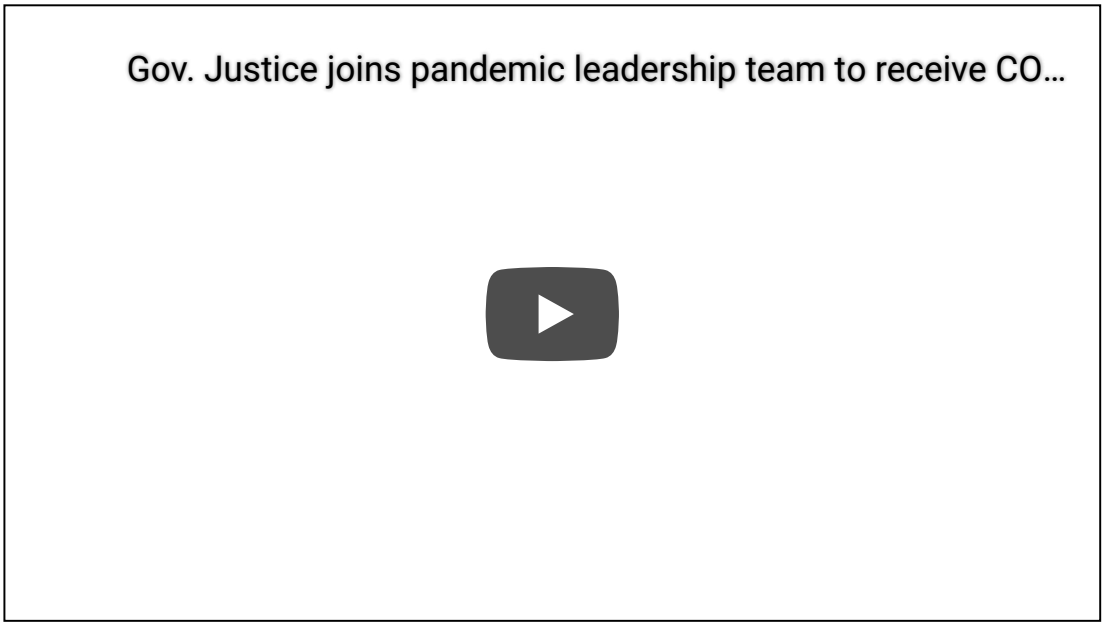
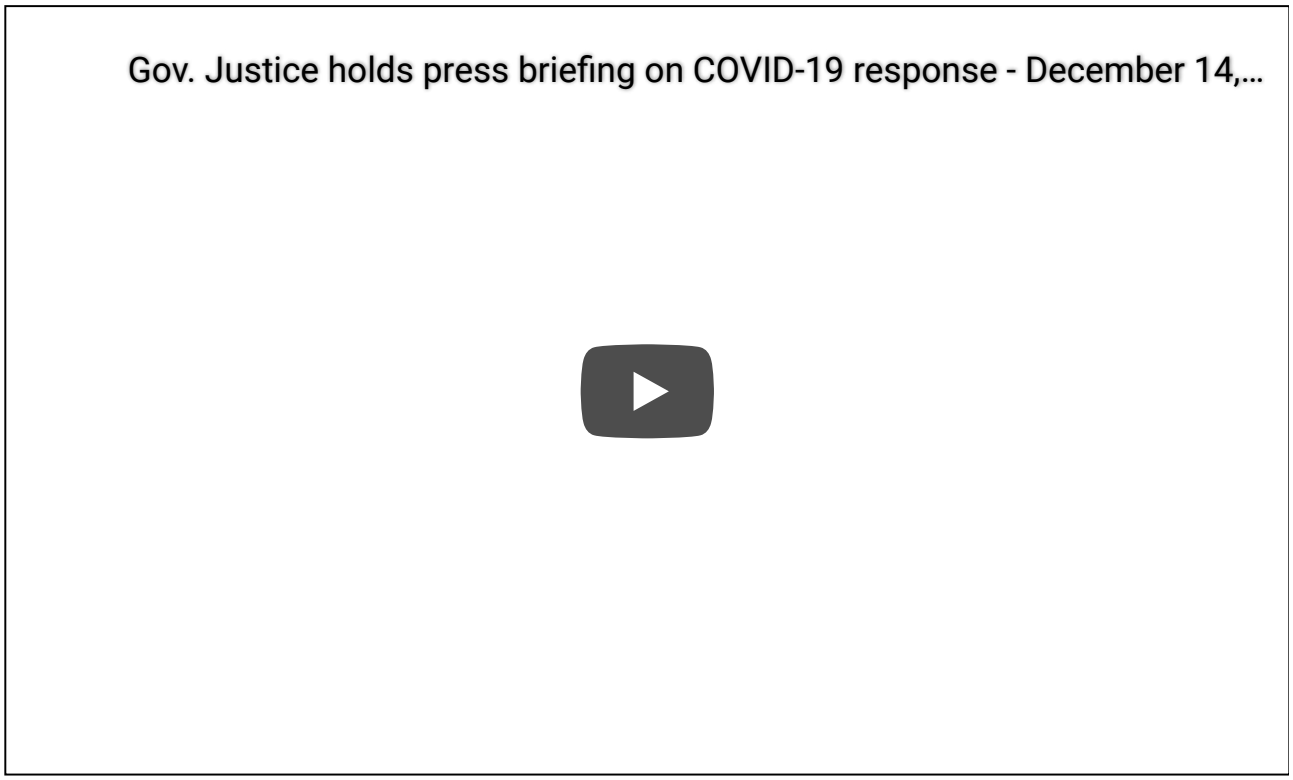
COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice announces arrival of COVID-19 vaccine in West Virginia

12/14/2020





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.

COVID-19 VACCINE ARRIVES IN WEST VIRGINIA

During Monday's briefing, Gov. Justice announced that the state's first doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine arrived in West Virginia this morning at hub locations in Kanawha and Monongalia counties.

"I cannot express how incredible of an achievement this has been," Gov. Justice said. "It's unbelievable. We're ready, in West Virginia, to show the rest of the country just how good we are and how great we are able to perform."

Pfizer's vaccine received Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the FDA Friday evening. Once the EUA was secured, vaccines began being shipped to states on Sunday morning.

Today's vaccine deliveries in West Virginia included the expected total of over 10,000 doses at the two hub locations in Kanawha and Monongalia counties.

By Monday evening, the Kanawha County site – which is slated to distribute the vaccine to 19 different medical facilities in the region – had already delivered to 17 facilities. The Monongalia County site – which is also slated to distribute the vaccine to 19 different medical facilities in its region – had already delivered to 10 facilities.

"Those hubs are processing vaccines for additional distribution to other sites in their regions of the hub. At this time things continue to move along smoothly," said West Virginia National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. James Hoyer, who is leading the state's vaccine distribution efforts. "I appreciate the work of all the agencies in the Joint Interagency Task Force and the outside organizations, such as the West Virginia Hospital Association and the West Virginia Health Care Association representing the long-term care and assisted living facilities. This is not just a whole-of-government approach, this is a whole-of-West Virginia approach.

"I also greatly appreciate the work that goes on particularly from our counterparts over at the DHHR," Maj. Gen. Hoyer continued. "It is a team effort and we're making great progress."

With additional deliveries planned at the remaining hubs in Berkeley, Cabell, and Greenbrier counties, the state is on track to receive its entire weekly dosage allotment of 16,575 – the maximum allowed for West Virginia – by tomorrow.

"If you are receiving doses from this first shipment, you will be contacted by your employer on where and when to schedule your appointments," Gov. Justice said. "By working with our partners, we will take care of those in our nursing homes and long-

term care facilities. We have incredible partners from various organizations working with us across the state to make this happen."

A total allocation of approximately 60,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine is expected to be delivered to West Virginia over the next several weeks. Even still, state leaders plan to continue scaling up distribution with other vaccines like the Moderna vaccine also expected to arrive in the weeks ahead.

"We're going as fast as we can to get people vaccinated," Gov. Justice said.

Click here to view photo album

(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157717325883677)

GOV. JUSTICE, PANDEMIC RESPONSE LEADERS RECEIVE COVID-19 VACCINE

Championing the safety and effectiveness of the new COVID-19 vaccine, Gov. Justice, members of the state's pandemic leadership team, and several healthcare workers from across West Virginia were all vaccinated live on-air during another virtual address late Monday afternoon.

“This is a historic day in our country,” Gov. Justice said. “This is an accomplishment that’s unbelievable: to be able to get out a vaccine, and get it out this quickly, get it through the FDA, with all the fine print approval to be able to start administering these vaccines.”

The Governor announced that the very first COVID-19 vaccines administered in West Virginia were at Thomas Health in South Charleston.

“This is a great, great day for the state of West Virginia. It’s a whale of an accomplishment,” Gov. Justice said.

Joining the Governor in receiving the vaccine were WVNG Maj. Gen. James Hoyer, State Coronavirus Czar Dr. Clay Marsh, DHHR Secretary Bill Crouch, State Health Officer Dr. Ayne Amjad.

VACCINE ALLOCATION PLAN UPDATED; TIMELINE FOR LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

Also during Monday morning's COVID-19 briefing, Gov. Justice announced an additional update to the state's vaccine allocation plan.

"With our limited supply at first, our planning and decision-making is based on four key principles: reduce the rate of hospitalizations, reduce the rate of deaths, protect our most vulnerable, and ensure our state can maintain critical services," Gov. Justice said.

As **previously announced** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-provides-new-details-on-phases-of-vaccine-allocation-plan.aspx), 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.

The four subsections of Phase 1 remain unchanged in terms of which personnel qualify under each category:
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.
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.

Read more about WV COVID-19 vaccine plan (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx)

West Virginia
COVID-19
Vaccination Program

There will be limited supplies of COVID-19 vaccine at first, so the vaccine will be distributed in phases based on risk.
Supply will increase over time.

Phase 1-A (All ages)

- **Hospital**
  - Acute Care Tertiary and Q/ICU/ED/COVID units
  - Airway specialists (ENT, G1,/heart/lung)
- **Long-Term Care**
  - Nursing home and assisted living staff
  - Nursing home and assisted living residents
- **Pharmacy**

coronavirus.wv.gov

West Virginia
COVID-19
Vaccination Program

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Supply will increase over time.

Phase 1-B (All ages)

- **Community Infrastructure**
- **Emergency Response**
- **Public Health Officials**
- **First Responders**
  - Fire, Police, 911 Centers, Emergency Management, Corrections staff
  - Ambulance drivers/crew members, Local Health Departments
  - Dental/ortho/oral surgery, National Guard Members on COVID-19 support

coronavirus.wv.gov

West Virginia
COVID-19
Vaccination Program

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Supply will increase over time.

Phase 1-C (Ages 50 and above FIRST)

Community Infrastructure and Resources

- **Other Health Care**
  - Remaining hospital staff
  - Clinics and higher risk settings
  - Home health/hospice

(Also Includes: CPS, APS, optometrists, allergy and immunology, audiology chiropractic, counseling, dermatology, primary care, infusion centers, labs therapy, medication assisted, opthamology, pediatrics, PT, OT, xray, etc.)

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West Virginia
COVID-19
Vaccination Program

There will be limited supplies of COVID-19 vaccine at first, so the vaccine will be distributed in phases based on risk.
Supply will increase over time.

Phase 1-D (Ages 50 and above FIRST)

Community Infrastructure and Resources

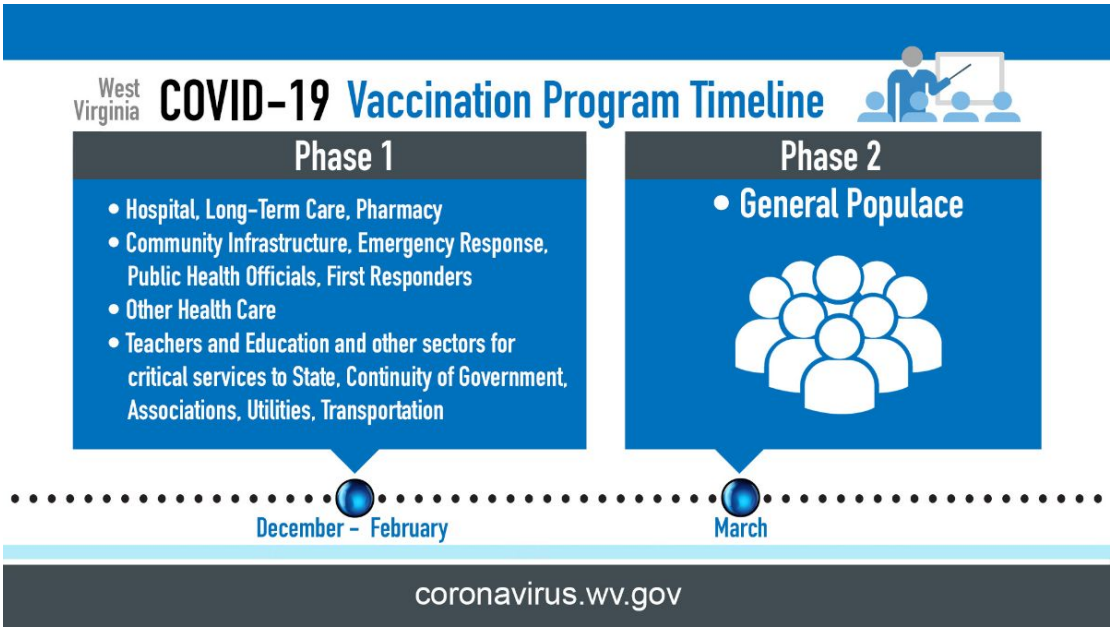
- **Other critical sectors vital to state/government services** (includes, but not limited to):
  - Utilities, transportation and associations
  - Higher education and K-12 faculty and staff
  - Continuity of government

coronavirus.wv.gov

For Phase 1-A and Phase 1-B, everyone in these categories will be offered the vaccines, regardless of age. However, in Phase 1-C and Phase 1-D, there will be an initial emphasis on getting vaccines to those at increased risk for complications or death from COVID-19, specifically individuals age 50 and above.

Later in the briefing, Maj. Gen. Hoyer also provided more specifics on the expected timeline for the COVID vaccine to be distributed to all of the state's long-term care facilities.

"The current objective, on long-term care facilities getting the first dose of the vaccine, would be no longer than 30 days," Maj. Gen. Hoyer said. "But we believe we can accomplish it in potentially three weeks with perfect coordination with our long-term care facilities."



DR. DEBORAH BIRX VISITS WEST VIRGINIA AGAIN TO DISCUSS COVID-19 RESPONSE

Additionally Monday, Gov. Justice announced that, prior to his briefing, he hosted Dr. Deborah Birx, Coronavirus Response Coordinator for the White House Coronavirus Task Force, for another meeting at the West Virginia Capitol to discuss the state's pandemic response.

"We had a great meeting with her this morning," Gov. Justice said. "She's an incredible resource for our nation. She's done unbelievable work. She truly thinks West Virginia has done really good stuff, which makes me really proud that our experts have pushed the right buttons in the right places and they've done good stuff."

Following her **first visit to West Virginia in mid-August** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-hosts-Dr.-Deborah-Birx%2c-White-House-Coronavirus-Response-Coordinator%2c-to-West-Virginia.aspx), Dr. Birx **specifically highlighted** (/News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-announces-updated-County-Alert-System-for-school-status%2c-nursing-home-visitation.aspx) Gov. Justice and West Virginia's County Alert System as a leading practice for other national leaders to emulate in a White House email to all 50 of the nation's governors.

During today's visit, Dr. Birx made a presentation where she provided detailed information about the most recent surge in COVID-19 cases across America, compared to previous surges in the spring and summer.

The Governor passed along the key points of the presentation, highlighting that the current surge being felt across the nation is much more severe and widespread than all previous surges.

"During the surge in the spring, we peaked in about four weeks, and then we started back down," Gov. Justice said. "In the summer, we peaked in five weeks...and started back down.

"The problem here is just this: from October the 12th to December the 1st, and you know it's still getting worse, we've now been eight weeks," Gov. Justice continued. "So the duration of this surge is significantly sharper and significantly greater."

The Governor went on to explain that the data presented by Dr. Birx underscores the necessity for West Virginians to continue to wear face coverings as much as possible and to take advantage of the state's free COVID-19 testing resources until they are able to be vaccinated.

"If you dink around with this, and you're feeling bad, and you mess around with this, and then you finally go get a test and all of a sudden,we're six or seven days into your positive situation, you're in real trouble," Gov. Justice said.

TESTING AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Also on Monday, Gov. Justice announced that, as part of efforts to further reduce the spread of COVID-19, he is planning to initiate weekly testing of all college and university students across West Virginia.

"Our younger sector of people, who are probably 18 to 35 years of age, they're running around everywhere under the sun. Many of them are positive for COVID, and they don't even know it," Gov. Justice said. "When we tested all of our colleges and university students earlier in the year, we had incredible results just from doing that. But the problem is we were only able to do it one time."

The Governor added that by vaccinating all of the state's long-term care facilities over the next several weeks, it will enable the state to shift testing resources away from those facilities and toward higher education institutions.

"With the vaccines that are coming out, it will enable us the opportunity to be able to test more," Gov. Justice continued. "If we can stop the spreading of the asymptomatic from our kids, and if our kids know that they have it, they're going to respond."

COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

Also on Monday, Gov. Justice reported that the current number of active cases in the state is now 21,076, which is up from 19,971 active cases during the Governor's previous COVID-19 briefing on Friday last week.

West Virginia has recorded 1,177 new positive cases over the past 24 hours, and 8,256 new positive cases in the past seven days.

A new record high of 720 hospitalizations has been reached, with a new record high of 199 of those patients currently in the ICU.

The cumulative percent of positive cases is now 4.10%, up from 3.99% on Friday and the highest such rate seen in West Virginia since April 22, 2020.

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

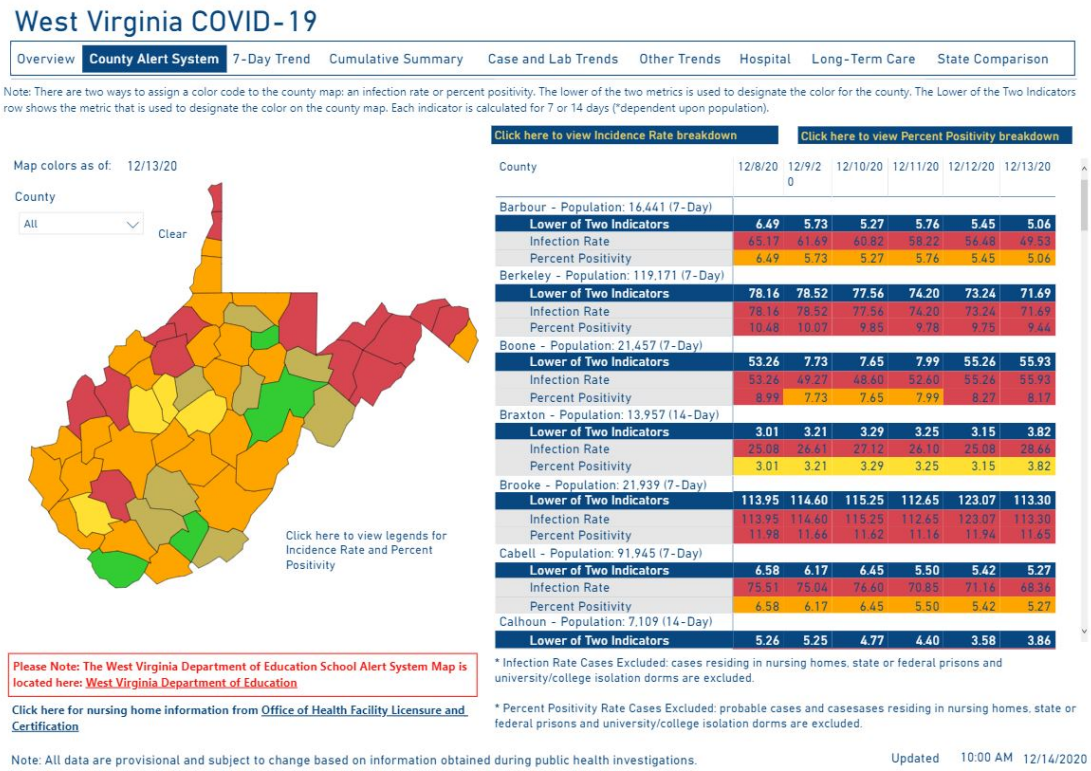
Meanwhile, as of midday Monday, the **statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission** (https://rt.live/)– also known as Rt – was 1.05; tied for the 23rd-best such rate of any state in the country.

MONDAY MAP UPDATE

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

Red counties: **15** (Berkeley, Boone, Brooke, Grant, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Jackson, Mason, Mineral, Morgan, Pleasants, Preston, Ritchie, Tyler)
Orange counties: **24** (Barbour, Cabell, Clay, Doddridge, Greenbrier, Harrison, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Mercer, Mingo, Monongalia, Nicholas, Ohio, Pocahontas, Putnam, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, Wood, Wyoming)
Gold counties: **8** (Fayette, Gilmer, Marion, Monroe, Pendleton, Raleigh, Tucker, Upshur)
Yellow counties: **4** (Braxton, Calhoun, Logan, Roane)
Green counties: **4** (McDowell, Randolph, Summers, Taylor)

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

Also on Monday, Gov. Justice reported that there are now 358 active inmate cases across the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) system, up from 315 on Friday. The current actives include 281 combined cases between the Northern Regional Jail and the Northern Correctional Facility, plus 29 others at the Pruntytown Correctional Center, 24 at Saint Marys Correctional Center, and 14 at Central Regional Jail.

There are 78 active staff cases across the DCR system, up from 76 on Friday.

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

West Virginia now has 15 active church-related outbreaks across 14 counties: Braxton, Cabell, Greenbrier, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Mineral , Mingo, Monongalia, Nicholas, Raleigh, Taylor, Webster, and Wyoming counties. These outbreaks account for a total of 117 cases, down from 131 on Friday.

There are now 116 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, up from 112 such outbreaks as of Friday.

The Governor also reported that, per the West Virginia Department of Education, there are 19 active outbreaks in public schools across the state. These outbreaks account for 68 confirmed cases, down from 72 on Friday.

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

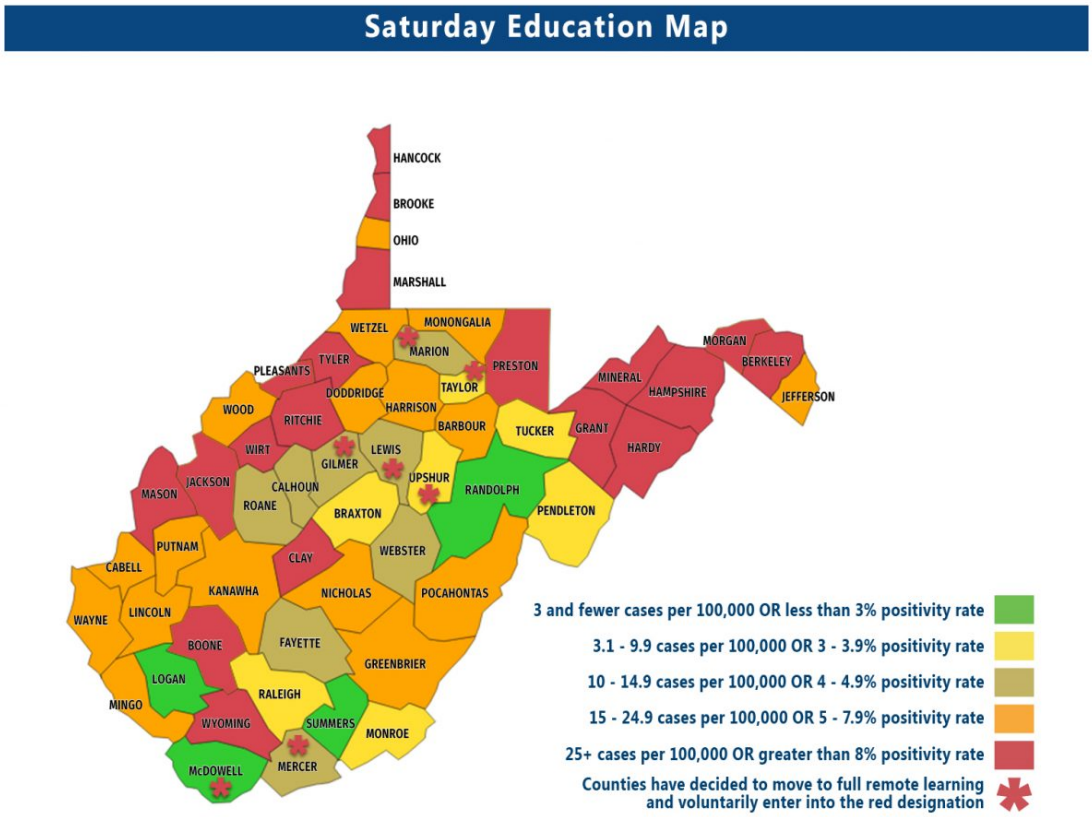
Additionally Monday, Gov. Justice reviewed this past Saturday's 5 p.m. West Virginia Department of Education color-coded **School Alert System map update** (https://wvde.us/school-reentry-metrics-protocols/), which determines the level of scholastic, athletic, and extracurricular activities permitted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

Results of the update on Saturday, Dec. 12, 2020, were updated on Monday, Dec. 14, 2020, to account for several counties turning Red. The latest School Alert System map designations are as follows:

Red counties: **19** (Berkeley, Boone, Brooke, Clay, Grant, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Jackson, Marshall, Mason, Mineral, Morgan, Pleasants, Preston, Ritchie, Tyler, Wirt, Wyoming)
Orange counties: **17** (Barbour, Cabell, Doddridge, Greenbrier, Harrison, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Mingo, Monongalia, Nicholas, Ohio, Pocahontas, Putnam, Wayne, Wetzel, Wood)
Gold counties: **8** (Calhoun, Fayette, *Gilmer, *Lewis, *Marion, *Mercer, Roane, Webster)
Yellow counties: **7** (Braxton, Monroe, Pendleton, Raleigh, *Taylor, Tucker, *Upshur)
Green counties: **4** (Logan, *McDowell, Randolph, Summers)

(*=Counties marked with an asterisk have opted to move to full remote learning and voluntarily enter into the Red designation, despite qualifying in lower categories)

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.



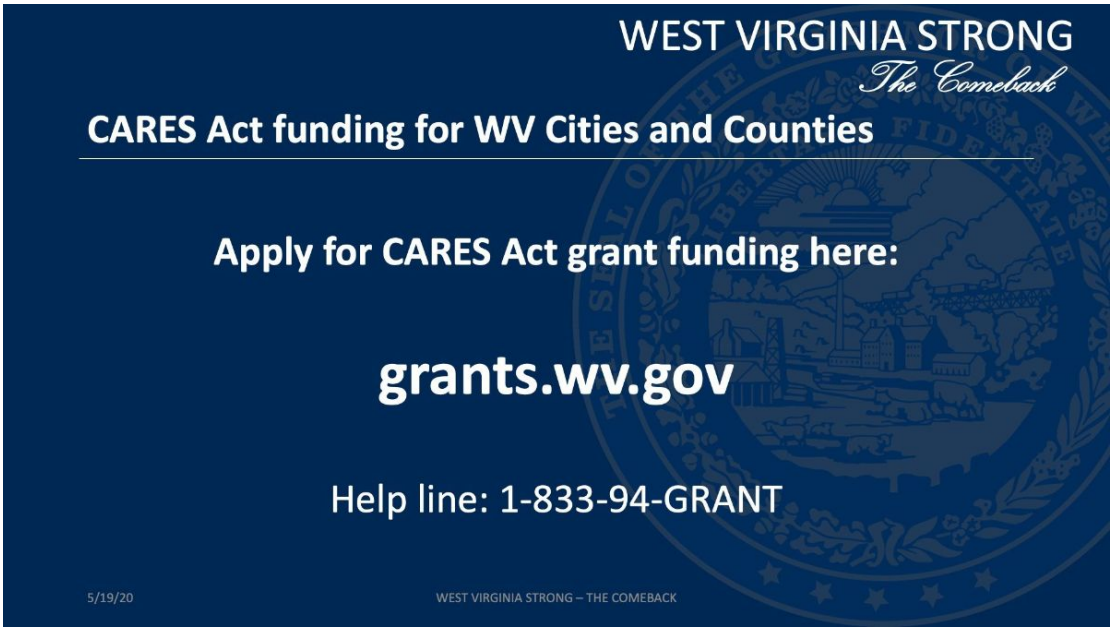
(https://wvde.us/school-reentry-metrics-protocols/)

CITIES/COUNTIES GRANT FUNDING: OVER $225 MILLION HAS NOW BEEN AWARDED

Additionally Monday, Gov. Justice provided an update on cities and counties throughout West Virginia applying for funds through the federal CARES Act, reporting that more than $225 million has now been awarded all across the state. He also offered a reminder that the deadline for cities and counties to apply for this funding is tomorrow: Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020.

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)

UPDATED FACE COVERING REQUIREMENT IN EFFECT; SIGNS AVAILABLE FOR BUSINESSES

Additionally 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.

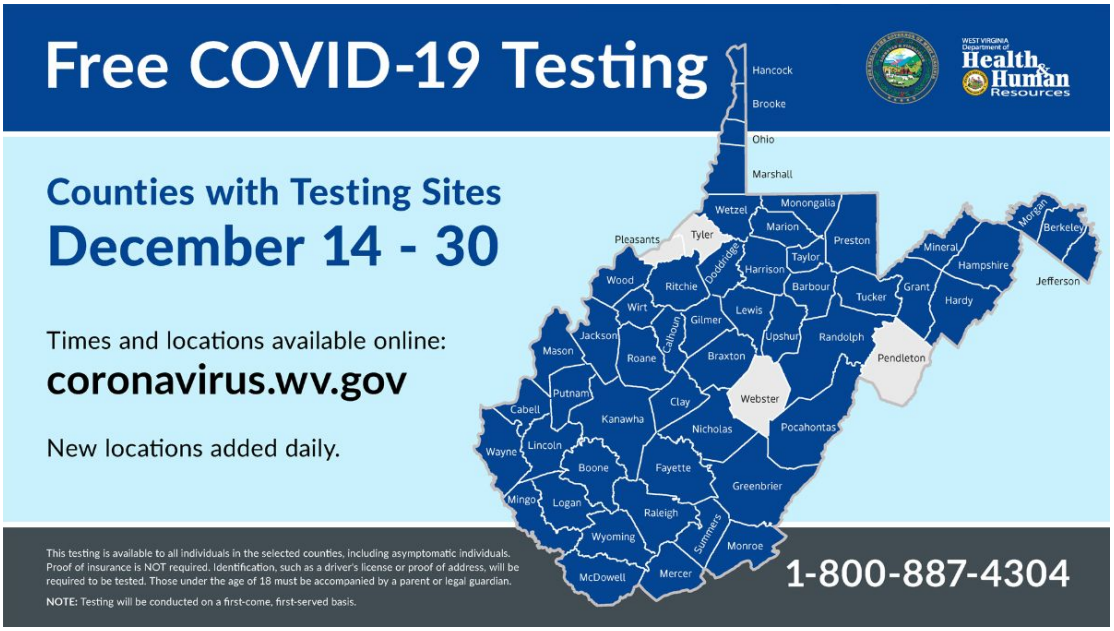
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Face-Covering-Toolkit.aspx)

AGGRESSIVE TESTING CONTINUES ACROSS STATE

Also on Monday, Gov. Justice provided an overview of the 51 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.

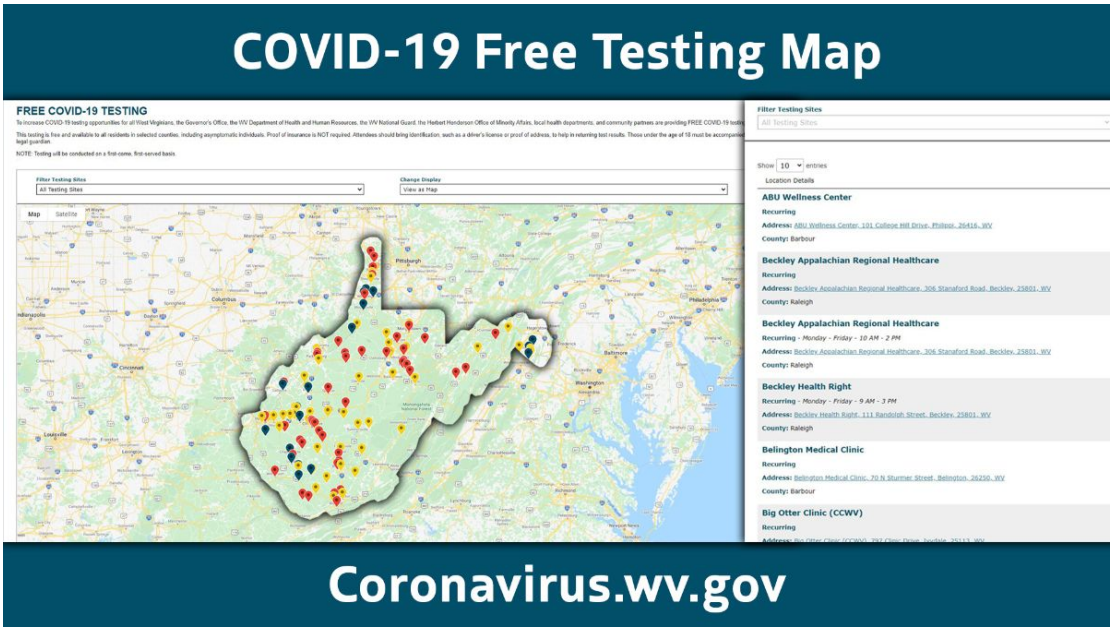
Click here to view all locations, dates, times, and more details
(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)



(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)

WEST VIRGINIANS CALLED UPON TO DONATE BLOOD AND PLASMA

Additionally 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/)

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.

Locate a flu vaccine near you through the **DHHR website** (https://dhhr.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx).

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

GOVERNOR CELEBRATES NATIONAL GUARD'S BIRTHDAY

Additionally, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks on COVID-19 to congratulate the entire National Guard, after the organization celebrated its 384th birthday on Sunday.

"I've said over and over, we owe everything we have to our men and women in uniform," Gov. Justice said. "Our National Guard, in this state, is spectacular beyond belief.

"I could never thank them enough," Gov. Justice continued. "If you could stand in my shoes for a little while, and just see the greatness of what these people have done, our Guard is the best."

"We're exceptionally proud of the Guard and our lineage, which goes back to 1735, and I'd remind people from West Virginia that the 201st Field Artillery in the West Virginia National Guard is the oldest continuously-serving unit in the United States Army," WVNG Maj. Gen. Hoyer said during his remarks Monday. "Governor, we greatly appreciate the leadership and support that you give to the Guard and we will continue to execute this exceptionally important mission of taking care of the people of West Virginia."

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/72157717325883677)

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