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Gov. Beshear: Kentucky Continues to See Exponential COVID-19 Growth

New orders critical to stopping spread, saving lives

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 23, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear implored Kentuckians to adhere to new restrictions and guidance that will help stop the rapid spread of COVID-19 in the commonwealth.

The number of Kentuckians diagnosed with COVID-19, hospitalized with the disease, admitted to the ICU and put on a ventilator because of complications from the virus continues to rise week over week. Today’s case report is the highest ever for a Monday.

“Day in and day out, our health care workers are doing what it takes. So day in and day out, we have to, too. Think about their sacrifice, every day going into a unit where they could contract this virus that they see people die from,” said Gov. Beshear.

“What about our sacrifice? Over these coming months until we get to a vaccine, are we willing to step up for them and for each other, to make sure we can all get through this?”

“We are at war. They are on the front lines and they are our only line. I will not abandon them. I will stand with them and I will make the difficult decisions it takes to make sure that our health care system can ultimately help everybody who needs it.”

The Governor shared a [video](#) in which health care workers ask all Americans to wear masks.

Wearing masks continues to be the most effective action Kentuckians can take to protect themselves and others. A [recent study](#) in Kansas from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that on average, counties that mandated mask-wearing saw a 6% reduction in cases; in contrast, the counties that opted out saw a 100% increase in cases.

The Governor said if Kentuckians do not take drastic measures to control the statewide outbreak, we will soon experience other states’ alarming current reality: New York has had to [reopen](#) a field hospital in Staten Island due to accelerating hospitalizations; in Wisconsin, the Mayo Clinic [has been forced](#) to put hospital beds in lobbies and a parking garage because hospitals have exceeded 100% capacity; and 22% of hospitals nationwide [say they will face](#) a critical staff shortage in the next week.

Finally, the Governor updated Kentuckians on COVID-19 in the state’s correctional facilities. He said that we have lost 15 inmates due to complications from COVID-19, including two who died this weekend from the Kentucky State Reformatory; we have also lost two corrections employees to COVID-19.

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Monday, Nov. 23, Gov. Beshear reported the following COVID-19 numbers:

- New cases today: 2,135
- New deaths today: 5
- Positivity rate: 8.97%
- Total deaths: 1,792
- Currently hospitalized: 1,573
- Currently in ICU: 391
- Currently on ventilator: 203

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

The red zone counties for this week can be found [here](#). Community leaders, businesses, schools and families in these counties should all follow [red zone reduction recommendations](#).

Those reported lost to the virus today include a 73-year-old woman from Fayette County; a 73-year-old man from Harlan County; two men, ages 85 and 88, from McCracken County; and a 77-year-old man from Webster County.

On Monday, Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health, updated Kentuckians on contact tracing, COVID-19 clusters and new projections that account for Gov. Beshear's additional restrictions.

"Contact tracing has a number of different purposes: case investigation, helping connect Kentuckians to helpful resources they need, contact notification and providing information about quarantining," said Dr. Stack. "Recent models show that just for Jefferson County and 14 surrounding counties, if we had complete compliance with new requirements we could prevent almost 1,000 additional deaths by mid-January. Even with low compliance, 513 deaths would be prevented."

Memorial

Today, Gov. Beshear honored LaTasha Benton of Lexington, who died of complications from COVID-19 at only 43. She was a key member of the Lexington community, dedicating her life to helping others. From tenants' rights, affordable housing, to criminal justice reform, LaTasha was there to do whatever was needed to raise awareness and help those people who needed it most.

"LaTasha was a fighter. Her mother, Stephanie Pace, [shared with *The New York Times*](#) that LaTasha was her 'Bionic girl,'" said Gov. Beshear. "LaTasha tested positive for COVID-19 at the end of October. She died on Nov. 6. LaTasha left behind her son, Daniel, her two brothers, Antonio and Robert, and her mother, as well as an entire community of people who loved her. LaTasha we are so sorry, and we grieve with your family. I will wear my mask for you and I hope everybody else does, too."

More Information

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

New [requirements](#) impact restaurants, bars, social gatherings, indoor fitness and recreation centers, venues and theaters, professional services and schools. See the full executive orders [here](#) and [here](#).

Audio public service announcements about the new requirements (created in partnership with [radiolex.us]RadioLex) are published here in: [Bosnian](#), [Chinese](#), [English](#), [Japanese](#), [Korean](#), [Spanish](#) and [Russian](#).

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now [recommends](#) Americans avoid Thanksgiving travel. In addition, the Kentucky Department for Public Health recommends the following for celebrating Thanksgiving safely:

- English: [Full Guidance](#); [One-Pager](#); [Single Slide](#)
- Spanish: [Full Guidance](#); [One-Pager](#); [Single Slide](#)
- Recorded PSAs (in partnership with [radiolex.us]RadioLex): [Bosnian](#), [Chinese](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Japanese](#), [Korean](#), [Persian](#), [Russian](#), [Spanish](#)

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