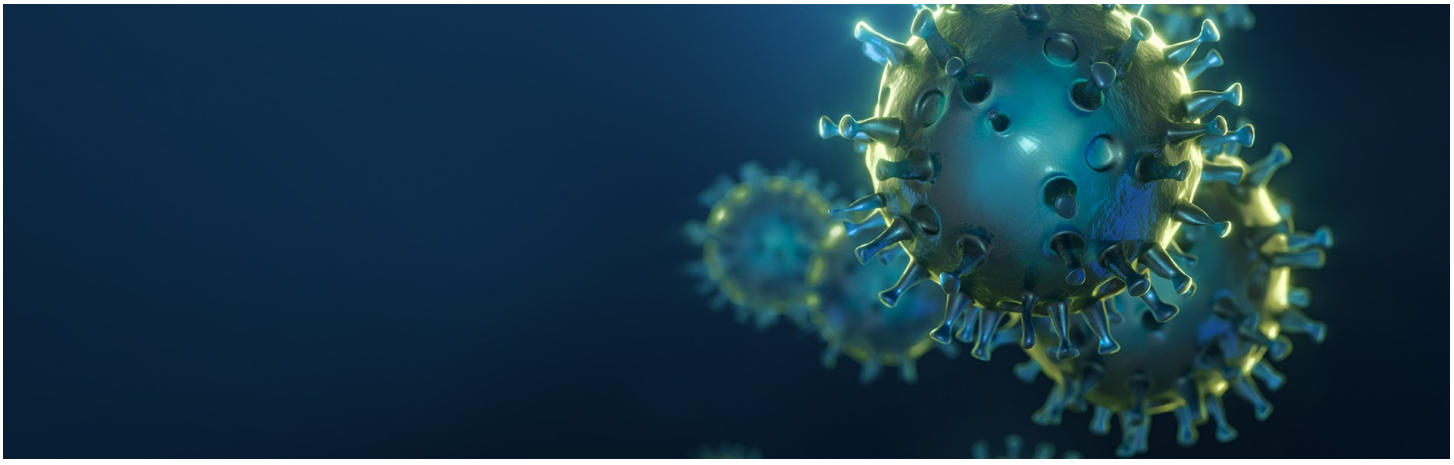
COVID-19 Update: Labor Day Precautions, New Traffic Safety Efforts, Broadband Connectivity

September 01, 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.

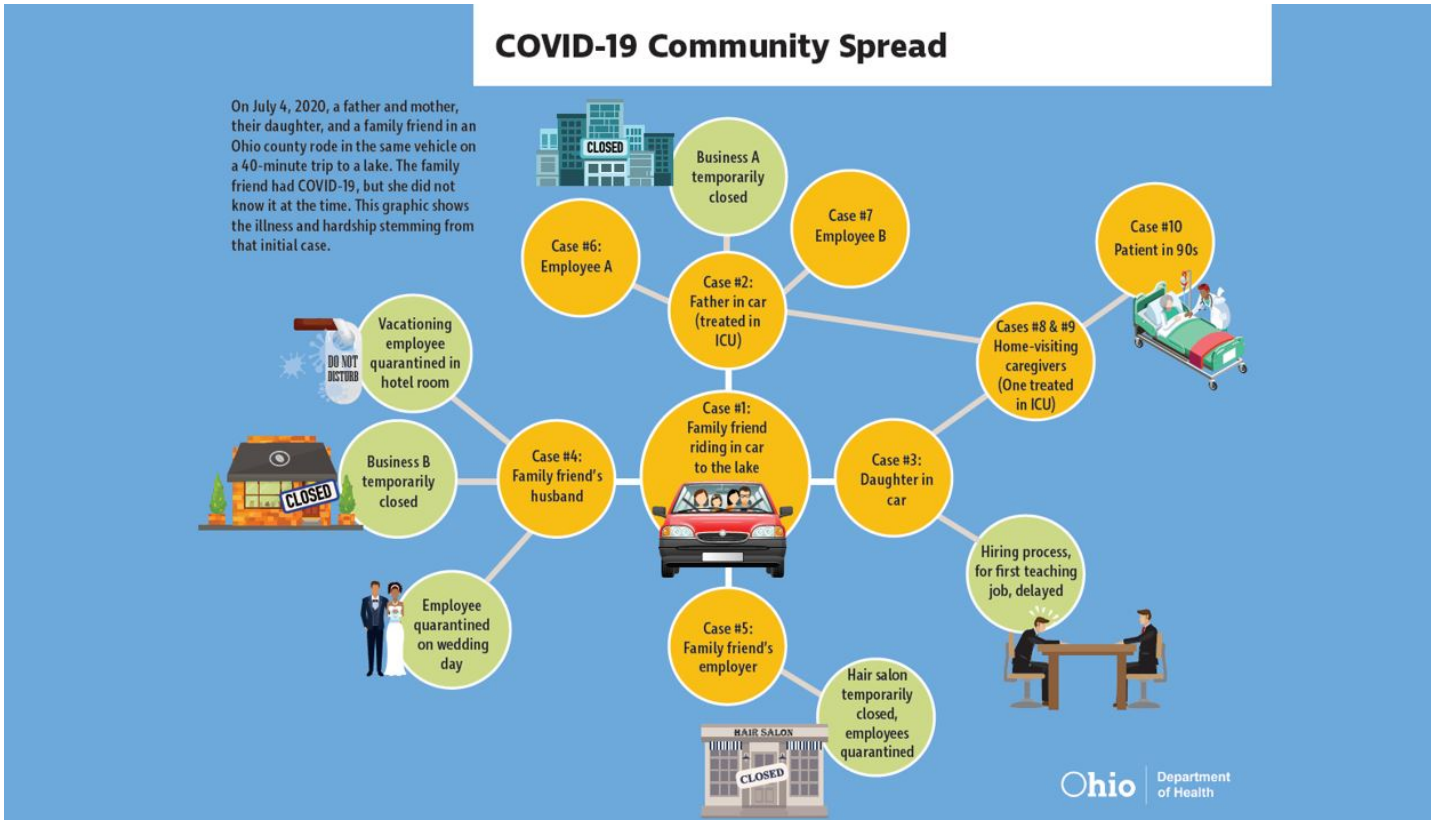
LABOR DAY PRECAUTIONS

In advance of the upcoming Labor Day holiday, Governor DeWine today reminded citizens to take safety precautions when celebrating with others outside of their households.

"Today Ohio reported its highest number of new cases since the end of July, which is a stark reminder that this virus has not gone away and it continues to spread in our communities," said Governor DeWine. "As you consider gathering with family and friends this weekend, please remember that COVID-19 still represents a significant risk to the lives and livelihoods of citizens in Ohio."

Governor DeWine encourages citizens to continue regular hand-washing, social distancing, and disinfecting. The mask mandate in Ohio remains in effect for all 88 counties.

In the weeks following the Fourth of July, Ohio began to see a significant increase in cases caused, in part, by holiday gatherings. The graphic below demonstrates one example of COVID-19 spread from an Independence Day gathering.



ADDED TRAFFIC-SAFETY EFFORTS

Governor DeWine announced three new traffic-safety efforts aimed at reducing the number of fatalities on Ohio's roads and better ensuring that Ohio's young drivers have the necessary skills to safely navigate the streets.

- Ohio Traffic Safety Council: The new council, led by the Ohio Department of Public Safety, will be composed of representatives of several state agencies and outside groups. The role of the council will be to coordinate and monitor all statewide traffic safety initiatives, analyze trends, and advise the Governor on creating safer roads through education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency response.
- Work Zone Enforcement: Because enforcing traffic laws can be a challenge in work zones, the Ohio State Highway Patrol Aviation Unit, which already conducts speed checks from the air, will conduct targeted enforcement on crash-causing violations in Ohio Department of Transportation construction zones. The increased enforcement is in response to the nearly 9,000 work-zone crashes in Ohio between 2019 and 2020.

- Juvenile Court Grants: Eight juvenile courts in Ohio have been awarded grant funding through the Ohio Department of Public Safety to help them provide young drivers more access to advanced driver training. Courts in Adams, Athens, Medina, Knox, Delaware, Miami, Fairfield, and Delaware counties will each receive $20,000 through Ohio's new Youthful Driver Safety Fund which was developed as part of Ohio's biennium budget.

The new traffic safety efforts are in addition to several other initiatives launched by Governor DeWine since 2019 including the creation of the Intersection Safety Program to improve the safety of 150 rural, urban, and suburban intersections across the state; the development of the "Ohio - Ready, Test, Drive!" program to help enhance the skills of new drivers; and the creation of several distracted driving corridors to reduce distracted driving in Ohio. Governor DeWine also worked with members of the General Assembly to introduce the Hands-Free Ohio bill, which is currently pending in the Ohio General Assembly, to strengthen Ohio's laws related to the use of wireless devices while driving.

Governor DeWine today also encouraged Ohio's drivers to watch their speeds after Ohio recorded 154 traffic fatalities in July - the highest number of traffic fatalities in one month since 2007. According to the Ohio State Highway Patrol, one in three of those killed in July was involved in a speed-related crash.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, fewer people are traveling on Ohio's roads which is leading many of those who are driving to speed. This year, the Patrol has issued more than 2,200 citations for speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour. This represents a 60 percent increase in these citations over the same time period last year.

BROADBAND EXPANSION EFFORTS

Lt. Governor Husted announced that over 900 grant requests have been approved for the K-12 Broadband Connectivity Grant to go towards hotspots and internet-enabled devices. This enables 121,000 students to gain high-speed internet in their homes, thanks to the devices provided by this grant based on information provided by the schools. In areas where there are barriers to take-home devices, the grant will also support the creation of new public wi-fi and mobile wi-fi spaces to help students connect to the internet. There are over 645,000 students in schools that are increasing their public wi-fi or using mobile wi-fi. Those students will have a place to go to access the internet if they do not have access in their homes.

By the end of this week, schools will receive notifications of their final award and can begin the process of purchasing these items through the Ohio Department of Education and BroadbandOhio.

The Lt. Governor also provided an update on Ohio’s telehealth pilot project at Switzerland of Ohio School District in Monroe County. The objective is to connect the school district with behavioral health services. Districts interested in developing telehealth services can now review the Telehealth in Schools Blueprint,

which provides a better understanding of lessons learned through the pilot project.

The Blueprint can be found here: innovate.ohio.gov/broadband.

Progress has also been made through Ohio's Common Sense Initiative (CSI) to streamline broadband regulations through their new Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool.

The tool found:

- 303 definitions related to the regulation of broadband, found in Ohio's rules or statutes across 25 different state agencies
- 16 different definitions of public utility in Ohio law across 5 different agencies

In an effort to develop a strategy that will create a clear and concise set of terminology for broadband providers to follow, the Lt. Governor and CSI will work with agencies to streamline these definitions.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Lt. Governor Husted also unveiled a new public service announcement to encourage Ohioans to wear masks. The PSA features 99-year-old Jim "Pee Wee" Martin who lives in Sugarcreek Township in Greene County.

Jim volunteered to be a WWII Paratrooper, an original member of Company "G", 3rd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. His nickname "Pee Wee" was earned because he was 106 pounds, the smallest and lightest guy in the company. In 1944, Jim jumped into France over Utah Beach the night prior to D-Day and fought for 33 days in the Normandy campaign. He also fought in Holland, Belgium, and Germany.

Among his many awards, Jim earned a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his great work.

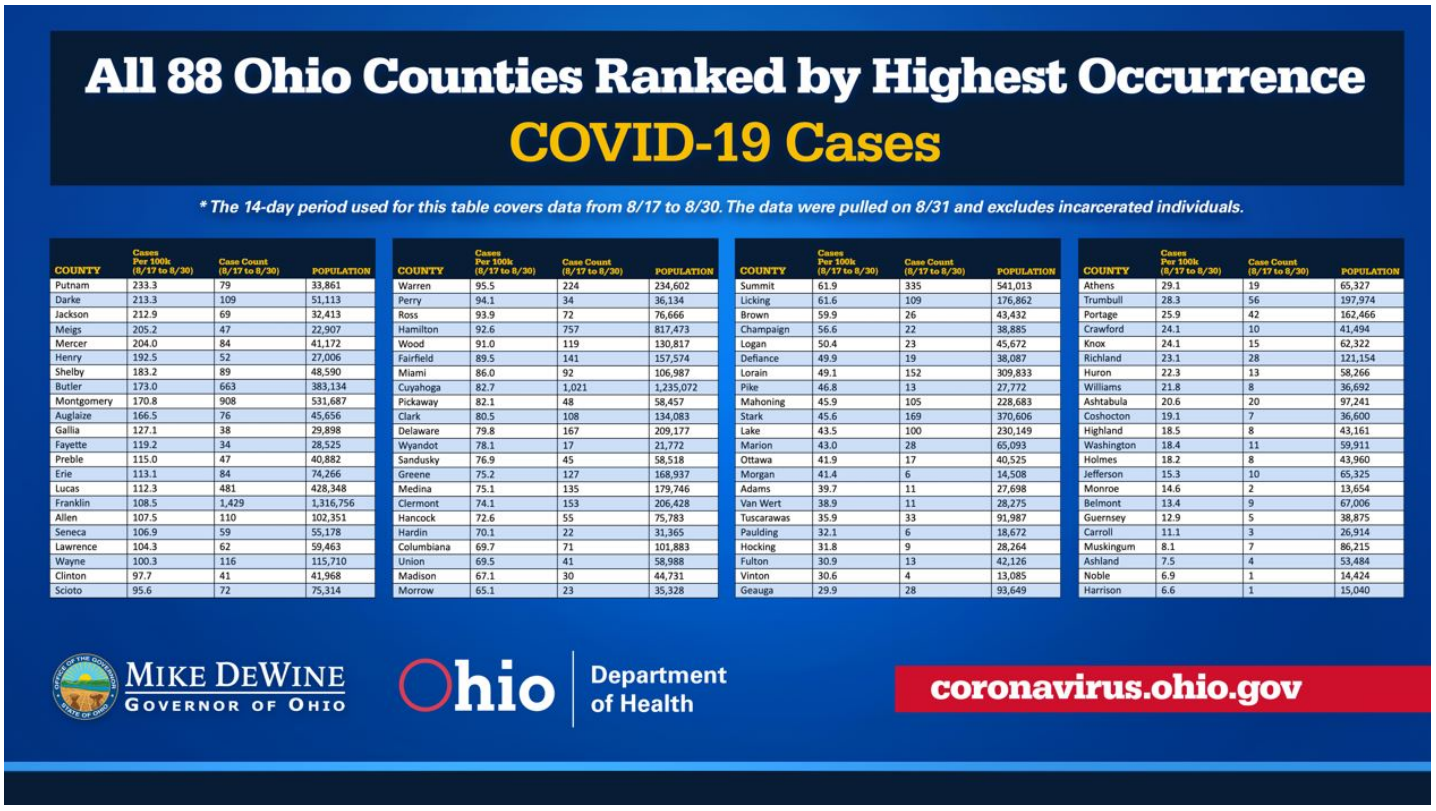
"Wearing a mask to protect Jim "Pee Wee" Martin seems like a small sacrifice for us to protect people like him, considering all he did to protect us," said Lt. Governor Husted.

The PSA can be viewed on YouTube.

CURRENT COVID-19 DATA

There are 124,610 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 4,165 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 13,479 people have been hospitalized, including 2,975 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Rankings of Ohio's 88 counties by highest occurrence can be found below.



COUNTY	Cases Per 100k (8/17 to 8/30)	Case Count (8/17 to 8/30)	POPULATION
Putnam	233.3	79	33,861
Darke	213.3	109	51,113
Jackson	212.9	69	32,413
Meigs	205.2	47	22,907
Mercer	204.0	84	41,172
Henry	192.5	52	27,006
Shelby	183.2	89	48,590
Butler	173.0	663	383,134
Montgomery	170.8	908	531,687
Auglaize	166.5	76	45,656
Gallia	127.1	38	29,898
Fayette	119.2	34	28,525
Preble	115.0	47	40,882
Erie	113.1	84	74,266
Lucas	112.3	481	428,348
Franklin	108.5	1,429	1,316,756
Allen	107.5	110	102,351
Seneca	106.9	59	55,178
Lawrence	104.3	62	59,463
Wayne	100.3	116	115,710
Clinton	97.7	41	41,968
Scioto	95.6	72	75,314

COUNTY	Cases Per 100k (8/17 to 8/30)	Case Count (8/17 to 8/30)	POPULATION
Warren	95.5	224	234,602
Perry	94.1	34	36,134
Ross	93.9	72	76,666
Hamilton	92.6	757	817,473
Wood	91.0	119	130,817
Fairfield	89.5	141	157,574
Miami	86.0	92	106,987
Cuyahoga	82.7	1,021	1,235,072
Pickaway	82.1	48	58,457
Clark	80.5	108	134,083
Delaware	79.8	167	209,177
Wyandot	78.1	17	21,772
Sandusky	76.9	45	58,518
Greene	75.2	127	168,937
Medina	75.1	135	179,746
Clermont	74.1	153	206,428
Hancock	72.6	55	75,783
Hardin	70.1	22	31,365
Columbiana	69.7	71	101,883
Union	69.5	41	58,988
Madison	67.1	30	44,731
Morrow	65.1	23	35,328

COUNTY	Cases Per 100k (8/17 to 8/30)	Case Count (8/17 to 8/30)	POPULATION
Summit	61.9	335	541,013
Licking	61.6	109	176,862
Brown	59.9	26	43,432
Champaign	56.6	22	38,885
Logan	50.4	23	45,672
Defiance	49.9	19	38,087
Lorain	49.1	152	309,833
Pike	46.8	13	27,772
Mahoning	45.9	105	228,683
Stark	45.6	169	370,606
Lake	43.5	100	230,149
Marion	43.0	28	65,093
Ottawa	41.9	17	40,525
Morgan	41.4	6	14,508
Adams	39.7	11	27,698
Van Wert	38.9	11	28,275
Tuscarawas	35.9	33	91,987
Paulding	32.1	6	18,672
Hocking	31.8	9	28,264
Fulton	30.9	13	42,126
Vinton	30.6	4	13,085
Geauga	29.9	28	93,649

COUNTY	Cases Per 100k (8/17 to 8/30)	Case Count (8/17 to 8/30)	POPULATION
Athens	29.1	19	65,327
Trumbull	28.3	56	197,974
Portage	25.9	42	162,466
Crawford	24.1	10	41,494
Knox	24.1	15	62,322
Richland	23.1	28	121,154
Huron	22.3	13	58,266
Williams	21.8	8	36,692
Ashtabula	20.6	20	97,241
Coshocton	19.1	7	36,600
Highland	18.5	8	43,161
Washington	18.4	11	59,911
Holmes	18.2	8	43,960
Jefferson	15.3	10	65,325
Monroe	14.6	2	13,654
Belmont	13.4	9	67,006
Guernsey	12.9	5	38,875
Carroll	11.1	3	26,914
Muskingum	8.1	7	86,215
Ashland	7.5	4	53,484
Noble	6.9	1	14,424
Harrison	6.6	1	15,040

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.

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