

State officials are planning for high school sports to return this fall as another 752 Arkansans test positive for the coronavirus. Gov. Asa Hutchinson announced today's (Fri) increase brought the state's total to 42,511, while an additional 11 COVID-19 deaths brought the death toll to 453. Speaking in his daily briefing on the pandemic, Hutchinson said he's directing the Arkansas Activities Association, which oversees high school sports, to submit plans to the Health Department for football, volleyball and cheerleading.

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"...our safety protocols."

Hutchinson also formed an advisory group tasked with making recommendations on how to best protect student athletes and school staff during the return to athletics. Acting Health Secretary Dr. Jose Romero said he endorses the move despite well-publicized coronavirus outbreaks within professional sports teams.

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"...performing it safely."

Sebastian County saw the highest increase in new cases today (Fri) with 81 residents testing positive. Pulaski County added 77 new cases while Benton and Washington counties saw 51 and 41 new cases respectively. The number of Arkansans hospitalized with COVID-19 increased by 3 to 507, with 100 patients on a ventilator. As of today (Fri) the state had 6,645 active COVID-19 cases, including 329 inmates of correctional facilities and 75 nursing home residents.