OFFICE OF GOVERNOR ANDY BESHEAR

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

Gov. Beshear Provides Update on COVID-19
Visit the Governor's Facebook page to watch today's news conference

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 16, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear on Thursday updated Kentuckians on the state's ongoing efforts to fight the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) as cases continue to rise in the commonwealth.

"What we are seeing across the country is alarming. We are seeing state after state not just facing escalating cases, but facing devastation," said Gov. Beshear. "As of today, Florida's hospitals have now run out of ICU beds. This is when people die because the system is overwhelmed. People are going to die who would not otherwise have died. In Arizona and Texas they are bringing in refrigerated trucks because people are dying so fast, there is no room for them in morgues. That ought to convince everybody of the seriousness of the situation we face and what a critical moment right now is."

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. July 16, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 21,083 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 413 of which were newly reported Thursday.

The Governor reemphasized that the rising case numbers show the need for everyone to wear a face covering in public or in close quarters with non-immediate family members, as required by his mandate.

"Today, we have a record number of kids under 5 diagnosed with COVID-19. These kids are counting on us to do the right thing," said Gov. Beshear. "Our new cases come from all types of counties. And remember, deaths follow cases."

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear reported five new deaths Thursday, raising the total to 650 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The deaths reported Thursday include a 91-year-old woman from Fayette County; a 59-year-old man and a 90-year-old woman from Knox County; and an 83-year-old man and a 92-year-old woman from Jefferson County.

"People are going to say this just happens to 90-year-olds, but today we've lost a 59-year-old -- 59 years old," said Gov. Beshear. "When you put up record numbers of cases, while our hospitals are working really hard, we will see more death. When we have fewer appropriate restrictions based on science in place, you know what to expect. How many more people do we have to lose?"

As of Thursday, there have been at least 507,197 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate currently stands at 4.38%. At least 5,500 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.

Unemployment Insurance Update

Today, Gov. Beshear announced that contractor Ernst & Young (EY) has processed 10,365 outstanding claims as of July 15. EY increased work hours from eight to 10 hours per day and also

began working on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Going forward, EY expects to resolve 4,000 claims per day.

"As you all know, unemployment insurance has been difficult – most of all, of course, for those who have struggled to get it," said Gov. Beshear. "But EY is getting more and more efficient. Remember to answer the phone when they call. The number is 502-333-9130."

Attorney General Attacks COVID-19 Safety Measures and Financial Assistance
The Governor reminded Kentuckians that in addition to seeking to invalidate the executive orders that keep us safe from COVID-19, the attorney general today also is targeting other measures his administration has put in place to help during this global pandemic. The attorney general's actions include trying to void:

- Healthy at Work requirements;

- expanded workers' compensation eligibility for workers – including first responders, active military and grocery store employees – who are ordered to quarantine as a result of exposure; and

- a measure that waives copays, deductibles, cost-sharing and diagnostic testing fees for private insurance.

"Today the attorney general asked a court in Boone County to overturn every single order we have put in place to protect people and to stop my office from putting in any future order to keep us safe," said Gov. Beshear. "It's truly frightening. Companies wouldn't even have to sanitize. In the middle of a worldwide pandemic. It means we would fail. It means people would die. Those are the facts, and that's the truth."

CARES Act Reimbursements
Gov. Beshear, in collaboration with the Department for Local Government (DLG), announced today that 22 eastern Kentucky governments have been granted $5,523,949 in reimbursements from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act for local governments with expenses related to COVID-19. Eighteen others have received preliminary approval, meaning they will receive reimbursements once final documentation is submitted to DLG.

"We know many of our local governments are hurting," the Governor said. "That's why we set aside $300 million in CARES Act funding for local governments with expenses related to COVID-19 to be administered by our Department for Local Government. This isn't money given, this is money earned."

For full details on the announcement, 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 hotline from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. EDT. 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 Thursday 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.

Gov. Beshear continues to highlight free, drive-through testing that is available through the state's partnership with Kroger.

Kentuckians can sign up for COVID-19 molecular diagnostic testing at Kroger sites online. Tests are being conducted at the following Kroger sites this week and next:

- Summit View Academy, 5006 Madison Pike, Independence, KY 41051

- Louisville Southern High School, 8620 Preston Highway, Louisville, KY 40219

- Bluegrass Community and Technical College, 500 Newtown Pike, Lexington, KY 40508

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

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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