

[Phase 2 to Begin June 1: Summary of the governor's daily press conference](#)



Governor Gina Raimondo, DOH Director Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott and Commerce Secretary Stefan Pryor held the daily COVID-19 press conference today at 1pm at The Vets.

Today's COVID-19 data breakdown is as follows: There were 170 new cases since yesterday; 242 people are in the hospital, 56 are in the ICU, and 40 are on ventilators. There are 23 new COVID associated deaths, bringing the Ocean State's total fatalities to 579. The ages of the deceased ranged from their 60s to older than 100. Three were in their 60s, four in their 70s, nine in their 80s, six in their 90s and one person was older than 100 years of age.

The governor made a series of announcements today about Phase 2, giving Rhode Island an idea of the shape of things to come. Raimondo was happy to report she was satisfied with the current trendlines,

and if they held on the same path, Phase 2 would begin at June 1. "We are on track," said the governor. Her executive order concerning Phase 1 restrictions has been extended until then.

Almost all sectors of the Ocean State economy will see some form of reopening starting in Phase 2. All state parks and beaches will reopen. Childcare will resume on June 1. Houses of worship will be able to reopen starting May 30 with new restrictions, like only 25% capacity. The social gathering limit will be raised from 5 to 15 people.

Travel restrictions will largely be lifted with few exceptions. People traveling to RI from states or cities with stay-at-home orders still in effect will still be asked to quarantine. The governor said it was a blanket order, covering any places currently under one, or if future cities or states put another one in place due to an outbreak.

Restaurants can have inside dining reopen with 50% capacity. Dining out will not be like it was before the pandemic. Office-based businesses should still work from home if possible. Starting in Phase 2, 1/3 of office workers can return to the office if absolutely needed. "In Phase 2, if you can work from home, work from home," said Raimondo. Like everything else, offices can still expect new restrictions.

Hairdressers, salons, tattoo parlors, nail salons and other close-contact businesses/personal care services can also reopen starting in Phase 2. Gyms, fitness classes, yoga studios and the like can also start to come back online in June. The governor repeated there will be new restrictions, available at reopeningri.com. Businesses can expect to do more regular and intense cleaning regimens, mandate face coverings, frequent hand washing, etc. The governor acknowledged adherence to these have been hard on businesses and stated, "These are not intended to be permanent or forever." Raimondo expects to lift them at the first possible moment it is safe to do so.

Music shows and other large, outdoor/indoor congregate setting festivals and events will not be returning just yet. The governor said it was hard to ensure proper social distancing at these large-scale, tightly packed events. Some outdoor activities are coming back online: zoos, historical place grounds, public gardens and boat rentals will be coming back in June. The governor said she will have more to announce on youth sports next week.

Motif today asked the governor about her response to an opinion piece from noted conservative columnist George Will. In his piece, Will said Governor Raimondo would be a good VP pick for Joe Biden. Raimondo said she had not seen the piece, but it sounds like he said nice things.

Steve Ahlquist of Uprise RI asked what the governor was doing to help Rhode Islanders behind or

struggling with rent, and if a rent moratorium was in the picture. Governor Raimondo said she would replenish the state assistance fund, where struggling renters can apply for grants to pay back-due rent. Since announcing it a few weeks back it had been emptied.

Dr. Alexander-Scott today was asked about the changing CDC guidance on surfaces and overall transmission of the virus. Alexander-Scott said this kind of changing attitude and guidance is commonplace when it comes to new infectious diseases. It contributes to the challenges of developing a vaccine as the virus changes over time.

As a final note, there will be no press conferences over the three-day holiday weekend. The next one will be Tuesday at 1pm. There will also be no COVID data update on Memorial Day, as Dr. Alexander-Scott desires some of the frontline data workers to be given a day with their families. *Motif* will be back with our live-tweeting and daily summary on Tuesday.