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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

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Gov. Beshear Announces New Testing and Vaccine Program in State-Run Health Care Facilities

Program will keep residents, staff safe following rise in COVID-19 cases

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 2, 2021) – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear discussed the latest on the COVID-19 delta variant in Kentucky and explained how Kentucky is leading by example with a new testing and vaccine program at state-run health care facilities.

“We are back into a period of time where a whole lot of things are moving – in the public sector, at the federal level – and we are learning more about the delta variant,” said **Gov. Beshear**. “The delta variant is spreading like wildfire. This variant is spreading faster than anything we have seen. If you’re unvaccinated, you are at significant risk.”

Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Eric Friedlander, who joined the Governor on Monday, explained that universal masking will be required in all state-run health care facilities, including veterans nursing homes, effective tomorrow, Aug. 3. In addition, following the recommendation of the Long-Term Care Task Force, the cabinet will require all contractors and state employees working in these state-operated facilities be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by Oct. 1, unless there is a religious or medical reason they cannot be vaccinated. If any of the staff in these facilities is unvaccinated, they will be tested at least twice weekly for their safety and the safety of the Kentuckians they serve.

“Despite all of our efforts, this virus has claimed lives in our facilities, just as it has in facilities across America, and it threatens to do so again,” said **Secretary Friedlander**. “Increasing the vaccination rate and/or testing rates for staff is a critical next step to ensure that we defeat this COVID variant and provide the best protection possible for the people who receive care in our facilities.”

The latest move comes after Gov. Beshear announced last week new COVID-19 precautions based on updated guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Governor required all employees and visitors at state office buildings, regardless of vaccination status, to wear face coverings. Many businesses and organizations have followed by increasing indoor masking, including Ford Motor Co. in Louisville.

In accordance with CDC guidance, Gov. Beshear also recommended school districts require universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time, in-person learning in the fall with layered strategies in place to prevent COVID-19 infection and transmission.

“We want to get back to normal. Those who are not vaccinated are preventing us from getting back to normal,” said Gov. Beshear. “If you’re unvaccinated, your chances of being in the hospital are significantly higher than those who are vaccinated.”

COVID-19 Case Information, Aug. 2

Number of people who have received at least one vaccine dose in Kentucky:

2,319,625

Number of unique individuals who have received a vaccine dose since Friday:

22,663

New Cases: 1,052

Positivity Rate: 9.77%

Current Hospitalizations: 796

Current Intensive Care Admittances: 250

Currently on Ventilators: 98

Executive Order Renewing Emergency Order for Pharmacists

On Friday, Gov. Beshear signed an executive order renewing emergency orders for pharmacists to ensure their authority in the ongoing battle against COVID-19. The order says pharmacists located in any Kentucky county may dispense emergency refills of up to a 30-day supply of any non-scheduled medication for residents of any county in the state.

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