



**OFFICE OF GOVERNOR ANDY BESHEAR
COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Gov. Beshear: Three FEMA Strike Teams Arrive Today to
Help with Surging, Severe COVID-19 Cases**

*Governor requested strike teams to assist in Louisville, Prestonsburg and
Somerset*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 27, 2021) – Gov. Andy Beshear said three Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) strike teams he requested arrived in Kentucky today to assist the commonwealth with record COVID-19 cases.

The teams will serve as backup for local ambulance services and perform patient transfers from one hospital to another.

"Our hospitals have never been more stressed and stretched during this pandemic than they are right now, and this FEMA assistance is critical to support some of our hospitals and health care heroes that need the most help," said **Gov. Beshear**. "I will continue to act to boost our health care capacity and help our hospitals during the most dangerous stretch of this pandemic that has already killed more than 7,600 Kentuckians."

With hospital staff and resources stretched thin, Gov. Beshear announced additional help the state has coordinated to assist hospitals, including: securing the FEMA strike teams; deploying the Kentucky National Guard to support COVID-19 response in hospitals; and providing COVID-19 testing assistance to some Kentucky hospitals.

The Beshear administration requested the FEMA strike teams from the National Medical Transport and Support Services to help with patient transports and patient care as the number of total COVID-19 cases, and cases requiring hospitalization, have dramatically increased in Kentucky over the past few weeks. At this time, the teams will not be responding to 911 calls, which are the responsibility of local emergency medical services (EMS).

"With our current COVID-19 trends, this will greatly impact our existing EMS resources in Kentucky. It is our responsibility to ensure the safety and the best patient care to the citizens of the commonwealth," said **Mike Poynter, executive director of Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services (KBEMS)**.

"Our thanks again to FEMA and other federal partners for the expedited tasking and deployment of these strike teams to assist in life-saving missions across the commonwealth," said **Michael Dossett, director of Kentucky Emergency Management**.

The FEMA assistance includes 30 personnel and 15 advanced life-support (ALS) ambulance vehicles, with one paramedic and one EMS tech assigned to each ambulance. Each of the three strike teams, assigned to assist Kentuckians from today through Sept. 25, includes five of the ALS ambulances and 10 personnel. The teams are deployed to Louisville, Prestonsburg and Somerset. If a continued need is identified beyond Sept. 25, an extension can be requested. The state submitted a request for two additional EMS strike teams.

The deployment locations are subject to change based on needs in the commonwealth.

On Thursday, the Governor announced record numbers of Kentuckians in intensive care, 590, and on ventilators, 345, and a positivity rate of 13.24%. He announced more than 10,000 new COVID-19 cases and more than 90 deaths in the last two days.

"The pandemic is burning through our state and taking our loved ones and neighbors with it," the **Governor** said. "I appreciate FEMA sending help to our health care heroes, who have worked tirelessly during the last year and a half to save our neighbors and loved ones during this pandemic."

The Governor declared this Health Care Heroes Appreciation Week to recognize the dedication and sacrifice of our frontline workers during this pandemic.

The FEMA strike teams are positioned in areas that have shown an increase in infections or projected to have an increase in infections and in areas where hospitals are near full capacity. According to KBEMS's current projections, the commonwealth will experience a deficit of medical transport resources if the upward trend in COVID-19 continues.

KBEMS' mission is to ensure availability of high-quality, life-saving emergency medical services for Kentucky by certifying and licensing Emergency Medical Personnel, while also establishing standards for the education and training of Emergency Medical Services Personnel.

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