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Gov. Beshear, Dr. Stack: Kentuckians Over 70, First Responders and Educators Will Receive Vaccine in Next Phase

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Weekly cases, positivity rate and hospitalizations continue to decline due to Kentuckians' actions

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 28, 2020) – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear and Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health, said the next priority group (Phase 1b) for vaccination will be Kentuckians who are at least 70 years old, as well as first responders and educators.

Depending on the vaccine distribution schedule, Phase 1b could begin as early as Feb. 1, 2021, plus or minus a week.

The Governor said 40 additional sites will receive vaccine doses for the first time this week.

"Remember, this vaccine roll out is, I think, one of the toughest and largest logistics challenges we've seen since World War II," said Gov. Beshear. "It's not going to be clean the entire time – we're building the airplane while we're flying it – but right now, we believe we've got the right plan in the right way to distribute this vaccine equitably all across the state."

"In Kentucky, we are going to include people who are 70 and older – that's five years younger than the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended. We believe here, because we have such a disproportionate burden of death in this population, we want to make the vaccine available as quickly as possible," said Dr. Stack. "We are also going to include first responders who haven't been vaccinated in phase 1a already, as well as K-12 school personnel."

To date, in Phase 1a, approximately 126,600 vaccine doses have been delivered to Kentucky: 39,000 of those doses are designated for long-term care facilities. At least 26,336 vaccine doses have already been administered statewide: 17,752 to health care workers, 2,788 through local health departments and 5,796 to long-term care residents and staff. For more information about Phase 1a and 1b, click here (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20201228_Stack-slides_FINAL.pdf).

Dr. Stack clarified that Phase 1a includes all health care personnel in clinical settings, including Kentuckians who work in environmental services, front-line operations, interpretation services, dental care and home-based health care staff. Dr. Stack estimated that there are at least 200,000 Kentuckians included in this category.

Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Eric Friedlander further updated Kentuckians on vaccinations in long-term care facilities.

“Walgreens and CVS have been able to provide vaccinations at more than 30 facilities,” said Secretary Friedlander. “This is a great start. We’re making a down payment on our promise to take care of the most vulnerable Kentuckians first. Also, those health care workers who have been in those facilities, who have helped and provided services to those residents all along, this is a way that we are able to prioritize those folks who have done the most for the most vulnerable.

“Walgreens and CVS, thank you. We’ve talked with them just about every day as we learn together. They’ve been good partners with us, and we’ll continue to be good partners with them.”

Eviction Prevention Update

Gov. Beshear said the CDC has extended its moratorium on evictions through Jan. 31, 2021. The Governor renewed a previous executive order (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20201228_Executive-Order_2020-1055_Evictions.pdf) mandating that the CDC moratorium apply in Kentucky. The CDC order (https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2020-19654) and the tenant declaration (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/declaration-form.pdf) required by the CDC order and by the Governor’s order are available online.

The new federal COVID-19 relief bill has designated $297,000,000 for Kentucky rental assistance, in addition to separate allocations for Louisville and Lexington. These funds can be used for past due rent, future rent payments, as well as to pay utility and energy bills and prevent shutoffs.

More State Leaders Vaccinated

The Governor said Secretary of State Michael Adams, Auditor Mike Harmon, Supreme Court Deputy Chief Justice Lisabeth T. Hughes and Justice Samuel T. Wright III received the vaccination against COVID-19 on Monday in the Capitol Rotunda, helping to ensure the continuity of state government and demonstrating bipartisan support for the safe, effective vaccine that is crucial to ending the pandemic and saving lives in Kentucky.

Justice Laurance B. VanMeter also received his vaccination last week. With Chief Justice John D. Minton Jr. receiving his along with Gov. Beshear a week ago, a majority of the Kentucky Supreme Court has now received the initial dose of the vaccination.

To see the full release and view photos, click here (https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=533).

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Case Information

As of 4 p.m. Monday, Dec. 28, Gov. Beshear reported the following COVID-19 numbers:

New cases today: 1,455
New deaths today: 8
Positivity rate: 7.97%
Total deaths: 2,563
Currently hospitalized: 1,552
Currently in ICU: 411
Currently on ventilator: 217

Top counties with the most positive cases today are: Jefferson, Kenton, Warren and Pulaski. Each of these counties reported 50 or more new cases; Jefferson County alone reported 225.

Those reported lost to the virus today include a 92-year-old man from Bath County; a 74-year-old woman from Grayson County; a 64-year-old woman from Henderson County; a 93-year-old woman and three men, ages 41, 67 and 79, from Jefferson County; and an 80-year-old woman from Madison County.

The Governor noted that the state's smart, limited restrictions and Kentuckians' sacrifices have made a clear impact in the state's fight against COVID-19, decreasing Kentucky's weekly case numbers, positivity rate and hospitalizations.

The Governor asked Kentuckians to keep New Year's celebrations safe and small.

"What we do on these holidays in 2020 is going to dictate how many people are or are not with us for holidays in 2021," said Gov. Beshear. "There is a light at the end of the tunnel. Let's make sure we're making the types of decisions that protect people as we get there."

Memorial

"Today's memorial is a difficult one to share, as it's the second passing of one of our front-line heroes from Med Center Health in Bowling Green. After losing Dr. Rebecca Shadowen in September to COVID-19, the hospital reported the loss of Dr. Don Miller on Dec. 21. Dr. Miller had been an ER doctor at Med Center Health for 17 years," said Gov. Beshear. "In early December, he tested positive for the virus, passing weeks later after a hard-fought battle."

Connie Smith, Med Center Health's president and CEO said, "Dr. Miller worked faithfully alongside his Emergency Department friends and colleagues on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic since the first Med Center Health patient tested positive in March of this year. He provided outstanding emergency care for our patients both before and during the pandemic and will forever be remembered as a true health care hero." Other colleagues like Seth Wilson stated that Dr. Miller's "methodical approach to emergency medicine" will leave a lasting footprint on the entire medical community.

"But more than anything, Dr. Miller was a good man. His friend and coworker Jackie Evans said Dr. Miller was 'compassionate and had a wicked dry sense of humor, a great work ethic' and 'only wanted the best for his patients and his co-workers.' If a coworker was ill, Dr. Miller would be the one to check in on them and their family members to make sure they were okay," said Gov. Beshear. "Today our thoughts and prayers are with Dr. Miller's wife, Teresa, and their 11 children, as well as the entire team at Med Center Health. Dr. Miller paid the ultimate sacrifice while caring for our people, and he will always be remembered as a hero in the eyes of all Kentuckians."

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Dr. Miller's good friend and colleague Dr. William Moss, Med Center Health's medical director of emergency services, shared a few words via a video (https://youtu.be/K5qQ97r-o5A) during the press conference.

More Information

To view the full daily report (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/covid19/COVID19DailyReport.pdf), incidence rate map (https://chfs.ky.gov/Pages/cv19maps.aspx), testing locations, long-term care and other congregate facilities update, school reports and guidance (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20201214_COVID-19-Mode-of-Instruction-Metrics-for-K-12-Education.pdf), red zone counties (https://chfs.ky.gov/Pages/cv19maps.aspx), red zone recommendations (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/Red-Zone-Reduction-Recommendations.pdf), the White House Coronavirus Task Force reports for Kentucky and other key guidance visit, kycovid19.ky.gov (https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19).

See all of the Kentucky Department for Public Health's winter holiday guidance here: English full guidance (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/2020_Guidance-for-Holiday-Celebrations_KDPH.pdf), one-pager (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/2020_Guidance-for-Celebrating-Winter-Holidays_KDPH.pdf) and single slide (https://governor.ky.gov/ImageLinks/2020-Winter-Holiday-Guidance.png) and Spanish full guidance (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/2020_Guidance-for-Holiday-Celebrations_KDPH_es.pdf), one-pager (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/2020_Guidance-for-Celebrating-Winter-Holidays_KDPH_es.pdf) and single slide (https://governor.ky.gov/imagelinks/2020-Winter-Holiday-Guidance_es.png).

Kentuckians can also listen to recorded PSAs about the holiday guidance (created in partnership with RadioLex (https://kentucky.gov/Pages/radiolex.us)) here: Bosnian (https://soundcloud.com/radiolex/bosnian-gov-beshear-covid-19-update-dec-17-2020), Chinese (https://soundcloud.com/radiolex/chinese-gov-beshear-covid-19-update-dec-17-2020), English (https://soundcloud.com/radiolex/english-gov-beshear-covid-19-update-dec-17-2020), French (https://soundcloud.com/radiolex/french-gov-beshear-covid-19-update-dec-17-2020), Japanese (https://soundcloud.com/radiolex/japanese-gov-beshear-covid-19-update-dec-17-2020), Korean (https://soundcloud.com/radiolex/korean-gov-beshear-covid-19-update-dec-17-2020), Persian (https://soundcloud.com/radiolex/persian-gov-beshear-covid-19-update-dec-17-2020) and Spanish (https://soundcloud.com/radiolex/spanish-gov-beshear-covid-19-update-dec-17-2020).

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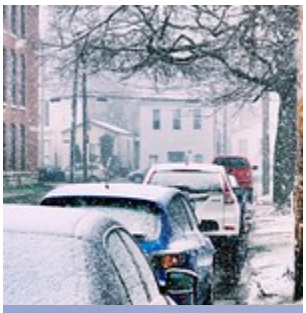
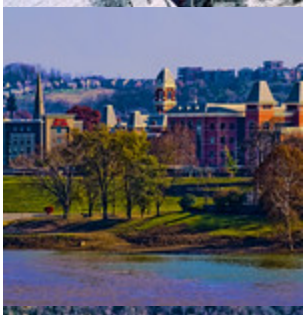
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/7372926@N06/47218320672/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/47184596121/in/pool-773339@N20)
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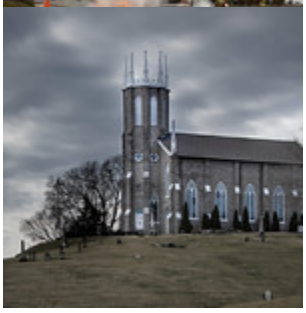
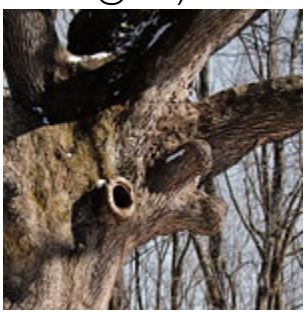
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/127721144@N05/46918072332/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcconnell_springs_photo_journal/46864760851/in/pool-773339@N20)
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