians seeking information on COVID-19 vaccines, vaccination timelines, and any other questions about the vaccines," Gov. Justice said. "We also have a lot of information online, and our partners use a whole variety of methods for getting this information out to you – like social media, radio, television, and newspapers."

Visit **vaccinate.wv.gov** (http://vaccinate.wv.gov/) for more information, including details on vaccine availability and other frequently asked questions.



(http://vaccinate.wv.gov/)

GOVERNOR HONORS PAIR OF PUBLIC SERVANTS LOST TO COVID-19

Additionally Monday, Gov. Justice took time to honor a pair of long-time public servants who passed away recently from COVID-19.

Corporal Mark Rustemeyer, a veteran officer with the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation, died Saturday, Jan. 2, 2021, while under treatment for COVID-19.

Rustemeyer was 58 years old and had served at the Saint Marys Correctional Center in Pleasants County since 1998. His death is the first of a West Virginia correctional employee attributed to COVID-19.

"I truly wish you would keep this great person, this great man in your thoughts and prayers," Gov. Justice said.

Click here to read more: W.Va. Corrections mourns death of Cpl. Mark Rustemeyer (https://dhs.wv.gov/News-Announcements/Pages/WV-Corrections-mourns-death-of-officer-with-COVID-19.aspx)

Gov. Justice also honored the memory of Captain Chuck Sadler, who most recently oversaw the training and certification standards for all West Virginia law enforcement through his role at the Justice and Community Services section within the Department of Homeland Security. He died on Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020.

Prior to his tenure with DHS, Sadler served for 24 years with the Charleston Police Department and retired as a captain. He was an Army Veteran.

"He was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. His faith and his family were the most important in this man's life, and that's how it should be," Gov. Justice said. "He also earned the respect of countless West Virginians, including thousands of our law enforcement community. He was a great man and will really be missed."

Click here to read more: W.Va. honors Capt. Charles "Chuck" Sadler (https://dhs.wv.gov/News-Announcements/Pages/WV-honors-Capt.-Charles-"Chuck"-Sadler.aspx)

COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

Also on Monday, Gov. Justice reported that the current number of active cases in the state is now 27,362, up from 24,433 active cases during the Governor's previous COVID-19 briefing last Wednesday.

West Virginia has recorded 828 new positive cases over the past 24 hours.

The number of active hospitalizations is now 799 patients, up slightly from 797 last Wednesday, with 205 of those patients currently in the ICU.

The cumulative percent of positive cases is now 5.07%; the highest such percentage since the beginning of the pandemic.

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

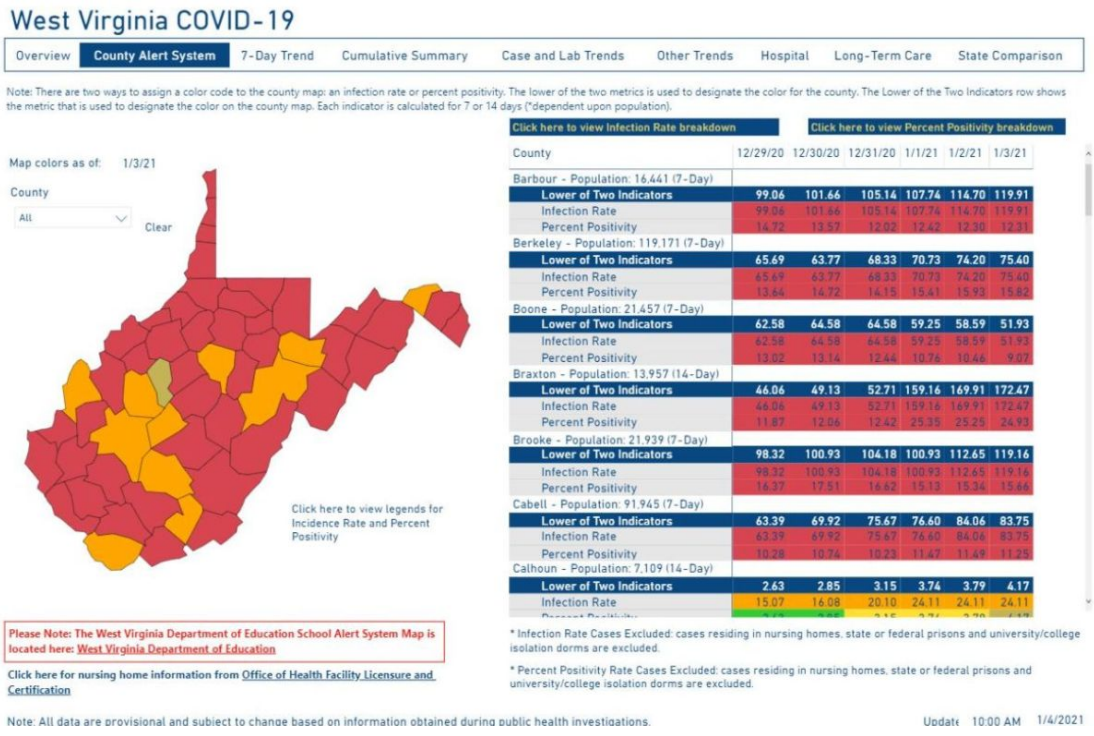
As of Monday morning, the **statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission** (https://rt.live/)– also known as Rt – had improved significantly to 1.02; tied for the 13th-best such rate of any state in the country.

MONDAY MAP UPDATE

Additionally Monday, 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: **43** (Barbour, Berkeley, Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Cabell, Doddridge, Gilmer, Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Lincoln, Logan, Marion, Marshall, Mercer, Mineral, Mingo, Monongalia, Monroe, Nicholas, Ohio, Pendleton, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Putnam, Raleigh, Ritchie, Taylor, Tyler, Upshur, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, Wood, Wyoming)
Orange counties: **11** (Clay, Fayette, Kanawha, Lewis, Mason, McDowell, Morgan, Randolph, Roane, Summers, Tucker)
Gold counties: **1** (Calhoun)
Yellow counties: **0**
Green counties: **0**



County	12/29/20	12/30/20	12/31/20	1/1/21	1/2/21	1/3/21
Barbour - Population: 16,441 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	99.06	101.66	105.14	107.74	114.70	119.91
Infection Rate	99.06	101.66	105.14	107.74	114.70	119.91
Percent Positivity	14.72	13.57	12.02	12.42	12.30	12.31
Berkeley - Population: 119,171 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	65.69	63.77	68.33	70.73	74.20	75.40
Infection Rate	65.69	63.77	68.33	70.73	74.20	75.40
Percent Positivity	13.64	14.72	14.15	15.41	15.93	15.82
Boone - Population: 21,457 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	62.58	64.58	64.58	59.25	58.59	51.93
Infection Rate	62.58	64.58	64.58	59.25	58.59	51.93
Percent Positivity	13.02	13.14	12.44	10.76	10.46	9.07
Braxton - Population: 13,957 (14-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	46.06	49.13	52.71	159.16	169.91	172.47
Infection Rate	46.06	49.13	52.71	159.16	169.91	172.47
Percent Positivity	11.87	12.06	12.42	25.35	25.25	24.93
Brooke - Population: 21,939 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	98.32	100.93	104.18	100.93	112.65	119.16
Infection Rate	98.32	100.93	104.18	100.93	112.65	119.16
Percent Positivity	16.37	17.51	16.62	15.13	15.34	15.66
Cabell - Population: 91,945 (7-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	63.39	69.92	75.67	76.60	84.06	83.75
Infection Rate	63.39	69.92	75.67	76.60	84.06	83.75
Percent Positivity	10.28	10.74	10.23	11.47	11.49	11.25
Calhoun - Population: 7,109 (14-Day)						
Lower of Two Indicators	2.63	2.85	3.15	3.74	3.79	4.17
Infection Rate	15.07	16.08	20.10	24.11	24.11	24.11

(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

Also on Monday, Gov. Justice reported that per the West Virginia Department of Education, there are currently 10 active outbreaks in public schools across the state. These outbreaks account for 45 confirmed cases, up from 35 last Wednesday.

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 12 counties: Greenbrier, Harrison, Jackson, Marion, McDowell, Mingo, Monongalia, Nicholas, Raleigh, Summers, Upshur, and Wyoming counties. These outbreaks account for a total of 139 cases, down from 160 last Wednesday.

There are now 118 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, down from 120 such outbreaks as of last Wednesday.

The Governor also reported that there are now 601 active inmate cases across the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) system, down from 634 such cases as of last Wednesday. Among the cases that are currently active, 253 are at Saint Marys Correctional Center, 246 are at Central Regional Jail, and 80 are at Tygart Valley Regional Jail. Meanwhile, Eastern Regional Jail has just three active cases at this time after peaking at over 270 cases last week.

There are 54 active staff cases across the DCR system, up from 46 such cases last Wednesday.

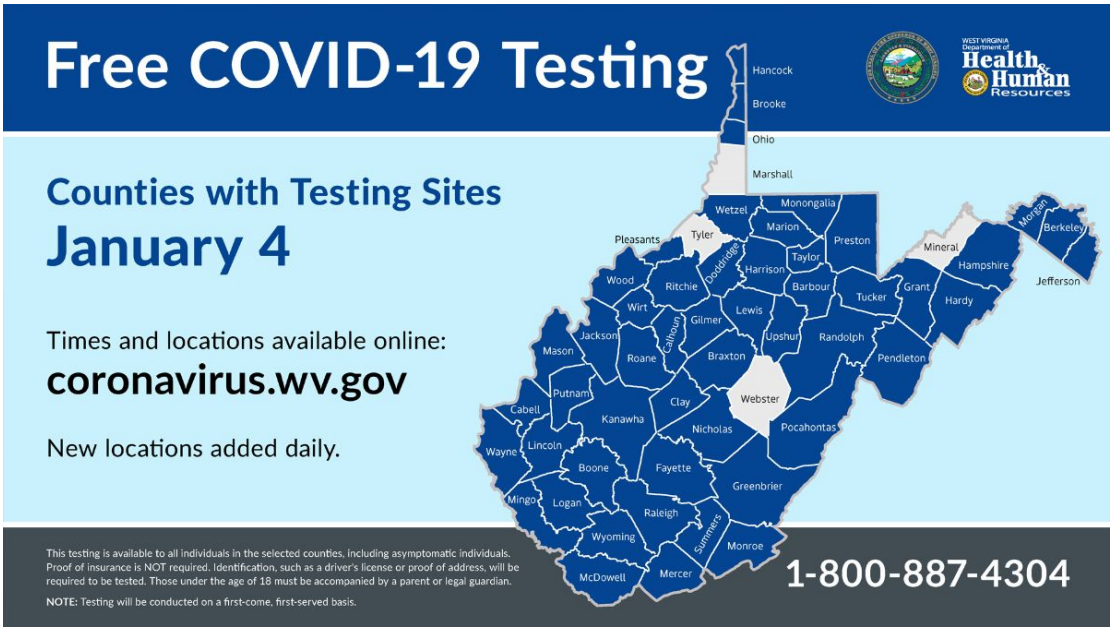
Click here to view the latest corrections facility update
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Correctional-Facilities.aspx)

AGGRESSIVE TESTING CONTINUES ACROSS STATE

Additionally Monday, 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.

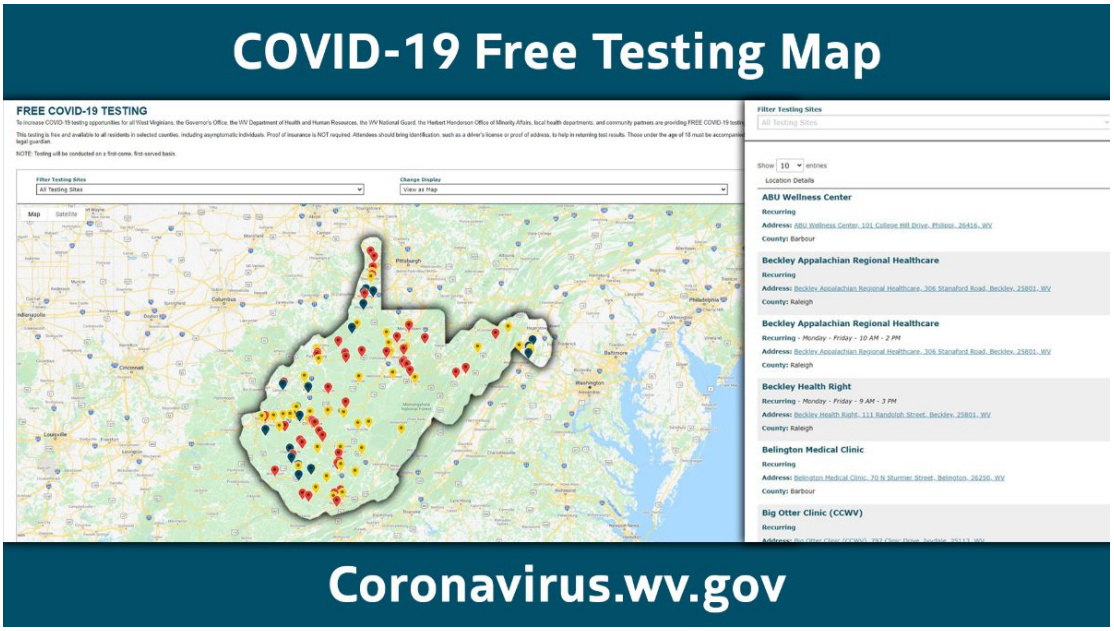
Click here to view all locations, dates, times, and more details (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)



(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)

UPDATED FACE COVERING REQUIREMENT IN EFFECT; SIGNS AVAILABLE FOR BUSINESSES

Also on Monday, 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)

MONOCLONAL ANTIBODY TREATMENT REMINDER

Additionally Monday, Gov. Justice offered a reminder that West Virginia plans to begin utilizing monoclonal antibodies to treat COVID-19 more frequently, following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's recent emergency authorization of the treatment.

Monoclonal antibodies are laboratory-made proteins that mimic the immune system's ability to fight off viruses.

The Governor again urged all West Virginians over the age of 65 who test positive to ask their doctor if they qualify for this type of treatment.

WEST VIRGINIANS CALLED UPON TO DONATE BLOOD AND PLASMA

Also on Monday, 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/)

DECEMBER REVENUE NUMBERS

Additionally Monday, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks on COVID-19 to announce that general revenue collections of $382.2 million for the month of December were $4.6 million below estimate.

Through the first six months of Fiscal Year 2021, total collections of more than $2.319 billion were $127.2 million above estimate and 5.3 percent above prior year receipts.

"The good part about all of this is that year-to-date, in terms of the surplus in our budget, we're $127.2 million above our estimate for the year, that's great," Gov. Justice said. "In addition to that, we are trending, now, with a cash surplus of absolutely hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars.

"I'm really proud of how we're doing in this state, economically," Gov. Justice continued.

Click here (/News/press-releases/2021/Pages/Gov.-Justice-reports-December-2020-revenue-collections.aspx) to read a full summary of December 2020 general revenue collection data.

FLU VACCINE REMINDER

Also on Monday, 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.

In addition to providing protection from the flu, this vaccine helps reduce the burden on hospitals and healthcare systems.

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).

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