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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear Outlines 7 Benchmarks to Reopen Commonwealth's Economy

Governor urges cautious optimism, reminds Kentuckians to remain flexible and patient

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 17, 2020) – On Friday, Gov. Andy Beshear discussed benchmarks that the commonwealth must meet in order to start reopening the state's economy while keeping Kentuckians safe from the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). The steps reflect federal guidance announced Thursday by the White House.

"We believe our approach is very much in line with the White House. The plan put out by the White House has certain thresholds that states should meet before we start taking certain steps," Gov. Beshear said. "The benchmarks are being driven by public health. We are all on the same page about what keeps people safe."

The Governor acknowledged Kentuckians' sacrifices and said we must all stay resilient as we work our way out of this.

"We have to make sure we do it smart, we do it safely," he said. "That we don't let our guard down, that we don't start focusing on the next game until we win this game."

Gov. Beshear said that the state's seven benchmarks to be assessed will determine the phases for reopening parts of the economy.

Benchmark criteria for Kentucky to move to the first stage

- 14 days where cases are decreasing
- Increased testing capacity and contact tracing

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) availability
- Ability to protect at-risk populations
- Ability to social distance and follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on large gatherings
- Preparedness for possible future spike
- Status of vaccine and treatment

Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Department for Public Health said, "Normal going forward is not the same as normal going into this. When we start lifting restrictions, I want to be very clear, there will be more disease. More people will get infected. There is a counterbalancing need with people's need to go on with life and people's need to remain safe. We have recognized that all along."

Once Kentucky meets certain first stage benchmarks, the White House provided guidance on what the first stage of reopening could like, which could include:

Guidance for the first stage of reopening

Individuals

- Individuals should continue to practice good hygiene
- People who feel sick should stay home
- All vulnerable individuals should continue to shelter in place
- All individuals, when in public, should maximize physical distance from others
- All individuals should avoid gatherings of more than 10 people, unless precautionary measures can be strictly observed
- Minimize non-essential travel and adhere to CDC guidelines regarding isolation following travel

Employers

- Should continue to encourage telework
- If possible, should return to work in phases
- Close common areas
- Minimize non-essential travel and adhere to CDC guidelines regarding isolation following travel
- Strongly consider special accommodations for personnel who are members of a vulnerable population

Specific types of employers

- Schools and organized youth activities that are currently closed should remain closed
- Visits to senior living facilities and hospitals should still be prohibited

- Large venues (sit-down dining, movie theaters, sporting venues, places of worship) can operate under strict physical distancing protocols
- Elective surgeries can resume, as clinically appropriate, on an outpatient basis at facilities that adhere to CMS guidelines
- Gyms can reopen if they adhere to strict physical distancing and sanitation protocols
- Bars should remain closed

For more information on the White House's criteria and all three proposed phases of reopening, visit [\[whitehouse.gov/openingamerica\]](https://whitehouse.gov/openingamerica)whitehouse.gov/openingamerica.

The Governor reminded Kentuckians how important it is to stay fluid and flexible based on the severity and number of cases in the state and the status of a vaccine and treatment options.

"We think that following these benchmarks, possibly before May we could see some loosening in the health care area," Gov. Beshear said. "We could see the ability to open up in some small ways before May, during May and beyond, but this will be a phased approach based on our benchmarks and recommendations from many groups. We have to ensure any actions we take protect the sacrifices that so many Kentuckians have made."

Kentucky reports first incarcerated offender death related to COVID-19

Friday morning, an offender from Green River Correctional Complex passed away in the hospital after battling COVID-19. The 49-year-old man was admitted to the hospital on April 8, and tested positive for COVID-19 the following day. His family has been notified.

The offender was serving a nine-year sentence out of Jefferson County for assault second and escape second and had approximately three years left to serve of his sentence. He was not eligible for the conditional commutations issued by Gov. Beshear.

The Kentucky Department of Corrections has approximately 12,000 incarcerated offenders in 13 prisons and 4,000 employees. Currently, 19 inmates and 15 staff have tested positive for COVID-19. Five have recovered. The agency also supervises about 50,000 offenders in the community through probation and parole.

The Kentucky DOC is working closely with the Kentucky Department for Public Health and is committed to following the proposed guidance from the CDC on Correctional and Detention Facilities.

4.6 million meals

Kentucky schools provided more than 4.65 million meals, including breakfasts, lunches and dinners, to students in March through feeding sites, according to the Kentucky Department of Education. On average, 230,000 children were served meals each day.

Case information

As of 5 p.m. April 17, Gov. Beshear said there were at least [2,522 coronavirus cases](#) in Kentucky, 134 of which were newly confirmed. Gov. Beshear said the now 11-day-old baby, who had tested positive and announced yesterday, is now at home. He said he was very thankful for that news.

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear also reported eight new deaths Friday, raising the state's toll to 137 deaths related to the virus.

Gov. Beshear continued to encourage Kentuckians to light up their homes and businesses green for those we have lost as a sign of compassion and renewal.

The newly reported deaths include two 80-year-old women from Jefferson, a 64-year-old man from Jefferson, an 83-year-old man from Russell, a 93-year-old woman from Graves, a 96-year-old man from Russell, a 73-year-old man from Jefferson and a 49-year-old man from Muhlenberg.

At least 979 people have recovered from COVID-19 in Kentucky.

To date, at least 30,596 people have been tested. At least 1,008 people have ever been hospitalized with 360 currently hospitalized.

At least 514 have ever been in the ICU with at least 227 people currently in the ICU.

Gov. Beshear also offered an update on the racial breakdown of COVID-19 patients and victims, which unfortunately highlights existing disparities in health and health care access.

The Governor said with about 76.38% of the known cases accounted for, 79.30% of Kentuckians who tested positive were Caucasian, 12.33% were African-American, 4.87% were multiracial, 3.43% were Asian and 0.06% were Native American or Alaskan Native.

The Governor also said with about 69.99% of the known cases accounted for, 93.11% of people who tested positive were non-Hispanic and 6.89% were Hispanic.

On fatalities attributed to the coronavirus, with about 81.75% of the known cases accounted for, Kentucky deaths are about 77.68% Caucasian, 21.43% African-American and 0.89% Asian.

On fatalities attributed to the coronavirus, with about 81.75% of the known cases accounted for, Kentucky deaths are about 99.11% non-Hispanic and 0.89% Hispanic.

More information The Governor is asking all Kentuckians to continue to fight the spread of the virus by following his [10-step guidance](#), which includes practicing social distancing and staying *healthy at home*. Gov. Beshear says these efforts have the potential to save the lives of as many as 11,000 Kentuckians. 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](#). Watch the Governor's social media accounts at 5 p.m. ET each day for his regular briefing. Kentuckians can also access translated COVID-19 information and daily summaries of the Governor's press conference at tinyurl.com/kygovspanol (Spanish) and tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations (more than 20 additional languages).

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages people to follow these [steps to prevent illness](#). Kentuckians who want advice can call the state hotline at 800-722-5725 or call their local health care provider.

Team Kentucky hashtags for social media #TeamKentucky, #TogetherKY, #Patriot and #HealthyAtHome.

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