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Gov. Beshear Details Next Phases in Reopening of Health Care Industry

Crystal Staley or Sebastian Kitchen
502-564-2611 (tel:502-564-2611)https://governor.ky.gov (https://governor.ky.gov)

Office of the Governor
700 Capitol Avenue
FrankfortKY40601

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 27, 2020) – As Kentucky took the first step in reopening its health care industry Monday, Gov. Andy Beshear offered new details on restarting the sector while continuing to keep Kentuckians safe from the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

“Going through this tonight, I hope gives you an idea on how we are going to gradually do this with strict compliance to guidelines, and to make sure we can do it in a smart and a safe way,” Gov. Beshear said. “This is the way that we are going to move into a broader Phase 1 reopening.”

Gov. Beshear and Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner for the Department for Public Health, outlined a four-phase structure to gradually bring more health care services back online.

This phased reopening of health care services is the first step under the Healthy at Work (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-healthy-at-work) initiative the Governor introduced to help businesses restart operations safely when the time is right. The initiative set out public health benchmarks (https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=132) for reopening Kentucky’s economy. These benchmarks closely follow the White House’s Guidelines for Reopening America. (https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/)

Today, under Phase 1, health care practitioners can resume non-urgent/emergent health care services, diagnostic radiology and lab services in:

- Hospital outpatient settings;
- Health care clinics and medical offices;
- Physical therapy settings, chiropractic offices and optometrists;
- Dental offices (but with enhanced aerosol protections)

This initial Phase 1 (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/covid19/phaseIhealthcareservicereopening.pdf) does not apply to long-term care settings, prisons and other industries or other settings, nor does it apply to elective surgeries or procedures.

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Phase 2 (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/covid19/phaseIhealthcareservicereopening.pdf) is set to begin Wednesday, May 6. At that time, outpatient surgeries and other invasive procedures can resume, though hospital and care facilities will have to meet strict guidelines.

Phase 3 (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/covid19/phaseIhealthcareservicereopening.pdf) is scheduled to start Wednesday, May 13. Hospitals and care facilities can begin doing non-emergency surgeries and procedures at 50% of their pre-COVID-19-era patient volume.

Officials want the final stage, Phase 4 (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/covid19/phaseIhealthcareservicereopening.pdf), to being Wednesday, May 27. At that point, most of the restrictions on types of procedures and volume will be left to the facilities to determine. However, oversight and guidelines meant to ensure that capacity remains in the system will continue.

Dr. Stack emphasized that this is a phased, gradual reopening of services (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/Phase-I-Healthcare-Service-Reopening.pdf) and that any COVID-19 resurgence may require adjustment. For full guidance on criteria for reopening and new best practices, click here (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/covid19/phaseIhealthcareservicereopening.pdf). The Governor added that more industry reopening dates would be announced soon.

Contact tracing

Until there is a vaccine or an effective treatment method, things will look and be different, the Governor said. A significant new infrastructure will be needed, and the state is preparing to hire more than 700 people across the state to help with contact tracing. A request for proposals will be issued this week to support the state with infrastructure and staffing.

Masks

The Governor said that by May 11, everybody working for an essential business that is reopening should be wearing a mask. Going to the grocery, into any place of business or any place where social distancing of keeping at least six-feet apart might be broken, the Governor said every Kentuckian should be wearing a mask.

Safe dentistry reopening

As of today, dental offices may reopen under Phase 1, provided they follow certain protocols and have the proper equipment to do so. The Board of Dentistry, along with the Kentucky Dental Association, Kentucky Dental Hygienists' Association and a number of other groups have developed the following guidelines for safely operating dental offices under Phase 1 (https://dentistry.ky.gov/Documents/Phase%20I%20Reopening%20-%20Dentistry%27s%20Plan%20w_%20Logos.pdf).

Unemployment payments

The Governor said Kentucky was making great strides in addressing an unprecedented wave of unemployment insurance claims.

Nearly 283,000 claims from March have been processed, and an additional 149,000 March and April claims will be processed tonight. He also said of those, 150,000 first-time payments went out Monday. About 30,000 claims from March will be paid this week. He said if you filed in March and still have not been paid, a new

hotline will be announced tomorrow just for these Kentuckians.

“Our goal is to get through those last March claims this week,” Gov. Beshear said. “If you filed in March and you haven’t received anything yet, I’ll be darned if we are not going to get it done this week.”

Testing sites and eligibility

Gov. Beshear is urging Kentuckians to fill up all available testing slots at multiple sites throughout the commonwealth. Anyone can now sign up for the free COVID-19 testing. For the latest information on drive-through testing, visit kycovid19.ky.gov (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/Pages/COVID-19-Drive-Thru-Locations.aspx). The Governor said through the partnership with Kroger today the state tested about 300 Kentuckians.

Census update

Gov. Beshear reminds Kentuckians to fill out their census at my2020census.gov (file://govfs03/press/Press%20Releases/my2020census.gov) or by phone at 844-330-2020 (tel:844-330-2020) (English) or 844-468-2020 (tel:844-468-2020) (Spanish).

Case information

As of 5 p.m. April 27, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 4,146 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 87 of which were newly confirmed.

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear also reported five new deaths Monday, raising the state’s toll to 213 deaths related to the virus. Today’s totals for cases and deaths include one that is being listed as a “probable case” pending more investigation.

The deaths include a 73-year-old man from Fayette County; two women, ages 81 and 88, from Hopkins County; and a 90-year-old woman from Jefferson County. A 62-year-old man from Jefferson County who also died is listed as the probable case.

At least 1,521 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://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20200427_COVID19_Case-Information.pdf).

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 daily summaries of the Governor’s news conference at tinyurl.com/kygovespanol (Spanish) and tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations (more than 20 additional languages).

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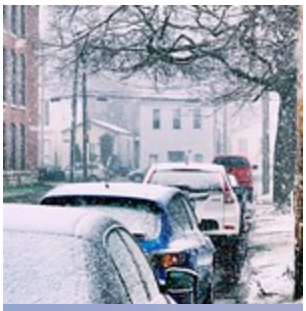
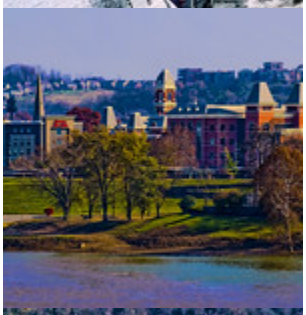
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/7372926@N06/47218320672/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/47184596121/in/pool-773339@N20)
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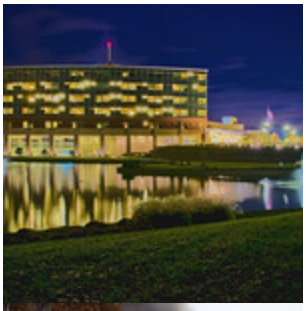
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/32275086277/in/pool-773339@N20)
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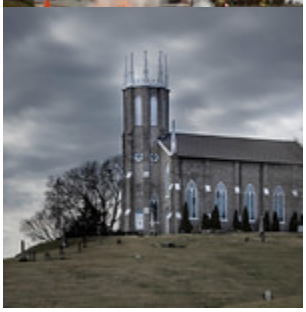
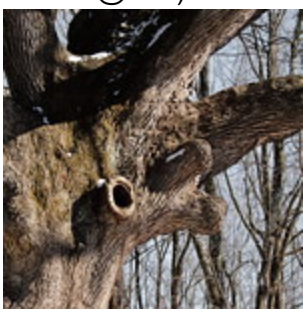
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/127721144@N05/46918072332/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcconnell_springs_photo_journal/46864760851/in/pool-773339@N20)
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