

Nebraska State and Legislative Actions:

Guidelines

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services released several new guidance documents regarding the reopening of businesses. These guidelines are intended for those employed in the salon, massage therapy, body art and tattoo, and dental industries. If you'd like to view the documents, please visit [here](#) for the various handouts.

Children's Mental Health Month

Nebraska DHHS issued a [press release](#) this morning, announcing May as Children's Mental Health Month. According to the release, common mental disorders, and symptoms associated, typically start in early childhood or teenage years. In addition, diagnoses of depression and anxiety are more common with increased age. DHHS encourages Nebraskans to do the following to promote mental health in children:

- **Parents:** You know your child best. Talk to your child's healthcare professional if you have concerns about the way your child behaves at home, in school, or with friends.
- **Youth:** It is just as important to take care of your mental health as it is to take care of your physical health. If you are angry, worried, or sad, do not be afraid to talk about your feelings and reach out to a parent, caregiver or trusted adult. If you have a mental health challenge or illness, remember, you are not your illness. You are an awesome individual who has an illness that effects your brain.
- **Healthcare professionals:** Early diagnosis and treatment are very important.
- **Teachers/School administrators:** Early identification is important. Work with families and healthcare professionals if you have concerns about the mental health of a child in your school. This [toolkit](#) can help you.

Governor Update

Gov. Ricketts began his Friday press briefing by asking Nebraskans to continue being vigilant in their efforts to control the spread of COVID-19, including to continue to work from home if you are able. Ricketts also announced that Nebraska has tested over 1,500 people each day, for the past nine days.

Veterans

Director of the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs John Hilgert joined the Governor to discuss plans surrounding Memorial Day. Hilgert announced that there will be a virtual recognition ceremony, beginning at 8 a.m. on Memorial Day. Guards from various veterans' groups will be present, standing guard around a display of candles and flowers inside the Rotunda at the Nebraska State Capitol. Hilgert

also announced that the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs is launching virtual services on its website. Through the virtual service, veterans will be able to chat in real time with a state service officer, and apply for benefits, among other things.

New Parents

Director of Administrative Services Jason Jackson announced that state office buildings will be making some changes to better accommodate employees who are new parents. This will include rooms for nursing, a primary wellness insurance plan that will cover more costs for prenatal and delivery care, parking accommodations, and a new program through the Department of Administrative Services that will allow parents to bring their babies to work with them. Jackson said other states have made such accommodations, including neighboring state Kansas.

Q&A

Q: Is the state planning on helping test residents of South Omaha?

A: Ricketts: Yes, we are currently working on that with organizations such as OneWorld Community Health Center.

Q: Should Nebraskans be concerned about the growing number of COVID-19 cases?

A: Ricketts: No, we have taken dramatic steps to social distance and minimize interactions. We flattened the curve, and it is evident we were successful as our healthcare system has not been compromised at all.

Q: Will there be Nebraska Football this year?

A: Ricketts: Not sure, that is something for the University of Nebraska and NCAA to decide. Under certain conditions, I could see making it work.

Federal:

Congress

Sens. Bernie Sanders, Kamala Harris, and Ed Markey announced today that they would be introducing a bill that would provide monthly payments to Americans through the remainder of the pandemic, plus three months after. ¹ The payments would be made available to all US residents, including undocumented immigrants who pay taxes, who make under \$120,000 per month. The bill would provide \$2,000 payments to single residents, and \$4,000 for married couples. Married couples with children would get an additional payment of \$2,000 for each child, up to three children.

“The one-time \$1,200 check that many Americans recently received is not nearly enough to pay the rent, put food on the table and make ends meet,” Sen. Sanders said. “During this unprecedented crisis, Congress has a responsibility to make sure that every working-class household in America receives a \$2,000 emergency payment a month for each family member.”

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/08/politics/bernie-sanders-covid-payments-kamala-harris/index.html>