



March 25, 2020

Governor Ralph Northam's Daily Briefing

Daily Numbers

- The increased COVID-19 cases indicates that we are at the start of this pandemic in Virginia and will likely have to deal with this for months, not weeks.
- Virginia now has a total of 391 cases (101 new cases, up from 290 yesterday) with 12 deaths (up from seven yesterday).
- We had two additional deaths yesterday and three more this morning. Two were individuals in Henrico at a Canterbury rehabilitation facility.
- For the latest statistics, click [here](#).

Capacity of the Healthcare System; Need to Healthcare Workers

The Governor discussed the healthcare needs related to COVID-19 treatment in our hospitals. The following are some of the points he shared.

- To treat one ICU patient, up to 10 healthcare professionals are needed, including nurses, an attending physician, three-five consulting physicians, a respiratory therapist, IV tech, radiology tech and pharmacology support.
- Each of these professionals is highly trained and in short supply.
- Virginia is considering looking at licensing regulations, use of medical students and use of the Virginia Medical Reserve Corp to meet the need for healthcare professionals.
- The Virginia Medical Reserve Corp includes 8,000 professionals of which more than 1,500 have volunteered over the past month.
- Virginia is looking for additional volunteers who are 18 years or older and are healthcare professionals who either are or have been licensed. Training is provided online. For more information, visit <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/mrc/>.
- Virginia continues to explore alternative sites to provide access to healthcare if existing facilities don't have the capacity to meet the needs. He noted that Virginia is in the same region as states to our north, including New York. When sites are selected, they will be announced.



PPE and Testing Supplies

- The Governor shared that each healthcare provider uses a new mask, gown and gloves each time he/she visits a patient. This totals approximately 240 PPE/day/patient. This does not include the PPE supply needs for first responders and law enforcement officials. Virginia's supply needs are in the millions.
- Because every state is seeking the same basic supplies, costs have increased significantly.
- The Governor stated that a national effort related to supplies is needed to address the needs for all states.
- Virginia continues to work closely with the business community to secure needed supplies.

Testing

- The Virginia state lab continues to have testing capacity.
- Most new cases have been identified through private testing.
- It was noted that private testing generally has a four to six-day turn-around time while the state lab results are available in less than 24 hours.

SNAP food benefits

- Increased SNAP benefits will be in effect beginning tonight as a result of the federal legislation signed last week. The hope is that the increased benefits will also allow individuals to pick up more groceries at one time, reducing the number of trips to a grocery store.

Childcare guidance

- Guidance has been provided by the Department of Education and Department of Social Services related to childcare. This guidance is attached and is available through DOE's [COVID-19 web page](#).



Parks

- All state parks will be open exclusively for day trips effective Friday. All campgrounds, cabins and other over-night facilities will be closed.

Transportation

- Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine shared that Virginia is working to convert all toll facilities in Virginia to electronic toll collection to the extent possible.
- Virginia currently has 16 tolling facilities, eight that are completely electronic.
- Of the remaining eight facilities, two are owned by VDOT and are being converted to electronic. Virginia is working with the operators of the others to move all to electronic toll collection.
- All 16 facilities accept EZPass, which is free, can be ordered online and delivered, with grocery store pick up available in some cases. More information is available [here](#).
- Virginia is encouraging use of exact change or payment by credit card when possible if an individual does not have an EZPass. They are also exploring use of a “GoToll” app.
- In cases where there are manned toll booths, extra precautions are being taken to sanitize all surfaces and ensure gloves are used.
- The Secretary noted that it is important to keep our roads open to ensure supplies and people can be moved efficiently and safely.

Federal relief package

The U.S. Senate passed a relief package last night. While the details continue to be evaluated, below are some highlights shared by Virginia Secretary of Finance Aubrey Layne:

- The total package is estimated to be \$2 trillion.
- Payments to individuals are estimated to total \$250 billion – \$1,200 for individuals and \$2,400 for families that meet need requirements.
- Enhanced unemployment benefits are estimated to total \$250 billion, allowing an additional \$600/week/person for up to four months with benefits also accessible to independent consultants and gig economy workers.
- Aid to hospitals is estimated to be \$130 billion.
- Loans and aid to small businesses is estimated to be \$350 billion.



- Aid to large businesses in key industries impacted by COVID-19 is estimated to total \$500 billion and will be focused on keeping people employed.
- State and local aid is estimated to be \$150 billion with no state receiving less than \$1.5 billion. Virginia is expected to receive significantly more than this.
- Transportation, agriculture, housing and student loan relief is also included.

Sec. Layne noted that Virginia has both a healthcare and economic challenge. To address the economic challenge, we must first address the healthcare challenge by complying with the restrictions and recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Liberty University

The Governor noted the Liberty University is preparing to welcome their students back to campus. He urged Liberty's president to follow the lead of Virginia's state universities and reconsider his decision to invite students back to campus to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. The Governor does not have the authority to require Liberty University to close its campus.

Individuals who have been in New York

For those individuals who have recently been in New York, a 14-day quarantine is recommended.

To view today's briefing, click [here](#). The next briefing will take place on Friday at 2:00 p.m.



Executive Order re: Elective Surgeries

Following the Governor's briefing, he issued [Order of Public Health Emergency Two](#) which directs all elective surgeries be postponed to preserve PPE supplies. The press release announcing this measure is available [here](#).