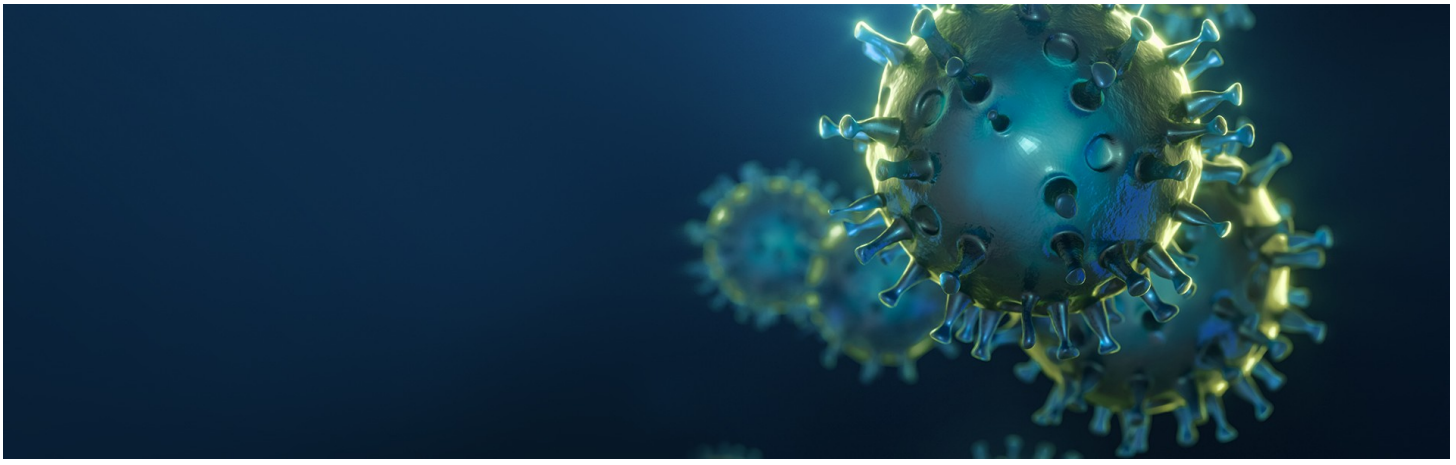
COVID-19 Update: Wastewater Testing, Ohio Medicaid Overhaul, IMAP

September 29, 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.

WASTEWATER TESTING

Governor DeWine provided an update today on the Ohio Coronavirus Wastewater Monitoring Network which tests wastewater for gene fragments of COVID-19.

Those infected with COVID-19 begin to shed the virus early in their infection, and a significant, sustained increase in gene fragments found in wastewater can be an early warning sign of a pending rise in COVID-19 cases in a specific area. The value of this information is that gives communities an opportunity to act proactively to prevent outbreaks.

Since the launch of the monitoring program, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has notified health authorities in six communities of a sustained increase in gene fragments found in their wastewater: Dayton, Columbus, Akron, Oregon, Sandusky, and Mansfield.

ODH is currently monitoring 36 sites across the state and an additional 25 sites will be added during the coming month. Communities found with a sustained increase in gene fragments are offered testing and contact tracing assistance.

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC), in partnership with Ohio State University, has also begun monitoring wastewater at Ohio's prisons to prevent spread among staff and inmates. A sustained increase in COVID-19 gene fragments in a prison's wastewater will trigger a series of actions within the prison to prevent spread, including the testing of all staff. Staff members working in prisons free of COVID-19 will have access to on-site voluntary testing.

OHIO MEDICAID OVERHAUL

Governor DeWine announced today that the Ohio Department of Medicaid will open a new application for businesses interested in providing managed care plans for children and adults within the Medicaid program. The request for proposals is part of a new vision for Ohio's Medicaid program that focuses on people - not just the business of managed care.

"Since coming into office in January of 2019, my administration has been evaluating our Medicaid program to develop a vision of a better, healthier, and more productive state," said Governor DeWine. "With input from Ohioans covered by Medicaid, physicians, hospitals, health care providers, and managed care plans, this will be the first major overhaul of Medicaid in 15 years."

Medicaid's new program will focus on improving care for children with complex needs, emphasizing personalized care experience, improving wellness and health outcomes, and increasing transparency and accountability across managed care.

A second managed care application will be issued later this fall to specifically serve children who have complex behavioral health needs.

Changes to Ohio's managed care plans will not disrupt Ohioans' coverage or access to care.

IMAP

Lt. Governor Husted, who serves as Director of the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, announced today that Ohioans can now access training at no cost through 12 training providers under the Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP).

Following the July application period, 12 training providers including community colleges, universities, Ohio technical centers, private providers, and non-profits received awards through IMAP. These providers will offer training for 71 short-term, industry-recognized, and technology-focused credentials to help upskill Ohioans

for the increasingly tech-infused economy. Through IMAP, up to 1,694 Ohioans have the opportunity to earn a credential at no cost to them.

Ohioans who are low income, partially unemployed, or totally unemployed can visit the IMAP landing page at IMAP.Development.Ohio.gov to work directly with the awarded training provider of their choice to enroll in the training program that works best for them. The IMAP landing page lists the eligible training providers and the credentials Ohioans can earn under the program, along with examples of jobs each credential can help an individual obtain.

Ohio businesses interested in connecting with the Ohioans earning these credentials can contact the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation at Workforce@OWT.Ohio.gov.

FAFSA REMINDER

The Lt Governor also reminded Ohioans that the Free Application for Federal Student Aid – also known as FAFSA - opens on October 1. All students, high school seniors, current students, and adults interested in attending or returning to college can complete the FAFSA. Each year, Ohio families miss out on available financial aid because they don't complete the FAFSA.

CURRENT COVID-19 DATA

There are 152,907 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 4,783 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 15,413 people have been hospitalized, including 3,274 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.

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