Gov. Beshear: Many Businesses Can Now Increase Capacity to 60%

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COVID-19 cases decline for seventh straight week, positivity rate declines to 4.84%

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 1, 2021) – On Monday, Gov. Andy Beshear announced 18 industries can increase capacity to 60% as the state completes its seventh straight week of declining COVID-19 cases.

Today, the Governor reported the lowest number of new COVID-19 cases since Sept. 28 and the lowest positivity rate since Oct. 18.

“Today, we have more good news than at any time in the pandemic. We’ve never seen what we are seeing now in terms of a downward trend. Previously, we had experienced only three consecutive weeks of declining cases,” said Gov. Beshear. “COVID hospitalizations, ICU admittance and those needing a ventilator have either decreased or stabilized.

“This capacity increase is an initial step where we will watch and see to ensure we don’t see a corresponding increase in cases.”

The following businesses can now increase capacity to 60%:

- Indoor auctions
- Barbershops/cosmetology/hair salons
- Bars and restaurants
- Bowling alleys
- Indoor educational and cultural activities
- Fitness centers
- Funeral and memorial services
- Government offices/agencies
- Massage therapy
- Movie theaters
- Nail salons
- Office-based businesses

- Places of worship (recommendation)
- Retail
- Tanning salons
- Tattoo parlors
- Vehicle and vessel dealerships
- Venues and event spaces

The Governor said he intends to increase child care capacity to regular group size on March 15 if positive trends continue.

Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Doses Arriving in Kentucky

Gov. Beshear said the first Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses will be arriving in the state this week and delivered to independent pharmacies.

“The approval of Johnson & Johnson’s one-shot, highly effective vaccine adds to the growing weekly supply available to Kentucky that has risen in just over a month from around 57,000 to over 100,000 first doses and growing,” said Gov. Beshear.

“Independent pharmacies have been preparing for months and are eager to play a part in putting this pandemic to an end. Your independent pharmacies are always there to serve and provide for the communities we work in, live in, and go to church in,” said David Figg, chief executive officer of Rice’s Pharmacy in Ohio County. “This vaccine in our pharmacies is another way to ensure access in all corners of the state, even those that may struggle with transportation. We are committed to making sure every dose is utilized, and this Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a great third vaccine in our arsenal. We will not let the commonwealth down.”

Update on Emergency Response to Record Flooding

Today, the Governor and state officials said the State Emergency Operations Center is activated at Level 3 operations status, supporting the response to severe flooding in some counties after extremely heavy rainfall across the commonwealth – more than six inches in some areas.

“Our first responders have been in harness saving lives throughout the entire weekend. We will be facing the impact of flooding of rivers and tributaries throughout the commonwealth over the next few days,” said Michael Dossett, Director of the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management. “The National Guard has been activated with 72 personnel on duty in Barren, Calloway, Johnson, Laurel, Pike and Rockcastle counties, providing support and equipment: 23 high-axle vehicles, two helicopters, six backhoes and six dump trucks to support resource requests.”

In total, 34 cities and counties have declared states of emergency. Four emergency shelters and one warming center has been opened. Swift water rescues were conducted in at least 42 counties.

Water rescues continue today in Eastern Kentucky as crews clear emergency routes of flood debris and landslides.

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Monday, March 1, Gov. Beshear reported the following COVID-19 numbers:

New cases today: 509
New deaths today: 15
Positivity rate: 4.84%
Total deaths: 4,652

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Currently hospitalized: 719
Currently in ICU: 180
Currently on ventilator: 82

Top counties with the most positive cases today are: Jefferson, Boone, Kenton, Laurel and McCracken. Each county reported at least 20 new cases. Jefferson County reported 95.

To see a list of those reported lost to the virus today, click here (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20210301_COVID-19_Deaths.pdf).

The Governor reminded Kentuckians that starting today, individuals in Phase 1C can sign up for appointments at regional vaccination centers. To learn more about Kentucky's 410 vaccination sites, visit vaccine.ky.gov (https://govstatus.egov.com/kentucky-vaccine-survey) or kycovid19.ky.gov/ky-covid-vaccine (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-covid-vaccine).

"This week, we have already set a record by vaccinating more than 100,000 Kentuckians in a single week," said Gov. Beshear. "As of today, we have vaccinated just under 700,000 Kentuckians – 16% of our total population and over 20% of our eligible population."

Long-Term Care Update
Cabinet for Health and Family Services inspector general Adam Mather said all first doses have been given in the federal long-term care program for residents, staff and contract employees who wished to receive the vaccine. The program is moving toward its maintenance phase.

"Over the course of this week, institutional pharmacies that have enrolled in both the state and federal systems will receive vaccines to administer at long-term care facilities. We are working to enroll the remaining pharmacies and they will be added to the program," said Mather. "This ensures that new residents, new staff, and reluctant residents and staff will be able to be vaccinated."

Free or Reduced-Cost Rides to and from COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments
The Governor reminded Kentuckians that public transit agencies across the commonwealth are offering free or reduced-cost transportation to and from vaccine appointments.

These services are already operating in over 90 counties, covering 75% of all counties across Kentucky. Kentuckians can find transportation services near them by heading to kycovid19.ky.gov (https://kentucky.gov/Pages/kycovid19.ky.gov) for a full list of participating public transit agencies and their phone numbers. Or, call the Kentucky COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline, 855-598-2246.

Student Loan Reimbursements for State Veterans Home Nurses
Gov. Beshear said nurses at Kentucky's state veterans' homes can now receive up to $40,000 over four years to pay off their student loans. To learn more, see the full release (https://veterans.ky.gov/nursinghomes/Pages/default.aspx).

"I congratulate KDVA and especially their nursing home staff and administration for not giving up and for finding an incentive that works in the framework of state government so we can provide great service to those who have served our country," said Gov. Beshear.

***Healthy at Home* Eviction Relief Fund**
The Governor reminded Kentuckians to apply to the *Healthy at Home* Eviction Relief Fund for assistance with housing and utility costs. The program is open to individuals in 118 counties (Jefferson and Fayette counties

have their own parallel assistance programs). To learn more about eligibility and how to apply, visit teamkyhherf.ky.gov (https://teamkyhherf.ky.gov).

Vaccine Water Rescue

Today, Gov. Beshear announced that local officials completed a water rescue of COVID-19 vaccines. The Lee County Health Department lost power and was flooded, but vaccines in the department's care were saved.

"Last night's weather flooded the Kentucky River District Health Department causing the power to go out and jeopardizing the COVID-19 vaccines being stored there," said Gov. Beshear. "Thankfully, the Kentucky River District director, Scott Lockard, and his incredible team, along with the Lee County Emergency Management, conducted a water rescue to keep these vaccines safe for our people. These folks lost a number of vehicles that day, but they did not lose one dose of vaccine."

COVID-19 Deaths Audit

Today, the Governor announced the state will conduct an audit to ensure every Kentuckian lost to COVID-19 is counted.

Neighboring states like Ohio and Indiana have engaged in audits using death certificates and matching them to reported deaths. Kentucky performed this audit in real time until cases increased in November.

"It will likely take a decade to fully understand and calculate the loss of life and the long-term health impacts of this pandemic," said Gov. Beshear. "But I am committed to honoring all of those lost by making sure each is counted. We can have no unknown loss and no unknown soldiers."

More Information

To view the full daily report (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/covid19/COVID19DailyReport.pdf), incidence rate map (https://chfs.ky.gov/Pages/cv19maps.aspx), information on testing locations (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-covid-testing), vaccines (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-covid-vaccine), contact tracing (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-contact-tracing), school reports and guidance (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-healthy-at-school), guidance for health care providers (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-healthcare-guidance) and the White House Coronavirus Task Force reports for Kentucky and more, visit kycovid19.ky.gov (https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19).

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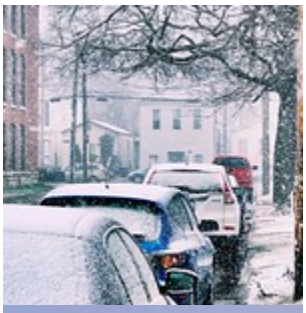
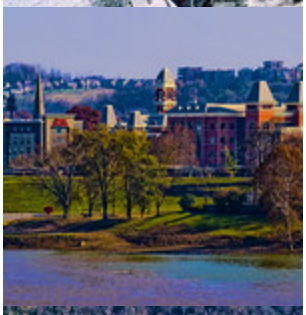
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/7372926@N06/47218320672/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/47184596121/in/pool-773339@N20)
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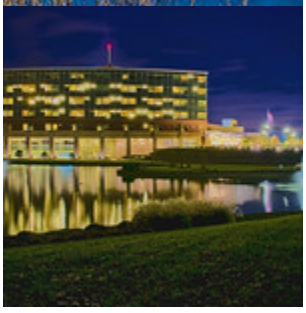
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/32275086277/in/pool-773339@N20)

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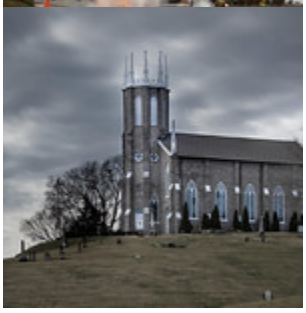
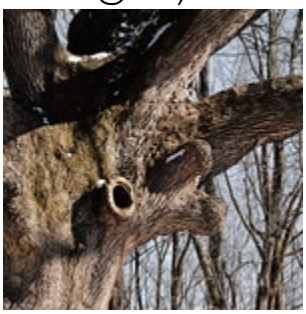
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/127721144@N05/46918072332/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcconnell_springs_photo_journal/46864760851/in/pool-773339@N20)
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