

Gov. Pritzker Lays Out Measures to Increase Testing, Hospital Capacity in Preparation for Additional Need

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CHICAGO - As the state continues to build on its robust response to the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for increased demand across the state's health care system, Governor JB Pritzker provided an update on the state's current testing and hospital capacity and laid out measures to increase that capacity to meet the anticipated need in the coming weeks.

“We’re using a two-pronged approach to make sure a worst-case scenario does not become our reality,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “First, we put in place protective measures to suppress the spread, like our stay at home order, limits on gatherings and social distancing guidelines. Second, we are working to increase our health care capacity statewide so that when we do arrive at our next phase — which should not be our worst-

case scenario but will be a point where hospitalizations significantly increase — we have the capacity to meet that need.”

TESTING CAPACITY

Illinois was among the first states to test for COVID-19 in state-managed labs, beginning with the capacity to run 50 tests a day in February and since expanding to three state labs running 600 tests a day.

The Illinois National Guard (ILNG) has also opened the state’s first drive-thru COVID-19 testing site on the northwest side of Chicago, adding 250 tests a day to the state’s capacity. The site is located at 6959 W. Forest Preserve Road in Chicago, opening at 9 a.m. and closing at 5 p.m. daily, unless testing capacity is met earlier in the day. More than 130 Illinois National Guardsmen are currently supporting the state’s response to COVID-19.

“The Illinois National Guard is proud to lend a helping hand as part of the overall state team fighting against this deadly virus,” **said Brig. Gen. Richard Neely, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard.** “Our National Guard members come from every part of Illinois. We are your friends, neighbors, relatives, co-workers; we are part of your communities. I couldn't be more proud of these patriotic men and women who have made the commitment to defend and serve our state and nation.”

In addition, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services has opened three sites with their private partners throughout the Chicago suburbs – one in Cook County and two in Will County. Each has the capacity to run nearly a 100 tests a day, and up to 250 with expanded staffing. These testing sites are open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the following locations:

- Walmart: 137 East North Avenue, Northlake
- Walmart: 2424 West Jefferson, Joliet
- Walgreens: 695 West Boughton Road, Bolingbrook

All four of the mobile testing sites operate under U.S. HHS criteria which prioritizes health care workers and first responders. As availability allows, testing criteria may be expanded beyond this initial pilot program.

Finally, there are four commercial labs and 15 hospital labs operating across the state, which average about 1,500 tests per day. IDPH continues to work with hospitals to stand up their own labs, providing positive specimens to hospitals for validation so they can

come online faster. Several existing hospital labs are building out their capacity and are within two weeks expected to provide additional 2,805 tests a day, totaling more than 4,300 a day.

Working to expand capacity by thousands of more tests a day, the state continues to partner with hospitals to bring additional labs online and is exploring additional mobile testing sites across the state, along with continued consistent delivery of necessary supplies, such as the reagent and viral transport media.

HOSPITAL CAPACITY

Hospitals across the state are meeting the current need, and the state is building additional capacity to treat patients that may need care in the future.

As of March 23, data reported to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) showed 12,588 non-ICU beds, 1,106 ICU beds and 1,595 ventilators available in hospitals across the state. The current capacity of the state's health care system as of is shown in the table below.

| | Non-ICU Beds | ICU Beds | Ventilators |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| In Use | 13,437 | 1,488 | 634 |
| Available | 12,588 | 1,106 | 1,595 |
| Total | 26,025 | 2,594 | 2,229 |
| <i>% occupied</i> | 51.6% | 57.4% | 28.4% |

Looking ahead, IDPH has put together projections for the hospital infrastructure needed to meet a surge of demand on the health care system if no protective measures were put in place — the worst-case scenario. Given that Gov. Pritzker has instituted a variety of mitigation and suppression methods over the last two weeks, the anticipated need will likely fall below these forecasts.

On March 30, IDPH projected that hospitals across the state would need an additional 2,511 non-ICU beds, 837 ICU beds and 419 ventilators compared to current capacity if the state took no action to combat the virus.

On April 6, IDPH projected that hospitals would need an additional 28,222 non-ICU beds, 9,407 ICU beds and 4,704 ventilators compared to current capacity without any protective measures.

This projected surge emphasizes the urgency that brought Gov. Pritzker to take several actions to ‘flatten the curve’ and prevent a rapid increase of cases.

In addition to those protective measures – which include the stay at home order, ban on gatherings exceeding 10 people, school closures and social distancing guidelines – the Governor has taken several steps to increase the capacity of the health care system:

- **Triage centers:** The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) has deployed 49 tents to area hospitals to set up triage centers outside their facilities to evaluate potential COVID-19 patients. In total, 66 of the state’s over 200 hospitals are currently operating with this expanded capacity. IEMA is working with 26 additional hospitals across the state to open new triage centers.
- **Repurposing old hospitals:** IDPH, IEMA, the Illinois National Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are investigating closed hospitals that could temporarily reopen to support our COVID-19 response. In a worst-case scenario surge, the State would dedicate several dozen existing hospitals almost entirely to COVID-19 patients, moving non-COVID patients to other hospitals, including these re-outfitted locations.
- **Expanding capacity in existing hospitals by acquiring critical equipment:** The administration continues to scour the globe for essential medical equipment like ventilators, including working with scientists and experts in Illinois and beyond to pursue innovative options. The Governor also spoke with President Trump yesterday and informed him that Illinois needs millions of N95 masks and hundreds of ventilators. The President promised assistance, and yesterday afternoon, the White House notified IDPH that Illinois will be receiving 300 ventilators and 300,000 N95 masks from FEMA in the coming days.