COVID-19 UPDATE: Testing Expansion, R0 in Ohio, Place of Worship Best Practices, New Role for Dr. Acton, ODJFS Employment/Training Grant

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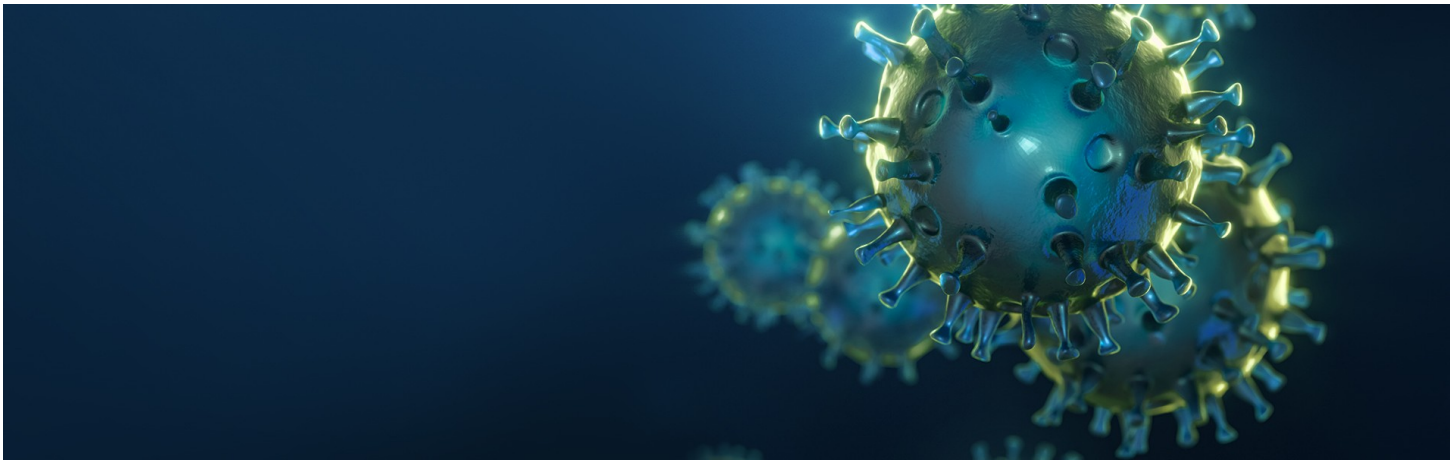

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)— Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jon Husted, and Dr. Amy Acton, MD, MPH, today provided the following updates on Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

TESTING EXPANSION:

Governor DeWine announced today that Ohio is expanding testing and encouraged those who want a COVID-19 test, including those who are low-risk or asymptomatic, to talk with their health care provider or contact a testing location to arrange a test.

"Until now, we have very much had a scarcity mindset because we had a very real scarcity of testing resources, but that mindset needs to change," said Governor DeWine. "Testing is a very important weapon in our arsenal as we continue to wage war against a very real enemy. By understanding who is sick, whether

they are showing symptoms or not, we are able to better prevent the spread of the COVID-19."

Governor DeWine also announced a series of "pop-up" testing locations, beginning with six locations in Columbus. These temporary testing sites will be available all over the state, including in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Portsmouth, Dayton, Xenia, Columbiana, Akron, and other locations.

Testing locations in Ohio can be found at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

BASIC REPRODUCTION NUMBER:

Governor DeWine today released the latest basic reproduction number or R0 (pronounced “R naught”) for eight regions of Ohio. The R0 represents the number of people, on average, that a person will spread a disease to. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that COVID-19's R0, without interventions, to be 2.5. With Ohio's interventions, the R0 for the state measured slightly lower than 1.0 on June 1. Ohio is beginning to see a slight increase in the R0 measurements, more so in certain parts of Ohio such as the Dayton region.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP:

Governor DeWine today sent a letter to the ministerial community in Ohio to update them on the status of COVID-19 and provide suggested best practices for resuming in-person services.

"Although Ohio never closed churches, synagogues, mosques, or other places of worship during this pandemic, we know that most of them stopped holding their traditional in-person services and found other ways to worship to protect their members and the communities where they serve," said Governor DeWine. "Just as we did with industry, outdoor activities, and entertainment, we have put together some suggested best practices for places of worship to keep in mind as they reopen."

This guidance can be found at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

NEW ROLE FOR DR. AMY ACTON:

Governor DeWine announced that Dr. Amy Acton will step down as director of the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and begin serving as his chief health advisor effective at the end of business today. Lance Himes, who previously served as ODH's director, was named interim-director.

"Let me say how very grateful I am for Dr. Acton’s selfless and tireless service to the people of Ohio as our Ohio Department of Health director," said Governor DeWine. "It’s true that not all heroes wear capes. Some of them wear a white coat embossed with the name Dr. Amy Acton."

In her new role, Dr. Acton will take a comprehensive and holistic approach to addressing health and well-being for all Ohioans. In addition to advising on health issues, she will continue to focus on the COVID-19 crisis.

ODJFS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING GRANT:

Lt. Governor Husted announced that the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) will receive an $8.5 million federal Employment Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant to help reemploy individuals who lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and to help employers rebuild their workforces.

ODJFS will work with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation to facilitate the grant program through local OhioMeansJobs centers and will distribute the funding to Ohio's local workforce areas. ODJFS will also provide outreach to employers and services to individuals who were laid off, either permanently or temporarily, as a result of the pandemic.

MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES TO JOIN ELITE USA:

JobsOhio today announced that minority-owned Stark County businesses will participate in ELITE, London Stock Exchange Group's business support and development program. In collaboration with JobsOhio and the Stark County Minority Business Association, ELITE USA announced that 13 minority-owned businesses will make up its new cohort.

"ELITE is providing Stark County minority-owned businesses access to resources that will help their efforts to scale up and grow," said Governor Mike DeWine. "This also expands ELITE's presence in Ohio ahead of its headquarters opening in Cleveland in the coming year."

"We are excited to connect ELITE's proven business development capabilities with the Stark County Minority Business Association," said J.P. Nauseef, JobsOhio's president and CEO. "Ensuring that these businesses have the tools they need to succeed and grow will create new opportunities in Northeast Ohio while accelerating Ohio's economic recovery strategy."

JobsOhio will fund the one-year program, which includes expert consultation regarding strategy, innovation, operations, marketing, governance and risk management, talent management, and leadership. This will be the second group of U.S. businesses to benefit from the ELITE program, which supports growth aspirations, promotes global partnerships, and facilitates access to international capital.

CURRENT OHIO DATA:

There are 40,004 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 2,490 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 6,753 people have been hospitalized, including 1,732 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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