

Arkansas' health secretary believes the number of coronavirus cases are currently at a rate where the state's plan to reopen schools in over two weeks can still push forward. This statement comes as the state's total number of COVID-19 cases passes 47,000.

According to numbers from the Arkansas Department of Health, the state added 735 new cases today (Thursday). The total number of cases is now 47,028.

Deaths increased by seven, bringing the death toll to 515. The number of those hospitalized with COVID-19 is now 514 a decrease of two. However, those on a ventilator increased by five. That total is now 111.

Health Secretary Dr. José Romero, speaking during the daily briefing on the pandemic, said there will be sporadic cases of the coronavirus once schools open up at the end of August. While Romero said the state wants schools to have the ability to "test appropriately" once they open up, they are not planning on testing children when they enter the building each day.

NEWS07**:13****"...into class"**

"They will go to school and testing will be based symptoms and exposure if appropriate. So there is no set program to test all students entering into class," Romero said.

Schools are set to reopen the week of August 24, after initially being delayed two weeks. Several state organizations, such as the Arkansas chapter of the American Academy for Pediatrics and the Arkansas Education Association have expressed worry and concern over a statewide approach to reopening schools in the fall.