



**Governor Northam Covid 19 Briefing
Friday, March 27, 2020**

- 604 cases
- 93 of the 604 are in those in the 20-29 year old age group or 16%
- Seeing cases of folks in their 50s, 60s and older. Also cases of young people in their 20s.
- 144 new cases since yesterday
- 14 deaths

Stats will be updated at 9 am every day

Seeing a continued rise in Covid19 positive test.
Anticipate this will be the case for some weeks ahead

Call **211** for state hotline to get access and answers on state services

Update on social distancing - The corona virus spreads when people gather together. "Virginians, you need to stay at home. Leave your home, only if it is a necessity. Go out and walk around the park, take a job, etc. but remember to stay 6 feet apart."

Otherwise stay at home for the next few weeks at a minimum to bend the curve downward.

We will see our hospitals overwhelmed. It is up to each of us to do our part to save our family, friends neighbors' lives.

Please take this seriously and stay at home.
Localities have the full authority to enforce this

Testing and PPE - We don't have enough tests or PPE for medical staff
Partly because of supply chain disruption in China.

"Our country needs a national solution. Governor Northam, along with Governor of Maryland and DC Mayor is calling for a federal testing group site for DC, VA, MD as it is home to so many federal workers in critical agencies that must continue to operate. We must be able to test them in real time and also have the bed capacity."

Governor voiced concern that PPE supply continues to be an issue. He said states are bidding against each other, and also bidding against hospital systems and even the federal government. For these reasons, production and distribution of PPE really must be managed at the federal level.

The Governor's has called on the President to use the Defense Production Act to ramp up PPE. Several Virginia companies have stepped up: Micron, Home Depot, and Dominion, etc.

Please go to [Virginia.gov/covid19supplies](https://www.virginia.gov/covid19supplies) to access survey to help fill severe shortages of specific infection-control products, healthcare supplies and other emergency relief.

Dept. of Corrections have made thousands of face guards that are under assessment. Va-based manufacturers - all working on it but really needs to be solved

Potential Sites for Emergency Beds

Army Corps of Engineers working on it. Governor spoke with congressional delegation and they have supported the Virginia National Guard with supplies and emergency logistics. The Governor is speaking with faith leaders, local governments, etc. to keep the flow of information going.

Other Covid News:

Hospitals, first responders, truckers, doctors, nurses ----
We need to keep them and their families safe and healthy

President Trump will see off USNS Comfort on Saturday. The Comfort will be going to New York and will allow New York hospitals to support Covid patients. We are proud that Virginia can help New York.

We are in this together. Stay home stay away from groups.

The Governor thanked VPM and all the media that has been covering the crisis and opened it up for Questions and Answers Several reporters phoned in their questions.

Q&A

Q. National Guard funding and do we have authority to use the National Guard without federal funding?

A. Secretary Carlos Hopkins: Yes, the Guard can be deployed without federal funding. Two types. Governor Northam requested federal funding. The Virginia Guard has been engaged year round. They've brought more members into active duty. Helping logistics, moving supplies, etc.

Q Have you considered statewide rationing criteria given the number of cases?

A. Secretary Carey: Based on work with Emergency Management and VDH and the Hospital Association, they have a plan (dusted off plan from years ago). Most important thing is to slow the spread of disease and contingency planning. We need the people of Virginia to stay home if you don't need to be out. Social distancing.

Q. How realistic is federalized testing in the greater DC area?

A. Very realistic. Not enough re-agent and swabs. Our state lab and some private labs and hospital testing is expanding. But density and vital personnel make it imperative to have that federal capacity. The Governor's collectively have asked for national leadership to make testing more efficient. Inventory of equipment to disperse, etc needs national/federal direction. We are all competing for same equipment.

Q. Where are priorities now for state public employee raises

A. Governor: We are looking at it on a day to day basis. Also, the CARES Act just passed and we will be making decisions between now and April 22 Veto Session.

Q. Why are ABC stores considered essential?

A. Secretary Moran: We are able to social distance in the stores

Q. What does Va look to receive from CARES Act

A. Secretary Lane: \$3.3 billion. \$1.8 directly to state to offset revenue loss or other expenses of COVID; \$1.5 billion to cities/localities.

Localities over 500,000 (in Virginia only Fairfax County) will be able to access more.

Q. Testing issue. Southwest Virginia cases are very low and but concern that there is insufficient testing. How have testing resources been dispersed statewide?

A. Secretary Carey: State lab is a great resource and supports those tests from health districts. Re shortage of testing capability: Didn't answer question.

Q. Juvenile detention centers - Families are paying (court ordered) child support payments to cover cost of education in the system. Will payments be suspended?

A. Moran: DJJ has implemented stringent (every 72 hrs) to insure safe and sound conditions in the facilities. This will continue throughout this crisis. Not accepting any further entrants.

Q. From the Farmville Herald: Hearing that VCU is reopening a hospital in the Farmville area to care for Covid patients.

A. Secretary Carey: Focused on bending the curve so realities don't come to pass. State is looking at the planning. State plans are to help health systems expand on their footprint. Working on a daily basis to support the plans with regional coalitions and using FEMA, National Guard to fill out that footprint in this crisis. We look forward in the days ahead for working through these plans. We hope it is not needed, but they are planning in case.

Q .From the Progress Index: Tests. Has there been special emphasis on getting tests to military bases? Ft. Lee had a case earlier this week. What reassurances can you give those localities that all is being done to get tests and priority of testing to military bases?

A. Governor Northam: We have a level of priority throughout the state for who is being tested. The Virginia state lab is in active communication with the military establishment. We are partnering with them to provide testing. Request they work through VDH and use same criteria.

Q. What is Virginia's bed capacity?

A. Secretary Carey: 1800 patients. Broad distribution of testing support to where it is critically needed. Have brought in instrumentation and hope to expand it in the next week or two. They are currently doing the FDA test that requires manual processing. Looked into instrumentation to process larger batches of tests at a single time which would increase capacity. Again, supply chain issues are limiting their ability to do tests. "We are all try to navigate through."

Q. Road construction projects in Northern Virginia ---- Has there been any thought to ceasing the road construction?

A. Secretary Valentine: The federal government has determined construction and maintenance to be an essential process. VDOT has 7700 personnel. One half is teleworking. The other half are working on critical projects throughout Virginia. They are all using standards and practices for equipment, trucks

Q. Can you talk about the closure of recreation and entertainment centers? Apparently private campgrounds are not closing to overnight visitors. This is putting a strain on local governments. What should they do?

A. Secretary Moran: There will be further direction on this tonight. No overnight stays for state parks and this will go for private campgrounds too.

Q. Are there any more closures/shut down restrictions being considered?

A. Governor Northam: It is a dynamic situation and changes hourly. The guidelines as of today will continue.

Q. Why not issue a stay at home order?

A. Governor Northam: You are talking semantics here. He has said repeatedly to stay at home unless it is essential for you to get out. All the states are giving the same direction and that is to stay at home.

Q. From Bristol, Va: Testing availability in Southwest, Virginia and PPE and medical supplies. What assurance can you give rural Virginia that they are a priority?

A. Secretary Carey: The way PPE is allocated is through the local health districts and those protocols remain. There is a shortage nationally that translates to the state and to the health districts. The rurals are very much a part of the state's allocation.

Q. Testing, beds, ventilators ---- Can you speak to the next few days, how many beds are available? Volunteer medical corps?

A. Secretary Carey: The Virginia Department of Health Professions is allowing reciprocity from other states. Regarding the number of beds: 2000 ICU beds and ventilators

Governor Northam: Be vigilant. Social distancing. Wash you hands.

We will get through this. The Governor acknowledged and thanked his staff and the people surrounding him in keeping all of us safe. The Governor said he was going to inject some levity into this very serious situation ---- The Governor and his staff are looking kind of casual and are not wearing neckties. The reason why: neckties harbor contagious pathogens. In light of protecting staff and keeping them healthy, they've all been asked to not wear neckties.