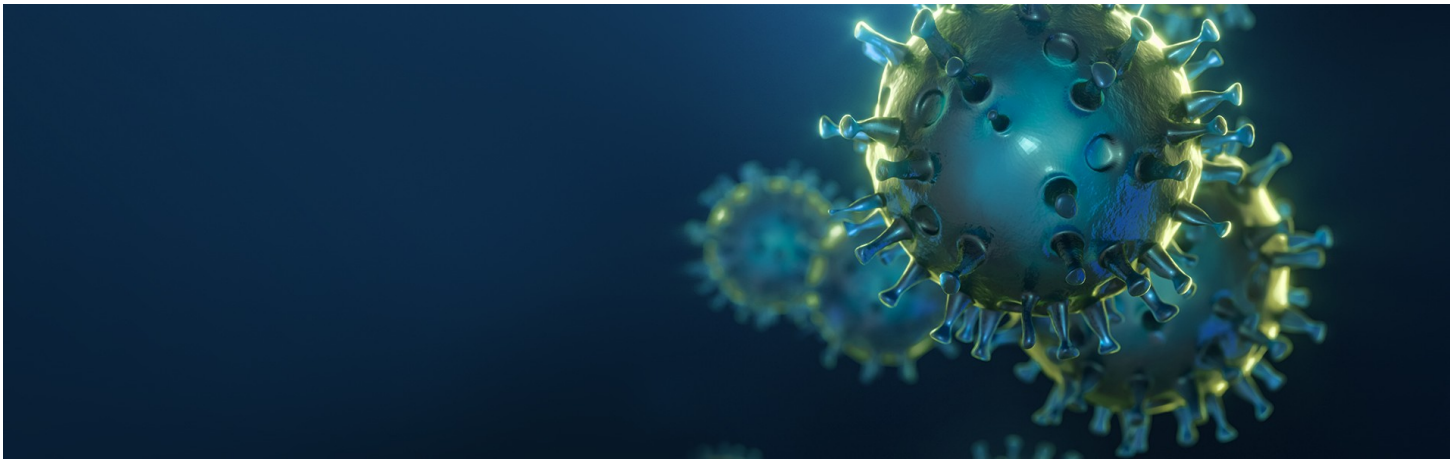
COVID-19 Update: K-12 Staff Vaccinations, Pandemic Impacts on K-12 Kids

January 28, 2021



(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.

K-12 STAFF VACCINATIONS

Every public school district in the state - except for one - has agreed to resume in-person schooling by March 1 which was a requirement for staff to have early access to the vaccine.

K-12 schools whose staff can be vaccinated next week have been notified. All other schools will be contacted tomorrow with information on when their K-12 staff will be permitted to receive a vaccine.

More details on Ohio's K-12 vaccination process will also be released on Friday. The plan ensures that the maximum number of people can be vaccinated in the shortest amount of time. The plan also makes the process as simple as possible for staff to be vaccinated and is organized to allow most K-12 staff in a county to be vaccinated within seven days of their assigned vaccination start date.

PANDEMIC IMPACTS ON K-12 STUDENTS

Ohio has prioritized getting K-12 students back in schools by March 1 because many adolescents' social-emotional and mental well-being has been impacted by the pandemic.

"We know some of our students have not been in the classroom in months - it's taking its toll," said Governor DeWine. "For some, remote learning works, for others, it doesn't. We are in danger of too many kids struggling for too long if they don't get back to school in person."

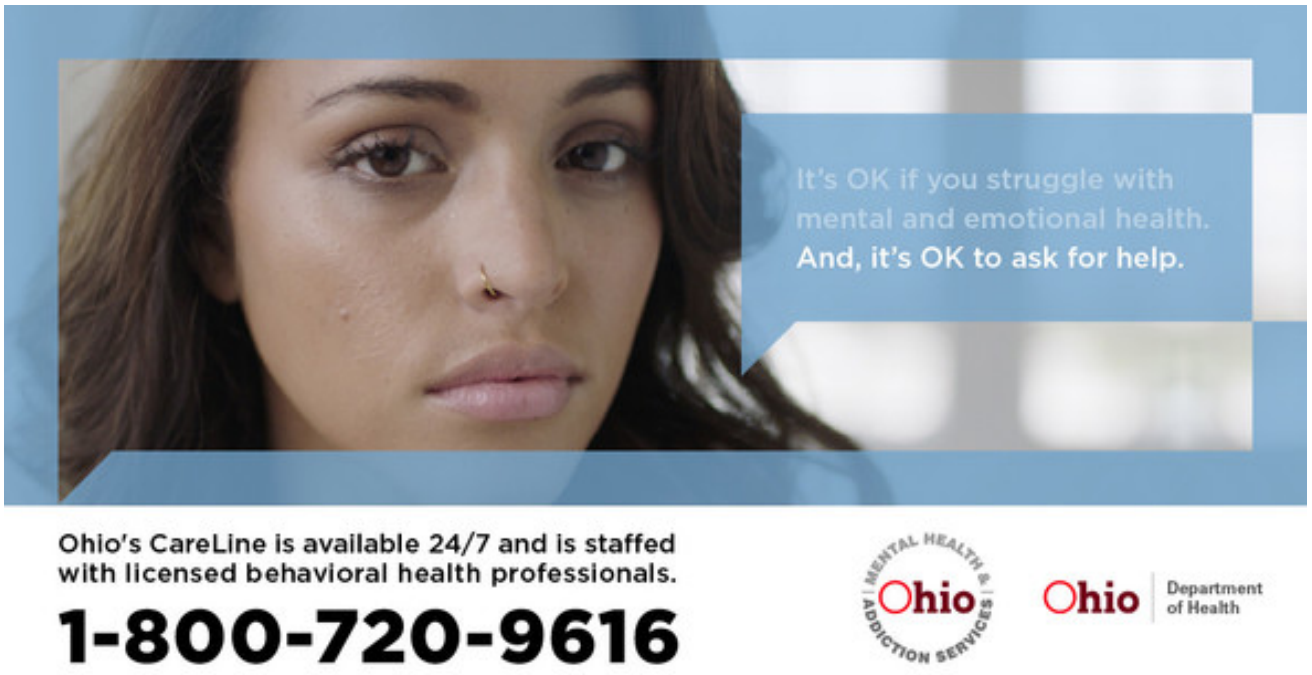
"School is community for our youth," said Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Director Lori Criss. "It benefits kids so much more than academic content. It's the social and emotional connections that kids feel with friends, classmates, extra-curriculars, teachers, and more."

According to the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the change of routine and the constant uncertainty of the pandemic produces anxiety, and the disconnection from learning, emotional, and social supports can lead to depression. In addition, missed significant life events like graduations, proms, art performances, science competitions, sports, and more can result in grief.

Families and friends should reach out for help if a young person is:

- talking about feeling hopeless;
- worrying about being a burden;
- feeling like there's no reason to live;
- using drugs, alcohol or engaging in other risky behaviors;
- struggling with school;
- disconnecting from family and friends.

Trained counselors with Ohio's CareLine are available 24/7 at 1-800-720-9616. They can help with a crisis, provide guidance, and connect callers to help in the community.



OHIO PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY SYSTEM

This week's Ohio Public Health Advisory System map shows little change. Hamilton County is no longer listed as a Level 4 (Purple) Public Emergency, but the rest of the state remains the same as last week. A county-by-county breakdown outlining the presence of COVID-19 in all of Ohio's 88 counties can be found on the Ohio Public Health Advisory System's website.

CURRENT CASE DATA

In total, there are 883,716 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 reported in Ohio and 11,006 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 45,786 people have been hospitalized throughout the pandemic, including 6,644 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.