

Nebraska State and Legislative Actions:

Governor Update

Gov. Ricketts began his Tuesday press conference by warning any out of state travelers planning on coming home from areas with widespread COVID-19 that they will need to self-quarantine for 14 days upon returning home to Nebraska. Ricketts also announced that Nebraska received more than 100 tests back from private labs and that the state is expanding its testing efforts. Ricketts did warn that with expanded testing will likely come more positive cases, however it will ensure we have the data we need in order to better combat the outbreak. He said the state is 'pooling' tests now, which means combining five tests into one test tube. If it comes back 'negative,' then you know all were negative; but if one is 'positive,' then those five people will have to be retested. This expands capacity to 400+ tests a day by public labs.

Hospital Readiness

CEOs from both Bryan Health and CHI Health were present at the press conference. Bryan Health CEO Russ Gronewold said that its hospitals are preparing for a surge and trying to free up beds. Gronewold said that all elective surgeries had been postponed as of Wednesday. Gronewold also said that Bryan Health converted older anesthesia machines to ventilators, along with previous supplies, and now has 100 or more ready to go. Bryan is also working with rural hospitals to help ensure they are prepared for possible surges. Bryan has started drive-through testing as of Tuesday, but it's by appointment only.

Cliff Robertson, CEO of CHI Health, said he is planning for Lincoln and Omaha, but also the numerous CHI hospitals across the state. Robertson said CHI Health can access resources from across the country since its part of a larger national network. CHI is looking at opening a unit at St. Elizabeth in Lincoln, as well as Midlands Hospital in Papillion to help increase capacity in the event of a surge of coronavirus.

Q&A

During Q&A, Ricketts was asked if Nebraska would be adjusting property tax payment deadlines (due April 1st) and the Governor said no, in part because he recognizes that delaying the deadline would be very disruptive to political subdivisions that depend on this tax base and that there isn't enough time before April 1 to study the total impact of a delay. Ricketts was also asked about comments made by President Trump yesterday afternoon that suggested Nebraska was getting hit less dramatically than other states. Ricketts said he didn't make the connection that it meant Nebraska could relax restrictions sooner and encouraged Nebraskans to continue social distancing.

SBA Loans for Non-profits

The Small Business Administration approved the Nebraska declaration of statewide economic injury on March 20. This declaration will allow small businesses, as well as non-profits and small agricultural cooperatives, to apply for economic injury disaster loans ("EIDLs") through the SBA. ¹Terms and Conditions include:

¹ <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/Information/EIDLloans>

- **Loan Amount:** Applicants may borrow up to \$2 million. The amount of the loan is determined based on the economic injury incurred, while subtracting other sources of funding and relief that applicants may have obtained. The SBA has the authority to waive the \$2,000,000 limit for businesses that are major sources of employment.
- **Interest Rate:** 3.75% annum. The rate is determined by formula and fixed for the life of the loan.
- **Term:** Up to 30 years.
- **Collateral:** Required for Economic Injury Disaster Loans over \$25,000. Collateral can be real estate, or personal property or assets.
- **Use of Proceeds:** Payroll, rent, and other fixed expenses that cannot be met as a result of the disaster. EIDLs cannot be used to refinance long-term debt.
- **Eligibility:** Small businesses are defined by the SBA's Size Standards.
- **Application Deadline:** December 21, 2020.

Grants for Health Centers

\$522,777 was allocated to seven federally qualified health care systems in Nebraska from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services amid the COVID-19 outbreak.² Included was Bluestem Health Main Clinics in Lincoln, which has 5 locations throughout the city. Other centers that have received a portion of the funds are Heartland Health Center in Grand Island, Charles Drew Health Center and OneWorld Community Health Centers in Omaha, Midtown Health Center in Norfolk, Community Action Health Center in Gering, and Good Neighbor Community Health Center in Columbus. The grants will help these centers with testing needs, medical supplies, and expanding telehealth offerings.

Nebraska Tax Day

From Gov. Ricketts' website:³ "As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and actions taken by national health authorities to limit the spread of the disease, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recently granted federal income tax relief to taxpayers. The IRS has automatically extended the tax filing and payment deadlines for federal income taxes from April 15, 2020 to July 15, 2020. The official release from the IRS can be found by [clicking here](#).

The State of Nebraska is providing this same income tax relief to state income taxpayers. The tax filing deadline will automatically be extended to July 15, 2020 for state income tax payments and estimated payments that were originally due on April 15, 2020. Nebraskans who are able to pay earlier are encouraged to do so to help the State manage its cash flow.

For Nebraskans affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in ways that impair their ability to comply with their state tax obligations for taxes administered by the Nebraska Department of Revenue, the Tax Commissioner may grant penalty or interest relief depending on individual circumstances."

Federal:

As of Tuesday afternoon, the United States Senate was finalizing an economic stimulus plan. It is said to likely pass by tonight, and if that is the case, we will provide a breakdown of what the package entails in tomorrow's update.

² https://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/federal-politics/lincoln-health-center-included-in-federal-coronavirus-grants/article_bd1027af-a8e8-5018-bc6e-0130cca0007e.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook_Lincoln_Journal_Star&fbclid=IwAR0br3JaxtRgsALQWlv_Ej5enk4zSVktlZy0a76HQWod0K6egGAJx6SZwAM

³ <https://governor.nebraska.gov/press/gov-ricketts-announces-extended-tax-deadline-overviews-state's-continuity-plans>