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# Gov. Beshear Takes Action to Protect Kentucky Families and Unprecedented Economic Progress

Crystal Staley or Sebastian Kitchen  
502-564-2611 (tel:502-564-2611)<https://governor.ky.gov> (<https://governor.ky.gov>)

Office of the Governor  
700 Capitol Avenue  
FrankfortKY40601

## *Based on federal guidance, school districts should require universal indoor masking*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 29, 2021)** – On Thursday during his Team Kentucky Update, Gov. Andy Beshear announced new COVID-19 precautions based on updated guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“With the delta variant spreading across the U.S. and only 62% of Kentuckians ages 18 or older vaccinated, right now our answer is: Masks plus vaccines equals victory over COVID,” said Gov. Beshear. “We are strong enough and resilient enough to do this. We are compassionate enough to know we have to do this.”

The Governor said his first priority is to ensure safe, in-person instruction in our schools for the maximum number of days. His second priority is to continue the commonwealth’s unprecedented economic progress.

Gov. Beshear and state officials expect that, without mitigation efforts, the delta variant will spread through unvaccinated workplaces and classrooms, disrupting education and slowing economic growth through loss of productivity and frequent quarantines. Therefore, he announced:

**K-12 Return to School Guidance Updated to Reflect CDC Guidance:** Gov. Beshear said school districts should require universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time, in-person learning in the fall with layered strategies in place to prevent COVID-19 infection and transmission.

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**Masks Required in State Office Buildings:** The Governor said masks will now be required at all state office buildings, regardless of vaccination status.

"I'm fully vaccinated, but I'm still my brothers' and sisters' keeper. I still believe in loving my neighbor as I would myself, so I'm going to mask up," said Gov. Beshear. "I promised when I became Governor that I would lead by example."

### **COVID-19 Update**

Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health, said from March 1 to July 28, 2021, 94.5% of COVID-19 cases, 91.8% of COVID-19 hospitalizations and 88.8% of COVID-19 deaths were among partially vaccinated or unvaccinated Kentuckians.

"We have changed in the blink of an eye from a quiet, calm state to a horribly inflamed state," said Dr. Stack. "We all know what we need to do, and that's to get vaccinated. I'm not begging folks. I'm wondering why folks wouldn't want to be protected. The vaccines are at no additional costs to you, and they protect you from all of these harms. It's puzzling why folks wouldn't do it."

Today, five local health department directors joined Gov. Beshear and Dr. Stack to discuss COVID-19 mitigation efforts: Denise Beach, director of the Hopkins County Health Department; Greg Brewer, director of the Gateway District Health Department; Mark Hensley, director of the Laurel County Health Department; Dr. Crystal Miller, DrPH, director of the WedCo District Health Department; and Dr. Sarah Moyer, MD, director of the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness.

"I want us all to take ourselves back to that moment in time in March, because I think that we all had the same goal in common that we knew without a shadow of a doubt that we would do whatever it took to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe," said Dr. Miller. "Somehow we've grayed those lines. We've gotten away from that mission. It's been a long 16 months. It's frustrating. It's exhausting. But the difference between March 6 and today is that we have a solution. We know exactly what works: vaccines and masking."

The Governor encouraged all Kentuckians 12 and older to get a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine and then sign up for a chance to win \$1 million or a full college scholarship at [ShotAtAMillion.ky.gov](https://shotatamillion.ky.gov) (<https://shotatamillion.ky.gov/>). One \$1 million winner and five full-scholarship winners have already been selected. (<https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=853>) On both July 30 and Aug. 27, another \$1 million winner and five more full-scholarship winners will be announced.

So far, 692,205 vaccinated Kentuckians have signed up for the \$1 million drawing and 40,934 vaccinated youth have signed up for the full scholarship drawing.

### **Kentucky's Economy, Workforce Charge Ahead**

Gov. Beshear highlighted three major economic and workforce development announcements, including the largest investment in the Western Kentucky region in more than 25 years. In 2021, companies have announced more than 60 projects totaling more than \$2.6 billion in investment and creating 5,500 jobs. More than 1,500 jobs have been announced in the last 11 days alone.

"This is how we make sure we are never seen as a 'flyover' state again. We have more opportunity now than at any point in my lifetime, and we have to grasp it," said Gov. Beshear.

**Area Technology Center to Serve Estill and Powell Counties:** On Friday, Gov. Beshear celebrated the grand opening of a \$14.7 million technology center that will serve hundreds of high school and technical college students and provide training for displaced workers seeking new career paths. To learn more, see the full [EMAIL \(mailto:support@kentucky.gov\)](mailto:support@kentucky.gov)

release. (<https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=889>)

Fruit of the Loom Expansion in Bowling Green: Today, Gov. Beshear announced Bowling Green-based Fruit of the Loom plans to expand its existing distribution center in Warren County and create 50 full-time job opportunities. To learn more, see the full release. (<https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=893>)

Pratt Paper Announces Historic \$400 Million Investment in Henderson: Today, Gov. Beshear and Anthony Pratt, executive chairman of Pratt Industries, announced the company's new \$400 million paper mill, a project committed to creating 321 well-paying jobs over the next five years. Pratt joined Gov. Beshear's press conference via video. (<https://youtu.be/m7NgRXR8Dml>)

Pratt's investment is the largest investment in this region of Kentucky in more than 25 years, the largest in the state in nearly two years and the third largest job-creation announcement of 2021. The project further propels Kentucky's recent wave of economic growth toward a sustainable future with quality job opportunities for residents across the state.

### Team Kentucky All-Stars

Today, the Governor recognized two groups of Team Kentucky All-Stars.

First, he congratulated two Kentuckians who just became Olympic gold medalists.

"Lee Kiefer, a medical student at the University of Kentucky (UK), not only won gold in women's individual foil, but made history as the first U.S. woman to win an Olympic medal in this event," said Gov. Beshear. "In addition, Will Shaner won the air rifle gold medal and set an Olympic record. Will was a three-time All-American as a college athlete at UK. On behalf of the entire commonwealth, we are so proud of you."

The Governor also celebrated Kentucky high school students who spent this summer at the Governor's Scholars Program, Governor's School for the Arts or the Governor's School for Entrepreneurs.

"Your Lieutenant Governor and I have been so inspired by meeting many of you and we can't wait to watch you lead our commonwealth into the future," said Gov. Beshear. "We're rooting for you as you work toward your next goals and enjoy the friendships you've made this summer that I hope will last a lifetime."

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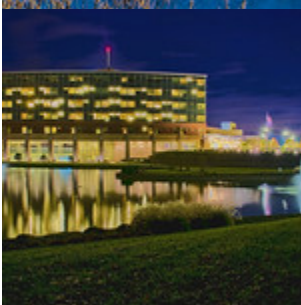
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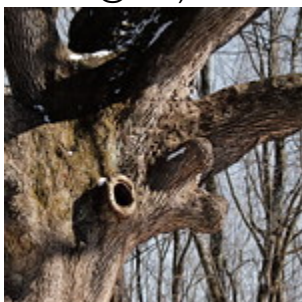


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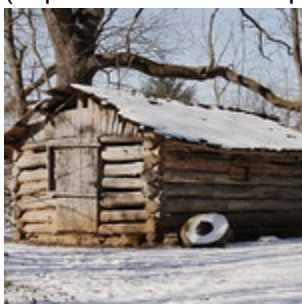


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