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Gov. Beshear: Kentucky Cases Increasing at Frightening Pace

Multiple highly effective vaccines on the way; Kentuckians must be resilient until they arrive

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 16, 2020) – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear warned Kentuckians that COVID-19 continues to spread at a frightening pace within the commonwealth and across the United States.

As of this morning, two companies, Moderna and Pfizer, have announced [their vaccines appear to be more than 90% effective as clinical trials continue](#). The Governor said he hopes this great news will inspire all Kentuckians to keep fighting the virus in the months before those vaccines become widely available. “We need everybody with this news to buckle down, to make sure you are making good decisions each and every day because people’s lives depend on it,” said Gov. Beshear. “If we can just get to the point where this vaccine will be widely available, we can make sure we don’t lose people. We need your help. This is now a time-limited virus. So if you’re tired, now you can see the end. Let’s get our second wind.

“Today, we’re talking about where this virus is; tomorrow, we’re going to share some modeling about where we think it’s going; and then on Wednesday, if we

don't see a change in the numbers, we'll talk about some additional steps that we may have to take to try to get this virus under control.

"If we have to take additional steps, it will not look like what we went through in March, in April and into May. At that time, we did not have enough testing; we had almost no PPE to protect those in hospitals; we didn't know the most effective ways to treat this virus so the mortality rate was through the roof; and we didn't know as much about the spread. If we have to take additional steps, they will be more targeted."

Today, Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Eric Friedlander also updated Kentuckians on the state's efforts against COVID-19 in long-term care facilities.

"We are working around the clock to continue to do all that we are able to combat what is a vicious, highly contagious disease," said Secretary Friedlander. "Among 382 long-term care facilities with active cases, 38 have at least 15 active cases, a dramatic rise from the 15 facilities with at least 15 active cases as of Oct. 30. There's a continued need to balance the emotional and mental well-being of residents and their family members and the harsh reality of this pandemic."

The Kentucky Department for Public Health will mobilize strike teams to hard-hit facilities, and the Kentucky National Guard also will mobilize 10 non-clinical support teams. Guidance has been updated with regard to communal dining, group activities and offsite travel, including a recommendation that residents leave a facility only when medically necessary and for needs that cannot be met on site or through telehealth.

"Holiday visits will need to look different this year. If a resident leaves a facility for an outing, the resident will be expected to go into quarantine upon returning to the facility," said Secretary Friedlander. "We continue to encourage compassionate care, televisits and outdoor visits."

Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman celebrated American Education Week and congratulated Recognizing Inspirational School Employees Award winners. She also announced that to date, more than \$3.7 million has been raised for the Team Kentucky Fund, which already has assisted more than 2,500 Kentucky families.

Applications for the fund will close at 5 p.m. today as Lt. Gov. Coleman expects all funds will be exhausted once current applications are processed.

“I would like to thank [Community Action Kentucky](#) (CAK) for their partnership. I said they would be the hands and feet of the Team Kentucky Fund, and that has turned out to be true,” Lt. Gov. Coleman said. “For every \$1 given to the Team Kentucky Fund, CAK has leveraged their existing programs to provide a total of \$2.22 to Kentucky families. That is a tremendous return on investment.”

If Kentuckians have an outstanding application with the Team Kentucky Fund, CAK will continue to work with them and will be in contact. If Kentuckians still need support, they should reach out to their local CAK office or visit [\[kycovid19.ky.gov\]](http://kycovid19.ky.gov) kycovid.ky.gov to view additional resources which may be available to them.

Finally, Secretary of the Executive Cabinet J. Michael Brown updated Kentuckians on COVID-19 in the state’s correctional facilities. Unfortunately, there has been a sizable outbreak at Lee Adjustment Center, where there are 29 active staff cases and 434 active inmate cases.

“The news from the corrections front is not good. We’ve seen an increase week over week of 514 inmate cases and 52 staff cases. That brings our total for the year to over 2,000 inmate cases and over 280 staff cases,” said Secretary Brown. “Our fear, frankly, is that we haven’t completely finished testing the facility and we already know that half of the inmates have tested positive for COVID-19. It’s alarming. We wanted to bring this to everyone’s attention to show that sometimes in spite of our best efforts, this virus continues to strike us.”

Case Information

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

- New cases today: 1,514
- New deaths today: 3
- Positivity rate: 8.98%
- Total deaths: 1,664
- Currently hospitalized: 1,442
- Currently in ICU: 360

- Currently on ventilator: 128

Top counties with the most positive cases today are: Jefferson, Fayette, Kenton and Hardin.

The red zone counties for this week can be found [here](#).

Those reported lost to the virus today include a 66-year-old woman from Graves County; a 63-year-old woman from Henderson County; and an 83-year-old woman from Jefferson County.

More Information

To view the [full daily report](#), [incidence rate map](#), testing locations, long term-care and other congregate facilities update, school reports, the White House Coronavirus Task Force reports for Kentucky and other key guidance visit, kycovid19.ky.gov.

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