

The total number of Arkansans who have died from COVID-19 has surpassed 800 as state added over two hundred more cases to its total.

According to numbers from the state Department of Health, Arkansas reported 273 more cases. The total is now 61,497. Of those cases, 5,036 are considered active. Thought the number of new cases is lower than previous days, the number of testing reported in the past 24 hours is also lower, with 3,530 tests reported.

The state did not reach its goal of conducting 190,000 tests for August, reporting 186,379 tests instead. The state lowered its goal for September to 180,000.

Speaking during his daily briefing on the pandemic, Gov. Asa Hutchinson said while the state did not meet its testing goal, it still tested around 6.2% of its population.

NEWS06**:12.5****“...in the state”**

“And so it illustrates we’re about that 6% mark of the population. I’m very pleased with that. That’s a good goal every month if we can do that. That gives us a good indication to where we are in the state,” Hutchinson said.

The number of hospitalizations in the state due to COVID-19 increased by three for a total of 423, while 17 more Arkansans have died from the coronavirus. The death toll is now 814. Six of those newly recorded deaths were from prior months.

When asked about an impending lawsuit that lists several lawmakers in the Arkansas General Assembly as plaintiffs against the Department of Health over coronavirus restrictions, Hutchinson said that he feels confident in the authority given to the state by the legislature.

NEWS07**:17****“...been filed”**

“There’s a minority of legislators that have expressed a desire to have the courts consider it. I don’t think that’s wise to have the courts involved with it, but anybody can file a lawsuit and to my knowledge that lawsuit has not been filed,” Hutchinson said.

Rep. Dan Sullivan, R-Jonesboro, says he plans to file the lawsuit Thursday, August 3.