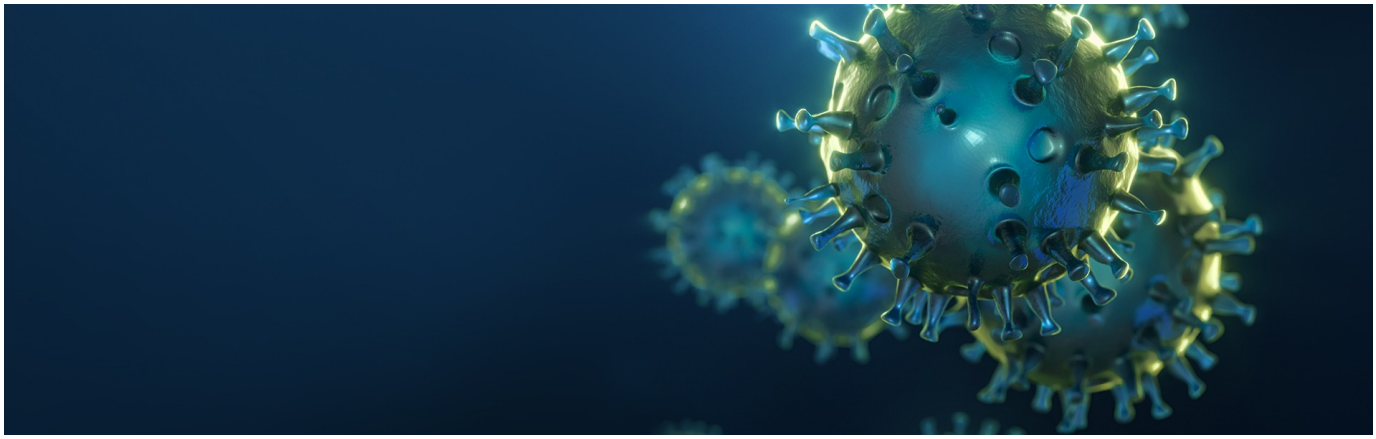
COVID-19 Update: Pandemic EBT, Additional Services to Reopen, Staying Connected

May 12, 2020



(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jon Husted, and Dr. Amy Acton, MD, MPH, today provided the following COVID-19 updates.

PANDEMIC EBT PLAN:

Governor DeWine announced that the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (OJFS) has received approval from the United States Department of Agriculture for its Pandemic EBT plan. The Pandemic EBT program was included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020.

The approval will allow OJFS to distribute SNAP benefits to 850,000 students across Ohio who relied on free or reduced-price meal programs when school was in session to have access to a hot, nutritious meal. The benefits will be mailed directly to students, and families do not need to apply to be eligible.

Families will receive approximately $300 to purchase healthy and nutritious foods to feed their children. These benefits amount to more than $250 million that will go to our grocery stores and other eligible retailers.

MASSAGE THERAPY, ACUPUNCTURE, COSMETIC THERAPY:

Lt. Governor Husted announced today that sectors licensed by the State Medical Board of Ohio, including massage therapy, acupuncture, cosmetic therapy will be permitted to reopen on May 15 with the implementation of proper safety measures.

To ensure that these establishments operate in the safest manner possible, the State Medical Board of Ohio worked with members of Governor DeWine's Personal Services Advisory Group and the Ohio Department of Health to create a detailed list of guidelines and best practices for these service providers to follow. The full list of mandatory and recommended best practices can be found at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

TATTOO AND BODY PIERCING SERVICES:

Tattoo and body piercing services will also be permitted to reopen on May 15 with the implementation of proper safety measures.

To ensure that these establishments operate in the safest manner possible, Governor DeWine's Personal Services Advisory Group created a detailed list of guidelines and best practices for these service providers to follow. The full list of mandatory and recommended best practices can be found at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

OLDER ADULTS - STAYING CONNECTED:

To help ensure that older Ohioans stay connected while staying at home, Ohio Department of Aging Director Ursel McElroy announced a new service today that will provide a daily check-in by phone for Ohioans age 60 or older.

The Staying Connected program will call older adults who sign up for the service during a predetermined window of time. When participants answer the phone, they will be asked to respond via touch-tone to confirm that they are OK or to access live support.

If no one answers after three attempts, a call is then made to an alternate contact (if provided) or to non-emergency services. The service can be canceled at any time.

“Especially during this very challenging time, we encourage older Ohioans to sign up for the Ohio Department of Aging’s Staying Connected phone program. This program will help reduce isolation and support the health and well-being of older adults in our state,” said Robert Cornwell, Executive Director, Buckeye State Sheriff’s Association.

Eligible Ohioans can sign up at aging.ohio.gov or by calling 1-800-266-4346.

Staying Connected is not an emergency response service, and participants should always use 911 or their emergency response system if they are injured or in need of emergency assistance.

CURRENT OHIO DATA:

There are 25,250 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 1,436 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 4,539 people have been hospitalized, including 1,232 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 closed captioning, 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.

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