

State and Legislative Updates:

Governor Update

Gov. Pete Ricketts began his Friday press briefing by reminding Nebraskans of the Six Rules to Keep Nebraska Healthy. He also asked Nebraskans to continue to sign up for TestNebraska and get tested if they are eligible.

Hospitals

Gov. Ricketts provided today's latest statistics on available hospital beds and ventilators, which continue to stay stable:

- 47% hospital beds
- 42% for ICU beds
- 75% for ventilators

Long-term Care

Administrator with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Becky Wisell joined Gov. Ricketts to discuss how DHHS has been working closely with long-term care centers. DHHS has developed a tool to assist nursing homes and assisted living facilities in developing a comprehensive COVID-19 response plan. This includes considering measures such as: restrictions on visitors, disinfection protocols, infection control, surge capacity, supplies and resources, and rapid identification of sick residents. All long-term care facilities will need to submit their plans to DHHS.

Q&A

Q: What does the future look like for theatres?

A: Ricketts: We will look at loosening those restrictions as we move forward, but we want to see how the first phase of loosened restrictions goes.

Q: Today the Supreme Court made a [ruling](#) that Director of Corrections Scott Frakes will have to turn over documents pertaining information on the lethal injection drugs used in a 2018 execution, what are your comments?

A: Ricketts: We will comply with the Supreme Court's ruling, but don't have a timeline for when the documents will be turned over.

Federal:

Congress

Today, the House of Representatives will vote on the latest proposed COVID-19 relief bill, the Heroes Act, as well as a rule change to allow for remote voting. ¹ It is unclear if the measure will pass through the House, but it is extremely likely it won't be taken up in the Senate due to strong Republican opposition. The White House has also warned of a veto due to "misguided provisions" included in the Act. **I will provide an update on today's vote in Monday's update.*

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

Vaccine

On Friday, President Trump announced “Operation Warp Speed,” which is an expedited effort to develop an effective vaccine for the coronavirus. ² However, Trump said regardless of how long it takes to develop a vaccine, the U.S. will return to normal in the near future. Currently, multiple companies such as Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson have been scrambling to be the first to find a vaccine.

² <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/15/politics/trump-vaccine-effort-coronavirus/index.html>