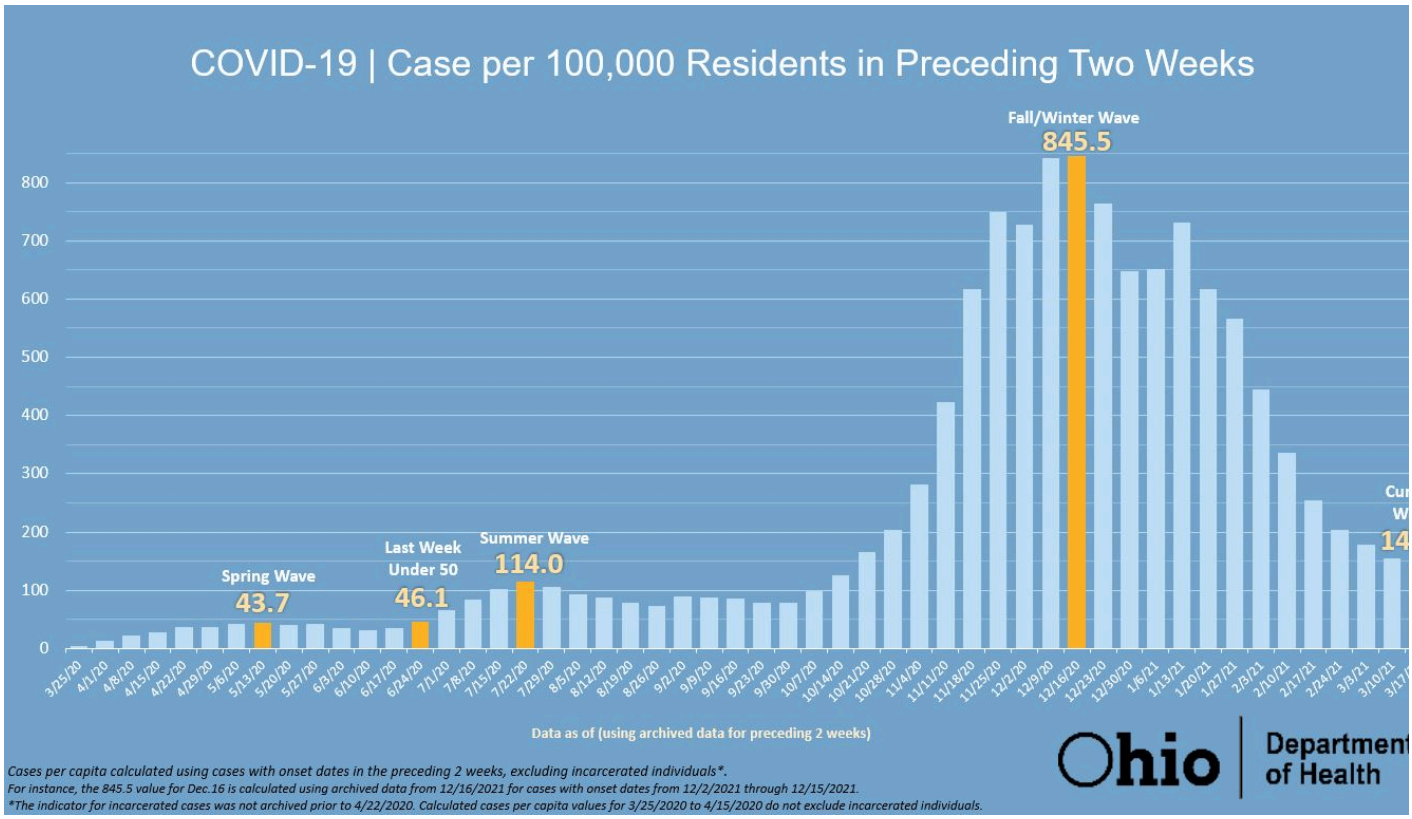
COVID-19 Update: Declining Statewide Case Rate, Indoor Air Quality Assistance Program, Special Election Scheduled

March 18, 2021

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

STATEWIDE CASE RATE

Governor DeWine announced that Ohio's statewide case rate stands at 143.8 cases per 100,000 people over the past two weeks. When Ohio reaches 50 cases per 100,000 people for two weeks, all health orders will be lifted.

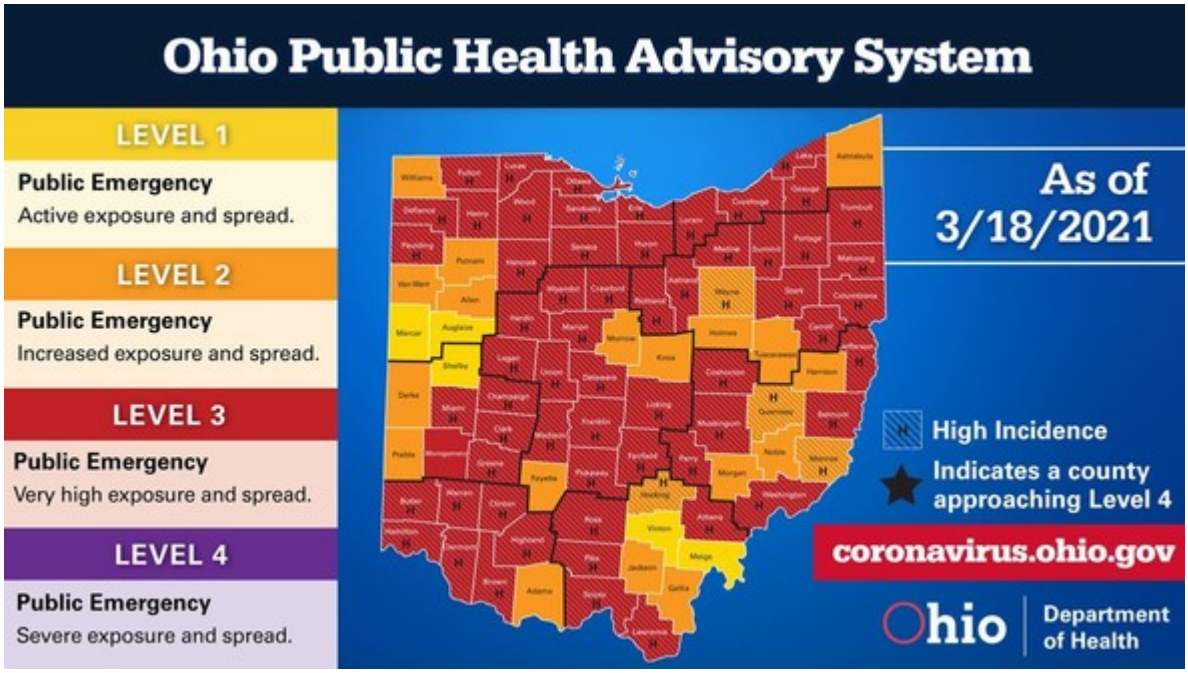


OHIO PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY SYSTEM

New health data compiled by the Ohio Department of Health shows declining rates of COVID-19 exposure and spread in ten counties.

Dropping from Alert Level 3 to Alert Level 2: Ashtabula, Carroll, Fayette, Jackson, Morrow, and Tuscarawas.

Dropping from Alert Level 2 to Alert Level 1: Auglaize, Mercer, Shelby, and Vinton.



NURSING HOME UPDATE

This week, Ohio's long-term care facilities reported just 70 new COVID-19 cases, compared to 157 new cases reported the previous week and 2,832 new cases reported at the peak of the pandemic in December.

"In addition to wearing masks, social distancing, and cleaning, there is no doubt of the significant impact vaccination is having on protecting nursing home residents and preventing severe illness and death among those most targeted by the virus," said Governor DeWine.

A total of 93 percent of Ohio's nursing homes and 77 percent of assisted living facilities have signed up to get additional vaccine for new staff and new residents through Ohio's COVID-19 Vaccine Maintenance Program. Governor DeWine urged the 243 facilities in Ohio that have not requested additional vaccine for new staff and residents to alert the state to its process to offer the vaccine by filling out the survey at aging.ohio.gov/COVIDvaccine.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation has expanded the eligibility of the COVID-19 Indoor Air Quality Assistance Program, which provides reimbursements to eligible applicants to help cover the costs of inspections, assessments, maintenance, and improvements to indoor heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems to control the spread of COVID-19. The program also provides reimbursement for secondary devices designed to destroy bacteria, mold, and viruses.

Launched in December, this $28 million federally-funded program targeted nursing homes, assisted living centers, and adult day centers that invested in HVAC improvements that weaken COVID-19's spread. The expanded eligibility extends to:

- Intermediate care facilities;
- Hospices;
- Senior centers;
- Adult care facilities;
- Waiver settings (group homes); and
- Substance use treatment centers.

More information, including the application, can be found at BWC.ohio.gov.

SPECIAL ELECTION

Governor DeWine announced special election dates for the 11th Congressional District to fill the vacancy left by former Rep. Marcia Fudge.

The vacancy opened after the United States Senate confirmed now-Secretary Marcia Fudge on March 10 to serve as the head of the Department of Housing & Urban Development, and her subsequent resignation of her congressional seat. A Writ of Election may only be issued upon the resignation of a member of Congress.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- May 5th: Declaration of candidacies for partisan candidates must be filed with the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections
- May 24th: Declaration of candidacies for write-in candidates must be filed with the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections
- May 25th: The county board of elections must certify the names of the candidates that will appear on the special primary ballot
- July 6th: Eligible Ohioans who want to cast a ballot in the Special Congressional Primary Election must register to vote by this date
- August 3rd: The Special Election Congressional Primary takes place
- October 4th: Eligible Ohioans who want to cast a ballot in the Special Congressional General Election must register to vote by this date
- November 2nd: The Special Congressional General Election
- November 23rd: Boards must complete and certify official canvass

The amount of time between the governor's Writ of Election announcement and the Special Congressional Primary and General Elections are very similar compared to the previous two special elections.

	Governor Issues Writ of Election	Special Election Primary Date	Total Number of Days	Special Election General Date	Total Number of Days
Speaker Boehner Special Election	Nov. 1, 2015	March 15, 2016	135	June 7, 2016	219
Rep. Tiberi Special Election	Jan. 5, 2018	May 8, 2018	123	August 8, 2018	214
Rep. Fudge Special Election	March 18, 2021	August 3, 2021	138	November 2, 2021	229

Ohioans interested in registering to vote or signing up to be a poll worker should visit VoteOhio.gov for more information.

Full Election Calendar

Frequently Asked Questions

"When making these important decisions, fairness and accessibility to the elections process are paramount," said Aaron Ockerman, Executive Director, Ohio Association of Election Officials. "Many issues must be considered, including the wishes of candidates, political parties, and election administrators. But above all, the voter must be at the core of any decision. The timeframe set forth by Governor DeWine weighs all those interests and ultimately puts forward the best solution for the voter."

"It was wise of Governor DeWine to select election dates that work best for both voters and election officials alike," said Jeff Hastings, Board Chairman, Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. "From the perspective of an elections administrator, this really was the only and best option. We've had special elections before where dates were chosen that didn't coincide with already established elections, and turnout was not only extremely poor, but it was costly to the taxpayers, too. Thanks to Governor DeWine, we're going to be ready to provide Ohio voters with the quality election they deserve."

NEW PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today, Governor DeWine unveiled two new public services announcements aimed at encouraging Ohioans to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

The first PSA features older Ohioans from throughout Ohio who discuss how they feel now that they've been vaccinated.

The second PSA features Anthony Munoz, retired Cincinnati Bengal and Pro Football Hall of Famer, who was recently vaccinated.

CASE DATA/VACCINE INFORMATION

In-depth COVID-19 data for Ohio: coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Ohio's central scheduling system: gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov

All vaccine providers: vaccine.coronavirus.ohio.gov

More vaccine information: coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine

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.