

## *State and Legislative Updates:*

### Medicaid Update

Late last week, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services provided an update in regard to Medicaid expansion. DHHS reported that it will be able to begin accepting applications on August 1, and that the new program will be ready on October 1 as scheduled. From the [press release](#):

“Medicaid expansion enrollees will receive Basic benefits through a managed care program which integrates physical health, behavioral health, and pharmacy benefits into a comprehensive, coordinated program.

DHHS plans to utilize a demonstration waiver of Section 1115 of the Social Security Act to allow Medicaid expansion beneficiaries the opportunity to qualify for enhanced Prime benefits by participating in wellness, personal responsibility, and community engagement activities. Prime benefits include Basic services plus dental, vision and over-the-counter medications.

As the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has been focused on the COVID-19 outbreak, the 1115 waiver has yet to receive final approval from CMS. This final approval is necessary in order to offer Medicaid enrollees the opportunity to implement the Prime services program. However, Prime benefits are automatically available for eligible 19 and 20-year-olds, pregnant women and medically frail individuals.”

### Governor Update

Gov. Pete Ricketts began his Tuesday press briefing by providing updates on the TestNebraska initiative. Through the program, 22,200 people were tested last week—which averages approximately 3,171 tests per day. The week before yielded 13,300 tests. Ricketts also announced that Nebraska currently has between 60 and 90 days worth of PPE available.

### Business Survey

Cathy Lang, director of the Nebraska Business Development Center, joined Gov. Ricketts to discuss the results of the Nebraska Business Response Survey. Lang revealed the top 3 concerns of participants, which were: the financial impact on operations, duration of the outbreak, and decreasing customer and consumer confidence. Lang also reported that the survey had 4,500 responses, with 87% of respondents reporting negative impacts to their businesses. To view the full report from the survey, click [here](#).

### Executive Orders

Gov. Ricketts announced that he would be extending his [executive order](#) on public board meetings through the month of June. The executive order allows public boards the flexibility to hold meetings virtually. However, the Governor said he would not be extending the order past June.

## *Federal:*

### Congress

On Friday, the United States House of Representatives passed a rule change that will allow lawmakers to vote remotely, as well as pushed forward a proposed fourth coronavirus aid package known as the Heroes Act.<sup>1</sup> However, Senate Republicans still are not convinced the \$3 trillion package is needed yet, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell saying last week “I don’t think we have yet felt the urgency of acting immediately—that time could come buy I don’t think it has yet.”<sup>2</sup>

This morning, Vice President Mike Pence and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin met with House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to discuss the economy. After the meeting McCarthy was asked if he had a change of heart regarding another relief package, to which he said no. As for now, it remains unclear if the proposed package will move forward.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/15/politics/house-vote-covid-aid-3-trillion-remote-voting/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/19/politics/coronavirus-stimulus-congress/index.html>