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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear Updates Kentuckians on Progress Fighting COVID-19

The Governor also shares new reopening guidelines for child care, bars, other businesses

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

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 21, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear on Thursday updated Kentuckians on guidelines for reopening safely as the state battles the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

"We're going to get through this together because just like Healthy at Home, we're going to be Healthy at Work in a way where we're are going to do this better than just about anybody else out there," the Governor said.

Case information

As of 5 p.m. May 21, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 8,236 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 135 of which were newly confirmed Thursday.

"We may be more than just plateaued, we may be in true reduction in what we're seeing about the spread," said Gov. Beshear. "Where we are now compared to where we were even three weeks ago is a much better place."

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear also reported 10 new deaths Thursday, raising the total to 386 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

Gov. Beshear said, “Ten more individuals. Ten more than we wanted to lose. Let’s make sure we’re thinking about them and their families tonight.”

The deaths reported Thursday include a 93-year-old woman from Jackson County, a 62-year-old man from Fayette County, 73-year-old woman from Adair County, a 72-year-old man from Simpson County, two 56-year-old women from Warren County, an 81-year-old man and an 86-year-old woman from Oldham County, and 69- and 78-year-old men from Jefferson County.

At least 3,008 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](#).

Child care reopening

Today, Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) Secretary Eric Friedlander announced that on June 8, in-home child care programs can open. On June 15, center-based licensed child care programs can reopen to all families.

“Today is a day of really good news for many people. Child care is one of the areas we know is critical to reopening the economy. It is critical to parents and has been critical to our essential workers,” said Sec. Friedlander. “It’s always a balance between protecting ourselves and our families and going to back to being Healthy at Work.”

The maximum group size will be 10 children per group. Children will remain in the same groups all day and staff will be assigned to the same children each day to reduce exposure. All adults must wear a face mask while in any child care program (in-home or center-based). Children 5 or younger should not wear masks, but older children may wear masks as they are able.

Programs should stagger playground time, eliminate center-wide family events, eliminate field trips and use centralized drop-off/pick-up locations to eliminate unnecessary traffic to classrooms and reduce exposure.

Sec. Friedlander also highlighted support for providers. All programs – in-home and center-based – will receive additional funding for cleaning and PPE supplies. Continued assistance will be available from state personnel and resources.

Click to see the complete guidance for [in-home child care](#) and [center-based child care](#).

Healthy at Work

Today, the Governor also announced auctions could be held starting June 1. Horse shows can be held again starting on June 8. Bars, gatherings with 50 people or fewer and venues that hold 50 people or fewer can reopen June 29 if they meet guidelines.

Businesses that are opening May 22 at 33% capacity can expand to 50% capacity a month later, on June 22, if they meet the guidelines.

“Based on the numbers we are seeing right now, we think we will be responsible and that we can hit it at that time,” said Gov. Beshear. “It all depends on how good we do at being Healthy at Work.”

For more information on the Healthy at Work timeline and industry requirements, [click here](#).

Kentucky students eligible for new emergency food benefits

The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) and the Kentucky Department of Education are partnering to provide food assistance to families who have lost access to free or reduced-price school meals during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency.

Beginning May 23, Kentucky families with students who normally receive free or reduced-price meals at school may get financial assistance to replace those meals through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program, part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

“These parents will be provided some additional benefits so they can use that to feed their children so that they don’t go hungry because they’re missing meals at school,” said CHFS Secretary Eric Friedlander. “When you apply for these benefits, it’s not just you as the individual that benefits. It’s your grocers, it’s your local businesses, it is the entire food system in Kentucky that benefits.”

Families who already receive assistance can receive P-EBT in addition to other benefits their household may get. Children who already receive SNAP, Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program assistance, Kinship Care or Medicaid will automatically receive P-EBT on their EBT cards and do not need to apply separately. P-EBT benefits will be added to existing EBT cards no later than May 28. Families of all other children must complete a short online application and will be mailed an EBT card with instructions on how to activate and use their card. Apply or get information from June 2 through June 30 at www.benefind.ky.gov or 855-306-8959.

Students who became eligible for free or reduced lunch after March 13 are eligible for P-EBT.

For more information, [click here](#).

Memorial Day Weekend

Keeping safe while celebrating together is crucial as we enter the traditional start of the summer season. Gov. Beshear and state health officials are asking all Kentuckians to keep gatherings to 10 or fewer people.

“We’ve done a wonderful job coming together and showing our care and concern for each other in Kentucky,” said Kentucky Department of Public Health (KDPH) Commissioner Dr. Steven Stack. “The works not over, and if we take our eye off the ball, in June or July, we’ll have the very problem we’ve averted so far.”

Other [guidance](#) includes wearing masks, maintaining social distancing of six feet or more, gathering outside instead of inside, washing hands frequently and covering food and individually wrapping plates.

Testing expansion

On Thursday, Gov. Beshear continued to encourage Kentuckians to get tested for COVID-19. [Kentucky’s testing capacity](#) now exceeds the daily average recommended by the White House to safely begin reopening the economy.

The recommended per capita testing rate is 100 per 100,000. In the seven days ending Tuesday, the daily average of Kentuckians tested per 100,000 residents was significantly higher at 138.

Information on how to register at more than 70 sites throughout the commonwealth can be found at kycovid19.ky.gov.

More information

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

Kentuckians can also access translated COVID-19 information and daily summaries of the Governor’s news conference at tinyurl.com/kygovespanol (Spanish) and tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations (more than 20 additional languages).





*For official news and updates from the Beshear/Coleman administration,
visit governor.ky.gov/news.*