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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear: As New COVID-19 Cases Decline, State Focuses on Equitable Vaccine Access

Dr. Stack also details COVID-19 death determinations process

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 8, 2021) – On Monday, as new cases continue to decline, Gov. Beshear said the state is working to address equitable vaccine access.

The Governor updated Kentuckians on the [demographics](#) of those vaccinated. “One thing to note when you look at the vaccine demographic data: we have more individuals in long-term care under 70 than I had ever imagined,” said Gov. Beshear. “With that said, we need to continue to prioritize those 70 and older.

“Right now, more women than men have been vaccinated, but we suspect that reflects the health care and education sectors that have been in earlier phases. I think this will even out more when we get to Phase 1C.

“Black and African American Kentuckians, to date, have received about 4.3% of vaccinations where we know the person’s race. That is unacceptable. It needs to be closer to 8%, at least. About 1.1% of vaccines where ethnicity is known have gone to our Hispanic population – also too low.

“We’re going to produce this data every week so we can track our progress and be held accountable.”

The Governor said addressing equity in vaccine distribution requires looking at three root causes: programmatic causes, as the state needs to take additional, intentional steps to make vaccination programs more equitable; societal causes, because minority Kentuckians are not equally represented in medicine and education, so they were underrepresented among the first to be vaccinated; and historic causes of vaccine hesitancy among minority Kentuckians.

“Our underserved and minority populations haven’t been treated right in the past when it comes to vaccines, or even experimentation,” said Gov. Beshear. “From the beginning, we knew Black and Latinx people were more hesitant to get the COVID-19 vaccination. We’re committed to addressing these concerns.”

“We look forward to expanding our network of partners in this effort and working to reach people who need access to this vaccine and need a little extra assistance in getting it, so they can have the same benefit as everyone else,” said public health Commissioner Dr. Steven Stack.

The Governor also announced the state’s positivity rate has decreased to the lowest it has been since Nov. 10 and Kentucky has now had four straight weeks of declining test positivity and weekly cases.

“The trends are all moving in the right direction, but that only happens from your hard work. We must keep this up because we do not want to lose this progress,” said Gov. Beshear.

The Governor said for the fifth straight week, the state has distributed more vaccines than it received in first doses from the federal government. Of all the first doses the state has received, 91% are already in a Kentuckians’ arms.

Kentucky has received 490,975 COVID-19 initial vaccine doses and 444,930 Kentuckians have received their first vaccine dose.

The state’s vaccination program has received 410,050 first doses and administered 375,728.

The federal long-term care vaccination program run through CVS and Walgreens has sent 80,925 first doses to Kentucky and the program has administered 69,202.

The federal government has vaccinated 17,186 Kentuckians as well, in the Bureau of Prisons, the Veterans Administration and in the Department of Defense.

The new federal pharmacy vaccination program will also start at the end of this week. It has two major partners in the state: a number of Walgreens locations and a large group of independent pharmacies.

“Walgreens is a great partner, but it didn’t have sufficient coverage in rural Kentucky, so we advocated for the program to include independent pharmacies, too,” said Gov. Beshear.

For more information on who is currently eligible for the vaccine in Kentucky, visit vaccine.ky.gov, or call 855-598-2246. Deaf or hard of hearing Kentuckians can call TTY 855-326-4654.

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Monday, Feb. 8, Gov. Beshear reported the following COVID-19 numbers:

New cases today: 1,003

New deaths today: 40

Positivity rate: 7.78%

Total deaths: 4,091

Currently hospitalized: 1,163

Currently in ICU: 274

Currently on ventilator: 142

Top counties with the most positive cases today are: Jefferson, Fayette, Warren and Campbell. Each of these counties reported 30 or more new cases; Jefferson County alone reported 205. To see a list of those reported lost to the virus today, click [here](#).

COVID-19 Death Determinations

Today, Dr. Stack updated Kentuckians on the state’s COVID-19 death determinations process.

“COVID-19 has become the third-leading cause of death in the United States. The process for determining which deaths were caused by COVID-19 is well-defined. It has been done this way for other diseases for a very long time,” said Dr. Stack.

“The death must be reported to appropriate authorities. Then you have to have a death certificate signed – that can take days or even weeks, or in unusual cases, longer – that all has to get reported to the local health department.

“The local health department then has to review those materials and make sure things are in order. At that point, they may feel like they’ve reached a conclusion on cause of death, and then they report that up to the state. The state has to take that information and then independently verify certain additional data points, making sure there was a positive COVID-19 test and clinical evidence that COVID-19 was related. For less than 10% of cases, there’s something that requires verification. So then the state has to request records. When they get that information, sometimes that’s all that’s necessary. Some cases, however, are less clear cut. My deputy clinical commissioner and her highly-qualified team of professionals then make an informed determination based on all of the information obtained. This is all a very methodical process.

“The historical record is always accurate based on the person’s date of death, as opposed to the date we are able to report the death, which can be days or weeks later.”

Team Kentucky Fund Donates \$380,000 to Mission-Aligned Local Nonprofits

On Monday, Gov. Beshear announced a \$380,000 donation from the Team Kentucky Fund to 19 qualified nonprofit organizations in equal shares of \$20,000. Each nonprofit serves Kentuckians by preventing homelessness and/or assisting families impacted by the opioid epidemic.

Each recipient had to be a qualified nonprofit organization under the emergency regulation governing the Team Kentucky Fund, 800 KAR 1:010E(10). To learn more and view the list of organizations, see the [full release](#).

With New Louisville HQ, Wieland North America to Create 75 Positions

Wieland North America Inc., a producer of copper and copper alloy products, plans a new North American headquarters in Louisville, a project expected to bring 75 jobs with an \$8.8 million investment as it advances Gov. Beshear’s goal to create quality careers for Kentuckians. To read more, see the [full release](#).

Price-Gouging

Today, Gov. Beshear signed an [executive order](#) renewing the state's prohibition on price-gouging. To report price-gouging, visit the attorney general's [website](#).

Memorial

"Today we are honoring Roy Holladay, known by many as Doc. He was 73 when he passed away Friday at Baptist Health in Paducah after battling COVID-19. Doc moved to Paducah from Tennessee in 1967, beginning a long career with Union Carbide," said Gov. Beshear. "He was a master electrician and served in Germany with the Air Force as a maintenance trainer for aircraft during Vietnam.

"Doc loved the outdoors. Lake Barkley was his heaven on earth. He shared his passion for fishing, camping and hunting with anyone who would listen. He was an amateur crappie tournament winner several times over, but his real triumph was teaching his daughter, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends to fish.

"His grandkids were, by far, the light of his life. Ali is fourteen, and Colin is thirteen, and he relished his time supporting them or showing them love.

"Doc served his church, Twelve Oaks Baptist, as both a leader and humble servant. He was a Deacon, bus driver, maintenance man, greeter and self-proclaimed master popcorn maker for basketball games and events. You name it, Doc did it.

"Doc is survived by his wife of 52 years, Martha Holladay; his daughter, Heather and her husband Jim, and his two grandchildren. Please join me in praying for this family, and every family grieving because of this virus."

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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