

Arkansas Update 4-23-2020

Arkansas is one of a handful of GOP-led states that has not issued stay-at-home orders for its residents, which the majority of US states have implemented to [slow the spread of coronavirus](#).

Governor Asa Hutchinson said he does not believe Arkansas needs to issue a statewide order because of its low density in population. He pointed to his actions in declaring a public emergency when Arkansas had its first confirmed case of coronavirus, closing the state's schools and increasing testing.

Earlier this month he told CNN news, "If we need to do more, we will do more. So that's always an option on the table if we have to shelter in place. But right now, what we're doing proves to be successful, this targeted approach."

On April 17th the governor said that he hopes to begin lifting on May 4 some of the state's restrictions imposed because of the coronavirus outbreak.

Hutchinson said he hoped to lift some of the state's limits if Arkansas meets the first phase of guidelines set Thursday by the Trump administration for states to reopen their economies. Arkansas has not issued a stay-at-home order but has imposed other restrictions that have closed businesses.

"This is a start, and we need everybody's help to meet that goal," Hutchinson said. The governor did not specify which restrictions he hoped to lift first. Hutchinson on Thursday said one of his priorities for lifting limits is reopening hospitals to elective surgeries.

Health officials said the number of cases in the state has increased to at least 1,695 people. For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.