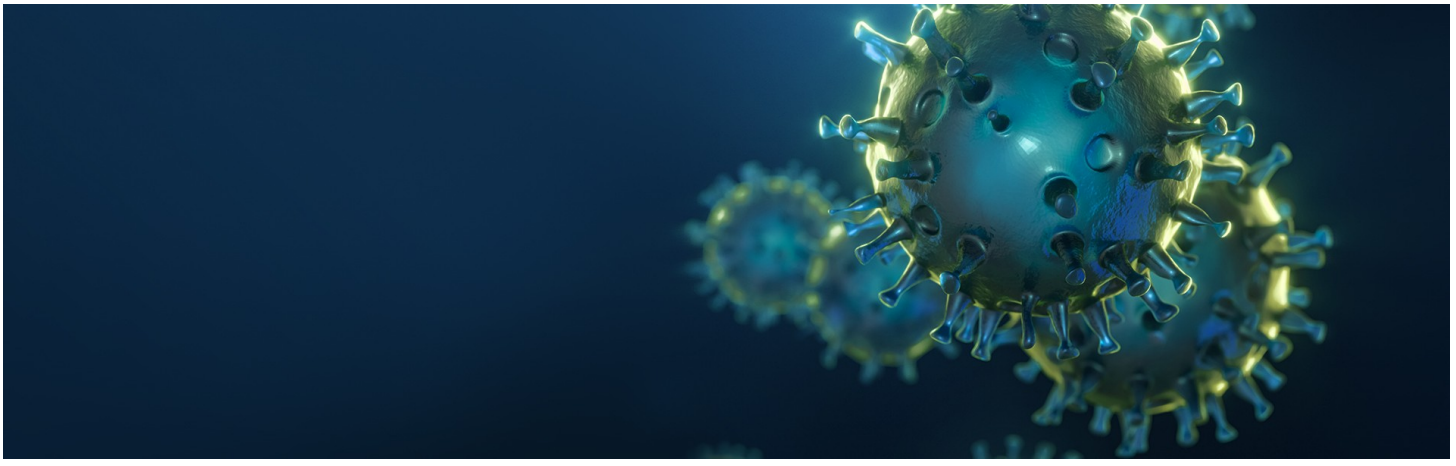
COVID-19 Update: Governor DeWine Urges Ohioans to Safely Celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday

November 24, 2020



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

CASE DATA & UPCOMING HOLIDAY

New data compiled by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) shows that 98 more deaths were reported in the past 24 hours which is the second-highest number of deaths reported in a single day in Ohio since the start of the pandemic.

A total of 364 new hospitalizations were also reported throughout the state in the past 24 hours, and 8,604* additional positive COVID-19 cases were also recorded.

Total hospitalizations are also continuing to trend upwards, with 4,449 patients currently hospitalized. Of these, 1,046 patients are in intensive care units.

The current surge in cases is believed to be linked to people gathering on and around Halloween.

"This holiday season, let's show each other how much we care by making the necessary sacrifices to ensure we will all be healthy to celebrate next Thanksgiving," said Governor DeWine. "Approximately one in four of all hospitalized patients in Ohio is infected with COVID-19, and this continues to put tremendous stress on Ohio hospitals in every corner of the state."

"The big fear is if we don't take the message of masking, distancing, and avoiding big groups seriously, Thanksgiving could result in our hospitals being overwhelmed," said Ohio Department of Health Chief Medical Officer Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff. "It's very serious. It's a matter of personal responsibility, and we owe it to each other."

*Total case numbers for Ohio are currently incomplete. Thousands of reports are pending review.

OHIO POSITIVITY RATE & TRAVEL

Ohio's positivity rate, which is the daily percentage of positive tests reported to ODH, has reached 14 percent - just one percentage point shy of Ohio's travel advisory warning level of 15 percent.

Each Wednesday, ODH releases a travel advisory for Ohio citizens planning to travel to other states which advises against travel to states with a positivity rate of 15 percent or more.

"Like so much of the country, Ohio is now a high-risk area," said Governor DeWine. "We're asking that everyone heed the recommendations of the travel advisory, even if you aren't leaving the state. Please stay home, and ask your friends and family to refrain from visiting this Thanksgiving."

In addition to Ohio's travel advisory, the updated Ohio Public Advisory System map will also be published on Wednesday at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

BAR & RESTAURANT ASSISTANCE FUND

Lt. Governor Husted announced that less than half of the eligible permit holders have submitted an application for the Bar and Restaurant Assistance Fund.

Roughly 30 different permit types, including bars, restaurants, breweries, distilleries, wineries, casinos, and private clubs may be eligible. Ohioans can find a list of eligible permits, along with the application, at BusinessHelp.Ohio.gov.

$5 BILLION DIVIDEND FOR OHIO EMPLOYERS

At the urging of Governor DeWine, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) board voted unanimously to approve issuing $5 billion in dividends to Ohio's employers in mid-December to ease the financial pressures caused by the coronavirus pandemic. This is nearly four times the dividend BWC issued in

October, bringing total dividends this year to nearly $8 billion. Employers should expect to see their checks in the mail in mid-December.

OHIO TO WORK

In September, a new initiative was announced in collaboration with JobsOhio called “Ohio to Work,” to help Ohioans who are looking for a job during the pandemic.

The initiative pulls together employers, nonprofits, educators, and training providers to help Ohioans reskill and restart their careers.

Lt. Governor Husted said today that the program is currently being piloted in the Greater Cleveland area, and October’s first Virtual Career Fair had more than 30 employers with over 1,000 open jobs. More than 700 job seekers attended. The next Virtual Career Fair is Thursday, December 10. To register, visit OhiotoWork.com.

ADDITIONAL GUESTS

During today's briefing, Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted were joined by four Ohioans who discussed their experiences with COVID-19 and/or their experiences treating patients with serious complications from the coronavirus.

Stephanie Marshall, a respiratory therapist at Grant Medical Center in Columbus, described treating patients struggling with respiratory complications and later being admitted to the hospital herself for serious COVID-19 complications.

Susan Norvell, a Middletown resident, discussed her family’s experience with COVID-19. All four people in her household were infected with coronavirus, and their experiences ran the full range from asymptomatic to mild symptoms to intensive care.

Matthew Colflesh, MD, from Trinity Medical System in Steubenville, stressed that although the eastern part of the state did not see surges in the spring and summer, their hospitals are now becoming stressed with a high number of hospitalizations.

Jasmine Shavers, a nurse at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, discussed her experiences caring for patients in the hospital's all-COVID intensive care unit.

CURRENT CASE DATA

In total, there are 371,908 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 reported in Ohio and 6,118 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 25,069 people have been hospitalized throughout the pandemic, including 4,483 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 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.