

Nebraska State and Legislative Actions:

Executive Order

On Thursday, Gov. Ricketts issued and signed an executive order that will speed up the processing of unemployment claims. The new EO amends unemployment benefit eligibility to be backdated to March 15, 2020—replacing March 22, 2020. This allows for one additional week of COVID-19 unemployment eligibility. To read more on the order, please see the press release [here](#).

Guidance on Faith-Based Services, Weddings, & Funerals

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has released its complete guidelines for houses of worship, as well as weddings and funerals. If you are interested in the guidelines or would like a copy of the DHHS guidance sheet, please see [here](#).

Governor Update

Gov. Ricketts began his Friday press briefing by declaring May as ‘Beef Month’ in Nebraska. Steve Wellman, director of Nebraska Department of Agriculture, joined the Governor to discuss Nebraska beef producers. Wellman said Nebraska serves 18% of the world’s meat, and we continue to improve over time. For example, Nebraska produces the same amount of beef as it did in 1970, but with 33% fewer animals.

UNMC

Gov. Ricketts announced that UNMC has crafted a playbook of guidelines for meat processing facilities. He introduced UNMC Executive Director of Emergency Management and Biopreparedness Shelly Schwedhelm. Schwedhelm said some of the guidelines include changing the airflow in the facilities, installing barriers between workers, and ensuring hand sanitizer, soap, and water is readily available for employees.

Q&A

Q: What is being done to expand rural broadband for students who don’t have internet access?

A: Ricketts: The Public Service Commission launched the [‘Million Dollar Grant’](#) program in late March to aid in expanding broadband access in rural Nebraska.

Q: How many cases/deaths have been tied to long-term care facilities in Nebraska thus far?

A: Ricketts: 242 total cases and 48 deaths have been tied to long-term care facilities. Approximately 52 facilities have been impacted. Currently, there are 72 recorded COVID-19 related deaths in Nebraska.

Q: What are your thoughts on the protestors at the Capitol today? (Over the lunch hour, about 20 people stood outside the Nebraska State Capitol and held a “Open Nebraska” rally like those in other states)

A: Gov. Ricketts stood by his choices in both placing restrictions and loosening them. He said the number one goal is to protect our healthcare system. He understands people growing tired of guidelines, but we must take things one day at a time.

Federal:

**No federal news to report today but stay tuned next week for updates on the United States Senate as the body reconvenes on Monday.*

