



State & Federal Update

Friday, May 22, 2020

## State and Legislative Updates:

### Chamber Toolkit

The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry launched an online toolkit for businesses and industry leaders. It contains numerous resources on COVID-19 in relation to a wide array of topics such as: reopening, employee privacy, preparation and response, and tax relief to name a few. Check it out [here](#).

### Governor Update

Gov. Ricketts began his Friday press briefing by reminding Nebraskans to be careful over Memorial Day weekend. He said to continue to adhere to the current guidelines, which call for no groups greater than ten people, social distancing, and practicing good hygiene. The governor also reminded Nebraskans that the virus does not discriminate and is affecting people of all races. He offered the following perspective using population statistics versus statistics on COVID-19 patients in Douglas County:

	<u>% of Population</u>		<u>COVID-19 Patients</u>
Black:	11.4%	vs.	10.2%
Hispanic:	13%	vs.	47%
Asian:	4%	vs.	15%
White:	80%	vs.	17.5%

### Schools

Education Commissioner Matt Blomstedt joined Gov. Ricketts to discuss reopening guidelines for schools. Blomstedt said school officials have been working on the [Launch Nebraska](#) initiative, and said the process has been taking shape. Blomstedt said that some in-person learning opportunities will be possible over the summer, mainly summer school. This will be possible by using a 15-person per room rule. He said that with the loosened restrictions announced yesterday, some graduations that were postponed later this summer will likely be able to take place—especially if the ceremony is done outdoors.

### Q&A

Q: Are swimming pools allowed to open under the [new guidelines](#)?

A: Ricketts: Yes, as long as social distancing and capacity guidelines are followed.

Q: Do you expect to see a spike in cases after Memorial Day?

A: Ricketts: It is up to Nebraskans to do the right thing, which most have been. Celebrate with your household members, or do not have/attend a gathering greater than 10 people. If Nebraskans follow the rules, we will be in fine shape.

Q: What are the current hospital statistics for Omaha, where cases are on the rise?

A: Dr. Anthone: Currently there are 135 hospitalized patients. The capacity for hospital beds in Omaha is at 30% (same as yesterday), and ICU beds are at 20%.

Q: Eleven state senators have signed and sent you a letter asking you to use CARES Act funds for rental assistance to help those out of work. Response?

A: Ricketts: I have not had a chance to read the letter yet but stay tuned. We are currently working on a plan on how to use the CARES Act funds.

## *Federal:*

### Congress

The United States Senate recessed Thursday without voting on an agreement that would double the time Paycheck Protection Program loans could be used by small businesses. <sup>1</sup> Currently, businesses that received PPP loans early on must use them by May 29. While there is reportedly wide bipartisan support, the body failed to gain unanimous consent before adjourning for the holiday weekend. The agreement will likely not be finalized until early June.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/lawmakers-seek-to-double-duration-of-small-business-loans-11590058811>