



**GOVERNOR NORTHAM - COVID-19 BRIEFING
MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2020**

**Covid-19 in Virginia
Virginia Department of Health**

Total Cases: 8,990 (+443)
 People Hospitalized: 1,550
 COVID-19-Linked Deaths: 300 (+23)
 People Tested: 56,735

City Breakdown of Cases Virginia Department of Health

Charlottesville	41 (+3)	Newport News	102 (+7)
Danville	28 (+6)	Norfolk	113 (+14)
Hampton	90 (+15)	Petersburg	21 (+2)
Harrisonburg	252 (+151)	Portsmouth	65 (+6)
Hopewell	16 (+2)	Richmond	236 (+59)
Lexington	3	Staunton	8 (+6)
Lynchburg	38 (+4)	Williamsburg	19
Martinsville	0	Winchester	25 (+4)

139 (+31) total outbreaks of COVID-19 across the state

- 77 of the outbreaks are in long-term care facilities (915 cases, 77 deaths)
- 26 in congregate settings (139 cases, 2 deaths)
- 17 in a healthcare setting (54 cases, 0 deaths)
- 13 in correctional facilities (141 cases, 0 deaths)
- 5 cases in an educational setting (10 cases, 0 deaths)
- 28% of the cases are African American.
- 34% of deaths are African American.

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- Testing is key to easing restrictions. Testing has been a problem across the country. Now doing testing in state and private labs, hospitals and universities have created their own tests. Hospitals are scaling up their testing capacity. Backlogs have now been reduced. Getting quicker diagnosis is key. The state lab has increased their capacity. They have equipment from Altria that will help them ramp up to 400 tests per day.
 - The Governor is standing up a **Virginia Testing Work Group**. Governors, labs and health care systems have been competing for swabs, reagents, etc. The work group will help to make sure our efforts are pulling in the same direction for testing capabilities and supplies. Led by Dr. Karen Remley and Dr. Lilian Peake. Helping to assure there is a coordinated statewide testing

plan and working with CDC (that has promised additional staffing and tests). This will ensure those that need to get tested will get testing. Also better managing supplies

- The Virginia Department of Health will expand the data it is sharing with the public starting today. They will start sharing more demographic data.
- Last week's Executive Order dealing with clinicians from other states, failed to include Physician Assistants and nurse practitioners in the medical order. He wants both PAs and nurse practitioners to know they are valued and wanted here and are included in the E.O.

Q. If more people are getting tested and testing positive, is it going to be difficult to follow the trends for 14 days of decreasing cases?

A. Governor: We are following the ratios for testing positive, but also hospitalization data. While the numbers have slowed a bit, and appear to be trending down, we know we have not reached our peak. Peak is still predicted in one model to the later this week. We want to responsibly and safely ease restrictions. We need to see 14 days of decreasing numbers. We haven't gotten there yet.

Q. The Centers for Medicare/Medicaid (CMS) are now requiring nursing homes to let family members know about COVID-19 diagnosis and also boosting transparency.

A. Dr. Furlono: we are looking to shore that up.

Q. Latest VDH data and webpage suggests that Virginia's flu season has come to an end. To what extent does that free up room for COVID-19 patients?

A. Dr. Oliver: The number of patients in hospital today is around 1300. Hospitals have been able to expand their capacity so that they have upwards of 6000 beds. They have been able to manage this. Doesn't see this as being an issue.

Q. Testing task force. How do you expect per capita testing to increase?

A. Dr. Carey: Our focus has been on CDC priority 1 settings. Moving towards the thousands more tests that we need. The work team the Governor announced will be very important. There are still supply shortages but trying to make sure they are using full capacity.

Q. How many tests per day does the state want?

A. Governor Northam: As we move forward we need to look at screening, testing, hotspots and isolation. The testing work group will look at how they do that tracking. This takes resources. They have federal money through CARES Act. They've been working on these things. This task force/work group will coordinate a lot of what they have been doing.

Q. Antibody testing and where does that stand? Are there labs in Virginia doing antibody testing research?

A. VDH: Awaiting a federal validation of the many commercial tests that are on the market. Commercially available tests need to be validated. Regarding antibody and antigen tests, there are several universities and private labs that are in the process. Not aware of anyone doing wide-scale testing at this point. Imperiametrics, Granger are both companies/labs that have told VDH that they are interested.

Q. Reports about food processing plants contributing to outbreaks including some in Virginia. What can be done to improve the flow of information and protect employees in this crisis?

A. Dr. Oliver: Yes, some Virginia facilities have experienced COVID-19 outbreaks. As they did with long term care facilities, the local health districts are working very hard with the management of these companies and facilities on case identification, equipment, and containing the spread. They will continue to do that. “We all want to make sure those workers will be as safe as they can be.”

Q. The President seems to be doubling down on his “Liberate Virginia” tweet. Comments?

A. Governor: Today I was on the call with Vice President Pence where it was reiterated “one team, one mission,” as well as the CDC guidelines for the easing of restrictions. There are mixed messages from the White House. This has entitled folks to protest in Virginia and elsewhere. The Governor reminds Virginians to remember “one team, one mission.” Folks out there protesting to open Virginia back up does not factor into the decision on the easing of restrictions. This is not the time for politics.

Governor Northam: The General Assembly reconvenes on Wednesday, April 22nd. The House of Delegates will be meeting in an open air tent on the Capitol grounds. The Senate will be meeting at the Science Museum. They will be addressing bill and budget amendments. He thanks all legislators that are coming back to take care of the Commonwealth’s business.

Next press conference will probably be on Thursday (Post-Veto Session)