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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear Provides Update on COVID-19

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

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 19, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear on Wednesday updated Kentuckians on the state's continuing efforts to fight the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) in the commonwealth.

"The COVID-19 death toll is more than in several wars that we have fought," the Governor said. "I hope that we are committed to doing what it takes and making smart decisions to keep this virus on the decline. Not just so we can reopen businesses and schools, but so we can have fewer people die."

Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health, urged people to remain vigilant in protecting themselves and others.

"I know people are tired and want to get back to their normal lives. We are not here to separate people from their schools, jobs and social activities, but we cannot rationalize our way out of this. There's a bad disease out there. We have no vaccine, cure or treatment. When it hits people it hits them hard, it causes hospitals to overcrowd and it takes lives," Dr. Stack said. "We want to inspire you to do the right thing. Please listen to the public health professionals, here and around the nation. Every single one of us is saying the same thing: Wear masks, wash your hands, social distance."

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Aug. 19, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 40,926 coronavirus cases in Kentucky,

655 of which were newly reported Wednesday. Fifteen of the newly reported cases were from children ages 5 and younger, including a 12-day-old baby in Jefferson County.

“Of the 655 new cases, 91 – which is 14% – are kids 18 years and younger,” the Governor said.

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear reported 12 new deaths Wednesday, raising the total to 830 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The deaths reported Wednesday include an 82-year-old woman and an 86-year-old man from Barren County; a 79-year-old woman from Butler County; a 78-year-old man from Garrard County; a 75-year-old woman from Harlan County; a 58-year-old woman from Hart County; a 72-year-old man from Letcher County; an 81-year-old woman and a 91-year-old man from Logan County; an 82-year-old man from Mercer County; a 62-year-old man from Oldham County; and a 42-year-old man from Warren County.

“I don’t remember two days where we had this many deaths back-to-back, and it’s the result that we talked about earlier, that when you have 3,000 cases a week, the deaths follow a couple weeks after,” the Governor said. “We’re at that point now.”

As of Wednesday, there have been at least 785,138 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate currently stands at 5.41%. At least 9,331 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](#). To see all recent daily reports, [click here](#).

Unemployment Assistance

Gov. Beshear announced Wednesday that the state is applying for additional unemployment insurance assistance from the federal government. On Aug. 8, President Donald Trump signed a [memorandum](#) seeking to extend some additional benefits to Americans whose jobs have been harmed or eliminated by the global pandemic.

“Originally the federal government provided an additional \$600 for those on unemployment in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic,” the Governor said, noting that that benefit ended without being renewed by Congress.

The Governor said that on Thursday the Labor Cabinet will file an application for the Lost Wages Assistance Program that is being operated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

“This program will allow all Kentuckians receiving unemployment benefits for the weeks of July 26-Aug. 15 to receive an additional payment of \$400 if they are unemployed or partially

unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Gov. Beshear said. “The \$400 will apply to all programs: traditional UI, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program and the extended benefits programs.”

He said only seven states – Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico and Utah – had been approved for the program and all have chosen to fund the program solely with federal dollars, meaning recipients will receive \$300.

“We have decided to provide an extra \$100 using CARES Act money. Kentucky’s portion will be approximately \$8 million per week, for a total of \$24 million over the three-week initial grant period,” Gov. Beshear said. “We believe this will make us the first state to apply that plans to fund the full \$400 promised in the President’s memorandum.”

He cautioned that while FEMA should approve the application in 48-72 hours, reconfiguring the computer systems to pay the added \$400 is likely to take about two weeks. Therefore, benefits recipients should not expect the payments until sometime in early September.

More Than \$8 Million Approved in CARES Act Reimbursements for Local Governments

In collaboration with the Department for Local Government (DLG), today, Gov. Beshear announced 18 Central Kentucky governments were approved for \$8,194,518 in reimbursements from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act for local governments with expenses related to COVID-19.

“Our local governments have been lifelines in our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is why this funding is so important,” said Gov. Beshear. “We are grateful for their hard work and dedication to keeping Kentuckians safe.”

For more information, [read the full release](#).

New Testing Update

Gov. Beshear announced Wednesday that the state’s partnership with Kroger to provide free, drive-through testing is being extended in Lexington.

The testing will be done at Bluegrass Community & Technical College, 500 Newtown Pike.

“We know there have been testing shortages in this area, and so let’s make sure we fill up all of those appointments,” the Governor said.

To register and find more information on the testing, [click here](#).

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 summaries of the Governor's news conferences at teamkentuckytranslations.com.

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