

More than 24-thousand Arkansans have tested positive for the coronavirus since the pandemic began as an additional five residents have died from COVID-19. Gov. Asa Hutchinson announced today (Mon) the state saw 439 new coronavirus cases for a total of 24,253, while the state's death toll from the disease rose to 292. Speaking in his daily briefing on the pandemic, Hutchinson said it's unclear how many more people will contract the virus as a result of gatherings over the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday weekend.

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"...about that we will."

Hutchinson said the state has also contracted with defense company General Dynamics to hire an additional 350 contact tracers, at a cost of \$20 million dollars. Hutchinson said the state hopes to add another 350 people working to track the spread of the virus beyond that initial contract. Health Secretary Dr. Nate Smith said the additional contact tracers will help to curb the spread of the virus in central Arkansas, which has seen a steady increase in new cases in recent days.

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"...infected is higher."

Arkansas had a total of 6,127 active COVID-19 cases as of today (Mon) including 117 nursing home residents and 456 inmates of correctional facilities. A total of 52 more Arkansans have been hospitalized with the disease since last Friday, bringing the state's total to 337. Smith also said the state has seen at least one person test positive for the coronavirus in each of Arkansas's 75 counties.