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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear: Phase 1 Health Care Services Will Begin Reopening Monday

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

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 23, 2020) – On Thursday, Gov. Andy Beshear announced that Monday, April 27, the state will begin the gradual restart and reopening of our Phase 1 health care services and facilities, although they will operate vastly different than they did before the outbreak of the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

“To do this safely, make sure you are going above and beyond. This is our proof of concept in the medical community. We have to prove that we can do this the right way,” Gov. Beshear said.

On March 23, Gov. Beshear signed an [executive order](#) ceasing all elective procedures to limit the spread of COVID-19 and increase hospital capacity to treat patients.

Thanks to Team Kentucky's extraordinary efforts to flatten the curve up to this point, Gov. Beshear and the Department for Public Health feel safe easing some restrictions on health care procedures and facilities.

The Governor said the phased health care services reopening is the first step under the [Healthy at Work](#) initiative he introduced Tuesday to help businesses reopen safely when the time is right.

“Doing this right is about saving lives, making employees safe and making sure the people they serve are safe when we reopen,” Gov. Beshear said.

The initiative set out [public health benchmarks](#) for reopening Kentucky's economy. These benchmarks closely follow the [White House's Guidelines for Reopening America](#).

Gov. Beshear said a foundational basis for safely reopening the economy requires a massive scaling up of testing capacity in the commonwealth.

Guidance for Health Care Practitioners and Facilities

On April 27, health care practitioners can resume non-urgent/emergent health care services, diagnostic radiology and lab services in:

- Hospital outpatient setting
- health care clinics and medical offices
- physical therapy settings, chiropractic offices and optometrists
- dental offices (but with enhanced aerosol protections)

This guidance does not apply to long-term care settings, prisons, other industries, or other settings for which separate guidance has already or will be provided in the future. This guidance does not apply to elective surgeries or procedures which will be addressed in a subsequent phase.

“This is intended to be a phased, gradual reopening so that we can do this thoughtfully, safely, and see the consequences of our actions to make the necessary adjustments,” said Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner for the Department for Public Health.

Dr. Stack emphasized that this is a [phased, gradual reopening of services](#) and that a COVID-19 surge may require adjustment.

Telehealth

In all phases, health care practitioners should still maximize telehealth rather than in-person services.

Visitation

Health care facilities should still not allow visitors except when necessary in end-of-life situations, or for vulnerable populations or minors, and even then, visitations should be kept to a minimum.

Waiting Rooms

Health care facilities should also eliminate traditional waiting room or common seating areas and use non-traditional alternatives, for example, a parking lot “lobby.”

Social Distancing

Health care facilities should maintain social distancing, keeping people at least six feet apart in all possible settings, and employ other steps to minimize direct contact between individuals within the health care setting.

Screening and Sanitization

Health care facilities should screen all health care workers, patients and others for temperature and COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival for shift or visit. Staff should be required to stay home if sick. Staff should plan for and ensure enhanced workplace sanitizing, enhanced hand hygiene compliance, and easily accessible hand sanitizer throughout the facility.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Each health care setting must be able to procure necessary PPE via normal supply chains.

All health care providers and staff must wear surgical/procedural masks and gloves while in health care office/facility.

All patients and other persons in health care office/facility must:

- Wear a surgical/procedural mask while in health care facility
- Wear either a surgical/procedural mask or cloth mask/face covering in all other health care settings

Special Considerations

In high-touch clinical settings (e.g., physical therapy, chiropractic, etc.), health care workers should wear non-latex gloves in addition to enhanced hand hygiene practices described above. Any objects and contact surfaces used for clinical services should be sanitized between patients.

In high-aerosol risk outpatient settings (e.g., dentistry, oral surgery, pulmonary services, etc.), we seek additional input from these professionals regarding steps to assure the safety of both their patients and clinical staff.

Testing Sites and Eligibility

Gov. Beshear announced that just today, the state ran 6,769 tests. In addition to health care facilities, Kentuckians can be tested free of charge for COVID-19 at:

Kroger sites

- Throughput of 300-330 tests per site per day
- All Kentuckians are eligible to be tested at Kroger sites

Louisville (Jefferson County)

Shawnee Park, 4501 W Broadway, Louisville, KY 40211

- Testing conducted Monday, April 27- Friday May 1 from 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- Hand sanitizer and face mask to be distributed at the site

Lexington (Fayette County)

Bluegrass Community & Technical College, 500 Newtown Pike, Lexington, KY 40508

- Testing conducted Monday, April 27- Friday May 1 from 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- Hand sanitizer and face mask to be distributed at this site

Owensboro (Daviess County)

Owensboro Community College at 4800 New Hartford Road, Owensboro, KY 42303

- Testing conducted Tuesday, April 28- Thursday April 30 from 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Bowling Green (Warren County)

South Warren High School, 8140 Nashville Road, Bowling Green, KY 42101

- Testing conducted Tuesday, April 28 - Thursday April 30 from 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Walgreens site

Through a separate partnership with Walgreens, Gov. Beshear said the company would offer a drive-through testing option in Lexington, starting Friday.

- The location is 2296 Executive Drive, Lexington, KY 40505
- The site is open seven days a week, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET.
- Visit [walgreens.com/coronavirus](https://www.walgreens.com/coronavirus) for additional information on registering and eligibility

Update on long-term care facilities

Gov. Beshear announced that as of Thursday, 530 residents and 251 staff had been diagnosed with COVID-19. Of those, 85 residents and one staff member have died of COVID-19 or complications from COVID-19.

Gov. Beshear reminded Kentuckians of the precautions the state is taking in long-term care facilities, including: encouraging all residents to wear masks, cancelling communal dining and social activities, minimizing entry into resident rooms, restricting non-essential personnel from entering the building, daily temperature checks and adopting a low threshold to transfer ill residents to a higher level of care.

Acting Secretary Eric Friedlander for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services provided other updates on how the cabinet is working with so many organizations and local officials to respond to the needs of long-term care facilities.

Medical Laboratory Professionals Week

Today, Gov. Beshear recognized Medical Laboratory Professionals Week, April 19-25, an annual celebration of medical laboratory professionals and pathologists who play a critical role in health care and patient advocacy.

“We are thankful for the laboratory medicine profession,” Gov. Beshear said. “To every lab professional out there working during this very trying time, we appreciate you.”

Condolences

The Governor sent condolences to the family of Patsy Carol Stith passed away on Monday at St. Elizabeth in Fort Thomas related to COVID-19. Stith was 76 years old. Patsy was an active senior who enjoyed yard work, gardening and making crafts.

Patsy was a mother to three sons. She was “mamaw” to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She has a sister and brothers, along with many friends, who will miss her. We mourn her loss the Governor said.

Gov. Beshear also sent his condolences to family, friends and colleagues of the Hopkins County Sheriff’s Deputy Terry Vick. Vick, 43, passed away April 22 after a traffic accident on Western Kentucky Parkway. He was a husband, father and U.S. Marine Corps veteran who had been in law enforcement for 17 years.

Deputy Vick was the school resource officer at Hanson Elementary, but had just completed an overnight security detail at Madisonville North Hopkins High School’s COVID-19 testing site, according to Hopkins County Sheriff Charles Young.

“He was helping people get testing during this crisis. Tonight, we remember him and all he contributed,” Gov. Beshear said.

The Governor said thank you to the Kentucky Organ Donor Affiliates and Kentucky’s Circuit Court Clerks for donating 1,500 COVID-19 swab tests, which were delivered to the DPH warehouse in Frankfort today.

Every year, April is National Donate Life Month. Although different this year, we are still honoring those donors who gave the gift of life, the recipients who are alive today because of them, and those 1,000 Kentuckians today on the waiting list. Everyone can do his or her part to be kind and register as an organ donor to give the gift of life. www.donatelifeky.org.

Case information

As of 5 p.m. April 23, Gov. Beshear said there were [at least 3,481 coronavirus cases](#) in Kentucky, 161 of which were newly confirmed.

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear also reported six new deaths Thursday, raising the state’s toll to 191 deaths related to the virus.

The newly reported deaths include a 68-year-old male from Muhlenberg, a 62-year-old female from Jefferson, an 87-year-old female from Adair, a 73-year-old male from Henderson, a 77-year-old male from Jefferson and a 93-year-old female from Kenton.

At least 1,335 people have recovered from COVID-19 in Kentucky.

To date, at least 42,844 people have been tested. At least 1,115 people have ever been hospitalized with 302 currently hospitalized.

At least 570 have ever been in the ICU with at least 163 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 78.36% of the known cases accounted for, 76.36% of Kentuckians who tested positive were white, 13.48% were black or African-American, 5.13% were Asian, 4.96% were multiracial and 0.08% were Native American or Alaskan Native.

The Governor also said with about 73.36% of the known cases accounted for, 92.11% of people who tested positive were non-Hispanic and 7.89% were Hispanic.

On fatalities attributed to the coronavirus, with about 85.86% of the known cases accounted for, Kentucky deaths are about 79.27% white, 17.68% black or African-American, 1.83% Asian and 1.22% were multiracial.

On fatalities attributed to the coronavirus, with about 82.72% of the known cases accounted for, Kentucky deaths are about 98.73% non-Hispanic and 1.27% 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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