

Nebraska State and Legislative Actions:

Governor Update:

Financial Institutions

Gov. Ricketts announced an executive order related to banks, credit unions, installment loan providers and other financial institutions. The executive order speeds up the implementation of online notarization, postpones annual examinations of installment loan businesses, and postpones audits for banks and other financial institutions until after the pandemic.

Grocery Stores

Gov. Ricketts invited Kathy Siefken with the Nebraska Grocery Industry Association to provide an update. Siefken emphasized that grocery shoppers need to take the guidelines seriously and encouraged that shoppers comply with the following:

1. If the parking lot is full, come back later.
2. Designate 1 shopper per household.
3. Plan your trip for once a week and do not hoard groceries.
4. Shop with your eyes. Only touch groceries you intend to purchase.
5. Keep social distancing with employees and customers.

PPE

Gov. Ricketts asked that if businesses purchased masks and other PPE and no longer have a need for the equipment, these businesses should consider donating the equipment to people who come into contact with the public every day like healthcare workers and first responders.

Agriculture

Gov. Ricketts announced that the Nebraska Department of Agriculture released guidelines for sales barns during the pandemic. Sales barns are considered essential businesses and are expected to maintain social distances like other essential businesses. A copy of the guidance can be found [here](#).

Insurance

During the question and answer period, Gov. Ricketts shared that United Healthcare and Medica are among the health insurance providers that have telehealth reimbursement codes in place. Neither company is reimbursing telehealth at in-person rates as Blue Cross, Blue Shield announced last week. Ricketts highly encourages other insurance providers to follow the lead of Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Health Care Flexibility

On Tuesday, Gov. Pete Ricketts issued a new [executive order](#) that will give Nebraska health care facilities more flexibility in responding to coronavirus. ¹ The executive order largely targets Critical Access Hospitals, which normally have limits of 25 beds and 96-hour length-of-stay. Through the order, CAHs will be able to keep patients longer, and increase the number of beds within a facility. Other provisions of the executive order include:

- Waives a time limit on complex nursing home interventions in assisted living facilities.
- Modifies the training and testing requirements for nurse aides, medication aides, and dining assistants to allow individuals with enough training and appropriate supervision to serve temporarily in these capacities.
- Defers requirements for the renewal and implementation dates of facility licenses and extends the licenses so that they do not need to be renewed during this emergency.
- Waives the Certificate of Need Act to allow hospitals to add or convert any beds into long-term care beds or rehabilitation beds in appropriate locations to care for COVID-19 patients who no longer require acute care support.
- Waives the licensed bed limit if additional unlicensed beds are available or could be added for use in treating COVID-19 cases or to meet the needs of non-COVID-19 patients.
- Directs the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to establish guidance for payment of Medicaid services via telehealth.

Federal:

Special Enrollment

On Tuesday evening, a senior administration official revealed that the Trump administration will not seek to reopen enrollment through the Affordable Care Act amidst the coronavirus pandemic.² However, anyone who loses their employer-based coverage can sign up for Obamacare policies within 60 days of being uninsured. In the past weeks, Democratic lawmakers and insurance organizations have advocated to reopen the exchanges in order to provide an opportunity for the uninsured to obtain health coverage. The eleven states that oversee their own exchanges, as well as Washington D.C., have already launched special enrollment periods.

¹ <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Gov-Ricketts-Signs-Executive-Order-Giving-Flexibility-to-Healthcare-Facilities.aspx>

² <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/31/politics/affordable-care-act-obamacare-open-enrollment-trump/index.html>