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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Gov. Beshear, State Leaders Provide Update on Kentucky's Fight
Against COVID-19**

***Key updates on interstate collaboration, testing, Team Kentucky Fund, field hospital
Visit the Governor's [Facebook](#) page to watch today's news conference***

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 15, 2020) –Gov. Beshear announced Wednesday that his administration is deepening ties with neighboring Indiana and Ohio in the fight against the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The Governor said he, Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb and Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine have agreed to continue close discussions on responding to the coronavirus pandemic, with an eye toward eventually coordinating plans to reopen the states' economies.

"Regionally, it is so critical," Gov. Beshear said. "If you live in Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati is right across the river, we have to work together to make sure that one area isn't on top of the virus and another just brings it in, and vice versa."

The Governor will continue regular calls and planning sessions with neighboring governors and other leaders over the coming weeks. As action is taken, the governors will provide updates.

"These two governors and I have been on a call at least once a week, and let me tell you, they care about their people," Gov. Beshear said. "There hasn't been one political moment in it, just three people trying to do the best they can surrounded by teams trying to do the best that they can."

He said that the collaboration is essential but that each leader ultimately would make his own decisions.

"In the end each state will have to sign off on any of their plans. None of us are going to relinquish our obligation to serve our people," the Governor said. "But we believe that these three states have been doing a

good job in what we face with the coronavirus and that our experience is very similar and so that by doing this we believe we can have a more effective eventual opening of different parts of our economy.”

Comprehensive testing

Gov. Beshear also announced the first stage of a unique testing regime, starting with frontline health care workers, that is designed to save lives and get people back to work.

The Co-Immunity Project is a collaboration among the State of Kentucky, Louisville Metro Government, the Christina Lee Brown Envirome Institute and several major health care companies through the Louisville Healthcare CEO Council.

The project will focus on comprehensive testing, centered on antibodies and developing donor plasma resources.

“It will test for antibodies for those who have been infected in the past and may have developed immunity,” the Governor said.

Gov. Beshear said we are unleashing the capabilities of a special asset we have in our state, the Louisville Center for Predictive Medicine, which has state-of-the-art facilities for BSL-3 biocontainment research.

The Co-Immunity Project is a collaboration – not only between public and private institutions, but also among private health care companies that normally compete against each other. They are banding together, contributing different capabilities to this project with the same goal of delivering a testing regime that can save lives and get a community of people back to work.

“This is a unique opportunity for us to leverage all of the research capabilities of the University of Louisville,” said University of Louisville President Neeli Bendapudi. “We are very eager to try to work with the entire population, first of all to protect our health care workers and then everyone in the community and hopefully from Louisville we are able to take this and extend it to enhancing the health of the entire commonwealth.”

Team Kentucky Fund

Gov. Beshear announced new fundraising numbers and an oversight panel for the Team Kentucky Fund.

Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman appeared Wednesday remotely via video to announce the five co-chairs.

“I have some great news to share with the state about the Team Kentucky Fund,” Lt. Gov. Coleman said. “First of all, I have recruited five co-chairs to serve as the team that leads the charge here, and it is a bipartisan group of folks that you might recognize because they have all held my position of lieutenant governor in the past.”

Jerry Abramson, Steve Henry, Crit Luallen, Daniel Mongiardo and Steve Pence will co-chair the Team Kentucky Fund to help Kentuckians whose employment has been affected by COVID-19.

Beshear, along with the Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet, took [executive action](#) March 23 to establish the Team Kentucky Fund, an online platform to provide help to Kentuckians affected financially during the COVID-19 emergency.

This fund will complement other efforts from the state's unemployment payments to federal stimulus, said Lt. Gov. Coleman, who is also secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet.

"We are going to be partnering with Community Action of Kentucky. We are going to be partnering with this group because they have a long history of impactful work. This organization is going to serve as the hands and feet of this mission," Lt. Gov. Coleman said.

Gov. Beshear said that right now there is more than \$1.8 million raised or pledged to the Team Kentucky Fund.

"More than 7,000 people have donated. Most of the donations were less than \$100," the Governor said. "We've also had some businesses and private donors step up with gifts from \$10,000 to the \$1 million announcement we had from the Kentucky Colonels just yesterday."

In addition to the Kentucky Colonels' unprecedented donation, Gov. Beshear highlighted some of the major gifts, including \$125,000 from an anonymous business donor, \$100,000 from LG&E, \$25,000 from Health Tech Solutions and \$65,000 from Bret Walker and Emilee Stites in cooperation with TeeSpring Inc. (Walker and Stites operate BeshearGear.com, with 100% of proceeds going to the Team Kentucky Fund.)

"I want to thank everyone for their generosity in this," the Governor said. "Nobody's personal finances are in a positive place as we go through this. Thinking about the fact that people have donated already \$1.9 million to help out their fellow human being is once again passing that test of humanity."

University of Kentucky Football Coach Mark Stoops sent a video promoting the Team Kentucky Fund.

"Any coach will tell you, in order to have success, you have to have to execute a game plan. Our game plan is this: stay healthy and stay home. And keep a safe distance from family and loved ones. That is how you win. That is how you defeat the coronavirus," Coach Stoops said.

"But much like a team, you also need a strong supporting cast. That is why the Governor and the Team Kentucky Fund has put together an initiative and a fundraiser," Coach Stoops said. "Some Kentuckians are being hit so much harder than others. And they need our support."

Donate to the Team Kentucky Fund at www.donate.ky.gov.

Drive-through testing update

Gov. Beshear provided updates and clarification about the state's partnership with Kroger to provide drive-through testing for the coronavirus in the commonwealth.

A main point of emphasis is that Kroger stores and pharmacies are *not* testing sites. Please do not call the stores or pharmacies seeking to register for the tests.

For those seeking to register for a test, a new website has been established. For location details or to register for a test, visit [\[KROGERHEALTH.COM/COVIDTESTING\]](https://KROGERHEALTH.COM/COVIDTESTING)KROGERHEALTH.COM/COVIDTESTING.

Those eligible for the tests include people exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, shortness of breath and cough; health care workers and first responders who may have been exposed to coronavirus; and anyone with mild symptoms who also may have been exposed to COVID-19.

The testing is done free of charge. The overall goal of the partnership is to conduct 20,000 tests over the next five weeks. Test results are expected within approximately 48 hours.

Census update

Gov. Beshear is continuing to encourage Kentuckians to do their Constitutional duty and fill out the 2020 U.S. Census.

“The Census provides significant dollars,” the Governor said. “When we talk about needing to rebuild our economy, we are leaving dollars on the table unless every Kentucky family completes the Census.”

Newly released numbers show that Kentucky is outpacing the national average 51% to 49.1% in self-response to the Census. However, a regional look at the commonwealth shows far less reporting in the eastern portion of the state.

“This is really important for the months ahead when we can look to not just restarting but reviving our economy,” the Governor said.

Field hospital update

Kentucky National Guard Adj. Gen. Hal Lamberton provided an update on the [field hospital](#) at the Kentucky Exposition Center.

“At this moment, it is operational. We currently have 250 beds there. We have the potential of expanding that should the need arise,” Gen. Lamberton said. “The intent of this acute-care facility is if there is a need and an overflow at our local hospitals in the Louisville area, that this is a means to send some of the light-medical-care COVID-19 afflicted patients. We can’t wait till that need is already there, we’ve got to have this prepared in advance of the need, thus the operational date now, well ahead.”

He said the collaborative effort includes the Kentucky National Guard, Kentucky Emergency Management, the Kentucky Department for Public Health, Kentucky Homeland Security and numerous local and state level organizations.

Case information

As of 5 p.m. April 15, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 2,291 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 88 of which were newly confirmed.

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear also reported seven new deaths Tuesday, raising the state's toll to 122 deaths related to the virus.

"These seven people are a loss to all of us so let's make sure we light our houses up tonight, and our places of business," the Governor said.

The newly reported deaths include four women from Jefferson County, ages 88, 89 and two 93-year-olds; a 94-year-old woman from Hopkins County; a 48-year-old man from Simpson County; and a 65-year-old man from an undisclosed county.

At least 862 people have recovered from COVID-19 in Kentucky.

To date, at least 28,324 people have been tested. At least 807 people have ever been hospitalized with 412 currently hospitalized. At least 367 have ever been in the ICU with at least 252 people currently in the ICU.

Gov. Beshear also offered an update on the racial breakdown of COVID-19 patients, which has been the subject of news stories across the country because of the disparity.

The Governor said with about 73% of the known cases accounted for, 80.62% of Kentuckians who tested positive were Caucasian, 11.63% were African-American, 4.93% were multiracial, 2.63% were Asian and 0.07% were Native American, Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian.

On fatalities attributed to the coronavirus, with about 82% of the known cases accounted for, Kentucky deaths are about 77% Caucasian, 22% African-American and 1% Asian.

"Again, those are concerning numbers," the Governor said.

More information

The Governor is asking all Kentuckians to continue to fight the spread of the virus by following his [10-step guidance](#), which includes practicing social distancing and staying *healthy at home*. Gov. Beshear says these efforts have the potential to save the lives of as many as 11,000 Kentuckians.

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](#). Watch the Governor's social media accounts at 5 p.m. ET each day for his regular briefing.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages people to follow these [steps to prevent illness](#). Kentuckians who want advice can call the state hotline at 800-722-5725 or call their local health care provider.

Team Kentucky hashtags for social media

#TeamKentucky, #TogetherKY, #Patriot and new Saturday #HealthyAtHome.

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TEAM
KENTUCKY



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