July 01, 2021

Virginia’s State of Emergency due to COVID 19 ends today and with that, so does the weekly COVID 19 Update Newsletter. We hope the Update has provided useful information to you as you navigated new challenges during the pandemic. Moving forward, we are planning a similar periodic publication of key news articles on workforce development in Virginia and the nation. Once it is developed, we will share our plan for the newsletter with you.

COVID 19 UPDATE - VIRGINIA NEWS

Virginia Employment Commission

Virginia.gov

For the filing week ending June 26, the figure for seasonally unadjusted initial claims in Virginia was 8,196.

The advance number of actual initial claims under state programs, unadjusted, totaled 359,130 in the week ending June 26, a decrease of 38,262 (or -9.6 percent) from the previous week.

Richmond health officials warn of Delta variant; 48 confirmed cases in Virginia

8News

During Tuesday’s weekly COVID-19 briefing with Mayor Levar Stoney, State Vaccination Coordinator Dr. Danny Avula, and City Health District Nurse Manager Amy Popovich; all agree that a lot of progress has been made over the last year, but the work is far from over.

According to state health officials Virginians can expect cases to climb by the end of the summer into early fall because of the contagious Delta variant.

Initiative to help unemployed Virginians get back to work

CBS19

The Virginia Career Works Piedmont Region, which serves Charlottesville and the counties of Albemarle, Culpeper, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange and Rappahannock, has launched the Return to Earn Grant Program.

Michael Rao and Paula P. Pando column: Counting on community college transfers to shape the next generation of Va. talent

Richmond Times-Dispatch

The result: The average community college transfer student will take at least 12 more credits to earn a bachelor’s degree than students who start and finish at four-year colleges, adding thousands of extra dollars of debt.

Across Virginia, a community of educators from community colleges and public and private universities is working together on transfer to ensure success for all students.

Governor Northam says Commonwealth on right road out of pandemic

13newsnow.com

Despite the presence of the Delta COVID-19 variant in Virginia, Governor Ralph Northam said vaccinated people can return to near-normal lives as much as possible.

Even with concerning news of highly transmissible coronavirus variants in the state, Governor Ralph Northam says he's largely encouraged at where Virginia currently stands.

Virginia's COVID-19 state of emergency set to expire today -- here's what that means for you

8News

Earlier this month, Governor Northam told 8News he will communicate with law enforcement to make sure no one is arrested for wearing a face mask.

After 15 months, Virginia's COVID-19 state of emergency is set to expire tonight.

Returning to the office: Companies like Capital One, Dominion Energy and CarMax adopting hybrid work models

Richmond Times-Dispatch

The decision reflects what may amount to a large-scale shift in how office work is done. Other Richmond-area companies have announced plans to incorporate remote work into their schedules.

It Takes a Village (or an Entire State) to Transform Transfer | Tackling Transfer

Inside Higher Ed | Higher Education News, Career Advice, Jobs

Transfer Virginia, in a nutshell, is a statewide collaboration between the State Council of Higher Education, the Virginia Community College System, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, HCM Strategists and Sova, and is part of the Tackling Transfer initiative.

Hundreds of people worked together to better serve the more than 14,000 community college students across Virginia who will continue their education at one of the over 40 universities in your state.

Virginia’s budget surplus could now approach $2 billion

Richmond Times-Dispatch

They will not be able to appropriate money for the budget beyond the next fiscal year, which begins on July 1 and ends on June 30, 2022, but the federal aid will give them flexibility to help the state recover from the pandemic and its economic effects beyond the current budget cycle.

COVID 19 UPDATE - NATIONAL NEWS

US jobless claims fall to 364,000, a new pandemic low

https://www.nbc29.com

The number of Americans applying for unemployment aid fell again last week to the lowest level since the pandemic struck last year, further evidence that the job market and the broader economy are rebounding rapidly from the coronavirus recession.

But many economists expect hiring to catch up with demand in the coming months, especially as federal unemployment aid programs end and more people pursue jobs.

High School Seniors Are Changing Their College Plans Because Of Covid

Forbes

The America’s Promise survey, given to 2,439 high school students of all grades nationally, revealed that 78% of 11th and 12th graders felt Covid affected their postsecondary plans at least a little bit, while nearly one in five students felt their plans changed a great deal.

Among those especially hard-hit are young adults transitioning from high school to college, according to surveys released last week by America’s Promise Alliance and Strada Education Network .

One Year Later: COVID-19s Impact on Current and Future College Students – Third Way

Just over half (53 percent) of college students believe that the worst is over when it comes to the pandemic, though both Black and Latinx students believe this at lower rates (38 percent and 48 percent respectively) (See Figure 1).

Students Feel Their Institutions Handled the Pandemic Well, But Are Not Sure Higher Education is Worth the Cost When Online

How Will Student Loan Borrowers Fare After the Pandemic?

| The Pew Charitable Trusts

The surge in enrollment, borrowing, and subsequent repayment challenges among adult students in their 20s and 30s who attended for-profit and two-year schools, often with low completion rates, following the onset of the previous recession.

Much of the recent student loan policy discussion has focused on short-term issues, such as borrowers’ abilities to make payments during a public health emergency, but what happened after the Great Recession suggests that repayment challenges could linger or accelerate after the pandemic ends.

Community Colleges Scramble to Recapture Students Lost in Pandemic

News

In Worcester, Quinsigamond administrators tell GBH News the school is now reconsidering its policy, which has been to withhold transcripts for debts as small as $200.

Following a pandemic that led to widespread job loss, he said, community colleges should stop withholding transcripts and degrees from thousands of students over relatively small bills.

The Supreme Court Leaves The CDC's Moratorium On Evictions In Place

NPR.org

Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who cast the fifth and deciding vote, wrote in a concurring opinion that he voted not to end the eviction program only because it is set to expire on July 31, "and because those few weeks will allow for additional and more orderly distribution" of the funds that Congress appropriated to provide rental assistance to those in need because of the pandemic.

The U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to lift a ban on evictions for tenants who have failed to pay all or some rent during the coronavirus pandemic.

Spread of Delta Variant Marks ‘Most Dangerous’ Time in Pandemic for Kids, May Force Schools to Re-Up Safety Measures, Experts Say

The 74

It’s “one of the most dangerous time periods [in the pandemic] for people who aren’t vaccinated,” Taylor Nelson, a University of Missouri medical doctor specializing in infectious disease, told The 74.

The highly contagious Delta COVID variant quickly spreading through the U.S. may force schools to double down on mitigation measures in order to reopen safely later this summer and into the fall, health experts say.

CDC: Students of Color Still Got Less In-Person Instruction as School Buildings Reopened

Education Week

Amid changing CDC guidance and state rules on how schools should operate safely during the periodic waves of the pandemic, the researchers logged when the schools offered fully remote, hybrid, and fully in-person instruction, as well as what grade spans and demographic groups of students had access to different kinds of instruction.

Among grades K-5, the gap in access to full-time, in-person classes between white students and students of color rose nearly 7 percentage points, to just over 15 percent, from January to April 2021.

Covid-19 Contact Tracers Race Against Delta Variant in the U.S.

WSJ

She calls every person who is reported as a positive case, as well as their close contacts, and urges them to isolate or quarantine.

Now, with just 10 or so new Covid-19 cases coming in each day, the team is aiming to stop the virus in its tracks, the 35-year-old public-health investigator said.

Pell Grants Should Cover Good Short-Term Worker Training Programs

Washington Monthly

Couric is living proof that short-term, career-focused educational programs—provided they are high-quality courses for in-demand fields—can put workers on track to high-paying jobs.

Opponents of short-term Pell argue the money would go toward poor-quality programs that lead to high-turnover, dead-end jobs.

COVID-19 causes largest decline in American life expectancy since WWII, VCU study finds

8News

Life expectancy in the United States fell by nearly two years between 2018 and 2020, the country’s biggest decline since World War II, according to a new Virginia Commonwealth University study.

Steven Woolf, the lead author of the study and the director emeritus of VCU’s Center on Society and Health, said it was “jolting” to realize the pandemic’s effect on life expectancy for Black and Latino people in the U.S.

What changes families need to recover from the past year

The Hechinger Report

“There are still families struggling with income, still having bills piling up,” said Jason Gindele, executive director of Mainspring Schools, a childcare center in Austin, Texas, which along with providing care, has helped families pay rent and buy food during the pandemic.

Although rates of material hardship among families with young children have been declining in recent months, 1 in 4 families recently surveyed by RAPID-EC, a biweekly survey of families with young children, are still having difficulty affording their basic needs, including paying for food, rent and bills.

How community colleges can better prepare adult workers

EdSource

But it shouldn’t be left only to the community colleges to prepare students for their careers, panelists agreed, and should start in middle school or high school.

Sergio Rosas, founder and CEO of Next Shift Learning, said community colleges need to work with a wide range of partners to train students.