

West Virginia

Department of Health & Human Resources

COVID-19 Outbreak Confirmed in Greenbrier County Church

6/13/2020

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) has confirmed the fifth COVID-19 outbreak at churches in West Virginia, with the most recent outbreak occurring in Greenbrier County. At least 17 cases have been identified at a Greenbrier County church.

Gov. Jim Justice immediately ordered the DHHR, West Virginia National Guard, and Greenbrier County Health Department to respond to this outbreak. The Greenbrier County Health Department is managing the outbreak with good cooperation from the church and contact investigation is underway. Gov. Justice has ordered the National Guard to immediately go to the site to begin decontamination, and they will be on site tomorrow. The church has closed for 14 days environmental cleaning with support from the National Guard and the health department is providing guidance on prevention measures.

“I want to strongly encourage all West Virginians, especially when in church settings, to follow the guidelines and use every other pew, maintain social distancing, and please wear masks,” Gov. Justice said. “A lot of the attendance at our churches are those that are elderly and at higher risk, so we are cautioning everyone to strictly follow our guidelines. As I have said many times, we will have stormy seas before we get a vaccine, so it is imperative that we strictly follow the guidelines or the seas will only get rougher.”

Gov. Justice has directed the West Virginia National Guard and DHHR in collaboration with the Greenbrier County Health Department to host two additional free testing events tomorrow, Sunday, June 14 and Monday, June 15, in Greenbrier County at Dorie Miller Park in Lewisburg from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

“I encourage anyone that has any level of concern to come and be tested,” Gov. Justice added.

“There are several key lessons to be learned from these outbreaks. Practicing good prevention measures do make a difference, such as wearing a mask, staying 6 feet apart and using good hygiene,” said Dr. Cathy Slempp, State Health Officer and Commissioner of DHHR’s Bureau for Public Health. “Out of state travel can be a risk and precautions should be taken upon return to West Virginia. Finally, please stay home from work or other community events if you are not feeling well.”

The other counties that have experienced outbreaks in churches are Boone, Hampshire, Jefferson, and Marshall counties. To protect the possibility of identifying individuals, the churches will not be named by DHHR.

Contact Information

Media contact: DHHRCommunications@wv.gov