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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Gov. Beshear Announces Requirements for Houses of Worship, Retail,
Others to Reopen**

*Faith Leaders Support Gov. Beshear's Plan for Reopening Houses of Worship
Visit the Governor's [Facebook](#) page to watch today's news conference*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 8, 2020) – On Friday, Gov. Andy Beshear outlined the requirements to begin reopening major segments of the economy and society including houses of worship, manufacturing, construction, government offices and agencies, retail and funeral services.

Also on Friday, the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Kentucky Council of Churches voiced their support for the Governor's guidelines to reopen places of worship on May 20.

The full plans for those entities to reopen is posted online at healthyatwork.ky.gov.

Gov. Beshear also announced that government offices and agencies can open on May 18 and funeral homes can open on May 20.

"I believe that the healthiest economy coming out of COVID-19 is going to be the one that can keep the virus contained while they successfully reopen," said Gov. Beshear. "Remember, listen to your faith leader. If they tell you that they're not ready and that they don't think that it's safe, then you should wait."

Dr. Todd Gray, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, said, “I am thankful for the hard work of Gov. Beshear and his team of advisers, as well as their outreach to faith leaders, in working through the details of this plan. While Kentucky Baptists are eager to return to in-person worship they only want to do so in a safe and healthy manner. I believe they will find this plan reasonable, doable, and in the best interests of the health of their congregations.”

The Rev. Kent Gilbert, president of the Kentucky Council of Churches and pastor of Union Church in Berea, added, “We all want our families and our neighbors’ family to be and stay healthy. Churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, and other religious settings are here to support life and well-being. As supporters of #TeamKentucky, the Kentucky Council of Churches and its member bodies encourage everyone to follow these ‘Healthy at Worship’ guidelines so we can preserve the health of all. No one wants to rush back to worship just to cause more funerals. Worship is meant to be life-giving. These guidelines will help keep it that way in this time of pandemic illness.”

All businesses should follow the [10 rules of staying healthy at work](#) as well as [industry-specific](#) guidance, which will be issued as soon as possible. See the full reopening schedule [here](#).

Today, Gov. Beshear and Eric Friedlander, secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, also provided an update on long-term care testing strategies, testing expansion, mask decontamination, the state’s reopening timeline and this weekend’s press conference schedule.

Case information

As of 5 p.m. May 8, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 6,288 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 176 of which were newly confirmed Friday.

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear also reported four new deaths Friday, raising the state’s toll to 298 deaths related to the virus.

The deaths include a 90-year-old woman from Edmonson County, a 90-year-old woman from Hopkins County, a 69-year-old man from Jefferson County and a 75-year-old man from Bullitt County.

“This number is a lot lower than yesterday, which is good, but these are four individuals we’ve lost and these are four families that need our support, so let’s make sure we light our houses up green and ring our bells at 10 a.m.,” said Gov. Beshear. “These are families that are counting on us.”

At least 2,266 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](#).

Long-term care testing strategy

Today, the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) announced a new long-term care testing strategy, in partnership with Norton Healthcare and local health departments and emergency management leaders.

All long-term care facilities will be risk-stratified based on eight key metrics. There will be COVID-19 surveillance testing for residents and staff in all 286 skilled nursing facilities in the commonwealth. Facilities will have guidance for pre-planning, testing, post-testing and follow-up. Norton Healthcare's help line will be available 24 hours a day for all facilities.

"This testing strategy will advance the proactive response initiated weeks ago by Gov. Beshear, when visitation in long-term care facilities was limited," said Secretary Friedlander. "This, and other proactive measures, ranging from infection-control prevention, consultations and PPE-planning, has saved lives among this vulnerable population. With the ability to now test every resident of our long-term care facilities, we can take an even more aggressive approach in our battle against the coronavirus."

Testing expansion

Thursday, Gov. Beshear announced new partnerships with First Care Clinics and Bluewater Diagnostics Laboratory that will help Kentuckians get tested for COVID-19 at no cost before they go back to work, even if they do not have health insurance. For more information on the new partnerships, [click here](#).

Information on how to register at more than 70 sites throughout the commonwealth can be found at kycovid19.ky.gov.

"We now have the ability when we have an outbreak or we think we do in any type of facility anywhere for that employer to be able to test everybody in the facility," said Gov. Beshear. "We don't have to make excuses anymore. We're not facing the same type of shortages. So let's make sure as we go back to being healthy at work that we're doing everything we can to take care of those around us."

N95 mask decontamination for frontline health care workers

Dr. Steven Stack, Kentucky's public health commissioner, announced that Kentucky hospitals will now be using the Battelle Critical Care Decontamination System™ that 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, or contact Katy Delaney at (614) 424-7208 or at delaneyk@battelle.org or T.R. Massey at (614) 424-5544 or at masseytr@battelle.org.

Thank you

This week, Gov. Beshear thanked [teachers](#), [nurses](#) and [interpreters](#). Today, he and Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman thanked moms across the commonwealth ahead of Mother's Day. Gov. Beshear announced there will be no news conference on Sunday in honor of the holiday.

"To all the moms out there, Happy Mother's Day. To all those who have served as mothers, bonus moms, step moms, women who long to be moms but cannot, I salute you as well," said Lt. Gov. Coleman. "I hope you can feel the love we have for you even if we are socially distant."

Gov. Beshear followed, "She beat me to it. Mom, Britainy, happy Mother's Day."

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 daily summaries of the Governor's news conference at tinyurl.com/kygovespanol (Spanish) and tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations (more than 20 additional languages).



For official news and updates from the Beshear/Coleman administration, visit governor.ky.gov/news.