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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. 20, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear on Thursday updated Kentuckians on the state's continuing efforts to fight the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) in the commonwealth.

"Today's report is good news and bad news. This virus is still out there and still aggressively spreading," said Gov. Beshear. "But our positivity rate is now down to 5.18%, which is headed in the right direction."

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Aug. 20, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 41,626 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 726 of which were newly reported Thursday. Twenty of the newly reported cases were from children ages 5 and younger.

"Let's make sure we make the right decisions to keep our cases low. Let's make sure we wear our masks and stay six feet apart," said Gov. Beshear.

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear reported 14 new deaths Thursday, raising the total to 856 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The deaths reported Thursday include a 66-year-old man from Barren County; a 95-year-old woman from Clay County; two men, ages 81 and 88, from Fayette County; an 88-year-old woman from Gallatin County; a 55-year-old man from Graves County; an 84-year-old woman from Harlan

County; a 77-year-old woman from Hopkins County; an 89-year-old man from Jackson County; a 57-year-old man from Marion County; a 96-year-old woman from Oldham County; a 65-year-old woman from Pulaski County; and a 76-year-old man from Warren County. One family asked for their loved one's demographics not to be shared.

"We are announcing 14 new deaths today. That's 38 deaths in just three days. We have to understand that this is not just real, this virus takes lives from us," said Gov. Beshear.

As of Thursday, there have been at least 794,282 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate currently stands at 5.18%. At least 9,388 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](#).

Census Update

Today, Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Eric Friedlander reminded Kentuckians of the importance of completing the 2020 census at 2020census.gov or by calling [844-330-2020](tel:844-330-2020). Kentuckians most comfortable in a language other than English can find multilingual census phone numbers [here](#). At last count, 66.2% of Kentuckians have completed their census questionnaires. The deadline to submit once-per-decade census forms is Sept. 30, 2020.

"Our hospitals, health care providers, social service agencies, housing authority and other organizations receive grant funding based on the number of people and the demographics of the population they serve. Let's not leave their supplemental funding on the table," said Secretary Friedlander. "Furthermore, congressional and state legislative seats are based on population, which means if we don't complete the census, we threaten our ability to be heard in Washington and here in Frankfort."

Department of Aging and Independent Living Update

Today, Secretary Friedlander updated Kentuckians on the accomplishments of the Kentucky Department of Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"For Kentucky's 900,000 plus seniors ages 60 and up who live independently in our communities, nutrition has often been an issue," said Secretary Friedlander. "For some of these vulnerable Kentuckians, it's been a matter of transportation. For others, it's been about not having enough money to pay for basic needs. For still others, they have had difficulty preparing meals. None of this is what we want for our seniors."

DAIL has served 2.1 million meals to seniors in fiscal year 2020, and specifically, 1.4 million meals since March.

“DAIL has provided senior center meals and home-delivered meals thanks to the passage of the Older Americans Act in 1965. For some, this is their only meal of the day,” said Secretary Friedlander. “This is one of those success stories that should make us all proud to be Kentuckians.”

Secretary Friedlander highlighted that senior meals are another program supported by census completion.

“Federal funding for senior meals is based off of our census numbers. Let’s ensure Kentucky has increased funding to feed seniors as we are one of the fastest aging states in the nation,” said Secretary Friedlander.

Kentuckians who are interested in supporting seniors in their communities can reach out to local senior centers to volunteer to deliver meals. Kentuckians ages 60 and older who need meals may call the Aging and Disability Resource Center at 877-925-0037.

Kentucky State Fair Opening Day

Today, the Governor thanked the members of the Kentucky State Fair Board for their hard work to design a fair that would keep many traditions alive while also ensuring the safety of Kentuckians. The participants-only Kentucky State Fair opens today and runs until Saturday, Aug. 29. Today, the fair featured 4-H and FFA youth showing dairy cows and goats.

“Although this year’s fair looks different, it continues to highlight Kentucky’s premiere agriculture and equestrian industries,” said Gov. Beshear. “With nearly 76,000 farms and over 240,000 horses in the commonwealth, the state fair has a long history of celebrating the best Kentucky has to offer.”

For more information on the fair’s schedule and COVID-19 precautions, visit the [fair’s website](#).

Immunization Awareness Month

August is Immunization Awareness Month, and today Gov. Beshear reminded Kentuckians of the importance of keeping themselves and their families up to date on vaccinations. The Governor shared an informational video on the topic as well, from [Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky](#), which can be [viewed here](#).

“One of the things that happened while we were all sheltering at home this spring and early summer was a big decline in vaccinations among Kentuckians,” said Gov. Beshear. “The rates have come back up as families feel safe going back to their physicians’ offices, but we’re still quite a bit

behind where we need to be. And we're about to enter into flu season, when getting our annual flu shot is vitally important to keeping our immune systems strong."

When people get vaccinated, they not only protect themselves from a disease, but they also prevent themselves from spreading it to others who may be more vulnerable, including infants, seniors and people with compromised immune systems.

Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health, [also recently encouraged Kentuckians](#) to keep their vaccinations up to date and especially urged them to get a flu shot this fall, citing the need to maximize hospital capacity in case of a COVID-19 surge.

"Get your flu shot. We need everyone to do this. We have to keep influenza as suppressed as we possibly can," said Dr. Stack. "In a bad year with influenza, our hospitals are strained just keeping up with flu patients."

Remembrance

Gov. Beshear on Thursday spoke about the life of one of the Kentuckians lost to the coronavirus.

Huey Cornelius and his wife raised their four children in Lexington.

"Dad was an educator, a principal, a coach, a class president, a neighbor, a Sunday School teacher, an insurance salesman, a friend, a classmate, an uncle, a brother, a grandpa, a husband and my father," his son Brance Cornelius said.

Huey Cornelius, 81, died last Tuesday after falling ill with the coronavirus three weeks earlier. Brance said his father had no underlying health issues. "No heart attacks, no strokes, no diabetes, no bypasses," he said. "He was an active 81-year-old."

Brance said his mother also tested positive for COVID-19 but quickly recovered. He asked Gov. Beshear to share their story in the hope that Kentuckians will honor his father by doing everything they can to keep each other safe and prevent other families from enduring such a painful loss.

"Our father touched so many lives. He held several positions, but mostly that of educator and insurance agent. If we would have been allowed to have a funeral, the number would be in the hundreds," Brance said. "Instead, we will mourn with our immediate family, that is, until it is safe to celebrate his life and legacy with those who loved him."

Unemployment Assistance

Gov. Beshear announced yesterday 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.

“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.”

For more information, read [yesterday's full release](#).

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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