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Gov. Beshear Advises Schools to Remain Closed to In-Person Instruction

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 20, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear on Monday advised the commonwealth’s education leaders to keep facilities closed to in-person instruction for the rest of the school year.

“Every health care professional has advised us that this is the right course of action to take,” the Governor said of the state’s continuing efforts to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

Gov. Beshear noted that same advice was being followed in many states, including Ohio, Indiana and Tennessee.

He said the move is in line with newly released guidelines from the White House (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>) as well as Kentucky’s own newly announced benchmarks (<https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=132>) that the commonwealth must meet in order to start reopening the state’s economy while keeping Kentuckians safe from the novel coronavirus.

“I know for many this is hard,” the Governor said. “We have seniors that were looking forward to an in-person graduation and a prom. I’ve got a son who’s graduating from elementary school and we have every student out there who has lost this time to be able to be with their classmates and there for in-person instruction.”

He said schools were being asked to continue nontraditional instruction and food service for students in need.

“This is something I think our superintendents were expecting and were planning on,” Gov. Beshear said. “They’ve provided great leadership, and I know that they will continue.”

The Governor said he understood the disappointment many were feeling but said it was part of the many sacrifices Kentuckians are making in the coronavirus fight.

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"It's not fair, it's not. But a worldwide pandemic has hit us and those of you who are missing out on these opportunities, we need your help and we need your sacrifice," he said. "Ultimately, the experience you are losing is hard, but your willingness to do it is going to help us save lives."

Unemployment update

Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman, who is also secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, appeared Monday via video link to offer an update on unemployment as the state continues to process an unprecedented amount of claims and payments.

She said on average the state is seeing about 13,000 new claims per day, as officials continue to staff up.

"We are continuing to process an unprecedented amount of unemployment insurance claims and payments," Lt. Gov. Coleman said. "We have processed twice as many claims since March 8 as we did in all of 2019."

She urged those seeking benefits not to reapply and not to open a new claim if they have already applied.

The only people who need to reopen a claim are those requesting an additional 13 weeks because the original benefits have expired.

A new technology team is working to address the delays, and more than 1,000 new workers have been hired and trained to handle calls.

Lt. Gov. Coleman said a particular focus will be taking care of anyone whose claim has been hung up for more than two weeks.

Drive-through testing

Gov. Beshear continues to urge people to sign up for testing at four recently announced new drive-through testing sites.

People in and around the communities of Madisonville, Paducah, Somerset and Pikeville can sign up for testing that begins later this week.

Those seeking to obtain a test can get location and registration details at The Little Clinic website (<https://www.thelittleclinic.com/drivethru-testing>).

Those eligible for the tests include people exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, shortness of breath and cough; health care workers and first responders who may have been exposed to coronavirus; and anyone with mild symptoms who also may have been exposed to COVID-19.

The testing is done free of charge. The overall goal of the partnership is to conduct 20,000 tests over the next five weeks. Test results are expected within approximately 48 hours.

Case information

As of 5 p.m. April 20, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 3,050 coronavirus cases

(https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20200420_COVID19_Case-Information.pdf) in Kentucky, 102 of which were newly confirmed.

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear also reported six new deaths Monday, raising the state's toll to 154 deaths related to the virus.

"We're thinking about these families," the Governor said. "We're going to continue to light our homes up green to let them know they are not alone, to show the color of compassion and renewal."

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He said a Kentucky State Police Honor Guard will mark the losses Tuesday during a wreath-laying ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda.

"Tomorrow, we are going to do a presentation of wreaths here at the Capitol in honor of the more than 150 Kentuckians lost," the Governor said. He said he will show the video during the briefing at 5 p.m. Tuesday.

The six newly reported deaths include a 92-year-old woman from Adair County, a 59-year-old woman from Crittenden County, an 85-year-old woman from Hopkins County, and two women, ages 62 and 76, and a 64-year-old man from Jefferson County.

Gov. Beshear also highlighted the death of William Dean Smith of Leitchfield. The 94-year-old former music teacher also was a war hero, having served in both World War II and the Korean War, according to a remembrance written by Ken Howlett of K105 (<http://www.k105.com/2020/04/20/william-dean-smith-war-hero-mentor-teacher-and-possessing-the-wisdom-to-give-second-chances/>). He became Grayson County's first coronavirus fatality.

"Tonight, we lift up William, his family, his community in Grayson County and beyond, and recognize what a profound loss this is," Gov. Beshear said. "This should reinforce our resolve to do our best every day to protect those around us. We've now lost at least a couple of war heroes. Let's make sure we're doing our part. Let's make sure we're living up to the example that his generation set for us. Let's make sure that we protect people from this virus."

At least 1,144 people have recovered from COVID-19 in Kentucky. Gov. Beshear said this was great news and that about 37.51% of Kentuckians with the virus have recovered.

To date, at least 32,830 people have been tested. At least 1,017 people have ever been hospitalized with 263 currently hospitalized.

At least 532 have ever been in the ICU with at least 147 people currently in the ICU.

Gov. Beshear also offered an update on the racial breakdown of COVID-19 patients and victims, which unfortunately highlights existing disparities in health and health care access.

The Governor said with about 76% of the known cases accounted for, 76.93% of Kentuckians who tested positive were Caucasian, 13.67% were African-American, 5.28% were multiracial, 4.07% were Asian and 0.05% were Native American or Alaskan Native.

The Governor also said with about 71% of the known cases accounted for, 92.49% of people who tested positive were non-Hispanic and 7.51% were Hispanic.

On fatalities attributed to the coronavirus, with about 80% of the known cases accounted for, Kentucky deaths are about 75.61% Caucasian, 21.96% African-American, 1.63% Asian and 0.81% were multiracial.

On fatalities attributed to the coronavirus, with about 76% of the known cases accounted for, Kentucky deaths are about 99.17% non-Hispanic and 0.83% Hispanic.

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More information

The Governor is asking all Kentuckians to continue to fight the spread of the virus by following his 10-step guidance (<https://www.facebook.com/GovAndyBeshear/photos/rpp.105907124194995/200763924709314/?type=3&theater>), which includes practicing social distancing and staying *healthy at home*. Gov. Beshear says these efforts have the potential to save the lives of as many as 11,000 Kentuckians.

Read about other key updates, actions and information from Gov. Beshear and his administration at [governor.ky.gov](https://governor.ky.gov/news) (<https://governor.ky.gov/news>), [kycovid19.ky.gov](https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19) (<https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>) and the Governor's official social media accounts Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/GovAndyBeshear/>), Twitter (<https://twitter.com/GovAndyBeshear>) and YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/c/GovAndyBeshear>).

Watch the Governor's social media accounts at 5 p.m. ET each day for his regular briefing. Kentuckians can also access translated COVID-19 information and daily summaries of the Governor's press conference at tinyurl.com/kygovspanol (Spanish) and tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations (more than 20 additional languages).

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages people to follow these steps to prevent illness (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fprevention-treatment.html). Kentuckians who want advice can call the state hotline at 800-722-5725 or call their local health care provider.

Team Kentucky hashtags for social media

#TeamKentucky, #TogetherKY, #Patriot and #HealthyAtHome.

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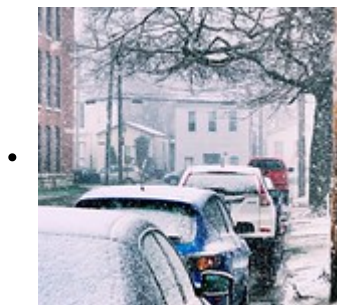
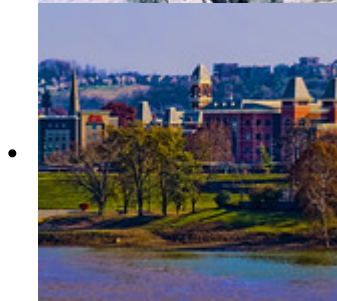
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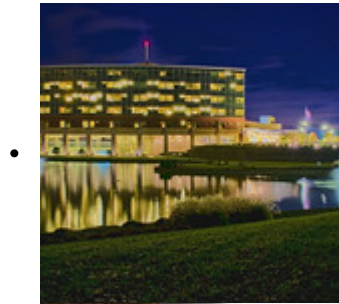
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