



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR ANDY BESHEAR

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Crystal Staley

502-564-2611

502-545-3714

Sebastian Kitchen

502-564-2611

502-330-0799

Gov. Beshear Working to Protect Kentuckians, Reduce Spread of COVID-19

18 positive cases; Childcare centers to prepare for closure; Hospitals to cease elective procedures

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 14, 2020) – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear held a briefing for Kentuckians and the media where he said the state has more positive cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and recommended childcare centers create plans for closure within 72 hours and that hospitals soon cease elective procedures.

Sixteen cases were confirmed at the 4 p.m. ET news conference, and as of 6 p.m. ET, more test results were received, bringing the state's total to 18 with two new in Fayette County. Fifteen negative tests were reported from across the state. The two additional positives in Fayette County were expected and related to an existing case. Gov. Beshear will provide more details on those cases Sunday at 4 p.m. ET at his scheduled press briefing.

Gov. Beshear said that while the state's first patient fully recovered from the virus, he continues to take aggressive action to protect Kentuckians, including recommending that childcare centers prepare plans so that they could close within 72 hours if it were to become necessary.

“While children remain at low risk, they can carry the virus and we must do everything we can to reduce its spread and protect our most vulnerable, including our senior citizens,” said Gov. Beshear. “We are going to get through this as one team – Team Kentucky. We must remain calm and take care of each other by practicing good hygiene, social distancing and sharing. We have heard about a new mom who cannot get formula for her new baby, we need everyone to be a good teammate and practice sharing.”

Gov. Beshear added that hospitals should end elective procedures by Wednesday.

“We’re going to rely a lot on their judgment for what is elective,” said Gov. Beshear. “We need all the capacity we can to deal with the cases that we believe we are going to see. We are going to work with them to give them the flexibility to repurpose a lot of their staff.”

Gov. Beshear also said one person who tested positive at UofL has left against medical advice and returned to his home in Nelson County. The Lincoln Trail District Health Department asked him to self-quarantine, but he has refused. The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is currently working with the local county attorney and county judge to obtain an order to force him to quarantine in his home.

As of 6 p.m. ET, March 14, the state’s current COVID-19 patient information includes:

1. Harrison, F, 27, out of hospital and fully recovered
2. Fayette, M, 40
3. Jefferson, M, 69
4. Harrison, F, 67
5. Harrison, M, 68
6. Fayette, M, 46
7. Harrison, F, 54
8. Harrison, M, 60
9. Harrison, M, 51
10. Fayette, F, 31
11. Jefferson (could be a repeat test)
12. Bourbon, M, 66
13. Jefferson, F, 68
14. Jefferson, F, 80

15. Nelson, M, 53

16. Montgomery, M, 56

17. Fayette

18. Fayette

Gov. Beshear said one of the patients is in poor condition, but has multiple factors that have contributed to that situation.

A newer case is from Bourbon County. Local officials joined Gov. Beshear Saturday along with Baptist Health Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer Dr. Jody Prather.

Bourbon County Judge-Executive Mike Williams said, “This was not the news we wanted, but it’s here. We encourage everyone in Bourbon County to continue to follow the calm, steady and spectacular leadership of the governor as he guides us through this crisis. There is a light at the end of the tunnel. We will achieve that together.”

Bourbon County Health Department Public Health Director Andrea Brown said, “It is so important to listen to the guidance issued by the governor and state health officials, especially for our most vulnerable populations of 60 and over and those with underlying conditions. We all need to follow these strategies in Bourbon County and across the state.”

Rep. Matthew Koch of Paris said, “United we stand. Listen to our health care professionals, work together and take care of each other.”

“We have been preparing for this. We are meeting daily and hourly with all our leaders to make sure we are prepared in all our communities,” said Prather. “We are working hard with the state so we are ready to respond and take care of our folks.”

Dr. Allen Brenzel, medical director for the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities, attended today’s news conference to talk about the mental health aspects of the pandemic.

“We need to stay informed, but we need folks to use reliable information and too much information will cause anxiety,” said Dr. Brenzel. “Let’s take an information break from time to time and let’s also preserve our routines to help sooth anxiety.”

Dr. Brenzel recommend Kentuckians continue to have a healthy diet, exercise and sleep.

“We need folks to relieve stress by continuing as many activities as possible. We are not asking people to be isolated, but to distance themselves and continue to find ways to connect with others online or over the phone,” said Dr. Brenzel. “All the state’s community mental health centers are ready to help if needed.”

Dr. Brenzel asked parents to take care of themselves, especially so they can take care of their children. Children should be able to have their questions answered and receive help in practicing good hygiene. Children may also need help interacting with others through technology.

If children show signs of clinginess and trouble sleeping, or a significant change in behavior, parents should seek guidance from a health professional. The state will post behavioral health tips online.

Gov. Beshear has continued to take decisive action since the first case was confirmed in Kentucky. To date, Gov. Beshear has:

- Declared a [state of emergency](#) to ensure the state has every resource available to respond
- Issued an [executive order to prohibit price gouging](#)
- Announced Kentucky’s COVID-19 informational website, kycovid19.ky.gov and issued extensive guidance on when to seek care and when to call the state’s hotline, **1-800-722-5725**
- [Issued an executive order](#) to waive copays, deductibles, cost-sharing and diagnostic testing fees for private insurance and state employees and asked providers to expand their networks to patients that may go outside their normal providers
- Announced that those without insurance will be able to get a test in Kentucky
- Announced strong actions to [protect the state’s most vulnerable populations](#) by limiting visitation to senior care and long-term care facilities
- Signed an [executive order](#) allowing pharmacies to refill prescriptions for up to 30 days to ensure those vulnerable communities or those who need to self-isolate will have their needed prescriptions
- Closed all state [prisons](#) to visitors
- Activated the State Health Operations Center and the State Emergency Operations Center
- Recommended the temporary closure of senior centers to help halt the spread of the virus for those most vulnerable
- Announced that [Kentucky Employers’ Mutual Insurance](#) (KEMI) will provide wage replacement benefits for first responders and medical personnel who have been quarantined for COVID-19

- [Announced new guidance](#) that state boards and commissions cancel any scheduled in-person meetings and instead use video teleconference technology
- Recommended schools cease in-person classes beginning Monday, March 16, and as of Friday, March 14, all 172 school districts, the Kentucky School for the Blind and Kentucky School for the Deaf will close
- Announced USDA approved the state's waiver to serve meals during non-traditional instruction days
- Announced the state is taking swift action to get the passengers from the Grand Princess cruise ship back home
- Issued [guidance](#) to state agencies to allow telecommuting where possible to decrease on-site staffing by up to 50 percent to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and suspended out-of-state travel for state employees
- Recommended businesses also utilize telecommuting and allow employees to work from home if possible
- Advised that all community gatherings be canceled
- Held daily and most days, twice-a-day media and Facebook live briefings to inform Kentuckians and provide recommended health and safety guidance

More information

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourages people to follow these [steps to prevent illness](#). Kentuckians can find regular updates and resources including more information about when to seek medical attention and courses of action for those in counties with positive cases at kycovid19.ky.gov. They are also urged to visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) for up-to-date information. Kentuckians who want advice can call the state hotline at 1-800-722-5725 or call their local health care provider.

To read Gov. Beshear's news releases and watch other news regarding COVID-19 visit governor.ky.gov.

###



Questions? [Contact us](#)



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES: [Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Unsubscribe All](#) | [Help](#)