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Gov. Beshear Announces 28 New COVID-19 Vaccination Sites, 291 Total Sites

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Governor, state officials update Kentuckians on winter storm safety, unemployment insurance, long-term care visitation

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 18, 2021) – On Thursday, Gov. Andy Beshear announced the state is opening an additional 28 vaccination sites, for a total of 291 sites across the commonwealth.

“There is now a provider that has vaccine close to where everybody lives in the commonwealth,” said Gov. Beshear. “There are some areas where you might have to drive just a little bit further, but we continue to add new sites for greater convenience. In many ways, we wish you could just call one number to sign up, but we are building for the future so there will be many sites available when vaccine supply increases to what we need.”

Kentuckians can see a list of all new vaccination sites here (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20210218_New_Vaccine_Sites.pdf). To see a map of all regional vaccination sites, click here. (https://govstatus.egov.com/kentucky-vaccine-map) For more information, go to vaccine.ky.gov (https://govstatus.egov.com/kentucky-vaccine-survey) or kycovid19.ky.gov/ky-covid-vaccine (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-covid-vaccine).

The Governor also updated Kentuckians on visitation protocols in some of the state’s long-term care facilities that will take effect Saturday, Feb. 20.

“Indoor visitation will resume for non-Medicare-certified facilities that have been through the vaccination process: that includes assisted living facilities, personal care homes, intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and independent living facilities,” the Governor said. “Group activities, communal dining and visitation amongst vaccinated residents will resume.”

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Cabinet for Health and Family Services inspector general Adam Mather added, “I want to thank residents and their families for their patience during this pandemic. It’s been a long journey and it’s exciting to be able to relax some restrictions. I want to reiterate that this relaxation only applies to facilities that are not Medicare-certified at this time. Thanks to Walgreens and CVS for their quick vaccination efforts to make this happen.”

Visitors must schedule with the facility ahead of time. Up to two visitors (if from the same household) can visit a resident at one time. Visitors need to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of the visit or of a COVID-19 vaccination. Detailed guidance will be posted here (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/os/oig/Pages/default.aspx) tomorrow.

Case Information
As of 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18, Gov. Beshear reported the following COVID-19 numbers:

New cases today: 963
New deaths today: 37
Positivity rate: 7.07%
Total deaths: 4,373
Currently hospitalized: 935
Currently in ICU: 260
Currently on ventilator: 130

Top counties with the most positive cases today are: Jefferson, Fayette, Laurel, Christian and Kenton. Each county reported at least 30 new cases.

To see a list of those reported lost to the virus today, click here (https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20210218_COVID-19_Deaths.pdf).

Winter Storm Update
Today, Gov. Beshear, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) Secretary Jim Gray and Kentucky Division of Emergency Management Director Michael Dossett updated Kentuckians on winter storm safety.

“Kentuckians have pulled together during these three winter storms. We have now restored power to more than half of the Kentucky customers who lost it – that’s substantial progress, but a lot more work needs to be done,” said Gov. Beshear. “We are a tough people, we’ve been through this before and we’re going to make it because we take care of one another.”

“The State Emergency Operations Center remains at a Level 3. There are 39 community warming centers now open, as well as seven shelters,” said Director Dossett. “We caught a glancing blow overnight with some additional snow and sleet, but better times are coming our way. Temperatures will be bitterly cold tonight and tomorrow but are warming for the weekend.”

“Precipitation has let up in most places, allowing our crews and contractors to make real progress on clearing roadways. In Eastern Kentucky, work continues to clear fallen trees and power lines,” said Secretary Gray. “We’re on the lookout for freezing drizzle today and overnight. That’s one of the most treacherous forms of winter weather. We urge the public to continue to limit travel and to be patient when they are on the roads.”

To help Kentucky families impacted by the storm, Secretary Gray has extended his official order (https://drive.ky.gov/Docs/Emergency%20Order%20112420.pdf) temporarily lifting some restrictions on commercial vehicles delivering aid to affected areas.

For snow and ice updates and resources, visit snowky.ky.gov (https://transportation.ky.gov/sites/snowky). For updates on roadway conditions, visit goky.ky.gov (https://transportation.ky.gov/sites/goky).

If Kentuckians lose power, they should call their utility company.

Never use a generator inside your home or garage, even if doors and windows are open. Only use generators outside, more than 20 feet away from your home, doors and windows. Never use an outdoor grill, a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home.

Unemployment Insurance Update

Today, Amy Cubbage, general counsel to Gov. Beshear, updated Kentuckians on unemployment insurance (UI).

“From the beginning of the pandemic through Dec. 31, we can tell you that we now have 82% of those claims that we received paid. About 10% of those claims are still pending, but the vast majority of those are from the last quarter of the year,” said Cubbage. “While we won’t rest until every claim is resolved, this is great progress in light of us receiving 1.6 million claims from about 650,000 people through the end of 2020.”

Bank of America Debit Cards

“Claimants who did not change their method of payment from debit card to direct deposit in their UI account were moved on Feb. 1 to receive their benefits by paper checks that will arrive in the mail,” Cubbage said.

- If you received a paper check and believe you should not have received a check, please send that check back to: Office of Unemployment Insurance, Attention: BPC, 500 Mero Street, 4th Floor Frankfort, KY 40601
- Include your name, contact information such as phone number and email address and a message that you never filed for UI.
- Claimants who still have UI debit cards are reminded that the funds must be spent off the cards no later than Feb. 28.
- Funds on the debit card after Feb. 28 will be returned to the state and then UI staff will process them back out to claimants in the form of a paper check.

Increased Fraud on Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Claims

“New measures have been put in place to help slow down the increased fraud claims we are receiving,” said Cubbage.

- All PUA out-of-state claims have a stop on them until they can be verified.
- UI staff are updating the office’s fraud form and fraud information page on the Kentucky Career Center website (https://kcc.ky.gov/) in the next week so that people who believe to have their identity stolen can access the form online.

“For these situations, staff put a stop on the claim due to fraud which stops the claim from processing any further,” Cubbage said. “After staff have reviewed the information, they will communicate to the person who had the claim filed against them. You will see prosecution on a local, state and national level in the coming months against the people committing fraud.”

New User-Friendly Interface Tested Yesterday

“UI information technology staff have been working tirelessly on a new claimant experience for the UI system,” Cubbage said. “A group of selected claimants tested the new interface yesterday and will be giving us feedback. Once the feedback is received and possible changes made we will launch this new application.”

This is not a new UI system, but an enhancement to the welcome screens the user sees when they first log on to their account to make it more user friendly. Proposals are currently being reviewed for a new UI system.

Virtual Appointments

“We make every effort during the time you are scheduled to contact you,” said Cubbage. “Our rule is, we call the claimant based on the phone number on their UI claim. If they do not answer the call, we will try the number they made the appointment with, and we also email the claimant.

“We then ask the claimant to email the staff person back before end of business day so that we can reach you and address your concern. If UI staff are unable to reach claimants, they will need to make another appointment. We make three attempts: two phone calls and one email.”

Healthy at Home Eviction Relief Fund

Today, Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman updated Kentuckians on the new $264 million *Healthy at Home* Eviction Relief Fund.

“We are nearly a year into the COVID-19 pandemic and, sadly, many Kentuckians are still grappling with its economic effects,” said Lt. Gov. Coleman. “This fund is a program in partnership with Kentucky Housing Corporation and is utilizing a portion of the $297 million in federal Coronavirus Relief Funds the commonwealth recently received.”

For 118 Kentucky counties, go to teamkyhherf.ky.gov (https://teamkyhherf.ky.gov/).

If you live in Fayette County, go to covid19renterhelp.org (https://covid19renterhelp.org/) to apply.

If you are a Jefferson County resident, visit stopmyeviction.org (https://stopmyeviction.org/).

Tenants applying through the Team Kentucky portal can request assistance with rent dating back to April 2020 and for three months of future payments. They can also get help paying utility bills, up to 12 months of past-due bills and three months of future payments.

“These programs will provide significant relief for Kentuckians and help with bills into the future. We need both the landlord and the tenant to apply online,” said Lt. Gov. Coleman. “There are some federal guidelines that both renters and landlords must meet. Those details are on the website, teamkyhherf.ky.gov (https://teamkyhherf.ky.gov/). Last year, Team Kentucky helped 4,135 households avoid eviction with nearly $15 million in assistance. This year, we want to do more.

“I received a story about a family from Clark County that was helped last year. Like many Kentuckians, they had their work hours cut back dramatically. They have a son with special needs and a parent battling cancer which made things much more difficult. They said they had no clue how they were going to pay bills. She said, ‘I remember on the day I found out I got funds, I cried. It was amazing. It was like a weight had been lifted off me. It was life-changing for us. We were really struggling. It is hard when you have to decide between food and paying rent.’”

To date, more than 8,500 people have started their applications, and more than 4,700 have completed the application process – that includes more than 3,000 tenants and more than 1,700 landlords.

Those with completed applications have requested more than $4.1 million in rental assistance and more than $1.1 million in utility assistance.

Special Open Health Care Enrollment

“We believe that access to health insurance is a right for every Kentuckian. Expanded health care has helped us to have fewer COVID-19 deaths per capita than most states,” said Lt. Gov. Coleman. “President Biden signed an executive order (https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-

actions/2021/01/28/executive-order-on-strengthening-medicaid-and-the-affordable-care-act/) that activated a special three-month health care enrollment period, which started Feb. 15 and will last until May 15. The Special Enrollment Period is for Americans to get quality, affordable health care coverage through their state's health insurance marketplace."

Kentucky residents currently uninsured may qualify for financial help to pay for health coverage or free coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Kentuckians may get help with enrolling in several ways:

- Visit HealthCare.gov (https://healthcare.gov/) and submit an application, or update an application that has already been started.
- Visit kynect.ky.gov (https://kynect.ky.gov/), a one-stop portal for finding health coverage and other benefits.
- Kentuckians may also call 855-459-6328 for assistance.
- And lastly, another option is contacting a health insurance agent currently licensed in Kentucky.

Kentucky Broadband Initiative

"Closing the digital divide is critical for economic development, education and creating the jobs of the future right here in Kentucky," said Lt. Gov. Coleman. "I am happy to report that we have registered over 61,000 broadband speed tests so far. In order to get as many people from across Kentucky to take this test, we are extending the deadline to March 1."

The speed test takes 30 seconds and is completely anonymous. This data will highlight areas in the commonwealth most in need of broadband.

Visit speedtest.ky.gov (https://speedtest.ky.gov/) to take the test.

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), information on testing locations (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-covid-testing), vaccines (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-covid-vaccine), contact tracing (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-contact-tracing), school reports and guidance (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-healthy-at-school), guidance for health care providers (https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-healthcare-guidance) and the White House Coronavirus Task Force reports for Kentucky and more, visit kycovid19.ky.gov (https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19).

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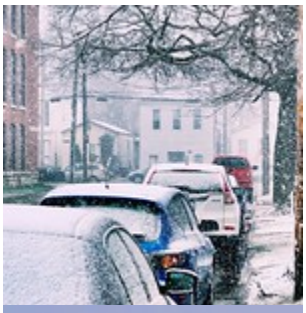
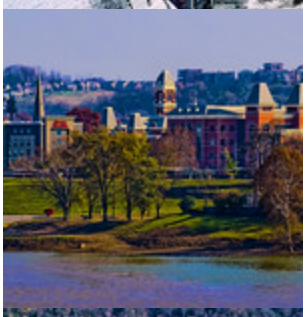
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/7372926@N06/47218320672/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/47184596121/in/pool-773339@N20)
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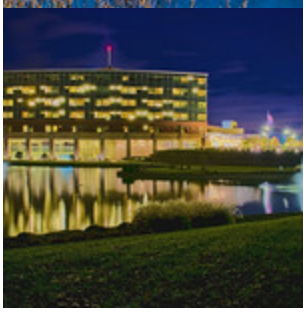
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/miamiboy/32275086277/in/pool-773339@N20)

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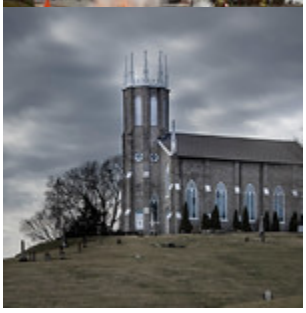
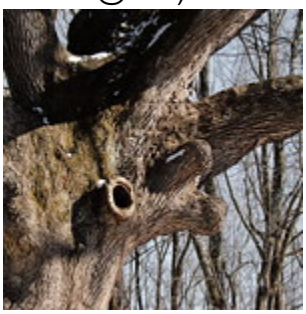
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/127721144@N05/46918072332/in/pool-773339@N20)
-  (https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcconnell_springs_photo_journal/46864760851/in/pool-773339@N20)
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