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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Gov. Beshear: A Safe, Sustainable Reopening for Kentucky's Economy**

*Health commissioner issues guidance on syndrome affecting some children with COVID-19*

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

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 13, 2020)** – Gov. Andy Beshear on Wednesday said Kentucky is focused on conducting a safe and sustainable reopening of the economy while continuing to fight against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

“Our goal is to reopen Kentucky’s economy in a gradual and safe way, to ensure that we can get people back to work,” the Governor said. “But at the same time, we acknowledge none of us have ever seen a worldwide pandemic like this in our lifetime.”

Gov. Beshear launched the [Healthy at Work](#) initiative in late April to guide the smart, safe and gradual reopening of the state’s economy. He noted that Kentucky’s plans closely follow the [White House’s Guidelines for Reopening America](#).

“If you look at Kentucky’s plan, it is more closely aligned with the White House’s reopening plan and Dr. Anthony Fauci’s advice than just about any other state that is moving forward with reopening,” the Governor said. “It’s very gradual, and that is by design to give us time to build capacity on testing and tracing.”

With more sectors being reopened, Gov. Beshear said all businesses must follow the [10 rules of staying healthy at work](#) as well as [industry-specific](#) guidance. A full reopening schedule can be found [here](#).

The Governor said that while guidance and rules are important, the key to a successful reopening of the economy rests with all Kentuckians.

“It’s all going to come down to the people of Kentucky,” he said. “The reason we were able to flatten the curve – and in Kentucky we have saved tens of thousands of lives – is because of our citizens.”

Gov. Beshear said maintaining vigilance about social distancing and hygiene, and being resilient in the face of continued sacrifices will save even more lives.

He warned of possible regional outbreaks, such as the one occurring in the Bowling Green area of Warren County.

“Let’s remember this thing isn’t gone, and even in places where it looks like there are relatively few cases, significant outbreaks can occur quickly,” Gov. Beshear said.

#### **Case information**

As of 5 p.m. May 13, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 7,080 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 227 of which were newly confirmed Wednesday.

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear also reported five new deaths Wednesday, raising the total to 326 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The deaths reported Wednesday include an 88-year-old woman from Adair County; three women, ages 73, 89 and 97, from Boone County; and a 74-year-old woman from Marshall County.

“Still five deaths to report today,” Gov. Beshear said. “These are five families that are going to need us. We need to light our houses up green tonight. We need to ring our bells at 10 a.m. tomorrow morning. These are five families in communities that are going to be grieving. These are five Kentuckians taken from us by this virus and let’s make sure that we remember that they are more than simply an age and a county.”

At least 2,649 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,

### **Child illness update**

Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health, provided an update on the coronavirus in children and discussed an advisory issued by the department about Pediatric Multisymptom Inflammatory Syndrome (PMIS), a syndrome that is causing serious health problems for some young people. The guidance includes a summary of key points about the syndrome, possible symptoms and reporting directions.

PMIS is a rare illness being seen in some children who have been infected with COVID-19. About a month after a coronavirus infection, children and teenagers with PMIS develop fever accompanied by abdominal pain and, often, swollen hands, feet and lymph nodes.

Gov. Beshear and Dr. Stack have spoken about two cases involving young Kentuckians who were being treated for complications after contracting COVID-19. A 10-year-old who previously was in dire condition is no longer using a ventilator, and a 16-year-old who was being monitored has been sent home to recuperate.

Dr. Stack said the Kentucky Pediatric COVID-19 Hotline (800-722-5725) staffed by Norton Children's Hospital is prepared to answer questions from both parents and clinicians about PMIS.

### **Bowling Green cases**

Dr. Stack said the Bowling Green area is experiencing the second highest rate of positive cases today. Dr. Stack said he was on a call with local and state health leaders today where they discussed starting to send medical student volunteers to the area to assist.

"We are providing additional support to them," Dr. Stack said. "And we will continue our dialogue and discussions with them to try to help them. I just want to emphasize: The disease is still out there. This is not the common cold; this is a bad actor. When it sets up in a community and starts to take hold, hospitals can get overrun."

The Governor when discussing test results, he said there were more than 70 new positive cases in Warren County.

"What we're seeing in Warren County is what many think is our future," the Governor said. "Getting this in control, plateaued overall in the state and having to monitor the state as a whole but then having hot spots that can start growing and then can grow very significantly. Our hearts are with the residents of Warren County."

### **N95 mask decontamination available**

Dr. Stack also highlighted the availability to hospitals and other health care providers of the Battelle Critical Care Decontamination System™. It uses vapor phase hydrogen peroxide (VPHP) to decontaminate N95 respirator masks for up to 20 reuses without degrading filter performance. For more information, visit [www.battelle.org/decon](http://www.battelle.org/decon), or contact Katy Delaney at (614) 424-7208 or at [delaneyk@battelle.org](mailto:delaneyk@battelle.org) or T.R. Massey at (614) 424-5544 or at [masseytr@battelle.org](mailto:masseytr@battelle.org).

### **Phase 3 of health care reopening**

Today marks the [next step in the reopening of the state's health care sector](#). The Cabinet for Health and Family Services issued directives governing the opening of hospitals and other health care facilities. Beginning May 13, hospitals and care facilities could begin doing non-emergency surgeries and procedures at 50% of their pre-COVID-19-era patient volume. Facilities will determine their own patient capacities starting May 27, as long as progress continues.

### **Department of Corrections**

Gov. Beshear [announced the appointment of Cookie Crews](#) as commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Corrections. Crews is a 36-year veteran of Corrections, having served at the helm of four prisons and the agency's Health Services Division the past eight years.

"I'm proud to announce Cookie Crews as our new commissioner of the Department of Corrections," the Governor said. "It's a challenging time in Frankfort and in our corrections system for so many reasons. She's demonstrated leadership, dedication and knowledge of the department."

### **Testing expansion**

Gov. Beshear said in partnership with Kroger, new testing locations would open in Richmond, Mayfield, Louisville and Hartford next week. Information on how to register at more than 70 sites throughout the commonwealth can be found at [kycovid19.ky.gov](http://kycovid19.ky.gov).

### **More information**

Read about other key updates, actions and information from Gov. Beshear and his administration at [governor.ky.gov](http://governor.ky.gov), [kycovid19.ky.gov](http://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/kygovspanol](http://tinyurl.com/kygovspanol) (Spanish) and [tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations](http://tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations) (more than 20 additional languages).

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