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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

**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. (Oct. 19, 2020)** – Gov. Andy Beshear on Monday updated Kentuckians on the state's continuing efforts to fight the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

"We're going to get through this together, what appears to be our third escalation," said Gov. Beshear. "We've got to come together to do what it takes to defeat this virus. As for me and my family, we are over a week into quarantine, trying to answer the call and set an example. That's our duty as Kentuckians and as Americans."

Gov. Beshear continues to conduct news conferences remotely as he and his family self-quarantine in the Governor's Mansion after they were potentially exposed to COVID-19 on Oct. 10 by a member of the Governor's security detail.

The Beshear family continues to test negative, feels well and will remain in quarantine until cleared by the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH).

## **‘The Fast 4 at 4’**

Gov. Beshear on Monday highlighted a variety of issues of importance to Kentuckians and the commonwealth.

### **1. Charitable Giving Guide**

The Governor is taking action to help protect Team Kentucky by publishing a [Charitable Giving Guide](#) that advises how to verify legitimate charities and avoid charity scams, which can increase during the Christmas season and as the tax year draws to an end.

“As we have faced the greatest challenge of our generation with COVID-19, we have seen so many compassionate Kentuckians step up to help others,” Gov. Beshear said. “Team Kentucky always answers the call when another person needs assistance, which could make us a target for charity scams. Those happen year round, but tend to peak around the Thanksgiving and Christmas giving season. The [Charitable Giving Guide](#) will help Kentuckians ensure their hard-earned dollars are used to help their neighbors and are not stolen by scammers.”

For more information and to view the full news release, [click here](#).

### **2. Expansion Brings Jobs**

Today, Gov. Beshear congratulated TOPY America Inc., a steel wheel manufacturer for the North American passenger car and light truck markets, on completing a \$38 million renovation at its Frankfort operation, a project positioning the company and its employees for success in the years ahead.

“For 35 years, TOPY America has been a vital part of the Frankfort community, providing stable jobs and quality products that families depend on,” Gov. Beshear said. “We are proud to see the company make this major reinvestment, take a big step forward in efficiency and modernization, and work to secure the future of its business and employees. Now more than ever, as we build a better Kentucky, companies need to reposition themselves for long-term success. I look forward to the years ahead for TOPY and the jobs, wages and families it supports here in Frankfort.”

For more information and to view the full news release, [click here](#).

### 3. ***Healthy at Home* Utility Relief Fund**

The Kentucky Public Service Commission is ending its moratorium on disconnections for nonpayment for the utilities it regulates on Oct. 20. To ensure there are protections when that begins, the Governor signed an [executive order](#) today that ends the statewide moratorium on disconnections for nonpayment on Nov. 6, but takes additional steps to help Kentuckians.

The executive order designates \$15 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds for the *Healthy at Home* Utility Relief Fund, which will provide relief for Kentuckians at risk of natural gas, water, wastewater or electric service disconnection.

The order will also require utilities to create a payment plan for residential customers that runs no less than six months. It will continue to waive late fees on utility bills for residential customers through Dec. 31, 2020.

“Customers will apply through [Community Action of Kentucky](#), but the funds will go directly to the utility. Community Action administers the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program or LIHEAP and is accustomed to assisting Kentuckians in paying their utility bills,” said Gov. Beshear. “While this is a difficult time for many Kentuckians, this is another resource for our families.”

Kentuckians can find additional assistance paying for utilities through the funds and organizations [listed here](#).

### 4. **Mask Up, Kentucky!**

Gov. Beshear continued to emphasize the importance of everyone wearing face coverings, calling it the single most important thing all of us can do to fight COVID-19.

Gov. Beshear also encouraged Kentuckians to spread the word on social media using #MaskUpKY and #MaskUpKentucky hashtags. Kentuckians

who use the hashtags will receive a #TeamKY mask if their post is featured as part of the Governor's daily 4 p.m. news conference.

### **Case Information – Monday, Oct. 19**

As of 4 p.m. Oct. 19, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 88,247 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 647 of which were newly reported Monday. There were 81 newly reported cases from children up through age 18, of which 18 were 5 and under. The youngest was just 4 months old.

"This is our highest number of cases that we've ever seen on a Monday," said Gov. Beshear. "At a time when we need cases to be going down, when more people are going to be going inside, when our kids are going back or will be back in school, we need to do better. If we want to keep doing some of the activities that we're doing now, we need to keep doing better."

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear reported nine new deaths Monday, raising the total to 1,326 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The deaths reported Monday include an 82-year-old man from Franklin County; a 73-year-old man from Jefferson County; a 58-year-old man from Lincoln County; a 73-year-old man from Marshall County; an 83-year-old woman from Mercer County; an 85-year-old man from Owen County; a 70-year-old woman and a 93-year-old man from Todd County; and a 72-year-old man from Wayne County.

"We do more work to confirm that COVID-19 was a contributing factor to these deaths than just about any other state. This disease is devastating to each and every one of these families," said Gov. Beshear. "This virus is real and it is cruel."

As of Monday, there have been at least 1,819,333 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate was 4.97%, and at least 17,229 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](#). Information about COVID-19 and schools is also being made available. To view the reports, [click here for K-12](#) and [here for colleges and universities](#).

### **Case Information – Sunday, Oct. 18**

Due to limited reporting on the weekends, some updated information is now available from Sunday, Oct. 18.

As of Sunday, there were 1,808,639 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate was at 4.56% and at least 17,196 Kentuckians had recovered from the virus.

For a detailed look at coronavirus case information from Sunday, Oct. 18, [click here](#).

### **Update from Lt. Gov. Coleman**

Today, Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman updated Kentuckians on the K-12 School COVID-19 Dashboard and celebrated schools that are stepping up to help Team Kentucky defeat a once-in-one-hundred-year pandemic.

“There are 1,570 schools that have reported data at least one day, which is 41 more schools that have newly reported since last week. But that means there are still 162 schools in the state that have never reported in the three weeks since we made this information public,” said Lt. Gov. Coleman. “Thank you to our education leaders across the state who are doing the right thing. Kentucky families need that kind of effort and commitment from every education leader.”

### **Update from Dr. Stack**

On Friday evening, the Kentucky Department for Public Health, an agency of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, announced [an initial, comprehensive draft plan](#) for distributing the COVID-19 vaccine to local health departments and health care organizations.

The first shipment of the vaccine is anticipated for delivery in late 2020 or early 2021 to Kentucky from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Defense.

Today, Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Department for Public Health, shared new details from that plan, including the phases for distribution outlined in the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s [Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine](#).

“Initially, we’ll have to target certain populations to get the vaccine out as quickly as possible to the people who need it most,” said Gov. Beshear. “As we go forward in months from there, we’ll have progressively larger quantities of vaccine,

and then we're cautiously hopeful that by the time we reach the end of next year, everybody who has wanted the vaccine will have had the chance to have one.

To learn more about each phase, see page 44-45 of the state's [draft COVID-19 vaccination plan](#).

Gov. Beshear said the timetable for making a safe coronavirus vaccine available to Kentuckians ultimately is dependent on how quickly one is developed and mass produced for distribution.

Dr. Stack also reminded Kentuckians of the new way KDPH is calculating the state's positivity rate.

"Remember, today we are changing to the calculation of laboratory positivity rate using electronic lab reports only," said Gov. Beshear.

Finally, Dr. Stack updated Kentuckians on the KDPH's travel advisory, which recommends that travelers quarantine for 14-days after visiting states with a positivity rate equal to or greater than 15%.

The states currently on that advisory are: Iowa (50.58%), Nevada (37.16%), South Dakota (36.37%), Idaho (29.63%), Wisconsin (24.30%), Wyoming (20.22%), Nebraska (18.03%), Kansas (17.41%), Mississippi (16.93%), Alabama (16.60%) and Utah (15.44%).

### **Remembrance**

Today, the Governor shared the story of Ruthie Martinez, a beloved wife, mother, grandmother and teacher, who passed away from COVID-19. Ruthie was only 49. She lived and taught in Lexington, and was called a "warrior" by Principal Hale of Winburn Middle School.

"We spoke to Ruthie's husband of 28 years, Miguel, who shared his wife was the most loving person and she always managed to find the good in people," said Gov. Beshear. "He laughed remembering she once said 'I don't know why, but the kids who sometimes act up always love me!' and he said it was because of her warm and supportive smile.

“Miguel said his wife was a terrific teacher and an amazing human being. She will be missed by him, their children and her grandchildren, as well as the students she impacted and all of those who loved her so much.”

### **More Information**

Read about other key updates, actions and information from Gov. Beshear and his administration at [governor.ky.gov](https://governor.ky.gov), [kycovid19.ky.gov](https://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](https://teamkentuckytranslations.com).

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