COVID-19 Update: School Quarantine Guidance Change, Curfew Extension, Bar and Restaurant Grants Still Available

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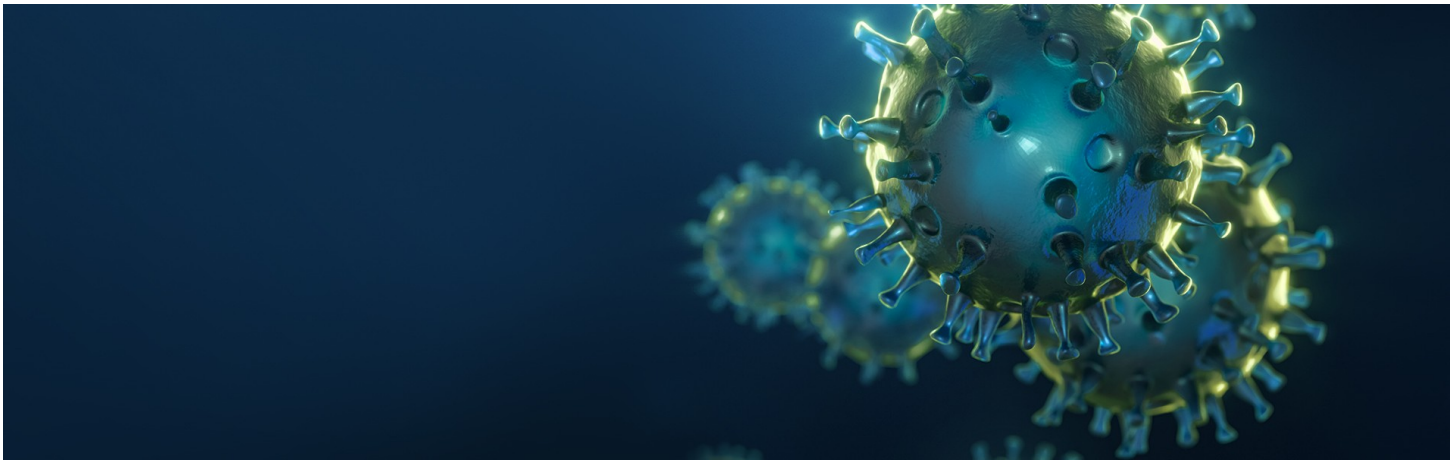

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine today provided the following updates on Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

OHIO VACCINES

Ohio is expected to receive more than 238,000 doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines next week. Governor DeWine encouraged those administering the vaccine to do so with urgency.

"Although we'll never know whose lives have been saved, we do know that these vaccines are saving lives," said Governor DeWine. "We all have a moral responsibility to get the vaccine out to those who choose to receive it as quickly as we possibly can."

Governor DeWine also encouraged citizens who wish to be vaccinated to act with urgency when offered the vaccine. Because the vaccine is currently scarce, Governor DeWine warned that those who decline to receive a vaccine at the first opportunity may not immediately receive another chance.

SCHOOL QUARANTINE GUIDANCE CHANGE

Governor DeWine announced that Ohio is changing its guidance regarding quarantines following an in-classroom exposure in K-12 schools. Moving forward, students and teachers exposed to a COVID-positive person in school are no longer required to quarantine as long as the exposure occurred in a classroom setting and all students/teachers were wearing masks and following other appropriate protocols.

The change follows an evaluation of virus spread in Ohio schools conducted by researchers with the Ohio Schools COVID-19 Evaluation Team. Preliminary results of the evaluation found no discernable difference in the risk of contracting the coronavirus between those in close contact with a COVID-positive person in the classroom and those who were farther away.

"This evaluation confirms for us that Ohio's classrooms are a safe place for our students and that the commitment our schools have made to keeping kids safe in the classroom is working," said Governor DeWine.

Schools should continue to require quarantines for exposed students in situations where masking and distancing protocols were not followed. The updated quarantine guidance does not apply to after-school activities, including sports.

CURFEW EXTENSION

Governor DeWine announced that the Ohio Department of Health will extend Ohio's 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew until January 23, 2021. The extension is necessary until Ohio can determine if it will see a post-holiday case surge that impacts hospitals.

The curfew does not apply to those going to and from work, those who have an emergency, or those who need medical care. The curfew is not intended to stop anyone from getting groceries or going to the pharmacy. Picking up carry-out or a drive-thru meal and ordering for delivery is permitted, but serving food and drink within an establishment must cease at 10:00 p.m.

BAR & RESTAURANT GRANTS STILL AVAILABLE

More than 5,100 eligible on-premises liquor permit holders have not yet applied for state assistance through Ohio’s Bar & Restaurant Grant Program. Of the $38.7 million allotted to support liquor permit holders, more than $12 million remains unclaimed.

Each active on-premises liquor permit (as of 10.23.20) is eligible for $2,500 per location. The funding is not competitive, and the money does not have to be repaid.

Although the program is referred to as the Bar & Restaurant Assistance Fund, more than just bars and restaurants have eligible liquor permits. Movie theaters, bowling alleys, sports and concert venues, and even some hair salons are eligible for this funding.

Permit holders who have not yet claimed their funds should visit businesshelp.ohio.gov to apply.

CURRENT CASE DATA

In total, there are 690,748 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 reported in Ohio and 8,855 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 38,002 people have been hospitalized throughout the pandemic, including 5,837 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Video of today's full update, including versions with foreign language translation, can be viewed on the Ohio Channel's YouTube page.

For more information on Ohio's response to COVID-19, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.