

Nebraska State and Legislative Actions:

Nebraska Accommodation Project

On Friday, Gov. Ricketts announced the expansion of the Nebraska Accommodation Project, or NAP, in response to COVID-19. The program is a collaborative between the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the University of Nebraska system, and the Nebraska National Guard, which aims to provide space for individuals to quarantine or isolate. From the [press release](#):

“The program for the general public will be rolled out in Omaha and other localities will follow. Dormitories on the University of Nebraska Omaha UNO campus will be utilized for those who are interested and meet the criteria for accommodation. The program differs from the first responders lodging program announced last week in that individuals who are under quarantine or isolation will not be able to leave these facilities until their quarantine or isolation periods have ended.”

Governor Update

Note: Gov. Ricketts ended his conference early today in order to fulfill an appearance on Fox News this afternoon. There were no special guest speakers in attendance, so today's Governor Update is shorter than usual.

Gov. Ricketts began his Monday press briefing by announcing he would be lifting the restriction on elective surgeries beginning May 4. Hospitals that have over 30% of beds, ICU beds, and ventilators available will be allowed to resume elective surgeries. This also includes elective veterinary and dental surgeries, as well as ambulatory surgical centers and inpatient hospitals.

Q&A

Q: Concerns about Grand Island St. Francis Hospital being overwhelmed?

A: Dr. Anthone: We have been in constant contact with the hospital and transferring patients to other hospitals as needed. Things are under control in Grand Island.

Q: What kind of crisis communications are in place for non-English speakers?

A: Ricketts: We will be hosting a press conference in Spanish to better communicate with the Spanish-speaking population in Nebraska. Ricketts also mentioned that information has been giving to many meatpacking workers, in their respective languages.

Q: What would you say to protesters saying their rights are being violated?

A: Ricketts: States have always had the ability in emergencies to restrict rights on a temporary basis.

Q: What impact will record low gas prices have on Nebraska?

A: Ricketts: It directly impacts our ethanol industry, since a large amount of our corn produced in Nebraska is used in ethanol production.

Federal:

Essential Workers & Legal Immunity

Groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Americans for Prosperity have been lobbying lawmakers on the topic of legal immunity should employees get sick with COVID-19. According to the U.S. Chamber, businesses are concerned that the influx of lawsuits could overwhelm businesses, and in some extreme cases: bankrupt businesses. To read more on the issue and lobbying efforts, please visit [here](#).

Congress

On Monday, it was reported that lawmakers and the Trump administration are nearing a deal to extend funding for the small business lending program. ¹ Also included in the package would be additional funding to hospitals and coronavirus testing efforts. The package is said to be approximately \$450 billion.

The Senate convened this afternoon; however, no deal was made. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has scheduled another session for Tuesday. “The Senate regretfully will not be able pass more funding for Americans’ paychecks today,” McConnell said. “However, since this is so urgent, I’ve asked that the Senate meet again tomorrow in a new session.” McConnell expressed that he felt progress was being made in reaching an agreement.

¹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/congress-trump-administration-near-deal-on-coronavirus-aid-to-small-businesses-11587392753>