

Arkansas has lifted a directive that required all patients about to undergo an elective surgery to get tested for COVID-19 beforehand. This decision comes as almost 800 more cases of the coronavirus were recorded on Thursday.

According to numbers from the Arkansas Department of Health, the state added 791 new cases, bringing the state's total to 41,559. Of those total cases, 6,580 are considered active.

During Gov. Asa Hutchinson's daily briefing on the coronavirus on Thursday, acting Secretary of Health Dr. José Romero spoke on the decision to repeal the directive.

NEWS06**:24****“...be eliminated”**

“Of the number of tests that were done and the number of positives that were encountered, it was a very small percentage, a decision was made to leave that decision up to the individual physician and institution. So the directive to perform, the requirement of presurgical COVID testing will be eliminated,” Romero said.

According to Romero, physicians and institutions can still require a test if they deem it necessary.

Hutchinson spoke on the testing efforts in Arkansas for July. So far, Arkansas has tested 181,456 this month.

NEWS07**:20****“...that goal”**

“Which means it's 6% of the population in Arkansas that we've tested this month. That's a high watermark. It is very successful and yes I know we said in a cocky moment that we're going to do 200,000 tests. We still have two days. It'll be close but we might not make that goal,” Hutchinson said.

Hospitalizations decreased by 4 for a total of 504. Those on a ventilator also decreased by 7 for a total of 101. However, the death toll due to the coronavirus in Arkansas increased by 8 for 442 deaths.