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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Gov. Beshear Asks Kentuckians to Keep Focus on COVID-19 Fight**  
*Governor says social distancing along with boosting health care resources, testing are keys*

*Visit the Governor's [Facebook page](#) to watch today's news conference*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 1, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear on Wednesday asked Kentuckians to focus on what we can do here to fight the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

“Our aggressive actions and everything you have sacrificed is making a difference,” the Governor said. “It is making a difference.”

As we head into a critical month in the global pandemic’s spread in the United States and throughout the commonwealth, Gov. Beshear said Kentuckians should concentrate efforts on three key areas to blunt the deadly outbreak. Social distancing is the main component, Gov. Beshear said, including everything from keeping at least six feet apart in public spaces to limiting all non-essential travel.

“I know it feels like this is all out of our control, but it is actually more in your control than most crises that we face, because your actions, your choices can reduce the spread of the virus,” the Governor said.

Gov. Beshear said the issue becomes harder to manage as the weather turns more favorable. He issued a warning ahead of this weekend.

“We cannot let a beautiful weekend ultimately harm the people around us,” the Governor said.

Gov. Beshear called on reporters and news anchors to post videos about social distancing on social media to help convince their followers to make the right choices this weekend.

“We’ve appreciated everything that you’ve done,” he said. “My challenge to you – and you’ve got two days to do it – is to get that message out.”

The Governor also shared information about COVID-19 cases that have been linked to a failure of social distancing at a church revival in Hopkins County, which was held following his order to end in-person services.

“Hopkins County has been hit really, really hard,” the Governor said. He read excerpts from a communication from the Hopkins County Health Department that said dozens of people in the community had fallen ill after they attended a church revival in Dawson Springs and did not then self-isolate themselves. The health official said Hopkins County has connected 24 positive cases and two deaths to the revival contacts.

The second thing Kentucky can do to fight the coronavirus is boost the state’s health care resources. Gov. Beshear said he and his staff are working every day to secure more equipment. A recent count of the state’s health care resources found 18,500 hospital beds, 1,300 ICU beds and 1,352 ventilators, though the Governor said those resources have been added to in recent weeks.

The third key is to boost testing. “I can confirm we’ve done more than 10,000 tests,” the Governor said. He said more tests coming in will make it easier to deploy resources.

### **Helping Kentucky workers**

While working to prevent the worst outcomes, Gov. Beshear has committed to protecting workers across the commonwealth whose livelihoods already have been disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Josh Benton, deputy secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, said officials are working to fix problems brought on by an unprecedented surge in unemployment claims.

Benton said the claims website, [kcc.ky.gov](http://kcc.ky.gov), has been completely revamped for ease of use and capacity is being continuously added to the call center. Benton said the center went from fielding about 1,500 calls per day to anywhere from 80,000 to 200,000 calls per day.

In these unprecedented times, the Governor has expanded access for groups not normally eligible for unemployment insurance. Substitute teachers, freelance workers, small-business owners, restaurant workers and more can access a range of benefits.

### **National Guard**

Gov. Beshear said Wednesday that the Kentucky National Guard was being called into action to help feed the commonwealth’s seniors, families and displaced workers during the coronavirus pandemic.

National Guard members will deploy to four regional food bank warehouses: Dare to Care Food Bank in Louisville; Feeding America, Kentucky’s Heartland in Elizabethtown; Freestore Foodbank in Wilder; and God’s Pantry Food Bank in Lexington.

Members will sort and pack food into bags and boxes, and distribute that food through “no-touch” deliveries in communities across the commonwealth.

“This support for Kentucky’s food banks will help our community members continue to receive food and pantry items that they desperately need,” said Brig. Gen. Hal Lamberton, Kentucky’s Adjutant General.

### **Scams**

Emergencies can make people vulnerable to scams. Gov. Beshear and Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner for the Department for Public Health, warned Kentuckians to be wary of coronavirus testing scams. The Governor said there were both at-home tests being sold and some drive-up testing operations being reported.

“You shouldn’t be handing over your hard-earned and precious money to go get pop-up testing anywhere,” said Dr. Stack, who urged anyone feeling ill or with questions to follow the state’s guidance on when to call health care providers.

Finally, Gov. Beshear reminded Kentuckians to complete the 2020 Census at [2020Census.gov](https://2020Census.gov) while staying healthy at home.

“We want to make sure every single person in Kentucky is counted so our state receives the correct amount of federal funding over the next 10 years,” the Governor said. “These dollars will help us recover from the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19.”

### **Case information**

As of 5 p.m. April 1, the Governor said there were [680 cases of COVID-19](#) in Kentucky, 93 of which were newly confirmed. There were two new deaths reported Wednesday, raising the state’s toll to 20 deaths related to the virus.

### **Key recent updates**

#### **Tough day in COVID-19 fight**

Expressing condolences, Gov. Beshear on Tuesday announced that seven Kentuckians had died that day after contracting the novel coronavirus. The Governor asked all Kentuckians to honor their loss by recommitting to practicing social distancing and staying healthy at home. “This is a virus that comes for the most vulnerable, and we have to make sure we’re protecting them,” Gov. Beshear said.

#### **Orders help grocery workers, nursing industry**

Grocery store workers can now receive the same emergency child care benefits that previously were extended to first responders and health care workers. Gov. Beshear said while the food supply remains safe, his administration wants to support the workers stocking shelves and manning the checkouts. Gov. Beshear also praised the Kentucky Board of Nursing for working with officials to moderate enforcement of some training and licensing requirements during the emergency. Among the issues addressed by a new order from the Governor: It eases restrictions on nurses who live out of state and makes it quicker to obtain a license.

### **Out-of-state travel restricted**

Gov. Beshear [issued an order](#) Monday restricting out-of-state travel by Kentuckians during the state of emergency. The decree allows for a range of exemptions, including travel to other states for work and groceries, to care for loved ones, to obtain health care and when required by a court order. Kentuckians arriving back in the commonwealth from out of state are required to self-quarantine for 14 days.

### **10 Steps to Fight COVID-19**

“Stay Healthy at Home” is the very first measure on a new 10-step plan to fight the coronavirus that Gov. Beshear unveiled Monday. The 10 Steps to Fight COVID-19 include tips on sanitation and social distancing as well as information for those seeking help with unemployment, mental health issues and health care benefits.

### **Federal disaster aid, CARES Act help Kentuckians**

Gov. Beshear announced two moves by the federal government to help the commonwealth’s coronavirus response and recovery efforts. The Major Disaster Declaration issued by President Donald Trump broadens access to the Public Assistance Program statewide to pay for emergency protective services. And the federal CARES Act provides a variety of assistance and hope to Kentuckians whose livelihoods have been harmed by the coronavirus outbreak and response. Among the provisions are a \$600 raise to the maximum weekly benefit, an additional 13 weeks of coverage and expanded eligibility for unemployment insurance.

### **Team Kentucky Fund**

Gov. Beshear, along with the Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet, took [executive action](#) to establish the Team Kentucky Fund, a GoFundMe-style online platform to provide financial help to Kentuckians whose employment is affected by the coronavirus. The Governor has challenged those who are able to help to make a tax-deductible [donation](#) to the fund. On Wednesday, Gov. Beshear announced donations had surpassed \$400,000. He also shared a video from University of Louisville men’s basketball [Coach Chris Mack](#) encouraging people to contribute to the fund. Previously, U of L head football [Coach Scott Satterfield](#) and University of Kentucky men’s basketball [Coach John Calipari](#) urged people to help their neighbors.

### **Reporting hotline**

Gov. Beshear announced the COVID-19 Reporting Hotline 833-KY SAFER (833-597-2337) for complaints about non-compliance with coronavirus mandates. Labor Cabinet personnel will monitor the hotline from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET. Kentuckians can visit the website [kysafer.ky.gov](http://kysafer.ky.gov) to make online complaints. To read about other key updates from Gov. Beshear visit the news section on [governor.ky.gov](http://governor.ky.gov).

### **More Information**

Gov. Beshear has taken decisive action to protect all Kentuckians since the first case was confirmed in the commonwealth. To read the full list of actions Gov. Beshear has taken to protect Kentuckians and limit the spread of the coronavirus, visit [governor.ky.gov/covid19](http://governor.ky.gov/covid19).

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. To read Gov. Beshear’s news releases and watch other news regarding COVID-19 visit

Each day at 5 p.m. ET, Gov. Beshear holds briefings for Kentuckians that are streamed online at his [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) pages.

Gov. Beshear continues to urge Kentuckians to be cautious of rumors and depend on proven and good sources of news, including [governor.ky.gov](http://governor.ky.gov), [kycovid19.ky.gov](http://kycovid19.ky.gov) and the Governor's official social media accounts [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

**Team Kentucky hashtags for social media**

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

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TEAM  
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*For official news and updates from the Beshear/Coleman administration,  
visit [governor.ky.gov/news](http://governor.ky.gov/news).*