



GOVERNOR NORTHAM - COVID-19 BRIEFING, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2020

- 1,484 cases
- 234 new cases since yesterday
- Deaths: 34 (up 7 from yesterday)
- Cluster of cases in Northern Virginia (Arlington, Fairfax County, Prince William County), Henrico, Chesterfield, and the Peninsula

- 305 patients hospitalized
- 145 in ICU beds
- 108 on ventilators

Please stay at home to prevent the spread.

- Virginian's must be realistic in expectations.
- You need to know the truth. No sugar-coating it
- Prepare for the long haul ---- months not weeks.
- Stay at home order means stay at home
- Go out when you need to and not when you want to

Modeling suggests late April to late May for curve flattening in Virginia

- Northam Administration is already thinking about how to “land the plane” on the back side of the curve
- If we can all stay home, we don't give the virus a chance to infect the next person

The virus needs a host to survive and spread

- Let's make it as difficult as possible for the virus to latch on to a host

The Army Corps of Engineers have identified 41 sites for alternative hospitals

- Exxon Mobil site in Fairfax County, adjacent to Inova
- Hampton Convention Center, proximity to Sentara and Riverside
- An unnamed Richmond area site

The state received a third shipment of PPE from the national stockpile. Still need more and working all options for frontline

Upcoming elections – With Virginia May local government elections and the June Congressional primaries, they are working through the best options for holding these elections.

- Working through best options for best way to hold these elections.
- Encouraged to use absentee voting by mail
- Elections vitally important and we will insure they are held

DR. OLIVER

Modeling – There are a number of models in existence. The UVA model is being used by Defense Threat Reduction Agency. Will have a modeling analysis in a few days that has Virginia-specific numbers.

GOVERNOR NORTHAM/TRACY DESHAZOR ON CENSUS

April 1 is Census Day in the U.S.

Because of pandemic, census workers will not go door to door

Census by mail, online, or phone

Accurate count is critical as we work to recover from pandemic

- Important for all to be counted.
- Helps communities shape planning and funding
- Take 10 minutes to fill it out
- The census is completely confidential and the information is not shared with law enforcement, etc.
- The information is only used for statistical purposes. Your social security number is not needed or asked for.

GOVERNOR

– Knows it is hard. Rent mortgage payment due. All are encouraged to apply for unemployment. Evictions suspended for public housing vouchers. Statewide judicial emergency means eviction proceedings suspended through April 26, 2020.

Also – April is an important month for religious holidays for all religions. In times like these we draw strength in our faith. For the safety of all, we need to find other ways to sustain our connection with our faiths.

Thank you for those following social distancing orders. Virginians are stepping up to make masks, buy laptops for students, volunteering for the Medical Corps. We so appreciate everyone stepping up, even if it is staying at home.

Q&A

Q. Homeless concerned about how this affects them when there are no shelters. Is there a statewide plan for assisting the homeless?

A. Secretary Ball: Working with Secretary Lane on securing solutions for that.

Q. How much more PPE do we need? Where are the most shortages? The Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association is calling on Veteran's Hospitals to be opened up. Did the state know about this?

A. Regarding PPE, we need as much as we can get. We are competing with other states and countries. While businesses and folks have stepped up, we are still lacking in the numbers that we need.

Secretary Carey: Incredible demand out there. Allocated is based on inventories and needs. It is changing day by day. They are burning through supply. Manufacturing occurring here in Virginia.

Secretary Hopkins: Regarding veterans and military hospitals --- They were aware of it and in communications with military hospitals across the state. They are engaged in same exercise as other hospitals. We understand their primary mission and they are prepared to serve as best they can.

Q. Field hospital question and PPE. If you set up the sites identified above, are the staff and PPE going to be available and where would they come from?

A. If supply does not increase we will have that constraint.

Q. County and local government finances – Will the state hold off on raising the minimum wage, for example

A. Governor: There are a number of pieces of legislation we are looking at. Haven't made decisions. Talking to the patrons, unions, workers, and labor. He will collectively make a decision in the best interest of Virginia.

Secretary Lane: Every action taken is in support of PPE. Unprecedented event. Economic crisis on the other side. Trying to balance it all and also balance the budget. The 4th quarter is very important. There are lots of requests and strategies. They are talking to General Assembly members and looking at getting the resources. For right now, this public health emergency is job one.

Q. Regarding upcoming elections and because candidates can't hold events. Do you have any guidance for candidates in this time?

A. Governor: times are different, living in a new day. Those candidates are going to have to use social media, think outside the box.

Q. Inmates testing positive. How is this changing behavior in prisons? Early release?

A. Secretary Moran: Two facilities impacted. The Department of Corrections following CDC guidelines for those positive tests. Quarantine and contact investigations. Modified lockdown and limiting movement. The Virginia Parole Board is working overtime. They've released 96 persons on parole. Still considering public safety and that is part of the Parole Board's consideration.

Q. Alternative sites – were any west of Richmond?

A. Secretary Hopkins: Heading out to Charlottesville and Roanoke next week.

Secretary Carey: Looking at the spread of the disease, the site hospitals are in the areas that see the most cases and that are going to deplete their PPE supply.

Q. Department of Corrections – Are you satisfied with that progress and that it is where you need to be?

A. Secretary Moran: The Department of Corrections is doing everything they can. The system means that those that are transient low-level offenses are in their local jails, not prisons. They are looking at each and every one at the state level prisons. They are very serious about it.

Q. Criminal defense attorneys finding inconsistencies in how decisions for bail, prison time . Are you satisfied that Virginia's criminal justice system is responding to the crisis?

A. Secretary Moran: He has been in daily contact with sheriffs, associations, etc. He is hearing that they are responding and releasing folks. Not getting them in on the front end.

Q. Southwest Virginia has a smaller number of cases. Why is this?

A. Governor: We are seeing highest number of positives in denser populations. Rural Virginia is more spread out and don't gather as much in large groups. In terms of testing, when individuals have traveled, etc and if they meet the criteria, they are being tested.

Q. Enforcement? Any changes to testing criteria and prioritization?

A. Governor: Local law enforcement is taking this seriously. If folks do not abide by the 10 or less rule, they are at risk of a citation and a class 1 misdemeanor.

Dr. Tony: The criteria comes from the Virginia Department of Health and has been broadened of late. There is still a limited number of tests, but not at the point where they can do it population-wide. At this point they don't envision changing the criteria.

Q. Testing capacity?

A. The State lab finished automation and doubled their throughput day. The 100 tests a day and same day results now doubled to 200 tests per day. They received new re-agents yesterday and more to come.

Gov Northam: As we look to the May surge that is coming and the amount of testing required, we know we need more efficient testing to help us know about staff exposure, etc. Working every day to improve access to testing and PPE

NEXT BRIEFING – FRIDAY, 2 P.M.