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Gov. Beshear Celebrates Kentucky Heroes in Fight Against COVID-19

Health care, front-line and everyday heroes protect fellow Kentuckians
Visit the Governor's [Facebook page](#) to watch today's news conference

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 19, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear today highlighted the work and sacrifices of a range of Kentuckians who are winning the fight against the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

“Remember in this crisis, what everybody does matters,” the Governor said. “And everybody who makes a good decision, does something heroic.”

Gov. Beshear identified three areas where Kentuckians are answering the call to protect the health and safety of their fellow citizens.

Health care heroes

The Governor praised the thousands of health care workers who are caring for the rest of us, many at a heightened risk of contracting the coronavirus.

“We have better results because we have better care and better caregivers than anybody could imagine,” Gov. Beshear said. “These are also our folks working in retirement homes and senior living facilities and doing so much.”

Front-line heroes

The Governor also put a spotlight on front-line workers who have kept the wheels of commerce and industry moving while other large sectors have shut down.

“This has changed the way that we think about that in this pandemic,” Gov. Beshear said. “We have our police, our firefighters, our EMS and our corrections officers. We’d normally think about them. We have our

truck drivers, our utility workers, our grocery store employees, our janitorial and cleaning staff and custodians. We have more types of front-line heroes during this than we'd ever thought of and appreciated."

Everyday heroes

Most important, Gov. Beshear said, are the efforts of everyday Kentuckians. The sacrifices everyone has made is paying off in a lower infection rate, less stress on the health care system and ultimately lives saved.

"Everybody who every day does the right thing," the Governor said. "Think about it: Just by following the guidance, by doing the right thing, by limiting our contacts, just by staying home your actions may have and likely did save lives. Isn't that the definition of being a hero?"

Sign up for drive-through testing

Gov. Beshear urged people to sign up for testing at four recently announced new drive-through testing sites.

People in and around the communities of Madisonville, Paducah, Somerset and Pikeville can sign up for testing that begins later this week.

"We need people in those areas, in the general geographic areas to sign up," the Governor said. "The sites want to do more than 300 tests per day. I want to make sure we do every single one of those tests each day. Now, we have more than 300 in each of the regions that fall into those that are eligible. We need you to go ahead and start signing up."

Those seeking to obtain a test can get location and registration details at [KROGERHEALTH.COM/COVIDTESTING](https://www.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.

Benchmarks for reopening economy

Gov. Beshear reiterated the details about newly [announced benchmarks](#) that the commonwealth must meet in order to start reopening the state's economy while keeping Kentuckians safe from the novel coronavirus.

The Governor said the state's seven benchmarks – which reflect guidance from the White House – would determine the phases for reopening parts of the economy.

Benchmark criteria for Kentucky to move to the first stage:

- 14 days of decreasing cases
- Increased testing capacity and contact tracing
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) availability
- Ability to protect at-risk populations

- Ability to social distance and follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on large gatherings
- Preparedness for possible future spike
- Status of vaccine and treatment

For more information on the White House's criteria and all three proposed phases of reopening, visit whitehouse.gov/openingamerica.

"So let's make sure as much as were looking at those benchmarks and were looking at the future, that we are acting in the present and we are doing the things that it takes to protect one another," Gov. Beshear said.

Case information

As of 5 p.m. April 19, Gov. Beshear said there were at least [2,960 coronavirus cases](#) in Kentucky, 273 of which were newly confirmed.

"We've had our highest number of new cases today," the Governor said. "That doesn't mean we are not on the right track; we are. This is just how this virus works."

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear also reported four new deaths Sunday, raising the state's toll to 148 deaths related to the virus.

"We are still in the midst of this fight against a deadly and highly contagious virus," the Governor said.

The seven newly reported deaths include a 93-year-old woman from Graves County, a 94-year-old woman from Hopkins County, an 85-year-old woman from Jackson County and a 61-year-old man from Jefferson County.

Gov. Beshear also shared a family's story of loss out of Hopkins County. Like all the coronavirus victims, Freda Furgerson Woods is not a number on the daily list. Her family shared their grief on social media after the 85-year-old woman from Hopkins County passed.

"My nana was a wife, a mother and a grandmother," one of her granddaughters wrote in a sweet tribute. "She was a talker and also a storyteller."

This July, she and her husband, Doug, would have celebrated 64 years of marriage. Now, even more heartbreaking for this one family, they have learned that their grandfather has also tested positive.

"Our hearts go out to the Woods family. We are thinking about you and when we light our houses green tonight we will be thinking about your beloved Nana and your grandfather as well," the Governor said.

"Freda and her family are one of the reasons we all have to do our part so we have fewer families mourning, fewer communities that are in harm. As Freda's family unfortunately knows too well, the threat is very real. This is why we are taking these steps."

Gov. Beshear continues to encourage Kentuckians to light up their homes and businesses green for those we have lost as a sign of compassion and renewal.

At least 1,122 people have recovered from COVID-19 in Kentucky. Gov. Beshear said this was great news and that about 38% of Kentuckians with the virus have recovered.

To date, at least 32,319 people have been tested. At least 1,011 people have ever been hospitalized with 265 currently hospitalized.

At least 532 have ever been in the ICU with at least 149 people currently in the ICU.

Gov. Beshear also offered an update on the racial breakdown of COVID-19 patients and victims, which unfortunately highlights existing disparities in health and health care access.

The Governor said with about 76% of the known cases accounted for, 77.71% of Kentuckians who tested positive were Caucasian, 13.13% were African-American, 5.36% were multiracial, 3.75% were Asian and 0.05% were Native American or Alaskan Native.

The Governor also said with about 71% of the known cases accounted for, 92.61% of people who tested positive were non-Hispanic and 7.39% were Hispanic.

On fatalities attributed to the coronavirus, with about 81% of the known cases accounted for, Kentucky deaths are about 77.5% Caucasian, 21.67% African-American and 0.83% Asian.

On fatalities attributed to the coronavirus, with about 80% of the known cases accounted for, Kentucky deaths are about 99.15% non-Hispanic and 0.85% Hispanic.

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. Kentuckians can also access translated COVID-19 information and daily summaries of the Governor's press conference at [tinyurl.com/kygovespanol](#) (Spanish) and [tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations](#) (more than 20 additional languages).

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 #HealthyAtHome.

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