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Gov. Beshear Provides Update on COVID-19

Governor says state is monitoring 11 people for Ebola after their return from affected countries

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 16, 2021) – On Tuesday, Gov. Andy Beshear reported 819 new COVID-19 cases, 24 COVID-19 deaths and a positivity rate of 3.87%.

“This week, while we are so hopeful, this virus is still out there and it is still dangerous. Please continue to wear your mask and social distance – even if you’ve been vaccinated, you have a duty to everybody else who is still waiting for their vaccine,” said Gov. Beshear. “Remember, by May 31, we believe every Kentucky adult who wants a vaccine will have gotten at least their first shot of hope. We believe that we will beat the president’s goal to open appointments up to everybody 16 and up by May 1.”

The Governor also said 11 Kentuckians have recently returned from countries currently experiencing an Ebola outbreak (Guinea and the Democratic Republic of the Congo). Local health departments contact travelers, assess exposure risk, educate those travelers about what to do if they have symptoms and quarantine

those at high risk for 21 days. None of the 11 people has been deemed high-risk for exposure.

“We are working with our hospitals to make sure they are ready to handle any suspect patients for 12 to 24 hours,” said Gov. Beshear. “We have six Ebola Assessment Hospitals that are working with us to make sure they are prepared to handle potential patients and assessments for Ebola.”

Long-Term Care Facilities Update

Today, Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health, said his team is responding to a COVID-19 outbreak in a long-term care facility where 41 people have tested positive for the virus.

“This situation is still unfolding, but I’m sharing this particular example today because there are some important lessons to take from it,” said Dr. Stack. “At this facility, 85% of residents and 48% of the health care workers have been vaccinated. It appears that an unvaccinated person introduced the virus into the facility. When it is your turn to get vaccinated, please do so. This is the best chance we have to keep our loved ones and ourselves safe from this terrible disease that has upended our lives. Vaccinations will also help us minimize the creation of new COVID-19 variants from mutations, which could cause us further harm in the future.”

Of the 41 infected people, only 30% of the vaccinated individuals have been symptomatic but 83% of the unvaccinated people have been symptomatic. Vaccination appears to have markedly reduced symptomatic disease.

Additionally, five of the residents have been admitted to the hospital. Of these, four hospitalized residents were unvaccinated and one hospitalized resident had been vaccinated. Here, too, vaccination appears to have markedly reduced the risk of hospitalization.

Corrections Update

J. Michael Brown, secretary of the Executive Cabinet, said the Department of Corrections is expected to begin vaccinating inmates who are 70 years and older on March 18 at Little Sandy Correctional Complex.

“We do have a serious COVID-19 outbreak at the Kentucky State Penitentiary. But 11 of 14 state correctional institutions have zero active inmate cases,” said Secretary Brown. “There is hope on the way. All 14 of our institutions have now

been enrolled as COVID-19 vaccine distributors for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.”

Gov. Beshear Signs Three Bills in Support of the Kentucky National Guard

Yesterday, with Brig. Gen. Haldane Lamberton, Gov. Beshear signed three pieces of legislation into law that benefit Kentucky National Guard soldiers and their families.

“These bills were supported in both chambers of the state legislature and will help better serve those who bravely serve our commonwealth and country,” said Gov. Beshear. “Every year, the work of the Guard is crucial to our state, but in this unprecedented year, the Guard has been called on time-and-time again, and each time they have continued to step up and serve unselfishly.”

The three bills are: [House Bill 73](#), which authorizes a state-sponsored life insurance program for Kentucky National Guardsmen through the National Guard Association of Kentucky; [House Bill 196](#), which prohibits vehicle insurers from refusing to issue motor vehicle liability insurance policies and enacting penalties against uninsured deployed service members; and [House Bill 206](#), which supports adoption in Kentucky as the new law immediately helps increase adoption assistance program reimbursements by \$2,000 per child for our military families.

Virginia Moore Recognized as Communicator of the Year, Alumni of the Year

“Virginia taught us the importance of inclusion, while making us all smile when we needed it most. She used her talents and skill to keep the deaf and hard of hearing community informed, teaching all of Team Kentucky a lesson as we work to build a better, more inclusive Kentucky, together,” said Gov. Beshear. “I am honored to share once again that others saw Virginia’s compassion and commitment, and are celebrating her today through two separate awards.”

Greater Clark County Schools in Indiana, Virginia’s school district growing up, named Moore as the 2021 Jeffersonville High School Alumni of the Year for her service throughout the pandemic. Her nominators said Virginia is a champion. And “although her work is silent, it speaks volumes.”

The Kentucky District of the National Speech and Debate Association also recognized Moore as Kentucky’s Communicator of the Year for 2021.

“I was honored to receive this award last year, and for me personally, it means a lot to be in the same category as my friend Virginia,” said Gov. Beshear.

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Tuesday, March 16, Gov. Beshear reported the following COVID-19 numbers:

New cases today: 819

New deaths today: 24

Positivity rate: 3.87%

Total deaths: 5,029

Currently hospitalized: 459

Currently in ICU: 110

Currently on ventilator: 59

Top counties with the most positive cases today are: Jefferson, Fayette, Laurel and Warren. Each county reported at least 25 new cases.

To see a list of those reported lost to the virus today, click [here](#).

Kentucky's COVID-19 Vaccine Website, vaccine.ky.gov, shows Kentuckians which phase they are in specifically. Individuals can sign up for notifications so state officials can communicate with them when doses become available at new and existing sites. [Kentucky's vaccine map](#) lists regional vaccination partners statewide, so individuals can search their county or region and see how to schedule an appointment. Below the vaccine map, Kentuckians can find additional vaccination sites at [Kroger](#), [Walmart](#) and [Walgreens](#) stores, as well as [independent pharmacies](#).

Kentucky's COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline, [855-598-2246](tel:855-598-2246) or TTY [855-326-4654](tel:855-326-4654) (for deaf or hard-of-hearing Kentuckians), has the same features as the website. Kentuckians can get assistance completing the vaccine eligibility questionnaire and scheduling an appointment when doses are available. The hotline is available 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. EST Monday through Friday.

Free or reduced-cost transportation to and from vaccine appointments is offered by public transit agencies across the commonwealth. These services are already operating in over 90 counties, covering 75% of all counties across Kentucky. Kentuckians can find transportation services near them by heading to kycovid19.ky.gov for a full list of participating public transit agencies and their phone numbers, or by calling the Kentucky COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline.

More Information

To view the [full daily report](#), [incidence rate map](#), information on [testing locations](#), [vaccines](#), [contact tracing](#), [school reports and guidance](#), [guidance for health care providers](#) and the White House Coronavirus Task Force reports for Kentucky and more, visit kycovid19.ky.gov.

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