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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Gov. Beshear Announces 2.5 Million Vaccination
Challenge to Lift Many Capacity Restrictions**

When goal is met, capacity restrictions and physical distancing requirements for nearly all venues, events and businesses that cater to 1,000 or fewer patrons will be lifted

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 12, 2021) – On Monday, Gov. Andy Beshear announced the Team Kentucky Vaccination Challenge: When 2.5 million Kentuckians have received at least their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, the state will remove most capacity restrictions.

When the goal is met, the Governor said he will lift capacity restrictions and physical distancing requirements for nearly all venues, events and businesses that cater to 1,000 or fewer patrons. In addition, he will end the curfew for bars and restaurants.

“The question is, how quickly can we get there? With the vaccine supply we have, we could get there in as little as three-and-a-half weeks from now. That minimum time frame might not be realistic, but we should get there in four to six weeks if we

are intentional,” said Gov. Beshear. “We have to try everything to reach this point as quickly as possible. That will help us have a more normal summer than any of us could have imagined this winter.”

Masking would remain in effect and mass gatherings would still be limited until COVID-19 variants are under control and more Kentucky children are able to be vaccinated. The Governor said Kentucky has reported cases of all three variants of concern: the B-117 variant first detected in the United Kingdom, the B-1427 and B-1429 variants first detected in California and the P1 variant first identified in Brazil.

The Governor said he estimates more than 1.6 million Kentuckians have received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine; he added that vaccination data would update to that number in the next two to three days after the state’s reporting system completed a security upgrade.

To see a list of vaccination sites that have openings this week, visit vaccinemap.ky.gov.

As he encouraged Kentuckians to get vaccinated, the Governor referenced comments from Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, who [said the US economy is at an "inflection point"](#) and that economic growth and job creation could accelerate if the U.S. continues to increase vaccinations and avoids another wave of COVID-19.

COVID-19 Funeral Assistance from Federal Emergency Management Association

“We have lost more than 6,000 Kentuckians to this horrible virus, leaving many grieving families with unanticipated funeral costs,” said Gov. Beshear. “To help ease some of the stress and burden caused by the pandemic, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has opened a COVID-19 funeral assistance program that provides financial support for funeral expenses incurred due to COVID-19 related deaths.”

Starting today, applications can be submitted for financial assistance from FEMA. At this time, there is no deadline to apply for the assistance, but the Governor encouraged Kentuckians not to delay in submitting an application.

To apply, Kentuckians can call the toll-free FEMA COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Helpline at [844-684-6333](tel:844-684-6333), or [800-462-7585](tel:800-462-7585) for deaf and hard of hearing

Americans. The help line is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. EDT.

“Please note, FEMA is not contacting anyone until the individual seeking assistance either has called FEMA first or has applied for assistance,” said Gov. Beshear. “If you doubt a FEMA representative is legitimate, hang up and report it to FEMA at [800-621-3362](tel:800-621-3362) or the National Center for Fraud Hotline at [866-720-5721](tel:866-720-5721).”

For more information about COVID-19 Funeral Assistance eligibility and the application, visit [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov) and search “COVID-19 Funeral Assistance.”

Gov. Beshear, Health Care Leaders Open Kentucky’s Largest Vaccination Site

Gov. Beshear marked another key moment in Kentucky’s fight against COVID-19 on Monday when he joined health care leaders to open a drive-through vaccination site at Cardinal Stadium where 200,000 Kentuckians can get their shot of hope over the next seven weeks. To learn more, see the [full release](#).

Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Protecting Lives at Correctional Facilities

J. Michael Brown, secretary of the Executive Cabinet, said to date, 6,602 out of 9,653 (68.39%) state inmates have received the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine and additional vaccine clinics are being conducted this week at the Kentucky State Penitentiary. If inmates declined a vaccine when it was first offered to them, but they change their minds in the future and request one, they will still be able to receive a vaccine.

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Monday, April 12, Gov. Beshear reported the following COVID-19 numbers:

New cases today: 270

New deaths today: 7

New audit deaths: 0

Positivity rate: 3.16%

Total deaths: 6,257

Currently hospitalized: 380

Currently in ICU: 104

Currently on ventilator: 54

Top counties with the most positive cases today are: Jefferson, Harlan, Laurel and Daviess. Each county reported at least 11 new cases.

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

“I urge everyone – for your own safety, for your own well-being – to make that choice to get vaccinated to keep yourself and your loved ones safe,” said Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health. “Vaccines are available. For example, all Kroger and Walgreens stores in the state of Kentucky are offering COVID-19 vaccines. If we can all rally around this and go get vaccinated, we can get back to activities safely.”

Unemployment Insurance Update

Today, Amy Cabbage, general counsel for Gov. Beshear, updated Kentuckians on when the state’s unemployment insurance (UI) system will go live again after a temporary shutdown for security upgrades.

“We are on track for the system to go live again at 7 a.m. EDT tomorrow,” said Cabbage. “So far, 100,000 letters have been mailed with new login information for claimants and the remaining letters will be mailed tomorrow. Knowing that the letters will not reach you in time for the system’s reopening, we will have call center assistance at [502-564-2900](tel:502-564-2900) available from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. EDT for the next 10 days.”

Claimants can only get PIN assistance on this call line. Wait times are expected to be longest between 7 and 8 a.m. and between 8 and 9 p.m. when there are fewer call center staff on duty.

“A valid email address is required to verify identity in new registration process. Free email accounts are available through Google and Yahoo. You will also need the new eight-digit PIN to create the new account,” said Cabbage. “If you are not due to request benefits this week, please hold off on requesting a PIN via phone and wait for the letter.”

Kentucky Tops South Central Region for 2020 Economic Development Projects Per Capita

Though the past year brought no shortage of obstacles for businesses across the globe, private-sector companies continued to announce job-creating projects in

the commonwealth as Team Kentucky works to build a stronger economy for the long-term.

As evidence, Site Selection magazine's annual Governor's Cup rankings for 2020 positioned Kentucky atop the South Central region, and third nationally, for qualifying projects per capita. The commonwealth also placed seventh overall in total projects, the highest of any state with a population under 5 million. To learn more, see the [full release](#).

More Information

To see all vaccination sites and free transportation options to and from vaccination appointments, visit vaccine.ky.gov. To see a list of vaccination sites that have openings this week, visit vaccinemap.ky.gov. If Kentuckians have questions, they should call the state's COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline, [855-598-2246](tel:855-598-2246) or TTY [855-326-4654](tel:855-326-4654) (for deaf or hard-of-hearing Kentuckians).

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.

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