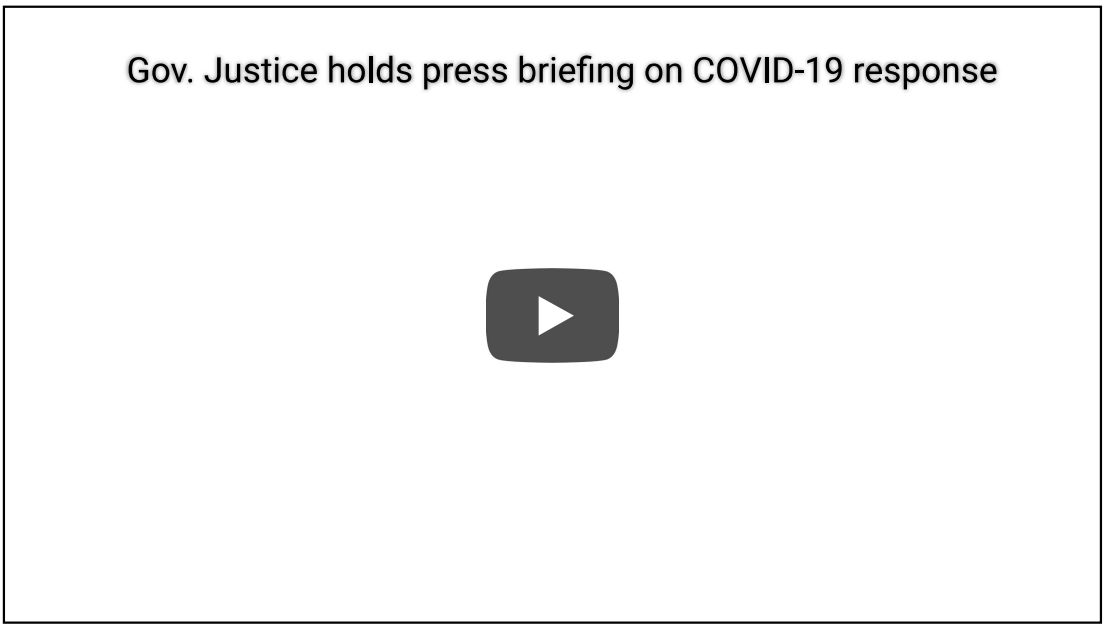
COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice announces closure of West Virginia schools

3/13/2020



CHARLESTON, WV – Gov. Jim Justice announced today that due to the emerging health threat posed by COVID-19, he has ordered the closure of all pre-kindergarten through 12th grade schools in West Virginia.

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There are currently no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in West Virginia. However, it's anticipated that the disease will come to West Virginia soon. The number of completed tests have changed since the Governor's press conference on Friday. As of 1:30 p.m. on March 13, 2020, West Virginia, through its public health lab, has tested 21 residents for COVID-19, with 17 results coming back negative and four pending.

Beginning this afternoon and continuing for the foreseeable future, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources will

provide daily updates on the number of COVID-19 tests and any potential future cases. That information, along with additional alerts and updates, will also be readily available online at **Coronavirus.wv.gov (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx)**.

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“This was a very difficult decision but I know in my heart that closing our schools in an effort to protect our kids, our teachers, and all those they come in contact with is the right thing to do,” Gov. Justice said. “Now what we have to do is fall back on our Superintendent and our education leaders – because they have assured me that they will be ready to take care of our kids who are at risk; to call their homes and check up on them and to find ways to make sure they get fed.

Additionally, our Communities In Schools program will play a big role in this effort."

At the conclusion of the school day on Friday, March 13, all pre-K-12 schools and school-related extracurricular activities will close to students. This order does not apply to West Virginia's childcare system such as daycare centers and home-based childcare providers. Gov. Justice has recommended that all community and private schools also close and follow the guidance of the State.

Over the next 72 hours, the West Virginia Department of Education will develop guidance for pre-K-12 schools to ensure the continuity of important student services, including a strategy for providing meals.

At this time, there is no scheduled date when schools are set to resume normal activity. The situation will continue to be monitored to determine when students should return.

"Rest assured, we will get our kids back in school as fast as it is safe for everyone," Gov. Justice added.

Further information will be provided as it becomes available.

The Governor and/or members of his administration will provide daily COVID-19 updates, Monday-Friday and on weekends as necessary, for the foreseeable future.

For more information about COVID-19 prevention and more, you can 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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