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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Gov. Beshear Provides Update on COVID-19**

*Visit the Governor's [Facebook page](#) to watch today's news conference*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 31, 2020)** – Gov. Andy Beshear on Monday updated Kentuckians on the state's continuing efforts to fight the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) in the commonwealth.

"I'm a big believer that our world can be much better than it is right now," the Governor said. "That's why I do this. I think my kids deserve a better Kentucky and a better world than they're growing up in. We have an opportunity based on coming together to defeat the crisis of the moment, to build a better Kentucky that has fewer crises now and in the future."

#### **Overdose Awareness Day**

Today, Gov. Beshear recognized International Overdose Awareness Day, a global event held on Aug. 31 each year to bring awareness to the overdose epidemic, reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths and acknowledge the grief of family and friends left behind.

"Awareness is the key to survival during most medical emergencies; and that's certainly true in the case of a drug overdose," the Governor said. "If you find a loved one has overdosed, or even a complete stranger, knowing how to react could mean the difference between life and death."

Those needing access to naloxone or more resources on how to respond to an overdose can find more information on [the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy's webpage](#).

The Governor also spoke about one overdose victim and his family's struggle in the aftermath of his untimely death.

"As Attorney General I filed more lawsuits against opioid distributors and manufacturers than anyone else in the country. My friend Emily, who leads Fed Up in Kentucky, lost her son TJ right before he was going to deploy with our National Guard," the Governor said. "There's so much pain out there, and somebody may make a bad decision at the start, but by the time an overdose happens typically someone has been suffering from an addiction that we cannot treat as a bad decision. We have to treat it as the disease that it is, knowing that it is preventable, knowing that all of us can step in to either try to help an individual suffering from it, or hopefully be there with the training necessary to protect them in that worst case scenario."

Gov. Beshear said he promised Emily he would continue to seek to provide resources to help people overcome addictions while also holding unscrupulous drug companies responsible.

Gov. Beshear noted that public health officials say that since the start of the pandemic in the U.S., they are seeing the largest number of overdose deaths since 2017.

Kentuckians struggling with substance use disorders, either themselves or within their families, can call 833-8KY-HELP (833-859-4357) to speak with a specialist about treatment options and available resources.

A live specialist will help locate everything from medication-assisted treatment to faith-based care, and walk through all the variables, such as location and cost. Callers can speak to a specialist from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (EDT), Monday through Friday. During non-business hours, callers may leave a message and the call center staff will get back in touch with them.

Gov. Beshear said the Governor's Mansion will be lit up with purple lights this evening to honor the lives lost to overdose deaths.

#### **'The Fast 4 at 4'**

Gov. Beshear on Monday highlighted a variety of issues of importance to Kentuckians and the commonwealth.

1. Today, the Governor reminded voters they now can go to [www.GoVoteKy.com](http://www.GoVoteKy.com) to request an absentee ballot for the Nov. 3 general election, if they are concerned about COVID-19 and voting. "Make sure your vote is counted," Gov. Beshear said. "This is how you have a voice for this country, for this commonwealth, for your county, for your community." Gov. Beshear encouraged all Kentuckians to make a plan to vote, either by mail, in person during early voting or in person on Election Day.

2. Gov. Beshear also reminded Kentuckians that the state issued a [travel advisory](#) in July that recommends people avoid visiting states with coronavirus case positivity rates of 15% or higher. Among the states currently exceeding that threshold, according to [data from Johns Hopkins](#), are South Carolina, North Dakota, Iowa, Alabama and Nevada. Anyone returning to Kentucky after visiting these places is asked to self-quarantine for 14 days.
3. Gov. Beshear asked Kentuckians to take advantage of the free COVID-19 testing available at sites throughout the commonwealth. “While much of the country has fallen behind on testing, we have stayed ahead,” the Governor said. “We need your help to continue to do that. The resources are out there to make sure that you are safe and to make sure you’re keeping others safe.” For information on more than 200 testing sites, [click here](#).
4. Jim Gray, Secretary of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), on Monday announced funding for access roads to spur development at industrial parks in Warren, Barren and Fulton counties.

“The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet is proud to be part of Team Kentucky and to have a role in preparing the ground for new, job-creating industrial sites,” Secretary Gray said.

The projects are:

- In Warren County, KYTC is committing \$500,000 from its Industrial Access Road program for a project by the Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce to extend Prosperity Drive in the Kentucky Transpark. The extended roadway will serve a new manufacturing plant being built by Crown Cork & Seal USA and open 296 additional, rail-served acres for development within the Transpark. Gov. Beshear helped to break ground for the Crown plant in February. The plant will make aluminum beverage cans.
- In Barren County, KYTC is committing \$500,000 from the Industrial Access Road program to assist the Barren County Economic Authority in developing South Cooper Industrial Park along U.S. 68 in Glasgow.
- In Fulton County, KYTC has agreed to provide up to \$146,500 to Fulton County Fiscal Court toward design and construction of a boulevard entrance to a new industrial park that is a joint venture of Fulton and Hickman counties. The site, which is in the City of Fulton, is contiguous to rail lines and less than a mile from the Interstate 69 corridor. It will be able to accommodate as many as seven small manufacturers or distribution companies, potentially providing hundreds of jobs.

For more information and to view the complete news release, [click here](#).

**Case Information – Monday, Aug. 31**

As of 4 p.m. Aug. 31, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 48,396 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 381 of which were newly reported Monday. Forty-three of the newly reported cases were from

children ages 18 and younger, of which two were children ages 5 and under. The youngest was a 1-year-old from Madison County.

“We always have lower numbers on Sundays and Mondays, due to lab closures over the weekend. But the White House report for this week still has 59 of our 120 counties in the red or yellow zone,” said Gov. Beshear. “We don’t want any of our counties in either. Let’s remember how serious this is and not act like everything is normal.”

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear reported three new deaths Monday, raising the total to 933 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The deaths reported Monday include a 61-year-old man from Lincoln County; a 72-year-old woman from Martin County; and a 65-year-old man from Owen County.

“When we make bad decisions, most often somebody else pays for it, and can pay for it with their lives,” said Gov. Beshear.

As of Monday, there have been at least 877,443 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate currently stands at 4.42%. At least 10,375 Kentuckians have recovered from the virus.

For additional information, including up-to-date lists of positive cases and deaths, as well as breakdowns of coronavirus infections by county, race and ethnicity, [click here](#). To see all recent daily reports, [click here](#).

Information about COVID-19 and schools is also being made available. To view the reports, [click here for K-12](#) and [here for colleges and universities](#).

#### **Case Information – Sunday, Aug. 30**

Due to limited reporting on the weekends, some updated information is now available from Sunday, Aug. 30.

As of Sunday, there were 874,597 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate was at 4.54% and at least 10,355 Kentuckians had recovered from the virus.

For a detailed look at coronavirus case information from Sunday, Aug. 30, [click here](#).

#### **Kentucky Enhanced VINE**

Today, Gov. Beshear, who formerly served as Kentucky’s attorney general, announced more than \$500,000 in grant funding will build an expansion of services for crime victims in the commonwealth.

“We must continue to create more victim-centered services to help our fellow Kentuckians move forward after their darkest days,” said Gov. Beshear. “This system is another step in the right

direction in creating more services focused on victims and survivors and connecting them with the support and information they deserve.”

He said the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet has awarded the Kentucky Department of Corrections \$551,000 in federal Victims of Crime Act grant funding for significant enhancements to be made to the Victism Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) system, the state’s victim notification program.

“VINE offers timely and potentially life-saving notifications via email and phone about an offender in custody,” Gov. Beshear said. “With the new funding, VINE also will help victims locate services they might need, provide alerts via text message and create a unified database.”

Some of the key features of Kentucky Enhanced VINE include:

- Voice-driven phone system for victims to search via voice prompts for a faster and more intuitive means of service.
- A heightened emphasis on confidentiality and security with the option of creating a password protected user account and a “quick escape” feature to quickly exit the application.
- Users now can create a personalized watch list, allowing them to gain updated information for more than one offender at a time.
- Users can search for service providers by ZIP code or county as well as by type of service.

The new platform will take several months to complete, and Enhanced Vine is expected to launch September 2021.

For more information and to view the complete news release, [click here](#)

### **Child Care Guidelines**

Eric Friedlander, Secretary of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, spoke Monday about changes to the emergency regulations relating to child care, which aim to balance the safety and health of our children, caregivers and the public.

“We also recognize our children’s need to learn and socialize and the essential role of child care for working parents. It is good that everyone is now recognizing the importance of child care,” Secretary Friedlander said. “It has been a difficult time for child-care providers. CARES Act funding has resulted in over \$67 million going to Kentucky child-care providers.”

In unveiling “Journey to a New Kentucky: Changes to Child-Care Facilities Guidance,” Secretary Friedlander said the department was offering a plan to address increasing capacity and the pre-

existing shortages of registered and certified providers, while continuing to enforce child care standards.

Among the provisions in the new guidance:

- Help for parents to meet needs of nontraditional instruction (NTI) days by aiding background checks on providers and ensuring staffers are: masked; using proper hygiene; enforcing health checks and small groups; and have a plan in place for when someone tests positive for COVID-19.
- Expanding the maximum number of allowed children to 15 for licensed child-care facilities.
- Certified homes, licensed infant and 1-year-old classrooms may return to typical group sizes.
- \$2,500 startup incentive bonus through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act to encourage new providers.

#### **More Information**

Read about other key updates, actions and information from Gov. Beshear and his administration at [governor.ky.gov](http://governor.ky.gov), [kycovid19.ky.gov](http://kycovid19.ky.gov) and the Governor's official social media accounts [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

Kentuckians can also access translated COVID-19 information and summaries of the Governor's news conferences at [teamkentuckytranslations.com](http://teamkentuckytranslations.com).

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