May 20, 2021

COVID 19 UPDATE - VIRGINIA NEWS

Virginia Employment Commission-Virginia

For the filing week ending May 15, the figure for seasonally unadjusted initial claims in Virginia was 10,642.

The advance number of actual initial claims under state programs, unadjusted, totaled 454,634 in the week ending May 15, a decrease of 37,395 (or -7.6 percent) from the previous week.

One of Virginia's largest foster agencies is seeing a steep decline in interest from prospective parents

Virginia Mercury

Toscano said those numbers remained relatively stable at the beginning of the pandemic, largely driven by parents who had already committed to the process.

Nancy Toscano, the president and CEO of United Methodist Family Services, said the number of families interested in fostering has gone down by 30 percent over the last six months compared to the same time period last year.

Area community colleges see enrollment decline-HeraldCourier.com

TBR data shows that Northeast State’s fall semester enrollment dropped by 15.7% over that time period.

“There’s lots of national data that show that two-year college students prefer that face-to-face interaction with their professors and on campus, and with the support services that come along with community colleges.”

How Virginia plans to vaccinate middle and high school students

dailypress.com

With only a few weeks left in the school year and a three-week time span between the vaccine’s two doses, the clock is ticking for schools.

Joint Statement from Governor Northam and General Assembly Leaders on Shared Priorities for American Rescue Plan Funding

Virginia

The pandemic highlighted the need to upgrade state and local public health services, which have been long underfunded in Virginia, as well as the need to help people with the cost of housing and utilities.

Virginia expects to receive more than $4.3 billion in federal funds in the coming days through the American Rescue Plan.

Governor Northam Directs Virginia Employment Commission to Speed Up Processing of Unemployment Claims

Virginia

Executive Directive Sixteen requires the agency add 300 new adjudication staffers, make immediate technology upgrades, and complete a full modernization of the Commonwealth’s unemployment insurance system by October 1, 2021.

RICHMOND— Governor Ralph Northam today directed the Virginia Employment Commission to invest $20 million to dramatically expand the agency’s ability to process complicated unemployment insurance claims.

Governor Northam Urges Virginians to Participate in “It’s Our Shot, Virginia Statewide Day of Action”

Virginia

RICHMOND— Governor Ralph Northam today reminded Virginians about the “It’s Our Shot, Virginia: Statewide Day of Action” taking place tomorrow, Tuesday, May 18 to help Virginia residents make a plan to get vaccinated.

Governor Northam Urges Virginians to Participate in “It’s Our Shot, Virginia Statewide Day of Action”

Virginia DMV offices adding more appointments; Vaccinated customers can go without masks

8News

(WRIC)- There are new signs of normal life at the DMV, as Virginia offices begin offering more appointments and allowing vaccinated customers to go without masks.

Additional windows will open in stages on June 15 and in July as the DMV increases staff, accounting for a total of 184,000 new appointment opportunities across the Commonwealth, according to Holcomb.

Va. keeps mask mandate in K-12 schools with exceptions for some sports fans, outdoor recess

8News

Alena Yarmosky, the governor's spokesperson, said fans who are not vaccinated should still wear a face covering in accordance with new CDC guidance at outdoor school events, though it's not technically required.

(WRIC)- While Virginia's universal indoor mask mandate has ended, face coverings are still being required in K-12 schools, except in certain circumstances like socially-distant outdoor recess.

Community college enrollment declining, including at PVCC

Next year, it will cover the full cost of tuition and fees for all students, not just those of select programs, who have a family income of $100,000 or less.

Va. House of Delegates to meet in person at the state Capitol | Virginia Business

Virginia Business

Virginia House of Delegates Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn announced Monday that the House, when it next convenes, will return in person to the Virginia State Capitol after a year of virtual and physically distanced voting due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The last time the House met in its quarters at the state Capitol in Richmond was in the 2020 regular General Assembly session, which concluded in early March 2020, just before the pandemic hit the commonwealth.

Va. revenue surplus likely to exceed $500 million after 'unusual recession'

Richmond Times-Dispatch

“We’ve had a remarkable turnaround in revenue expectations compared to what we saw in the pandemic last year,” said Robert McNab, an economics professor at Old Dominion University who also serves on the governor’s advisory panel

A federal lawsuit forces Virginia to own its duty to handle pandemic jobless claims promptly

Virginia Mercury

Left jobless when the pandemic crushed the restaurant industry 14 months ago, the 40-year-old single mother did her best to make ends meet and care for her 12-year-old daughter with the weekly Virginia unemployment insurance benefits she initially received.

Dimmerling is among thousands of Virginians who have lived for months with the daily panic of impending financial doom because of the Virginia Employment Commission’s lagging performance in dealing with contested pandemic unemployment claims within the 21 days as prescribed by federal law.

Vaccination of adolescents age 12+ starting now in Virginia | Virginia Business

Virginia Business

One exception: Large community vaccination clinics — including those at Tysons Corner Mall and Gander Mountain in Prince William County — will start offering vaccination on Friday so the vaccine providers can be trained with current federal guidance regarding vaccination of adolescents.

With the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s approval late Wednesday afternoon, Virginia public health authorities gave their OK to expanding Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine shots to children ages 12 and older Wednesday night.

COVID 19 UPDATE - NATIONAL NEWS

U.S. weekly jobless claims drop further; mid-Atlantic factory activity slows

U.S.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The number of Americans filing new claims for unemployment benefits dropped further below 500,000 last week, but jobless rolls swelled in early May, which could temper expectations for an acceleration in employment growth this month.

Other data on Thursday showed factory activity in the mid-Atlantic region growing at a significantly slower pace this month, likely because of shortages of labor and raw materials.

Not one usable vaccine so far out of Baltimore plant with multi-million-dollar federal contract

Virginia Mercury

Kramer and Emergent’s founder and executive chairman, Fuad El-Hibri, faced an onslaught of questions from Democratic lawmakers during Wednesday’s hearing about the circumstances surrounding the company’s cross-contamination of the substance used to produce doses of J&J’s one-shot coronavirus vaccine at its Baltimore facility.

They also asked about the timing of bonuses to and stock sales by top company officials as the Baltimore plant struggled with production and discarded several batches of substance needed for the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine last fall .

Colleges scramble to incorporate new CDC guidance on masking into their plans

Inside Higher Ed

Colleges and universities are scrambling to revise campus public safety protocols in the wake of new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention saying that people fully vaccinated against COVID-19 do not need to wear masks in most indoor and outdoor settings or maintain physical distance from others.

The CDC says that the risk of contracting the virus among vaccinated people is minimal and the risk of transmitting the virus is also reduced, meaning that in both indoor and outdoor settings, "fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing," except where required by local laws, regulations or rules, including workplace guidance.

Pandemic Brings Increased Interest to Nursing Profession

Diverse

“Health care workers received a great deal of media exposure this year,” said Dr. Lisa Muirhead, associate dean for diversity, equity and inclusion at Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing at Emory University. Meghan Wenzinger, a rising senior at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, recalled her mother—who is a nurse practitioner—receiving a letter from New York Governor Andrew Cuomo last spring, asking for extra health care support for COVID-19 patients in New York City.

Reluctant to return?

Community College Daily

To date, more than one-third of adults have had to change or cancel their education plans due to the pandemic, based on a survey Strada conducted from February to April.