



*COVID-19 State and Federal Update*  
Thursday, April 2, 2020

## *Nebraska State and Legislative Actions:*

### Governor Update

Gov. Ricketts began his Thursday conference by announcing 56 Nebraska counties are now under directed health measures, <sup>1</sup> and that Nebraska schools are not allowed to have in person classes through May 31<sup>st</sup>. He also reminded that elective dental and veterinary services should be postponed and encouraged dentists and veterinarians to donate any protective equipment they have to hospitals and first responders.

### Quarantine Space

Gov. Ricketts announced that the State of Nebraska and the University of Nebraska system have reached an agreement allowing the State to utilize dormitory space for those who need a place to quarantine but do not have a place to do so. Gov. Ricketts also said the space could be used for those recovering from coronavirus that are ready to leave the hospital but still need to isolate.

### Unemployment

Gov. Ricketts issued a new executive order that extends coverage to new groups of people, as well as extends previous waiver provisions until August. The Governor warned Nebraskans of quitting their jobs in hopes of collecting unemployment. He said that people who quit their jobs are not eligible, and that unemployment is reserved for people who have lost their jobs due to no fault of their own. He also said that if you are called by your employer to come back to work and you don't, you will lose unemployment benefits because that's considered quitting.

Labor Commissioner John Albin explained new benefits for self-employed, gig workers, and other workers who are not part of traditional unemployment. Albin urged those people to go ahead and file for state unemployment in order to get things started. Albin said that the State has received as many claims in the past three weeks as it did for all of 2019, and because of this it will take time to process unemployment claims so it's best to get the process started by applying now.

### Community Relief

First Lady Suzanne Shore announced a new partnership between Nebraska Impact and the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation to help communities meet the needs of children and families amid the COVID-19 outbreak. Shore said funds will be used for a multitude of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://governor.nebraska.gov/press/gov-ricketts-announces-15-counties-north-and-central-nebraska-now-included-state's-directed>

things such as restocking food pantries, supplying low income students with school supplies while learning from home, and helping people pay rent. For more information on the initiative please click [here](#).

#### Medicaid 1135 Waiver, Appendix K filed

Today, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care submitted a 1135 waiver and filed an Appendix K as part of its ongoing response to Covid-19. The 1135 waiver requests, among other things, flexibility to waive prior authorizations for Medicaid fee-for-service patients when clinically appropriate; the ability to waive revalidations and site visits for provider enrollment; the ability to waive renewals of pre-screening and resident reviews for nursing facilities; and extends time limits for Medicaid recipients to request appeals hearings. A [FAQ](#) and [copy](#) of the waiver are listed on DHHS's website.

The Department also submitted an Appendix K for individuals who receive services on the Aged and Disabled (AD) Medicaid waiver. Nebraska last submitted an Appendix K last year during the spring flooding incident. Among the options available under the Covid-19 related Appendix K are:

- 14 additional days annually of respite hours
- Flexibility to raise rates
- Waiving the annual Level of Care (LOC) assessment requirement when the service coordinator cannot complete the assessment by phone or electronic means
- Ability to remain eligible for the AD Waiver even if services are not used during the pandemic; and
- Allows Chore, Respite, Extra Care for Children with Disabilities and Home Delivered Meals to be administered in alternate settings during the pandemic.

More information about the [Appendix K](#) is available on DHHS' website.

### *Federal:*

#### Social Security

Americans receiving social security benefits will automatically receive economic stimulus payments, regardless if they file taxes or not, according to the United States Treasury Department.<sup>2</sup> There had been confusion as to whether Social Security recipients who don't normally file taxes would have to file a tax return in order to receive the money. However, the Treasury Department said Wednesday that those beneficiaries will automatically receive the money. The IRS will use the information that the Social Security Administration has on file and recipients will not have to take any action.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/01/politics/social-security-stimulus-payments/index.html>