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Gov. Beshear Provides Update on COVID-19

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FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 22, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear on Tuesday updated Kentuckians on the state's continuing efforts to fight the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

"The tough news is tough news for us as a country: We've now lost 200,000 Americans to the coronavirus – 200,000. It's difficult to comprehend that this virus that pretty much didn't exist at the beginning of the year, in about six months would take 200,000 Americans," the Governor said. "I certainly don't have a challenge in my lifetime where we have lost so many Americans.

"And I can't think of one in the past that's occurred that some people denied. This virus is deadly, it's real and it's harming and killing us. And on a day when we've lost 200,000, and some numbers are going up, we have to understand our fight is still going on.

"It's going to take as long as it takes, it's going to be difficult. The fact that we've already lost 200,000 ought to tell you how powerful this virus is and make us commit to doing the right things to defeat it. Two hundred thousand. We've only got a couple Kentucky cities that are larger than 200,000."

'The Fast 4 at 4'
Gov. Beshear on Tuesday highlighted a variety of issues of importance to Kentuckians and the commonwealth.

1. **National Voter Registration Day**
   Today is National Voter Registration Day, a nonpartisan civic holiday celebrating our democracy, observed on the fourth Tuesday of September since 2012. Gov. Beshear recognized the holiday and encouraged all Kentuckians to register on time and make their voices heard in November.

   "This ought to remind everyone to register to vote and then make sure to vote," said Gov. Beshear. "You have more opportunities to vote than ever, so we should be able to set a turnout record this year."

2. **Flu Shots**
   Gov. Beshear again emphasized that all Kentuckians who are able should receive a seasonal flu shot. Because we are still engaged in a very active fight against the coronavirus, health experts are warning

EMAIL (mailto:support@kentucky.gov)

that a bad seasonal flu outbreak might spark a “twindemic” that could overwhelm health care systems.

“I got mine the other day, it really doesn’t hurt and it protects you,” said Gov. Beshear. “It’s perfectly safe to do it.”

3. **Higher Education Financial Aid Options**
   Today, the Governor highlighted financial assistance available for Kentucky students pursuing higher education.

   “We want Kentucky students to be preparing for their futures now – whether that’s college or advanced training – so when we emerge from this pandemic, they’ll be ready to take advantage of the opportunities awaiting them,” said Gov. Beshear. “And we want every Kentucky student to access the federal and state assistance available to the greatest extent possible.”

   The Governor also encouraged, “If you are in school and experiencing financial difficulty, contact your school’s financial aid office. They can help reassess your financial need, which could result in your aid being increased.”

   Students can contact the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) at KHEAA.com (kheaa.com) or 800-928-8926 for questions about student financial assistance and how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

   The FAFSA for the 2021-22 school year will become available here (https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa) on Oct. 1, 2020.

   KHEAA administers the state’s scholarship and grant programs. In fiscal year 2020, thanks to proceeds from the Kentucky Lottery, more than $272 million in state scholarships and grants were awarded to Kentucky college students.

   Students can also turn to KHEAA’s sister agency, The Kentucky Higher Education Student Loan Corporation (KHESLC), Kentucky’s only source for state-based, fixed interest rate, competitive private education loans.

   Loans administered by KHESLC help Kentucky students afford college when an unmet need still exists after all scholarships and grants have been exhausted.

   KHESLC has also assisted thousands of borrowers with financial hardships during the COVID-19 by offering forbearances, which allow loans to be put on hold for specific amounts of time.

   For more information on KHESLC and the resources offered to help education borrowers, visit KHESLC.com. (kheslc.com)

4. **National Recovery Month**
   Today, Gov. Beshear recognized National Recovery Month, which is held every September to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the emergence of a strong and proud recovery community and the dedication of service providers and community members across the nation who make recovery in all its forms possible.

   “You meet some of the hard-working folks helping others through recovery, many of whom have gone through this themselves, dedicating their lives to help other people,” said Gov. Beshear. “You see a little bit of God’s grace right there.”

   The Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy reports that roughly 22 million people in the United States are in recovery as of today.

   The Kentucky Chamber started the Opioid Response Program for Business, which launched in June 2019, in response to Kentucky employers struggling to navigate the issue of workforce participation and overdose deaths.

   “One special story: Rob Perez owns DV8 Kitchen in Lexington where all of his employees are in recovery,” said Gov. Beshear. “He shared his business has seen huge successes including a turnover

rate that is 1/3 better than the national average and a longer tenure of employees. And, DV8 was named the 40th best restaurant in America."

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Sept. 22, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 62,731 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 824 of which were newly reported Tuesday. One hundred and thirty-four of the newly reported cases were from children ages 18 and younger, 22 of which were children ages 5 and under. The youngest was 6 days old.

"Not only do we have more cases than I'd like today – 824, and 134 are kids under 18 – but our positivity rate is back up over 4%, at 4.52%," said Gov. Beshear.

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear reported seven new deaths Tuesday, raising the total to 1,119 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The deaths reported Tuesday include an 87-year-old man from Hardin County; a 79-year-old man from Jefferson County; a 56-year-old woman from Marion County; a 69-year-old woman and two men, ages 79 and 90, from McCracken County; and a 92-year-old man from Taylor County.

"Let's light our homes up green for these seven families. Let's ring our bells every morning at 10 a.m. To the families it doesn't matter when during this pandemic their family members passed away, it hurts just the same," said Gov. Beshear. "Let's make sure we show them the respect we have for everybody else."

As of Tuesday, there have been at least 1,142,031 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate was 4.52%, and at least 11,361 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 (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/covid19/COVID19DailyReport.pdf). To see all recent daily reports, click here (https://chfs.ky.gov/Pages/cvdaily.aspx).

Information about COVID-19 and schools is also being made available. To view the reports, click here for K-12 (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/covid19/K-12cv19report.pdf) and here for colleges and universities (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/covid19/CollegeandUniversitycv19.pdf).

Lost Wages Assistance (LWA)

As of today, Gov. Beshear announced that Kentucky has been approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for an additional three weeks of LWA payments. Eligible Kentuckians will receive $400 for the weeks of Aug. 22, Aug. 29, and Sept. 5 for each week a claimant meets the criteria.

Eligibility criteria:

- Individuals who qualify for a weekly benefit of at least $100 per week in unemployment compensation for each week covered by FEMA's LWA
- Individuals who have self-certified that their employment has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

Payments will be automatically processed for claimants who meet the weekly benefit criteria and have already provided a self-certification. Claimants meeting the weekly benefit requirement who have not yet self-certified will be given an opportunity to provide the required self-certification, and those claimants will receive the benefit so long as FEMA funding remains.

More Information

Read about other key updates, actions and information from Gov. Beshear and his administration at governor.ky.gov (https://governor.ky.gov/news), kycovid19.ky.gov (https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19) and the Governor's official social media accounts Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/GovAndyBeshear/), Twitter (https://twitter.com/GovAndyBeshear) and YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/c/GovAndyBeshear).

Kentuckians can also access translated COVID-19 information and summaries of the Governor's news conferences at teamkentuckytranslations.com (file://govfs03/press/Press%20Releases/teamkentuckytranslations.com).

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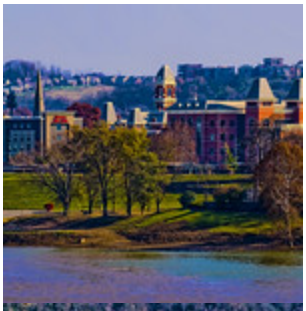
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/47184596121/in/pool-773339@N20)
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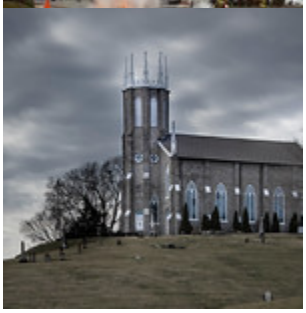
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/127721144@N05/46918072332/in/pool-773339@N20)
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