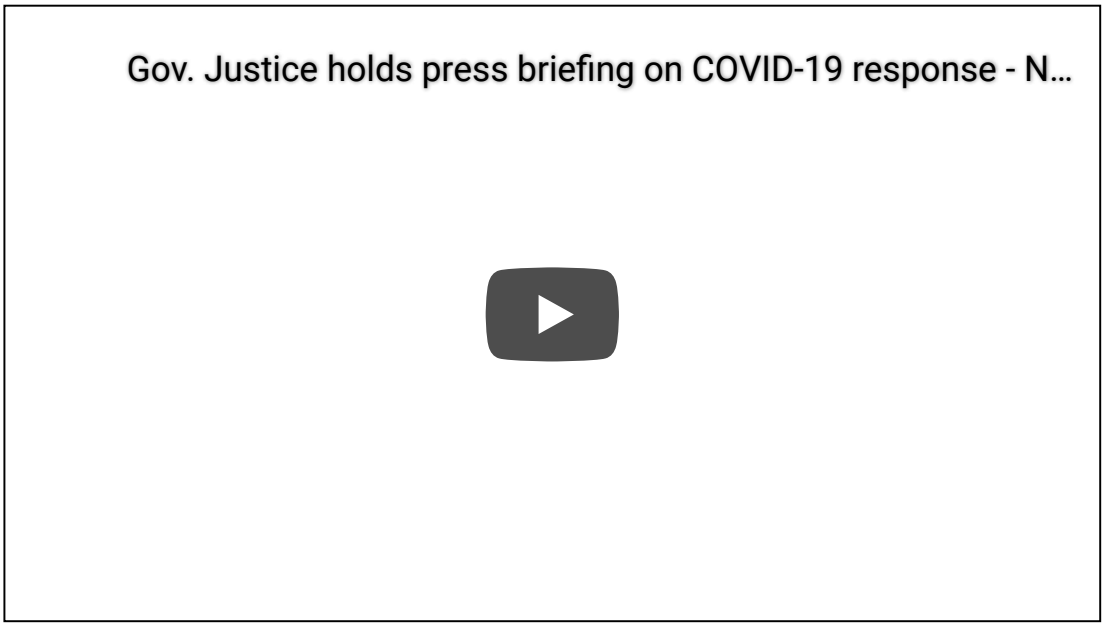
COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice: State prepared for efficient vaccine distribution; unveils new online map of free COVID-19 testing sites

11/20/2020



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.

VACCINE DISTRIBUTION PLANNING CONTINUES

Following this morning's **announcement** (https://www.pfizer.com/news/press-release/press-release-detail/pfizer-and-biontech-submit-emergency-use-authorization) by pharmaceutical company Pfizer that they are seeking emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for their new COVID-19 vaccine, Gov. Justice announced during Friday's briefing that state officials in West Virginia have been preparing for months and are ready to implement an efficient vaccine distribution plan the moment that a vaccine is approved.

"Pfizer has reported that their vaccine has shown in excess of 94 percent effectiveness in their trials," Gov. Justice said. "Once the FDA approves the emergency authorization, the vaccine will be distributed very quickly.

"Our Vaccine Advisory Council has been working on this since August, the National Guard has been heading this up, doing incredible work led by General Hoyer and his people," Gov. Justice continued. "As soon as this vaccine is available, we will absolutely be ready to distribute it in West Virginia."

Last month, Gov. Justice **announced** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-announces-completion-of-West-Virginia-COVID-19-Vaccination-Plan%2c-submission-to-CDC.aspx) that state officials had completed and submitted West Virginia's **COVID-19 Vaccination Plan** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Documents/vaccineplan.pdf) to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for review and approval.

"The vaccine plan that we submitted to the CDC is ready to be implemented the very second we receive doses of the vaccine in our state," Gov. Justice said. "The most vulnerable will be vaccinated first. But, until that vaccine is in our hands, what is our best defense? It is, without question, to wear our masks and keep our distance."

Earlier this week, Gov. Justice also celebrated early reports on another COVID-19 vaccine, currently being developed by biotech company Moderna, which **indicate** (https://investors.modernatx.com/news-releases/news-release-details/modernas-covid-19-vaccine-candidate-meets-its-primary-efficacy) that the vaccine appears to be 94.5% effective, according to preliminary data from their ongoing study.

Click here to view photo album

(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157716970982992)

NEW INTERACTIVE ONLINE MAP OF FREE COVID-19 TESTING SITES

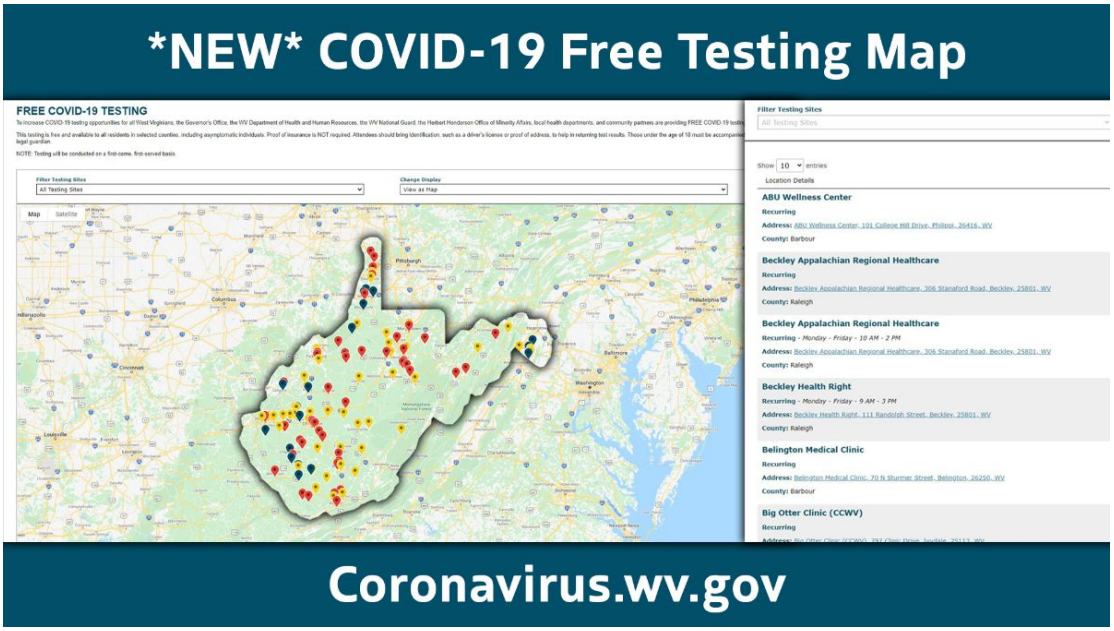
Also on Friday, Gov. Justice announced that a new online map of all free COVID-19 testing locations across West Virginia has been launched on the state's COVID-19 website.

"This map will provide real-time access to all available testing sites," Gov. Justice said. "I encourage all West Virginians to use this resource to find a location for yourself and for your loved ones to get tested."

Users can filter the map by type of testing site, including daily testing events, recurring testing events, and 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 interactive map of free COVID-19 testing sites
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)

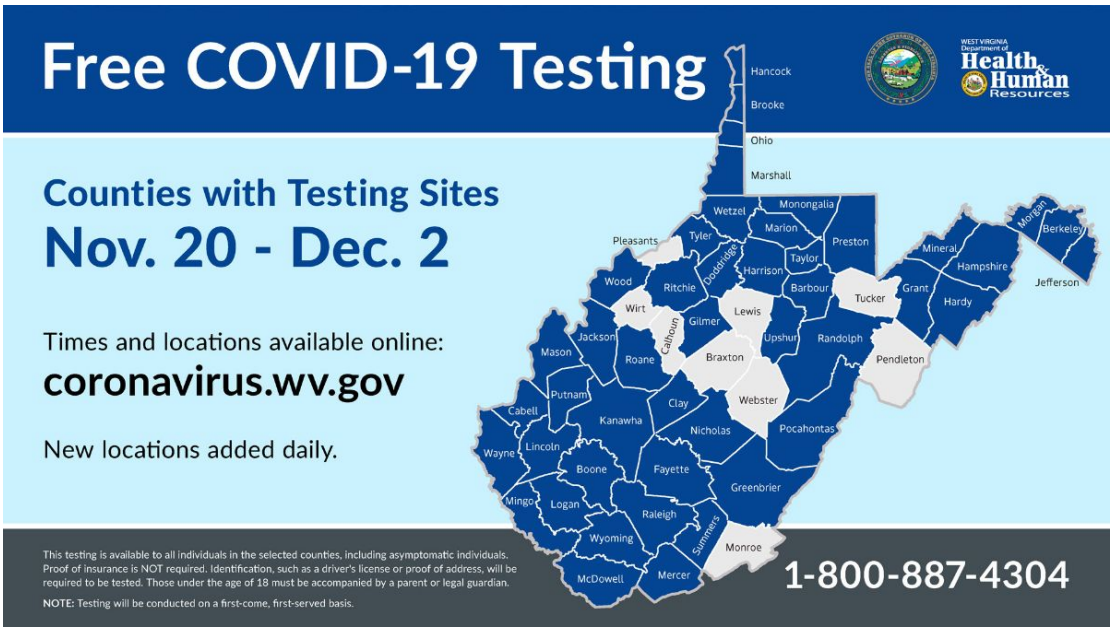


(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)

Across West Virginia, 46 counties have 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)

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 54 locations statewide, including several new testing sites. Locations include stores in Berkeley, Boone, Brooke, Cabell, Clay, Fayette, Gilmer, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Marion, McDowell, Mercer, Monongalia, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Preston, Putnam, Raleigh, Randolph, Summers, Taylor, Upshur, Wayne, Wetzel, Wood, 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.

Pre-registration is required for pharmacy drive-thru testing.

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)

GOVERNOR ECHOS CDC'S CAUTION ON THANKSGIVING TRAVEL

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice discussed the latest **guidance on Thanksgiving travel** (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays/thanksgiving.html), issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention yesterday.

"The CDC announced that travel may increase your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19. Postponing travel and staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others this year," Gov. Justice said. "Celebrating virtually, or with the people you live, with is the safest choice this Thanksgiving.

"I encourage all West Virginians to go get tested before Thanksgiving and before spending time with loved ones," Gov. Justice continued. "That's just going to make things better."

RECORD WEEK FOR COVID-19 TESTING IN WEST VIRGINIA

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice announced that in the past seven days alone, 91,237 West Virginians have taken advantage of the **free COVID-19 testing** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx) opportunities, setting a one-week state record.

"On Wednesday, we tested an all-time single-day high of 17,180 West Virginians," Gov. Justice said. "This is an incredible increase from a month ago. A month ago, remember, I was pleading with you to go get tested, and we just kept going along at 2,000 or 3,000 people per day. We didn't really take heed at the time. Now, at least, we're doing it.

"This is so important because testing is one of our best strategies to contain this virus," Gov. Justice continued. "By identifying the asymptomatic people, the people who may very well be spreaders, we are able to defeat this disease."

GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER FOR ADDITIONAL TESTING AMONG VULNERABLE POPULATIONS PAYING OFF

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice announced that, one week after **issuing** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-broadens-statewide-indoor-face-covering-requirement%3b-announces-adjustments-to-school-calendar.aspx) an **executive order** (/Documents/2020%20Executive%20Orders/EO%2079-20%20-%20Nursing%20Home%20and%20Assisted%20Living%20Testing.pdf), requiring that all doctors, nurses, staff, and employees working at nursing homes and assisted living facilities throughout the state be tested for COVID-19 twice a week, asymptomatic positive cases have been found in 11 such facilities across West Virginia.

"This thing can run through a nursing home or an associated living facility and kill like nobody's business, we know that," Gov. Justice said. "Since last Friday, we have found asymptomatic cases in 11 of these locations.

"That's 11 potential outbreaks we prevented from turning into really bad situations," Gov. Justice continued. "That's good work by a lot of people there."

UPDATED FACE COVERING REQUIREMENT IN EFFECT; SIGNS AVAILABLE FOR BUSINESSES

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice provided a reminder that his broadened Statewide Indoor Face Covering Requirement is now in effect.

The new order requires all West Virginians age 9 and older to wear a face covering at all times inside all indoor public places. This differs from the Governor's initial indoor face covering requirement, which allowed masks to be removed in such places if adequate social distancing could be maintained. Under the new order, that exception no longer exists.

The new order also 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 now 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)

COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice reported that the current number of active cases in the state has also reached a new record high of 12,177, including a record 6,806 new positive cases in the just the past seven days and a record 1,081 in the past 24 hours.

The number of total patients hospitalized dropped to 402 and the number of patients in the ICU dropped to 120.

Meanwhile, the cumulative percent of positive cases is now 3.42%, up from 3.35% on Wednesday and the highest such rate seen in West Virginia since April 24, 2020.

As of Wednesday afternoon, the **statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission** (https://rt.live/) – also known as Rt – was 1.13; the 26th-best such rate of any state in the country. Only one state across America currently has an Rt value under the 1.00 threshold indicating whether the disease is spreading or contracting.

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

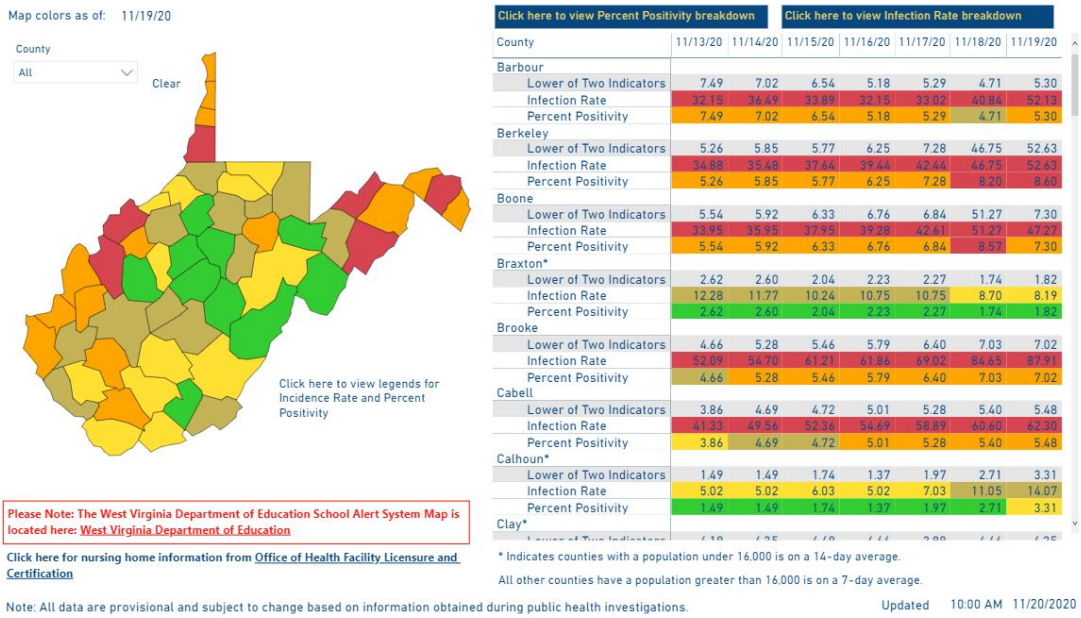
Click here to view the latest COVID-19 data (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx)

FRIDAY MAP UPDATE

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

Red counties: **6** (Berkeley, Hardy, Jackson, Marshall, Mineral, Wood)
Orange counties: **14** (Barbour, Boone, Brooke, Cabell, Hampshire, Hancock, Jefferson, Mason, Morgan, Ohio, Putnam, Wayne, Wirt, Wyoming)
Gold counties: **13** (Clay, Grant, Harrison, Kanawha, Lincoln, Mingo, Monroe, Nicholas, Preston, Ritchie, Taylor, Upshur, Wetzel)
Yellow counties: **12** (Calhoun, Fayette, Greenbrier, Logan, Marion, McDowell, Mercer, Monongalia, Pleasants, Raleigh, Randolph, Tyler)
Green counties: **10** (Braxton, Doddridge, Gilmer, Lewis, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers, Tucker, Webster)

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)

DHHR's COVID-19 Dashboard **(Click "County Alert System" tab)**
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx)

OUTBREAK REPORT

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice reported that, per the West Virginia Department of Education, there are 24 active outbreaks in public schools across the state. These outbreaks account for 88 confirmed cases, down from 110 on Wednesday.

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

West Virginia now has 22 active church-related outbreaks across 17 counties: Berkeley, Cabell, Fayette, Hardy, Jackson, Kanawha, Logan, Marion, Mingo, Monroe, Preston, Raleigh, Taylor, Tyler, Wayne, Wood, and Wyoming counties. These outbreaks account for a total of 282 cases.

There are now 101 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, up from 82 on Wednesday.

The Governor announced that the situation at Stevens Correctional Center in McDowell County is improving after a recent outbreak in the facility. Nearly 40 inmates and 18 staff members have now recovered, dropping the number of active inmate cases to 226 and the number of active staff cases to 25. Leadership with the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) continues to work alongside McDowell County officials to assist and support their response.

Outside of the outbreak at Stevens Correctional Center, there are now 10 active inmate cases and 34 active staff cases across the entire DCR system.

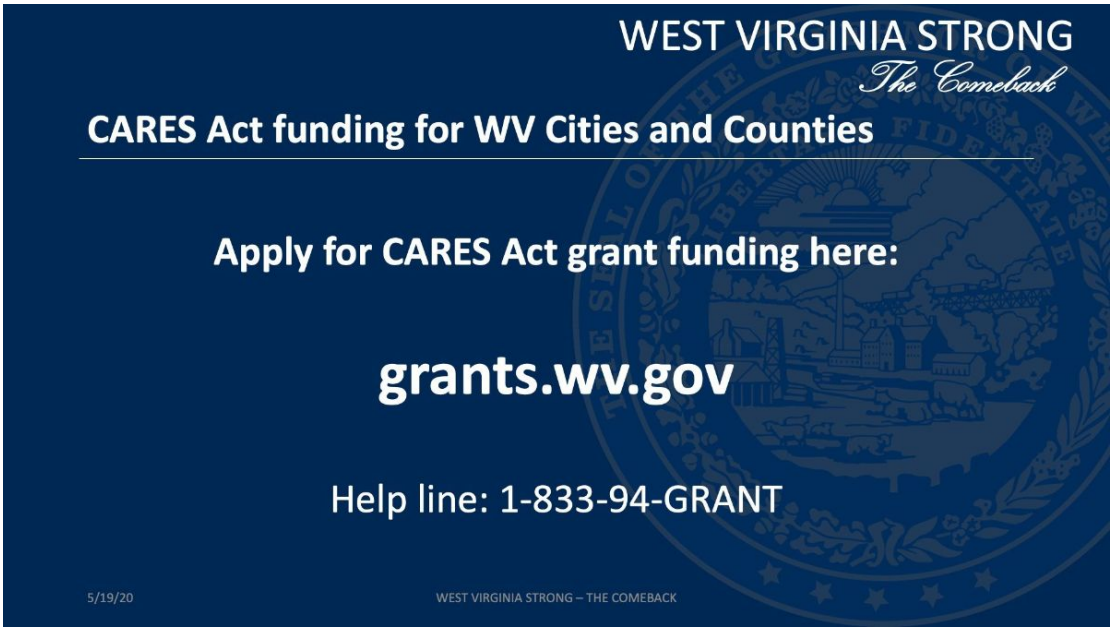
Click here to view the latest corrections facility update
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Correctional-Facilities.aspx)

CITIES/COUNTIES GRANT FUNDING: OVER $186 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 $186 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)

GUN BUCK SEASON SAFETY

On Friday, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks about COVID-19 to offer a reminder that Gun Buck Season in West Virginia is scheduled to begin Monday, Nov. 23, 2020, and to urge that hunters remain safe.

"I'm a hunter and I have always enjoyed the buck deer season," Gov. Justice said. "I've walked across almost every mountain in this state. Nobody's been in the woods more than I have. I love being there. I love the nature. The beauty of this state is unbelievable.

"But here's the thing; you've got to abide by the laws and be the safest you can possibly be," Gov. Justice continued. "Wear your blaze orange, use good gun safety. For crying out loud, every year it seems like we have some level of tragedy, and I don't want that to happen this year. So we've got to be super careful. I want you to have a great hunt and enjoy yourself, but I also want you to be safe."

Read more: **WVDNR.gov** (https://www.wvdnr.gov/).

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).

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