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Gov. Beshear Provides Update on COVID-19

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FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 15, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear on Tuesday updated Kentuckians on the state's continuing efforts to fight the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

"I will start by telling you one of the most exciting things about our COVID report is that today we are now under a 4% positivity rating," the Governor said. "That is moving in the right direction at a time when we are giving guidance, especially to school systems, about how to at least get back to a hybrid model starting on Sept. 28."

'The Fast 4 at 4'

Gov. Beshear on Tuesday highlighted a variety of issues of importance to Kentuckians and the commonwealth.

1. **CARES Act Funding for Central Kentucky**
   In collaboration with the Department for Local Government, today, Gov. Beshear announced 20 Central Kentucky governments were approved for $7,009,885 in reimbursements from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act for local governments with expenses related to COVID-19.

   "Our local governments have been lifelines in our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Gov. Beshear. "This funding is crucial as we work to restart and rebuild Kentucky's economy while continuing to keep Kentuckians safe."

   The governments approved for reimbursement are: Bourbon, Clark, Clinton, Marion and Russell counties; Burnside, Graymoor-Devondale, Harrodsburg, Hillview, Lancaster, Mount Washington, New Castle, New Haven, Nicholasville, Paris, Shepardsville, Simpsonville, Versailles, West Buechel and Whitesville.

   This funding will be used to reimburse payroll expenses for public safety officials, PPE, cleaning and sanitizing supplies, teleworking equipment and other expenses necessary to combat COVID-19.

   For more information and to view the full news release, click here (https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=365).

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2. **Infrastructure Grants**
   Gov. Beshear today announced that Kentucky has been awarded $38.1 million in federal discretionary transportation grants for advancement of much-needed bridge and highway improvements in Logan, Todd and Kenton counties and the City of Corbin.

   “This is exciting news for many Kentucky drivers and their families. It also is a great opportunity to make investments in infrastructure that will return a direct and beneficial economic impact in each of these regions and beyond,” the Governor said. “Growing our economy requires continuing investments in the infrastructure that moves our goods and our people.”

   The funding is part of the BUILD program – Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development. In this case, BUILD grants leverage matching funds from the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and the local governments.

   In Corbin, $15 million will go toward widening a section of U.S. Highway 25W from two to five lanes. In Logan and Todd counties, $13.5 million will help replace four bridges on U.S. Highway 79. In Kenton County, $9.6 million will improve the Kentucky Highway 536 corridor.

   For more information and to view the full news release, click here (https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=364).

3. **Mask Up Kentucky**
   Gov. Beshear also stressed the continued importance of everyone wearing face coverings, calling it the single most important thing all of us can do to fight COVID-19.

   “This is our greatest and most important tool for getting back to everything we want to do,” the Governor said. “Do the right thing: Mask up.”

   He also encouraged Kentuckians to spread the word on social media using #MaskUpKY and #MaskUpKentucky hashtags.

4. **Childhood Cancer Awareness Month**
   Also Tuesday, Gov. Beshear highlighted a proclamation he signed declaring September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in Kentucky.

   “Today, I want to support and recognize a special group of individuals in Kentucky who are some of the most vulnerable in our fight against COVID-19,” the Governor said. “That special group is our state’s youngest cancer fighters. This month, and every September, we stand in solidarity with these children and their families during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.”

   Gov. Beshear noted that childhood cancer is the top cause of death by disease for kids in Kentucky and the U.S.

   “One in 285 children will be diagnosed with cancer in the United States, nearly 15,000 a year. In our state, we rank a staggering fourth in the country of children diagnosed with pediatric brain tumors,” he said. “In Kentucky, we don’t think those numbers are OK.”

   Gov. Beshear noted that through the Kentucky Pediatric Cancer Research Fund, the state is able to give all Kentucky children access to less toxic immunotherapy, new treatments and less invasive diagnostic tests. In addition, through the Kentucky Cancer Registry, the state is leading research to determine why more Kentucky children from certain areas of the commonwealth face higher rates of developing brain tumors.

   Gov. Beshear welcomed a recorded message from his friend David Turner Jr. (https://www.governor.ky.gov/imagelinks/kids-get-cancer-too.mov), a young Kentuckian battling DIPG, a type of brain tumor with no known cure.

   Gov. Beshear signed the Childhood Cancer Awareness Month proclamation in David Jr.’s honor.

Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Sept. 15, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 58,000 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 745 of which were newly reported Tuesday. Ninety-five of the newly reported cases were from children ages 18 and younger, of which 15 were children ages 5 and under. The youngest was only 27 days old.

“While those are more cases than we would like to see based on significant tests and testing that we are continuing on our day-to-day basis, our positivity rate is now under 4% again, just barely,” the Governor said.

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear reported nine new deaths Tuesday, raising the total to 1,074 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The deaths reported Tuesday include a 90-year-old man from Bullitt County; an 83-year-old woman from Hopkins County; two women, ages 65 and 94, and two men, ages 48 and 73, from Jefferson County; a 93-year-old woman from Kenton County; and two men, ages 84 and 88, from Warren County.

“Again we are going to see higher numbers of deaths as we have a higher number of cases,” the Governor said.

As of Tuesday, there have been at least 1,068,026 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate was 3.97%, and at least 10,962 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).

Opioid Funding

Gov. Beshear and Eric Friedlander, secretary of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, discussed on Tuesday a $35.4 million federal grant that will support the continued work of the Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE).

The grant money was awarded to the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities and will advance the KORE’s mission. This is a two-year State Opioid Response (SOR) grant awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

“Kentucky is committed to ending the opioid epidemic through establishing a comprehensive, compassionate, and science-based approach to prevention, treatment and recovery services,” the Governor said. “Like many Kentuckians, this issue is personal for me, and I fully understand the devastating impact opioids have on individuals, families, our health care system and economy. SOR federal dollars have given us much needed support to address this epidemic at the community level. It’s making a tremendous difference.”

The key initiatives the funding will help are increasing access to medications for opioid use disorder treatment, reducing unmet treatment needs and overdose deaths and expanding capacity to address stimulant-related deaths.

“Opioid use disorder is not a moral failing. It is a health issue and a highly treatable one when individuals have access to evidence-based services, medication and long-term care,” said Secretary Friedlander. “While addiction is a chronic and complex brain disorder, many Kentuckians are recovering from substance use disorder – every day. With this continued support, we are able to help even more people and communities across the state.”

For more information and to read the full news release on the SOR award, click here (https://chfs.ky.gov/News/Documents/nrkoregrant.pdf).

In addition, the Department for Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) was awarded a $999,999 Innovations in Nutritions Programs and Services grant. This money will help senior centers plan for emergencies and disaster planning.

“The global pandemic has impacted senior centers’ ability to provide meals to those who depend on them,” said Secretary Friedlander. “However, interruptions are more likely to be caused by emergencies of other types, including weather. Seniors who receive what can sometimes be the only meal of the day are greatly impacted if they can’t get food for any reason, whether it’s snow, ice, floods or tornadoes.”

For more information and to read the full news release on the DAIL award, click here (https://chfs.ky.gov/News/Documents/nrdailgrant.pdf).

Bars and Restaurants
Gov. Beshear said Tuesday that the state has slightly eased regulations on bars and restaurants to push back last call and operational hours.

He said restaurants and bars now will be allowed to have last call at 11 p.m. and close at midnight, both an hour later than under previous guidance.

“That was a specific request from those in the restaurant industry. We thought it was reasonable,” the Governor said. “But again let’s make sure that whether you’re in that industry or another industry, with rules and regulations that you are trying to do it right and are not trying to find a way to get around it. That not only hurts you and your facility and the people that come to it, but it hurts everybody around as well.”

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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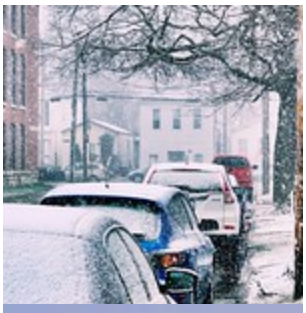
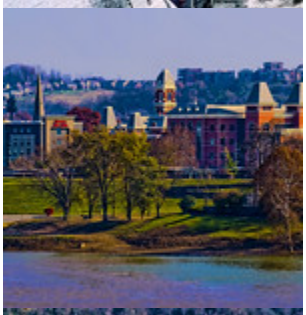
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/7372926@N06/47218320672/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/47184596121/in/pool-773339@N20)
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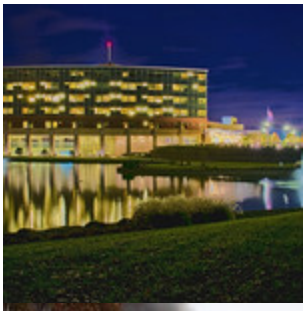
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/32275086277/in/pool-773339@N20)
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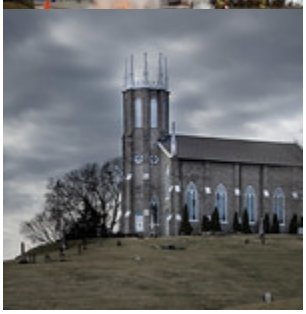
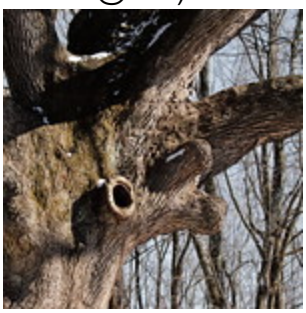
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/127721144@N05/46918072332/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcconnell_springs_photo_journal/46864760851/in/pool-773339@N20)
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