

COVID-19 continues to spread inside Arkansas correctional facilities as the state adds 787 new coronavirus cases. Gov. Asa Hutchinson announced today's (Wed) increase brought the state's total to 40,968, while an additional six COVID-19 deaths brought the death toll to 434. Speaking in his daily briefing in Russellville today (Wed), Hutchinson said the state's testing efforts within correctional facilities are one reason for Arkansas's prison system having the highest per capita infection rate in the country.

News01

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"...will not report."

A report by the Marshall Project shows Arkansas also has the fifth-highest number of deaths among prison systems in the U-S. Chicot County in southeast Arkansas had the highest number of new cases Wednesday with 152 residents testing positive, largely due to a new outbreak at a correctional facility. Hutchinson also responded to a report by the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette showing that now-acting Health Secretary Dr. Jose Romero advised against the state moving to a second phase of reopening businesses in early June.

News02

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"...judgment that we can."

The report states Romero expressed concerns to then-Health Secretary Dr. Nate Smith that easing restrictions could lead to a rise in infections and overwhelm the state's healthcare system. Hutchinson announced the state would move to Phase 2 of the Trump Administration's reopening plan the following day. Seven additional Arkansans were hospitalized with COVID-19 as of today (Wed) for a total of 508, while the state had a total of 6,596 active cases of the disease.