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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear Provides Update on COVID-19

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

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 18, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear on Tuesday updated Kentuckians on the state's continuing efforts to fight the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) in the commonwealth.

"We can't tell you how long we're going to be fighting it, but we're going to get through it and we're going to win," the Governor said. "To do it and to do it right, we're going to have to listen to and follow some wisdom such as this Chinese proverb: 'One moment of patience may ward off great disaster. One moment of impatience may ruin a whole life.'"

"We are all desperate to get back to our old lives. But if we are not patient, we put the lives of other people on the line, we put the health of our economy on the line. And we potentially threaten what we love the most – our children – and their wellbeing. At a time like this, our patience is being tested. My question is, are we going to pass that test?"

Gov. Beshear also spoke about his recent orders and guidance on openings for schools and businesses. He noted that the decisions he and others in his administration have made are based on public health and pegged to information provided by the White House. The Governor noted that for the week of Aug. 8-14, the White House listed 20 Kentucky counties in the "red" zone, meaning there is a positivity rate of 10% or higher. Dozens more are in the 5-10% positivity rate "yellow" zone.

“If you add the red and the yellow counties, you are close to if not over 50% of an entire state,” the Governor said. “That’s exactly the reason that we took the actions on bars and restaurants and reduced gatherings to 10 or fewer, Dr. (Deborah) Birx said we have to do it statewide. She said, ‘I can hand you this report, but when you have this many counties that are in the red and the yellow zone, you have statewide community spread that is uncontrolled – uncontrolled spread of COVID-19.’ That doesn’t mean we can’t get it under control, it just means it takes some time and we have to be patient.”

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Aug. 18, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 40,299 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 627 of which were newly reported Tuesday. Fourteen of the newly reported cases were from children ages 5 and younger, including a 1-month-old from Pike County.

“Today, this is about what we have seen on other Tuesdays, going back three or four weeks. We are announcing 627 new cases; 76 of which are in Kentuckians 18 years or younger,” the Governor said. “I believe, again, first we’ve got to plateau, then we can get on that downward slope. Then we’re going to be in a much safer place to do things.”

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear reported 12 new deaths Tuesday, raising the total to 830 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The deaths reported Tuesday include a 44-year-old woman from Carter County; a 67-year-old woman from Daviess County; an 89-year-old man from Graves County; two women, ages 72 and 83, and two men, ages 72 and 80, from Jefferson County; a 67-year-old woman from Letcher County; a 75-year-old woman from Oldham County; a 72-year-old woman and a 73-year-old man from Perry County; and an 84-year-old woman from Washington County.

“Today we’ve also lost 12 Kentuckians to COVID-19. Twelve. And when you look at this report, it’s people of a number of different ages,” Gov. Beshear said. “We haven’t had a lot of days where we’ve had double-digit deaths. What we’ve suffered from are a few every single day, which is hard, but a day when we have 12 from all over Kentucky is a difficult day.”

As of Tuesday, there have been at least 770,382 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate currently stands at 5.48%. At least 9,223 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](#). To see all recent daily reports, [click here](#).

Reinforcing the fact that the global health pandemic caused by COVID-19 will touch most of our lives in some way, Rocky Adkins, senior advisor to Gov. Beshear, spoke Tuesday about his father – 84-year-old Jess Adkins – who is recovering after falling ill from the coronavirus.

“I’m happy to report to you today that I got a call this morning from UK Medical Center that they are moving my father from the hospital to Cardinal Hill,” Adkins said. “Folks, that’s good news. And my dad is going to rehab, and after that, where we’re going to return him home.”

Adkins noted that his son who was helping his father also tested positive for coronavirus but is asymptomatic.

“I wanted to give this personal testimony today and this very personal story to hopefully reach somebody across Kentucky. First of all to tell you – by phone call or by someone – check on your neighbors. Check on your neighbor. Make sure they’re OK.

“Second of all, follow the guidelines. The protocols, the orders, all of these things that none of us may like, but appreciate and respect what’s being handed down,” Adkins said. “There will be time for debate on all of this, but I’m telling you for now, for Jess Adkins, for an 84-year-old man who will tell you as soon as he can to wear your mask, to wash your hands, to stay away from crowds, to social distance, all of that.”

100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment

Gov. Beshear and Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman on Tuesday marked the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution with a proclamation honoring those who fought to ensure that women secured the right to vote.

“We honor the approval of the 19th Amendment, and recognize the contributions made by Kentucky women and men to its ratification, including Nettie Depp, a pioneer in education who will become the first woman to be presented with a statue in a place of honor in the State Capitol,” the Governor’s proclamation reads, in part. “And we resolve to remember their struggle and celebrate the history of the movement, and commit to the full equality for women.”

For the complete text, [read the full proclamation here](#). After signing the proclamation, Gov. Beshear said he will give the pen he used as a gift to his daughter, Lila, as a reminder of the historic victory and advancement of women’s rights.

“I’m proud of our Kentucky men and women who made that historic achievement possible. In fact, in 1920, Kentucky had the highest women’s voter turnout in the nation at 57%,” said Lt. Gov. Coleman. “To every woman in Kentucky of voting age, this year, I challenge you to join me in beating that record set 100 years ago.

“We’ve made amazing strides – women can realize goals and serve in roles that previously have been far out of reach. However, we still have much further to go. We must recognize and celebrate women of color and of diverse backgrounds for us to fully be inclusive and realize our potential as a society. We must fight for equal pay for equal work. And we must continue to support young women and encourage them to follow their dreams, whatever they may be, because nothing – absolutely nothing – can or should stop a determined woman,” said Lt. Gov. Coleman.

In addition, the Governor was scheduled to take part in a ceremony at 8 p.m. in downtown Lexington along with Mayor Linda Gorton to dedicate a new sculpture, named “Stand.” Due to inclement weather, the event was postponed until Wednesday evening. The bronze work depicts five silhouetted images of the suffragists who fought for women’s right to vote in the early 20th century.

\$5.7 Million in U.S. DOJ Grants to Public Safety Agencies

In collaboration with the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, today, Gov. Beshear announced that Kentucky’s local public safety agencies and eligible local governments have been awarded more than \$5.7 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice’s (USDJOJ) Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program (CESF).

“These funds are crucial in assisting police departments, sheriff’s offices, correctional institutions and other agencies within the criminal justice system to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19,” said Gov. Beshear. “Our public safety agencies have worked tirelessly on the front lines during this pandemic and have adapted quickly to many new challenges to continue protecting our Kentucky families.”

For more information, [read the full release](#).

More Than \$9 Million Approved in CARES Act Reimbursements for Local Governments

In collaboration with the Department for Local Government (DLG), today, Gov. Beshear announced 11 Northern Kentucky governments were approved for \$9,249,838 in reimbursements from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act for local governments with expenses related to COVID-19.

“Our local governments have been lifelines in our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is why this funding is so important,” said Gov. Beshear. “We are grateful for their hard work and dedication to keeping Kentuckians safe.”

For more information, [read the full release](#).

Kentucky Transportation Gets \$3 Million in Federal Funding

Gov. Beshear also announced Tuesday that the Federal Transit Administration has awarded more

than \$3 million to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. The money – \$3,070,671 – will go to 10 public transit agencies across the commonwealth to purchase new transit vehicles.

“Reliable transportation is essential to so much we do in our daily lives,” Gov. Beshear said. “For many of our fellow Kentuckians, that means public transportation. It’s how they get to work, or school, or health care appointments, or the grocery and a host of other places. This funding is an investment on their behalf.”

The agencies serve 41 communities around the state. The agencies will use the money to purchase 62 vehicles.

For more information, [read the full release](#).

Dr. Stack Update

Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health, provided new information on a prison testing pilot program and reporting on COVID-19 for schools.

Dr. Stack said a pilot program is testing wastewater at Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women in Shelby County and the Kentucky State Reformatory in Oldham County. He said university labs will test the wastewater for the presence of COVID-19 RNA, hopefully providing an early indication of an outbreak.

“We are committed to keeping inmates and the staff that work in correctional facilities safe. This enables us to monitor a population that is confined in an area without having to test them unless we see a warning sign in the wastewater. In this type of test, COVID-19 also shows up multiple days earlier than people become symptomatic. So there’s a lot of reason to be hopeful about this,” said Dr. Stack.

Dr. Stack also spoke Tuesday about reporting protocols for public and private schools. He said schools will identify new COVID-19 cases and the students and staffers involved. The school will then notify the Kentucky Department for Public Health. The individual schools also will notify their school community about new cases. Finally, the KDPH will publish school case reports, just as it does for long-term care reports. The current plan is to not publicly list names, ages or genders of positive cases matched to a school, but to report the overall positive number of cases involving educators and students.

“Bringing kids back to school is not an issue where public health is in any disagreement with education. It’s not easily that we recommend that schools defer in-person class. Even though at the national level there’s clearly an emphasis on getting back in school, the surgeon general himself has said that when your test positivity rate goes over 10%, it’s going to be really hard to succeed regardless of your plans in place because the disease just spreads too fast. The World

Health Organization goes further and says at over 5%, you're going to have a really hard time," said Dr. Stack. "We're all committed to getting kids back to school, but we've got to do it safely."

Prison Update

J. Michael Brown, secretary of Gov. Beshear's executive cabinet, provided an update Tuesday on efforts to fight coronavirus at the state's prisons.

"Looking week over week, some of the news is positive. Some of the news is tragic," Secretary Brown said.

In the last week, there have been 12 new cases of positive inmates with seven of those coming from being transfers from Louisville Metro Detention Center. During that time, there was just one new positive staff member. Unfortunately, the Department of Corrections lost its first staff member, a retiree who had returned to work part-time, to COVID, bringing the overall number of deaths from correctional facilities to 13.

In corrections, there have been 863 total inmate cases with 570 of those now recovered. There have been seven institutions that have never had an inmate case.

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 summaries of the Governor's news conferences at teamkentuckytranslations.com.

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