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Gov. Beshear: New Actions Required as COVID-19 Case Grow

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

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 20, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear on Monday updated Kentuckians on continued efforts to fight the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) as the commonwealth faces a significant uptick in new cases.

“The virus is spreading out there. It’s spreading significantly. We must make sure that we take the steps to keep ourselves safe, our families safe and each other safe. Any concept that there’s just more testing out there and the virus is still in the same place is absolutely and categorically false,” the Governor said. “A fact’s a fact. Twitter can’t change that. Make sure that you know where we are right now so we can adopt what we need to get through.”

He noted that the daily number of positive cases as well as the rolling seven-day average shows Kentucky is seeing its positivity rate on COVID-19 tests jumping from around 2% in mid-March to about 4% in recent weeks.

Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health, said the growth in cases and the positivity rate was somewhat difficult for many to understand.

“People aren’t used to exponential growth. Sunday was our highest total by far. When you start this climb, it’s like going up Mount Everest. But we know we can control this, we’ve proven that. We know that the things we’ve recommended work,” said Dr. Stack, noting nearly a thousand

new cases were reported yesterday. “Sunday was a wake-up call. Sunday was a warning. It’s a shot across the bow. Our fate is collectively in Team Kentucky’s hands, whether we can adopt a simple measure like wearing a mask. If we don’t take some strong action, people will see how bad things can get in Kentucky, and believe me, we don’t want to get there.”

In an effort to blunt the growth in cases, Gov. Beshear today announced a new travel advisory and a pullback on the guidance for mass gatherings.

The [new travel advisory](#) recommends a 14-day self-quarantine for travelers who went to any of eight states – Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Nevada, South Carolina and Texas – that are reporting a positive coronavirus testing rate equal to or greater than 15%. The advisory also includes Mississippi, which is quickly approaching a positive testing rate of 15%, and the U.S. Territory of Puerto Rico.

The states and territory were identified from data reported to [Johns Hopkins University of Medicine Coronavirus Resource Center](#).

“The No. 1 COVID-19 cluster cause that we’re seeing right now is travel. We know how much this is being brought back. We are asking anyone who goes to a state that has over a 15% positivity rate to quarantine for 14 days when they come back,” said Gov. Beshear. “Fifteen percent is really dangerous. We need people to change their plans because it’s a life or death matter for this commonwealth.”

Dr. Stack encouraged Kentuckians to avoid travel to these areas. Those who do visit the places listed and return to Kentucky are being asked to self-quarantine for two weeks. Officials ask those affected to avoid public places and personal contacts; to remain isolated from family members as much as possible; to follow all other *Healthy at Home* guidelines; and to check their temperature twice a day, among other recommendations.

“This is a recommendation. This is an advisory. I’m telling you what you need to do to stay safe,” said Dr. Stack. “The economic difficulties are real. The isolation this has caused for a lot of folks. Problems with deferred medical care. We’re aware of these things. They pain us. The pandemic has worsened all of them. The way we avoid many of those things is taking the steps to control our destiny, wearing those masks and socially distancing.”

Gov. Beshear also announced that the Cabinet for Health and Family Services has issued a [new order](#) that pulls back on guidance covering social, non-commercial mass gatherings. On June 29, the original guidance was eased to allow for gatherings of 50 or fewer people. Today’s order returns the guidance to allow only for such gatherings of 10 or fewer people. The guidance, which does not apply to weddings, restaurants, retail or other public venues, went into effect today at 5 p.m.

Much of the other guidance on mass gatherings remains intact, including mandates on barring sick people, requiring face coverings and social distance, and a ban on sharing food and drinks.

People hosting such gatherings also are encouraged to host the events outdoors when possible, sanitize high-touch surfaces and follow other *Healthy at Home* suggestions.

“We’re seeing clusters created by our backyard barbeques, our block parties, and it’s because we let our guard down. We have a lot of friends over and we know them. We figure they’re probably doing everything right,” said Gov. Beshear. “We take off our masks, we relax, we get too close, we stand around while people are grilling and we’re seeing some very difficult outcomes because of it. So much depends on us trying to stop this thing before it gets out of control.”

Gov. Beshear also spoke about a call he took part in early Monday with Vice President Mike Pence and other White House officials.

He said the message from the White House was that places around the country seeing major surges in cases would be required to mandate some restrictions that would negatively affect businesses.

“Today was the call that the White House does that the Vice President handles, and he talked about the steps they believe are necessary for areas that are hit really hard. Those include reducing restaurant capacity to 25% and closing bars. I remember how many of our restaurants can’t operate even at 33%,” the Governor said. “I want to make sure we don’t hit that surge that we have seen in other places so we don’t have to adopt those White House suggestions. One facility doing the wrong thing can hurt everyone else.”

Case Information – Monday, July 20

As of 4 p.m. July 20, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 23,414 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 258 of which were newly reported Monday. Eight cases were from children ages 5 and younger. That followed 30 such cases in young children reported Sunday.

“Just yesterday, nearly 1,000 cases, on average that means we lose 30 additional people,” the Governor said. “Let’s make sure we change that curve that’s out there to protect the people around us.”

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear reported one new death Monday, raising the total to 671 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The death reported Monday was a 94-year-old woman from Casey County.

“Today we’re reporting, thankfully, just one new death,” said Gov. Beshear. “But this is one family we need to support.”

As of Monday, there have been at least 533,143 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate currently stands at 4.52 %. At least 6,876 Kentuckians have recovered from the virus.

For additional information, including up-to-date lists of positive cases and deaths, as well as breakdowns of coronavirus infections by county, race and ethnicity, [click here](#).

Case Information – Sunday, July 19

Due to limited reporting on the weekends, some updated information is now available from Sunday, July 19.

As of Sunday, there were 531,995 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate was at 4.69% and at least 6,874 Kentuckians had recovered from the virus.

For a detailed look at coronavirus case information from Sunday, July 19, [click here](#).

Safety Reporting Hotline

Gov. Beshear reminded Kentuckians that the COVID-19 reporting hotline is available to help keep everyone safe.

People who witness dangerous non-compliance with coronavirus mandates, including requirements for mask wearing, social distancing and sanitation, at Kentucky businesses are encouraged to call the COVID-19 reporting hotline at 833-KY SAFER (833-597-2337). Labor Cabinet personnel will monitor the line from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. To file a complaint online, [click here](#).

Testing Update

Responding to some reports that some seeking coronavirus testing still are being asked to provide a doctor's order, administration officials reiterated that the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Public Health (DPH) issued an [order](#) removing any such requirement to receive a COVID-19 test.

Kentuckians can sign up for molecular diagnostic testing at more than 200 locations throughout the state, listed by county at kycovid19.ky.gov.

Last Week in Review

Learn more about major updates and actions from the past week, including:

- The [Kentucky State Supreme Court issued an order](#) keeping in place all of Gov. Beshear's executive orders related to the fight against COVID-19, including the order mandating the wearing of face coverings in many instances, until the court can hear full arguments from the Beshear administration and the attorney general's office and issue a final ruling. To learn more, [read the full release](#).
- Kroger, an invaluable partner in the commonwealth's testing efforts, [announced](#) it is joining many other national retailers and small businesses in requiring customers to wear

face coverings while shopping. Kroger's masking policy goes into effect Wednesday, July 22.

More Information

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](#).

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

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