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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear Working to Reduce Spread of COVID-19

21 positive cases; Visit the Governor's [Facebook](#) page to watch today's news conference
FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 15, 2020) – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear updated Kentuckians on the state's ongoing response to limit the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and said the state has three additional positive cases.

As of 5 p.m. ET Sunday more tests results were received, bringing the state's total to 21 with two new positive cases in Jefferson County and one in Clark County.

"I am not going to be the governor who acts two weeks too late," Gov. Beshear said. "I will continue to act swiftly to limit the spread and reduce the risk to Kentuckians, particularly those vulnerable populations. My promise to Kentuckians is we will work through this together and make sure we get through this."

Gov. Beshear said that while the state's first patient fully recovered from the virus, he continues to take aggressive action to protect Kentuckians. Unfortunately, another of the 21 patients is in critical condition and is not expected to recover. Beshear said that while the coronavirus is not the only factor in that individual's condition, it is a contributing factor.

After attending a recent event in Louisville where someone who attended later tested positive, Gov. Beshear tested negative on Saturday and is not showing any symptoms.

Gov. Beshear said 14 of the 16 Kentuckians who were on the Grand Princess cruise ship are on their way back to the state. He said two other Kentuckians, who were at a different Air Force base, will return Monday.

“These are our people. I don’t think they have been treated the way they should,” Gov. Beshear said. “This is happening because I have demanded it and our commissioner of health has demanded it.”

Gov. Beshear urged people not to unnecessarily buy large amounts of food and household items, making it unavailable for others.

“Fear can cause more harm than this virus ever will. I am asking everyone to be a good neighbor,” he said. “We take care of each other in this state.”

Gov. Beshear asked people to be responsible and not pack in to restaurants and bars. He said he would be forced to follow Ohio and shut down restaurants if people do not listen.

“We are asking people to make major sacrifices in this state. We are shutting down schools for a couple of weeks,” Gov. Beshear said in talking about the difficult but necessary steps he has taken to stop the spread and protect Kentuckians.

Gov. Beshear said one person, who tested positive at UofL, left against medical advice and returned to his home in Nelson County. The Lincoln Trail District Health Department asked him to self-quarantine, but he refused. The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is currently working with the local county attorney and county judge-executive to obtain an order to force him to quarantine in his home.

As of 5 p.m. ET, March 15, the state’s current COVID-19 patient information includes:

1. Harrison, F, 27, out of hospital and fully recovered
2. Fayette, M, 40
3. Jefferson, M, 69
4. Harrison, F, 67
5. Harrison, M, 68
6. Fayette, M, 46
7. Harrison, F, 54
8. Harrison, M, 60
9. Harrison, M, 51
10. Fayette, F, 31
11. Jefferson, F, 67
12. Bourbon, M, 66
13. Jefferson, F, 68
14. Jefferson, F, 80
15. Nelson, M, 53
16. Montgomery, M, 56
17. Fayette, M, 47
18. Fayette, M, 31
19. Clark, M, 49
20. Jefferson, F, 73
21. Jefferson

The governor said he knows people are anxious and their lives are being disrupted.

“We have released tips and guidance for good mental health and to relieve anxiety during this period of time. We know we will get through this,” Gov. Beshear said. “Mental health is going to be critically important in getting through this. Make sure that you do things that help your mental health.”

Gov. Beshear has continued to take decisive action since the first case was confirmed in Kentucky. To date, Gov. Beshear has:

- Declared a [state of emergency](#) to ensure the state has every resource available to respond
- Issued an [executive order to prohibit price gouging](#)
- Announced Kentucky’s COVID-19 informational website, kycovid19.ky.gov and issued extensive guidance on when to seek care and when to call the state’s hotline, **1-800-722-5725**
- [Issued an executive order](#) to waive copays, deductibles, cost-sharing and diagnostic testing fees for private insurance and state employees and asked providers to expand their networks to patients that may go outside their normal providers
- Announced that those without insurance will be able to get a test in Kentucky
- Announced strong actions to [protect the state’s most vulnerable populations](#) by limiting visitation to senior care and long-term care facilities
- Signed an [executive order](#) allowing 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
- Closed all state [prisons](#) to visitors
- Activated the State Health Operations Center and the State Emergency Operations Center
- Recommended the temporary closure of senior centers to help halt the spread of the virus for those most vulnerable
- Announced that [Kentucky Employers’ Mutual Insurance](#) (KEMI) will provide wage replacement benefits for first responders and medical personnel who have been quarantined for COVID-19
- [Announced new guidance](#) that state boards and commissions cancel any scheduled in-person meetings and instead use video teleconference technology
- Recommended schools cease in-person classes beginning Monday, March 16, and as of Friday, March 14, all 172 school districts, the Kentucky School for the Blind and Kentucky School for the Deaf will close
- Announced USDA approved the state’s waiver to serve meals during non-traditional instruction days
- Announced the state is taking swift action to get the passengers from the Grand Princess cruise ship back home
- Issued [guidance](#) to state agencies to allow telecommuting where possible to decrease on-site staffing by up to 50 percent to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and suspended out-of-state travel for state employees
- Recommended businesses also utilize telecommuting and allow employees to work from home if possible
- Advised that all community gatherings be canceled
- Provided [tips and guidance](#) to assist with physical and mental health during a pandemic
- Recommended childcare centers create plans so if needed they can close within 72 hours

- Asked hospitals to cease elective procedures by Wednesday, March 18
- Held daily and most days, twice-a-day media and [Facebook live](#) briefings to inform Kentuckians and provide recommended health and safety guidance

More information

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encourages people to follow these [steps to prevent illness](#). Kentuckians can find regular updates and resources including more information about when to seek medical attention and courses 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.

To read Gov. Beshear's news releases and watch other news regarding COVID-19 visit governor.ky.gov.

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