

## *Nebraska State and Legislative Actions:*

### SNAP

Nebraska Applesseed sent a [letter](#) to Gov. Pete Ricketts this afternoon, urging him to enact Pandemic-EBT, or P-EBT. P-EBT is a temporary program under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that helps families with kids on free or reduced-lunch programs during the pandemic. Many states have recently enacted the program, however Nebraska has not. If implemented, P-EBT would provide about \$114 per month per child to families in Nebraska to purchase food during the pandemic. Other Nebraska organizations that joined Nebraska Applesseed in signing the letter were the Center for Rural Affairs, Food Bank for the Heartland, Voices for Children in Nebraska, and Women's Fund of Omaha, among others.

### Governor Update

Gov. Pete Ricketts began his Tuesday press briefing by announcing that over 200 Nebraskans were tested through the Test Nebraska yesterday. The testing took place at sites in Grand Island and Omaha. CHI Health and the Nebraska National Guard were on hand at the sites to help administer the tests. The Test Nebraska test lab has also been set up and is being handled by CHI Health at its St. Elizabeth campus in Lincoln.

### CHI Health

Derek Vance, president of CHI St. Elizabeth, said CHI is honored to help assist the state with processing tests. Vance said employees worked quickly to get the lab ready and worked around the clock to become familiar with equipment. The lab at St. Elizabeth will operate 24/7 and receive tests daily from the Nebraska State Patrol. The lab has the capacity to analyze 3,000 tests a day, and 15 to 25 people will be working in the lab.

### Q&A

Q: What about antibody tests in Nebraska?

A: Ricketts: So far, 5 antibody tests have been approved, but Nebraska is not focused on those tests currently. It is possible the state explores the tests later, but the focus now is tests that determine if someone currently has the virus.

Q: How much has the state spent on PPE?

A: Ricketts: \$25 million. As far as ventilators, the state has spent \$58,000.

Q: Why hasn't a single inmate been tested for COVID-19 when 5 corrections workers have tested positive?

A: Ricketts: Inmates are being treated like everyone else and will only be tested if they are showing symptoms.

Q: Are you concerned about a meat shortage with the news that some [grocery stores](#) will be limiting the amount of meat customers can buy?

A: Ricketts: I do not think we currently have a meat shortage, but I think there may be less choices and variety.

## *Federal:*

### Vaccines

On Monday, Pfizer began conducting a new coronavirus vaccine trial in the United States. <sup>1</sup> The vaccine, which is known as a mRNA vaccine, was developed by Pfizer in partnership with BioNTech out of Germany. The trial will have 360 participants, while a similar trial in Germany will have approximately 200. Other companies such as Moderna and Inovio have begun vaccine trials already in the United States, and other companies such as Johnson and Johnson have announced vaccine plans.

### Congress

This afternoon, Democrats failed to force a vote that would have provided more transparency regarding the Small Business Administration. <sup>2</sup> Democrats were hoping to gain more oversight of the SBA, specifically real-time data on who is receiving PPP loans. However, Sen. Marco Rubio, who is also the chairman of the Small Business Committee, objected the effort and argued that the move could impact the ability of the SBA to work quickly during a time where the agency is already overwhelmed.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/05/05/850547834/pfizer-begins-coronavirus-vaccine-trial-in-u-s>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/05/politics/small-business-administration-oversight-senate-vote/index.html>