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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear Highlights Need for Continued Fight against COVID-19
State reports largest daily jump with 147 new cases; Actions taken to protect vulnerable stressed

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

FRANKFORT, Ky.(April 7, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear Tuesday put a spotlight on the need for the continued fight against the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and highlighted actions taken to protect the vulnerable.

“It doesn’t matter what other states are doing. What we are doing is working. What we are doing is flattening the curve,” Gov. Beshear said. “We’re responsible for ourselves, our lives and the lives of people around us. It’s crunch time. You’ve done good work to date. It’s important to do even better.”

Long-term care facilities

Gov. Beshear provided an update on actions being taken at long-term care facilities. As of 5 p.m. Tuesday, Kentucky’s long-term care facilities had 77 reported cases of coronavirus, including 55 residents and 22 staffers. There have been 11 deaths attributed to the disease.

“We’ve lost 11 Kentuckians who were in some long-term care facilities,” the Governor said. “This is a concern, and we’ve got to make sure we prevent the coronavirus from getting in as many of these facilities as possible and react quickly and swiftly when it does happen.”

Actions being taken system wide:

- Encourage all residents to wear masks to reduce spread of virus
- Cancel communal dining, social activities and limit the movement of residents around the facility

- Minimize entry into resident rooms by bundling care and treatment activities
- Restrict non-essential personnel, volunteers and visitors from entering buildings
- Daily intake of temperatures and shortness of breath, cough and sore throat
- Have low threshold to transfer ill residents to a higher level of care

Green River Correctional Complex

Gov. Beshear offered an update on coronavirus cases in the Green River Correctional Complex in Muhlenberg County. As of 5 p.m. Tuesday, Green River Correctional Complex had 14 total cases, including nine inmates and five staffers.

Among the steps being taken there, they will:

- Extensively monitor inmate and staff health, and will move inmates to isolation unit when symptoms are reported
- Stagger recreational time and limit the number of inmates released to increase social distancing
- Permit and encourage all inmates to wear masks to reduce the spread of the virus
- Temporarily close the gymnasium and cease all in-person activities such as sports, classes and chapel
- Continue cleaning of high-touch surfaces
- Continually work with complex and medical staffers on infection control solutions for the entire facility

Western State Hospital

Gov. Beshear also provided an update on COVID-19 cases at Western State Hospital, where there were 13 reported cases, including nine patients and four staffers, at 5 p.m. Tuesday.

“Our Office of the Inspector General and Secretary of CHFS (Cabinet for Health and Family Services) are working directly with Western State Hospital to make sure we are doing everything, not just to protect the patients, but also the staff,” the Governor said. “I know the staff in all of these facilities are scared. We’re going to do everything we can to work with them and protect them, but I want them to know how appreciative we are that they are helping those who truly need the help, knowing what we are facing.”

Among the specific actions being taken there:

- Encourage all residents to wear masks to reduce spread of virus
- Place hold on accepting new patients to decrease the spread of virus within the facility
- Minimize entry into resident rooms by bundling care and treatment activities
- Restrict non-essential personnel, volunteers and visitors from entering buildings
- Daily intake of temperatures and shortness of breath, cough and sore throat
- Have a low threshold to transfer ill residents to a higher level of care

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.

Unemployment insurance update

Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Deputy Secretary Josh Benton, in an update on unemployment insurance, said they are actively training more staff, going from 12 before the pandemic to now 1,000 to 1,200 on the phones to help Kentuckians. Gov. Beshear and Deputy Secretary Benton said it is a priority to add capacity and respond to the needs of Kentuckians.

“We have also tried to stop the denied letters from being sent, and that those who have received one should ignore,” Benton said. “We have also been able to move back the date that individuals can get that 13-week extension. You are going to be notified within the week how to reopen your claim for an additional 13 weeks. This is really good news, especially for miners who have lost their jobs and exhausted their benefits.”

Testing update

Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner for the Department for Public Health, said the effort by the state was ramping up to do 2,000 tests a day. However, he said the availability of swabs and testing materials continues to be a roadblock to wider tests.

“These tests are not for everybody. We want to make testing available for everyone who needs it and we don’t have enough testing available,” Dr. Stack said. “So in a world where resources are limited, we have to deploy a scarce resource to a greater good.”

He said he supported hospitals that decide not to administer some tests.

“If you go to hospital to get a test and they tell you that you don’t qualify, I support the hospitals in their decision-making,” he said.

Racial breakdown of cases

Gov. Beshear also talked about the racial breakdown of COVID-19 patients, which has been the subject of emerging news stories across the country.

The Governor said with about 68% of the known cases accounted for, Kentucky’s cases included about 79.25% Caucasians, 12% African-American, 2.6% Asians and 2% multiracial.

“I’m watching the debates and stories as they’re coming out nationally, and I will say they are concerning,” he said. “But they do make me proud that we expanded Medicaid, and that is for all of our people, when we did. I think it’s given us years, all of us across Kentucky to get healthy, get regimented, get the medications that we need to get on with our lives.”

Case information

As of 5 p.m. April 7, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 1,149 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 147 of which were newly confirmed.

“While this is a large number, and it is, we still don’t see the numbers going the same way in Kentucky as in so many other places,” the Governor said. “Today is the largest number we have reported, but our three-day trend is actually lower than our last three-day trend, and I’m not sure a lot of places in America can say that right now.”

Gov. Beshear said seven new deaths were reported Tuesday, raising the state’s toll to 65 deaths related to the virus.

The new deaths included four men in Jefferson County, ages 42, 60, 70 and 85; two women from Lyon County, ages 72 and 94; and a woman from Adair County.

As a sign of compassion and renewal, the Governor asked Kentuckians to join him in lighting their homes green tonight in honor of the lives lost.

“The loss of these seven Kentuckians is a loss to all of us across Kentucky,” Gov. Beshear said. “It ought to make us recommit to doing the things it takes to lose fewer and fewer Kentuckians every chance we get.”

Although the number of new cases reported today was large, Gov. Beshear urged Kentuckians to see how their sacrifices were stacking up nationally.

“New York today had 731 people that they reported passed away. New Jersey had 232. Pennsylvania, 78. Indiana, 34,” the Governor said. “Those are all Americans, and we will miss all of them. I hope that gives people out there kind of a scope of why we fight as hard as we do, why we make the sacrifices we do. Why we acted so early and aggressively. And for everybody out there sacrificing: It is paying off.”

Recent Updates

Governor issues urgent plea for PPE

Gov. Beshear asked that any person, company or agency with personal protective equipment (PPE) to donate do so immediately. A new hotline (1-833-GIVE PPE) and website (giveppe.ky.gov) have streamlined the entire donation process. In addition, PPE donations now are being accepted at all 16 Kentucky State Police posts across the commonwealth and at Transportation Cabinet offices in Louisville and Lexington.

State parks

Gov. Beshear announced the state would begin allowing first responders and frontline health care workers to quarantine in cabins at state parks in six locations across the commonwealth, which would allow them to quarantine away from their families and other loved ones if necessary. “It’s a good use of those state parks and we’re excited to do it,” the Governor said. First responders and health care personnel interested in accommodations should contact their [local emergency management operations center](#) or visit kyem.ky.gov. Read about other key updates from the week by visiting Gov. Beshear’s website, 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 limit the spread of the coronavirus, visit the official page for [Kentucky’s Response to COVID-19](#).

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 [governor.ky.gov](#).

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](#), [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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visit [governor.ky.gov/news](#).*