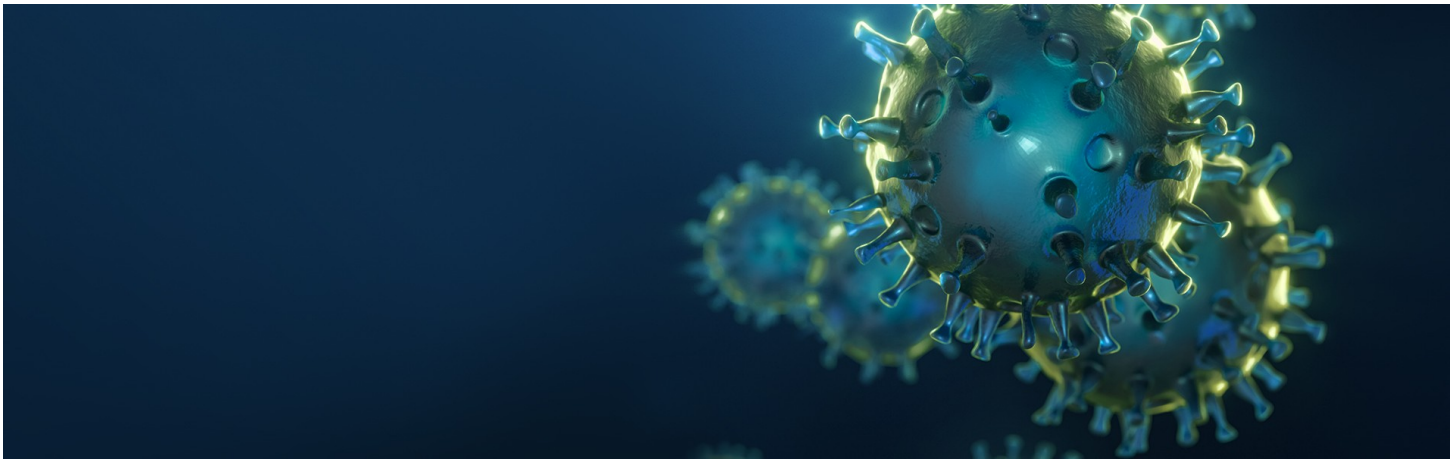
COVID-19 Update: Thanksgiving Mobility, Upcoming Holidays, Ohio National Guard Waiver

December 21, 2020



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

OHIO EXCEEDS 8,000 DEATHS

On Saturday, Ohio surpassed 8,000 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. As of today, 8,122 people infected with the coronavirus have died since the beginning of the pandemic.

In the past 24 hours, 6,548 new cases and 301 new hospitalizations were reported. A total of 17 counties have a case rate over 1,000, meaning that at least 1 percent of people in these counties either have or recently had the virus and are at risk of spreading it to others.

THANKSGIVING MOBILITY & UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

Ohio is not experiencing a drastic surge in cases related to Thanksgiving gatherings which is attributable to the fact that Ohioans greatly reduced their contacts and travel over the holiday. According to anonymized data published in the New York Times, there was a 60 to 70 percent reduction in contacts over the Thanksgiving holiday.

"If we can get through Christmas and New Year's without a significant surge, we will be much better positioned to start 2021 against this virus," said Governor DeWine. "It's critical that we keep up the work we started over Thanksgiving for the next several weeks to prevent another surge in January."

Ohio Department of Health Chief Medical Officer Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff stressed the need for citizens to continue following the Stay Safe Ohio Protocol to help prevent Ohio hospitals from becoming overwhelmed.

"Up to and through Thanksgiving, Ohioans took important steps to avoid letting COVID-19 overwhelm our hospitals, but in spite of this, our hospitals remain extremely busy," said Dr. Vanderhoff. "Adding a post-holiday spike would create a terrible situation, so we can't let ourselves be lulled into a sense of complacency as we move into the next two-week period, the biggest holiday season on our calendar."

OHIO NATIONAL GUARD WAIVER

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced that the Ohio National Guard received a waiver that will allow them to help administer the COVID-19 vaccine. The waiver gives the Ohio National Guard the flexibility to fully utilize National Guard medical personnel trained in administering the vaccine.

The Ohio National Guard has approximately 600 members who are medical personnel, including physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, and medics. Ohio is working to determine how it will best utilize Guard medical personnel without adversely affecting Ohio health care systems' critical medical resources by removing Guard members from their civilian medical positions.

PHONE NUMBERS

Governor DeWine reminded doctors and others performing COVID-19 testing to collect complete information from patients including telephone numbers. This is vital information for local health departments conducting case investigations and contact tracing.

IMAP

Lt. Governor Husted reminded Ohioans about the Individual Microcredential Assistance Program, or IMAP, which is a program available to Ohioans who are low income, partially unemployed, or totally unemployed to earn a tech-focused credential for free. There are 11 IMAP training providers and 54 eligible credentials available, and 37 of these credentials can be completed 100 percent online. Those interested should visit IMAP.Development.Ohio.gov to apply.

CURRENT CASE DATA

In total, there are 629,354 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 reported in Ohio and 8,122 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 35,048 people have been hospitalized throughout the pandemic, including 5,537 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.