



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR ANDY BESHEAR
COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Crystal Staley
502.545.3714

Sebastian Kitchen
502.330.0799
502.564.2611

**Gov. Beshear Provides Guidance on Public Events, Schools, Prisons as State
Continues Preparations and Response to COVID-19**

Gov. Beshear urges cooperation to protect Kentuckians, stop spread of COVID-19

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 11, 2020) – Governor Andy Beshear announced more decisive action and preparations on Wednesday to stop the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

“We know this is community spread and we need to get ahead of it,” Gov. Beshear said. “It is important for everybody out there to be calm, practice good hygiene and reduce the risk of exposure for themselves and others.”

Actions and preparations announced by Gov. Beshear on Wednesday include:

- Instructed school districts to be prepared to close on short notice, as short as 72 hours.
- Closed all state [prisons](#) to visitors.
- Encouraged every individual in Kentucky, in particular those over 60 and those with chronic medical conditions, to do what they can to avoid large gatherings and minimize time in groups and public spaces.
- Cancelled the Governor’s Prayer Breakfast out of an abundance of caution.
- Asked places of worship to cancel services temporarily due to the proximity .
- Suspended out-of-state travel for state employees.
- Urged more businesses to allow employees to tele-commute and to provide paid sick leave.
- Asked people to spread out in meeting and work spaces by increasing distance between seats and taking other similar actions.

Gov. Beshear said the actions and directions are proactive to prevent the spread and to protect Kentuckians, particularly those at higher risk, including those over 60 or with chronic health conditions including heart, lung or kidney disease.

“These steps we recommend are not made lightly,” said Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner for the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH). “Please work with us to make them effective.”

Gov. Beshear, who faithfully attends church with his family, said he knows asking houses of worship to cancel services is a big step and some people will disagree, but he and Dr. Stack said they are urging this action because of the close proximity to others in houses of worship, the communal activities and close interaction, and because many attendees are members of high-risk populations.

“I believe God gives us wisdom to protect each other and we should do that. I believe that it is our job to offer those protections,” Gov. Beshear said.

The Governor has briefed state lawmakers and all 120 county judges. He will also update jailers and school superintendents.

“Every action Gov. Beshear and his cabinet secretaries have taken is because we care deeply about the health and welfare of our people,” said Justice and Public Safety Cabinet Secretary Mary Noble.

Eight people in Kentucky have tested positive including five in Harrison County, two from Fayette and one from Jefferson. There are connections between the five Harrison County cases. All eight people are in isolation, four in medical facilities and four at home.

In Kentucky, the state has received results for 54 cases with 46 of those being negative. Eighteen of the 20 results received Tuesday were negative.

Gov. Beshear, Dr. Stack, Secretary Noble and Eric Friedlander, acting secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, briefed Kentuckians at the Capitol on Wednesday morning on the latest developments and the response of state and local government.

Beginning weeks before the virus was found in the Commonwealth, state and local officials collaborated to prepare for COVID-19 and are now working together to respond.

Gov. Beshear has taken decisive action to prepare and respond to COVID-19. Friday, immediately after confirmation of the first case, Gov. Beshear declared a [state of emergency](#) to ensure the state has every resource available to respond. Saturday, he issued an [executive order to prohibit price gouging](#). Monday, the Governor [issued an executive order](#) to waive copays, deductibles, cost-sharing and diagnostic testing fees for private insurance and state employees. The Governor is also telling providers to expand their networks to patients that may go outside their normal providers.

Tuesday, Gov. Beshear announced strong actions to [protect the state’s most vulnerable populations](#) by limiting visitation to senior care and long-term care facilities. Gov. Beshear also signed an [executive order](#) to allow 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. His action will also allow, if necessary, pharmacies to operate at locations other than those designated on their permits to make sure people have access to necessary medication.

The State Health Operations Center is activated at level one – fully activated – and the State Emergency Operations Center is also activated.

More information

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourages people to follow these [steps to prevent illness](#). People can find regular updates and resources including more information about when to seek medical attention and course of action for those in counties with positive cases at kycovid19.ky.gov. They are also urged to visit 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.