



## OFFICE OF GOVERNOR ANDY BESHEAR

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts: Crystal Staley  
502-545-3714[nicole.burton@ky.gov]

Jack Mazurak  
502-782-1965

### **Gov. Beshear: More Than 15,000 COVID Cases Reported Over Past Three Days**

*Governor, state officials provide cases, vaccines, testing, unemployment, long-term care updates*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 8, 2021)** – On Friday, Gov. Andy Beshear announced the third-highest ever report of new COVID-19 cases, surpassed only by the [Jan. 7](#) and [Jan. 6](#) reports.

The Governor has reported 15,403 new COVID-19 cases in just three days.

“We are at a really tough point once again in our war against COVID-19. We have successfully stopped three waves of this virus, but we are now seeing a real and significant increase in cases and our positivity rate from people’s gatherings around the holidays,” said Gov. Beshear. “I wish it hadn’t happened. We’ve got to make sure that moving forward we are not gathering in that way, and we’ve got to know that we wear a mask now to protect ourselves.

“You need to be wearing a mask anywhere outside of your own household. It’s gotten that bad and these mutated versions appear to be spreading really fast.”

According to the most recent White House Federal Report for Kentucky, the state's fall and winter surge has been at "nearly twice the rate of rise of cases as the spring and summer surges."

The report continues: "The acceleration suggests there may be a United States COVID-19 variant that has evolved here, in addition to the United Kingdom variant that is already spreading in our communities and may be 50% more transmissible.

"Aggressive mitigation must be used to match a more aggressive virus: Without uniform implementation of effective face masking (two or three-ply and well-fitting) and strict social distancing, epidemics could quickly worsen as these variants spread and become predominant."

The White House report recommends the creation of high throughput vaccination sites, continued active vaccination encouragement by the Governor, health officials and other community influencers and televised vaccinations, as Gov. Beshear and state officials conducted [Dec. 22](#), in addition to four more group vaccinations where photos were shared with the media on [Dec. 23](#), [Dec. 28](#), [Jan. 4](#) and another set on [Jan. 4](#).

The Governor also shared guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which directly conflicts with the policies outlined in [Kentucky House Bill 1](#) that would strip the Governor of emergency powers to enact some restrictions that have [saved thousands of lives](#) during the pandemic and are supported by Kentuckians.

A [recent poll](#) indicated 66% of Kentucky voters approve of the way the Governor has handled the pandemic. The COVID States Project, a [consortium of top universities](#), in its latest report, finds solid majorities of Kentuckians support all seven COVID-restriction categories, which includes 85% supporting restrictions on large gatherings, nearly 74% backing limits on restaurants and 67% supporting limits on in-person school instruction.

The CDC advises: "Given the potential for a rebound in the number of cases or level of community transmission, a low threshold for reinstating more stringent mitigation standards will be essential."

The Governor also suggested the bill was both counterproductive and contradictory: "The CDC reopening plan written into the guidance that would become law in this bill says that if we've got cases going up instead of two weeks of cases going down, things should be shut down. This is the problem when you put guidance into law that was never intended to be law: House Bill 1, based on

what it references, may be requiring a shut-down of Kentucky that does not and should not need to happen.

“Also, is House Bill 1 saying that restaurants have to be open but people aren’t allowed to go in them? That makes no sense.”

### **Case Information**

As of 4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 8, Gov. Beshear reported the following COVID-19 numbers:

New cases today: 4,750

New deaths today: 13

Positivity rate: 11.9%

Total deaths: 2,856

Currently hospitalized: 1,748

Currently in ICU: 393

Currently on ventilator: 217

Top counties with the most positive cases today are: Jefferson, Fayette, Oldham, Kenton, Warren and Morgan. Each of these counties reported 150 or more new cases; Jefferson County alone reported 758.

To see a list of those reported lost to the virus today, click [here](#).

### **Condolences for U.S. Capitol Police Officer Killed in Line of Duty**

The Governor said he was heartbroken to learn a Capitol police officer has died after sustaining injuries from the attack on our U.S. Capitol by domestic terrorists.

“This is what happens when you foster disrespect, hate, and division,” said Gov. Beshear. “Every public servant must be responsible for their words and the messages they send. Our thoughts and prayers are with the officer’s family.”

### **Vaccine Progress Update**

The Governor said 107,799 initial vaccine doses have been administered across the state; 47,385 have been administered since Monday’s report, which Gov. Beshear said highlights the impact of the state’s [push to dramatically speed up](#) vaccinations in the commonwealth.

“A shot that sits in a freezer for an extended period of time is no use to anyone,” said Dr. Stack. “Because it is incredibly difficult to find everyone who meet very specific, discrete criteria, and because, unfortunately, there is a substantial portion

of the population who is opting to wait for the vaccine or has some concern or hesitancy about it, at the end of the day, we want every vaccination administration site to give at least 90% of the vaccine that reaches the state within seven days, even if that means moving to people in a lower priority category who are willing and able to receive it.”

### **New Northern Kentucky Testing Location Announced**

Today, Gov. Beshear announced a new COVID-19 testing site, created in partnership with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, at the Covington West IRS Parking Lot (302 W. 4th Street Parking Lot, Covington, KY 41011).

The site will be open Jan. 11 to Jan. 14 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

When they arrive at the testing location, Kentuckians should follow instructions on the signage and given by onsite personnel. There are no public restrooms available at the test site. After receiving an appointment, it is very important to print and bring the test voucher on the day of your test. Kentuckians can register for a test [here](#).

### **Unemployment Insurance Update**

Today, Amy Cabbage, general counsel for Gov. Beshear, said of the almost 1.5 million claims, only 90,000 initial claims across all programs have unresolved issues.

“A number of those claims appear to be fraudulent claims that will never pay out, and we estimate the true number of claims in that group is approximately 30,000. Only about 5% of claimants have outstanding initial issues, with about a quarter of those having filed in the last three months,” Cabbage said. “We are also proud that we have been able to pay benefits to more than 90% of claimants, where prior to the pandemic our average payment rate was 75%.”

Cabbage also provided more information about the new federal benefits provided by Congress in December in the Continued Assistance Act. The Continued Assistance Act provided:

- An 11-week extension of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program for non-traditional and contract employees, which means claimants under that program can qualify for a total of 50 weeks;

- An 11-week extension of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program, which provides some claimants who have exhausted traditional UI benefits continued benefits;
- An opportunity to regain the Extended Benefits program; and
- An 11-week \$300 per week supplement similar to the \$600 per week supplement Congress provided during the spring and summer.

She explained more about stimulus payments for unemployment insurance claimants announced by the Governor last night. The Office of Unemployment Insurance (OUI) is working on programming to get these payments out to those who qualify by the end of next week. These are one-time payments that will arrive in the same manner as regular unemployment payments, whether by direct deposit to a bank account or a prepaid debit card. There are two types of payments under this program:

1. A \$1,000 payment to people who have filed claims from March 4 through Oct. 31 and have yet to have their claims resolved. Kentuckians are eligible if OUI has proof of identity and if their claims have not been flagged as fraudulent. Approximately 20,000 to 24,000 Kentuckians are eligible for these payments.
2. A \$400 payment to people who would have qualified for the \$400 FEMA supplemental payment in August and September, but didn't have a benefit amount high enough to qualify under the President's order. People who drew a weekly benefit amount of \$175 or less in November and December will qualify for the \$400. Approximately 60,000 Kentuckians are eligible for these payments.

"Watch the [KCC website](#) for updates on timing and more specific details about these payments," Cabbage said. "Also, if you receive your benefits on a prepaid debit card, please check the notice on the KCC website about the upcoming change in debit card providers. There will be a lag between providers, so unless you change your payment method to direct deposit into a bank account you will receive a paper check for a short period of time. If you prefer to receive a check rather than a direct deposit, please make sure we have your correct address." Finally, Cabbage provided an update on overpayments to claimants.

"You may remember that early in the pandemic we had some issues with mistaken payments being made to claimants, and now they've been asked to pay those back. As you know, the Governor asked us to find a way to forgive those

overpayments because those were our mistake, not yours,” Cabbage said. “The Continued Assistance Act actually amended the federal law and allows us to waive those, but state law doesn’t at this time. So we are hoping the General Assembly will give us the flexibility to waive those payments while they are here. We look forward to working with them to achieve that.”

### **Long-Term Care Update**

Today, Adam Mather, inspector general at the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, provided an update on vaccine progress in the commonwealth’s long-term care facilities.

As of yesterday, vaccinations had been given to staff and residents in 287 long-term care and assisted living facilities. Nearly 24,000 initial doses have been administered.

“There will be significant ramp-ups and a pledge by both partners to be finished administering initial doses by Jan. 25. Some delays in vaccinating residents have been related to COVID-19 outbreaks in facilities, but those residents will be able to be vaccinated at a later date. As the Governor mentioned, staff vaccinations remain a bit of an issue, but a caveat to that is that some of the facilities have decided to split their staff in half in case there are any reactions, so they can ensure they don’t have a staffing shortage.

“With that said, I want to point out that we haven’t seen any negative side effects from residents or staff reported other than soreness.”

### **Price-Gouging Prohibited**

Today, Gov. Beshear signed an [executive order](#) prohibiting price-gouging, extending a previous order. This order will remain in effect for the duration of the [state of emergency](#).

### **More Information**

To view the [full daily report](#), [incidence rate map](#), information on [testing locations](#), [vaccines](#), [contact tracing](#), [school reports and guidance](#), [guidance for health care providers](#) and the White House Coronavirus Task Force reports for Kentucky and more, visit [kycovid19.ky.gov](http://kycovid19.ky.gov).

###