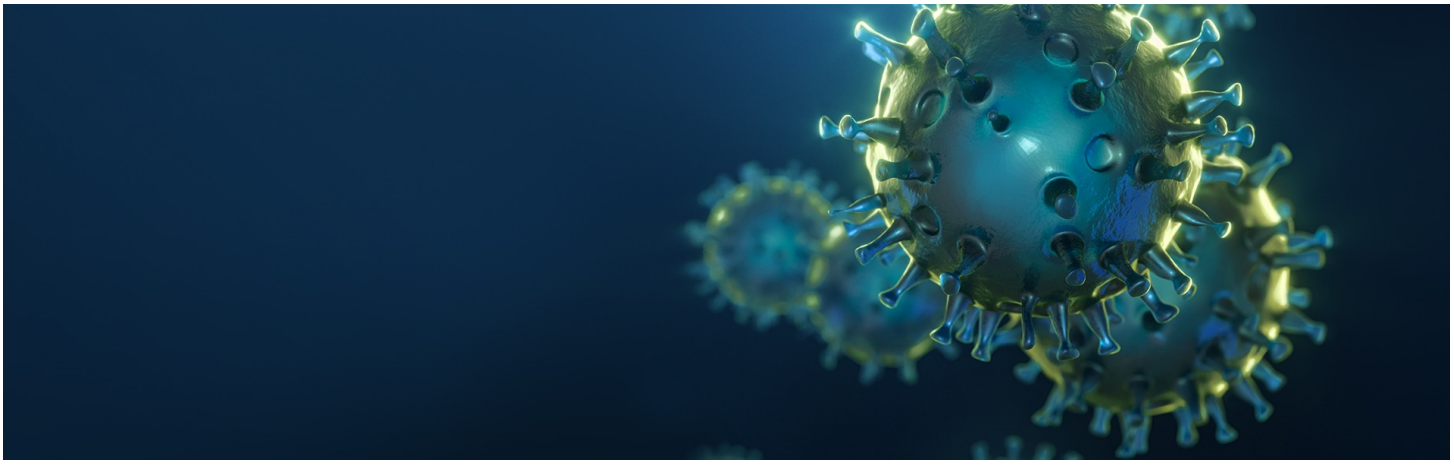
COVID-19 Update: Updated County Risk Levels, New Data Dashboards, Response Guide for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, Lost Wages Assistance, and Halloween Guidance

September 17, 2020



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

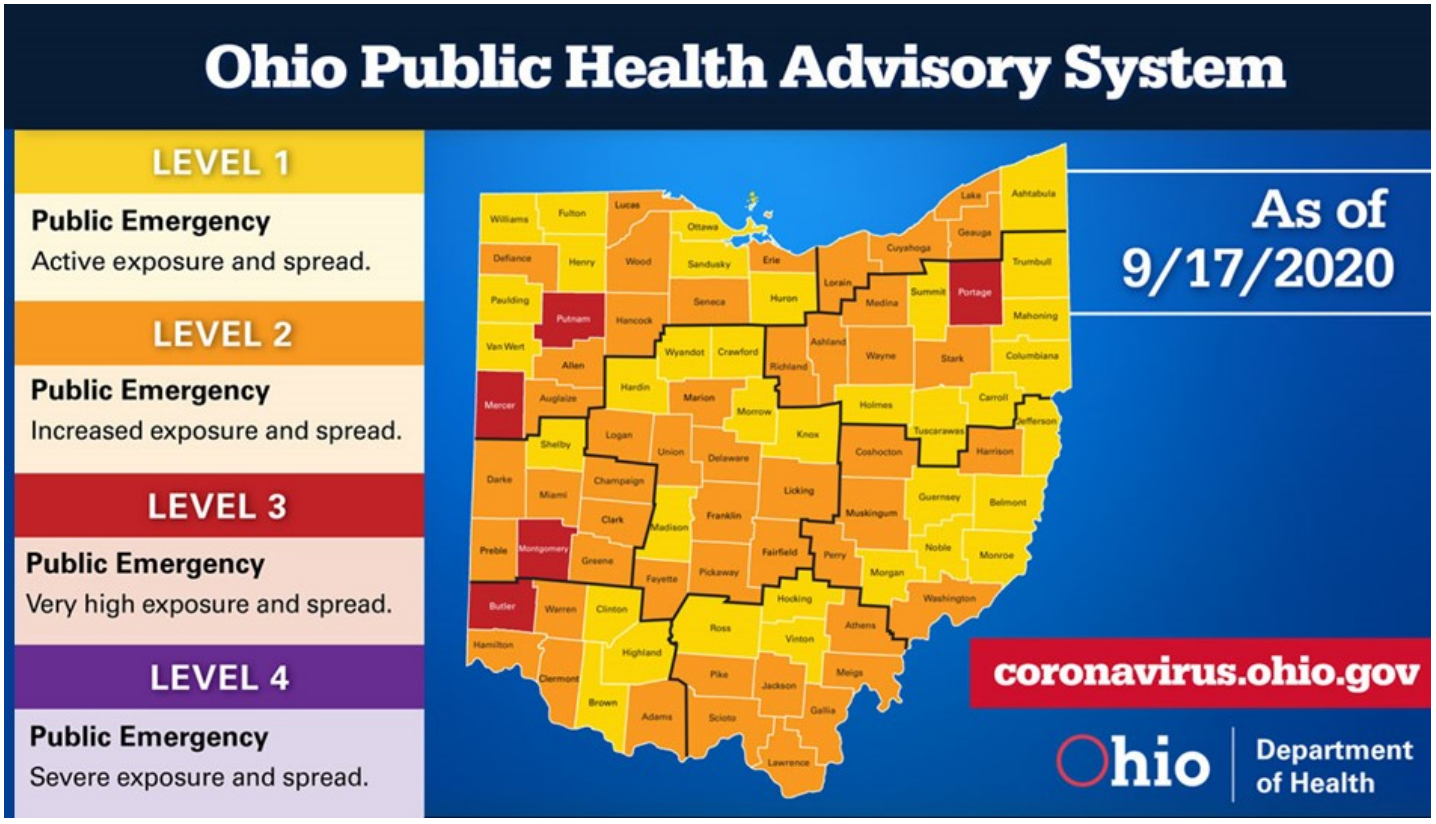
UPDATED COUNTY RISK LEVELS

Governor DeWine today released Ohio's updated Public Health Advisory System map. New health data compiled by the Ohio Department of Health found that five counties currently have a very high risk of exposure and spread: Butler, Mercer, Montgomery, Portage and Putnam.

A total of 69 counties stayed at the same level as last week, and one county, Preble, dropped from Level 3 to Level 2.

In addition to the five Level 3 counties listed above, five additional counties meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's definition of high incidence: Athens, Delaware, Greene, Harrison, and Pickaway. Although these counties do not meet enough indicators to trigger a Red Level 3 Public Emergency, these counties have had more than 100 cases per 100,000 residents over the last two weeks which could lead to rapid virus transmission if steps are not taken to slow the spread.

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.



NEW DATA DASHBOARDS

Governor DeWine announced the state has launched the Schools Dashboard and the Children's Dashboard to provide school districts and parents the best information to make decisions about their child's education and social interactions. The Schools Dashboard will show new and cumulative COVID cases reported to schools by parents/guardians and staff. The data can be sorted by county or school district and includes students and staff. Schools are required to report cases to their assigned Local Health Department who then report to the Ohio Department of Health.

The Children's Dashboard, developed in consultation with the Ohio Children's Hospital Association, includes information about cases and hospitalizations related to COVID-19 among children aged 0-17 in Ohio by selected demographics and county of residence. Both dashboards are available at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

FLU SHOT REMINDER

Governor DeWine announced that the state of Ohio has its first, documented case of the flu in Putnam County. He reminded Ohioans of the importance of getting a flu shot this year to reduce the spread of the flu and its impact on our hospital systems. While it doesn't protect you from COVID-19, it does provide another layer of protection to keep yourself, your family, friends and communities healthy.

Those who are elderly and need help getting to their physician's office can contact their local Area Agency on Aging at 866-243-5678 to access transportation resources and other services.

Anyone without a primary healthcare provider can visit vaccinefinder.org to find nearby pharmacies and other healthcare locations offering the flu vaccine.

RAPID RESPONSE GUIDE FOR MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS

Governor DeWine announced that the state is releasing the Rapid Response Guide for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers. This guide will support local health districts in developing culturally appropriate plans to respond to outbreaks in the migrant and seasonal farmworker communities. A copy of the guide will be available at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

In addition, the Ohio Department of Health is awarding $2.6 million in CARES Act funding to agricultural camp operators to improve the health and safety of migrant workers worksites and camps to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. The improvements will focus on reducing housing density, installing touchless equipment, partitions, and hand washing stations. The Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services are distributing face masks, hand sanitizer, disinfectant cleaner, and digital forehead thermometers to workers and operators.

CORONAVIRUS WASTEWATER SURVEILLANCE NETWORK

Governor DeWine also provided an update on Ohio's Coronavirus Wastewater Surveillance Network. Since mid-July the network has been monitoring income waste at wastewater treatment plants around the state to test for gene fragments of COVID-19. Ohio is currently testing in more than 30 cities across the state and will expand testing to more than 50 locations in the next month. The state will continue to closely monitor the wastewater data and ensure communities are aware of trending increases in gene copies to assist with quick response and prevent further spread of disease. More information about the program can be found at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

HALLOWEEN

Governor DeWine reminded parents that Halloween activities will be different this year than in years past. He encouraged parents and children to wear a mask, practice social distancing, avoid large groups, and to stay home if sick. Final decisions on whether to hold or participate in trick-or-treating or other events should be made by local communities, individuals, and parents. The state will be developing guidance for Halloween and it will be posted on coronavirus.ohio.gov to help communities and families plan for the holiday.

LOST WAGES ASSISTANCE

Governor DeWine announced that the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has started

distributing $300 per week in Lost Wages Assistance to eligible unemployment insurance recipients. This assistance is available to Ohioans who received traditional unemployment benefits, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Trade Readjustment Assistance, SharedWork Ohio or extended benefits for weeks ending August 1st through September 5th. PUA claimants will receive payments first, in a staggered manner with individual payments for each week they qualified for the program. For Ohioans receiving other types of unemployment benefits, there will be one retroactive payment for all weeks they qualify.

Currently ODJFS is working to complete the programming necessary to disperse payments. Updates on this process can be found at jfs.ohio.gov/lwa.

CENSUS

Governor DeWine reminded Ohioans that the deadline to complete the 2020 Census is quickly approaching. As of this morning, Ohio's self-response rate was 69.9 percent, which is above the national rate of 65.9 percent but one percentage point behind Michigan. The census, which only takes about 10 minutes to complete, impacts the state for the next 10 years, including how federal, state, and local funding is distributed and determines congressional representation.

Ohioans can complete their census by either going to 2020Census.gov or calling 1-844-330-2020.

CURRENT COVID-19 DATA

There are 141,585 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 4,580 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 14,625 people have been hospitalized, including 3,0149 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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