



## Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for February 15, 2020

### The coronavirus has infected more than 1,700 healthcare workers in China, killing 6 of them

As coronavirus cases continue to swell — impacting nearly 64,000 people and killing some 1,380 — a particularly vulnerable population is bearing the brunt of this epidemic: medical staff. Other key points in the story:

- Chinese officials said that 1,716 healthcare workers in China have been infected by the coronavirus. Six of them are dead.
- "Health workers are the glue that holds the health system and outbreak response together," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, adding that "we need to know more " about how they are getting sick.
- Wuhan, the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak in December, is also home to 1,102 infected staff.
- On Friday, Beijing's National Health Commission disclosed for the first time that nearly half a million people have come in contact with infected patients.

Full story: <https://www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-infected-healthcare-workers-china-deaths-2020-2>

### 5 U.S. cities to start testing patients with flu-like symptoms for coronavirus The tests will only be given to patients who test negative for the flu.

#### Experts are probing whether the coronavirus can be spread through communal sewage systems after a Hong Kong high-rise found 2 cases 10 floors apart

(CNN & Business Insider) The virus, which has [killed more than 1,100 people so far](#), is transferred between humans and can be done so by [simply brushing skin](#). It was not immediately clear whether they had any prior contact.

Authorities have since evacuated more than 100 people living in Hong Mei House, whose apartments are all connected to the same sewage pipe system, the [South China Morning Post](#) (SCMP) and [Agence France-Presse](#) (AFP) reported.

Read more: <https://www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-hong-kong-high-rise-sewage-pipe-investigation-2020-2>

CNN Story: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/12/asia/hong-kong-coronavirus-pipes-intl-hnk/index.html>

### CDC to use local flu surveillance for wider coronavirus testing 5 U.S. cities to start testing patients with flu-like symptoms for coronavirus

([AHA Today - Feb 14](#)) Five public health labs already conducting influenza surveillance in the U.S. will test specimens for novel coronavirus (COVID-19) if they test negative for influenza, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [said](#) today. ***In addition to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago and New York City, CDC will add more cities in the coming weeks to better detect if the virus is spreading in communities.***

The results of this testing is intended to serve as an early warning signal that CDC will use to indicate if it is time to change its public health approach, Nancy Messonnier, M.D., director of CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases said. She also said that the U.S. public health efforts are now based on containment of the outbreak, but if this testing shows community spread, the approach will shift to mitigation strategies, such as social distancing measures and increased use of telemedicine. She noted that CDC is working on guidance that would better define this potential shift to mitigation, but that past work in pandemic influenza planning has already laid the groundwork for mitigation approaches should COVID-19 infections become widespread.

CDC also clarified that the current understanding of how COVID-19 spreads is through respiratory droplets (from sneezing or coughing) from an infected person who is within six feet of another person. Although it is possible to contract the virus by touching a contaminated object and then touching the eyes, nose or mouth, COVID-19 cannot survive long on surfaces.

The World Health Organization [reported](#) that over 1,700 Chinese health care workers have been infected, and six have died.

"This is a critical piece of information, because health workers are the glue that holds the health system and outbreak response together," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said today in a [press briefing](#). "But we need to know more about this figure, including the time period and circumstances in which the health workers became sick."

Messonnier said no U.S. health care personnel have been infected so far, but added, "We need to be pristine in our health care settings to keep our health care workers safe."

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**Kentucky's rural healthcare facilities are in crisis.  
Senate Bill 50 will further reduce access**

(KyForward) Our Commonwealth is ranked as having one of the highest percentage of hospitals at risk of closure in the nation with nearly one-fourth of rural hospitals in Kentucky at risk of closure. The most at-risk of closure are the small, nonprofit or public safety-net hospitals.

These hospitals, along with nonprofit primary care clinics known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), are vital to the health of our people, especially those living in rural and inner-city urban areas of Kentucky. They provide a higher percentage of care to uninsured and underinsured Kentuckians. These groups run programs that are designed to keep the most vulnerable populations healthy and reduce chronic illnesses and emergency room admissions that increase health care costs.

Small independent pharmacists are also struggling. They have been cut out of the system or had their compensation reduced.

Learn more: <https://www.kyforward.com/john-inman-kys-rural-healthcare-facilities-are-in-crisis-and-senate-bill-50-will-further-reduce-access/>

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**Public Health Issues Guidelines Related to Severe Flooding  
Flooding Can Create Health, Safety Concerns**

([KY CHFS Press Release](#)) The Department for Public Health (DPH), within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), reminds Kentuckians to follow safety guidelines following severe flooding and water run-off events from recent rainfall across the state.

Governor Andy Beshear, who today visited the Eastern Kentucky areas hardest hit by flood, praised residents for helping each other and told them his administration will support them.

DPH officials have specific flood recovery measures.

For more information about public health issues related to flooding, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/index.html> or <https://healthalerts.ky.gov/Pages/FloodSafety.aspx>.

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**First users of high-speed KentuckyWired network  
celebrate reliable, fast connection in rural areas**

(KyForward) The first users of KentuckyWired are celebrating the reliable and fast connection in rural areas. The state-owned, high-speed fiber optic cable network is going into government offices in all 120 Kentucky counties.

"I would recommend this to anybody," said Karen Wotier, one of the first users of KentuckyWired. Wotier is the building manager for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) branch location in Owenton. It was the first office to transition to KentuckyWired in December.

The CHFS office in Owenton is the first of approximately 900 state government sites being transitioned to KentuckyWired by October 2020. Kentucky will be the first state in the nation to build an open access, middle mile, high-speed fiber optic network in every county.

More information about KentuckyWired can be found at the KCNA website at [kentuckywired.ky.gov](http://kentuckywired.ky.gov).

Read more: <https://www.kyforward.com/first-users-of-high-speed-kentuckywired-network-celebrate-reliable-fast-connection-in-rural-areas/>

The KHREF Emergency Preparedness Update is assembled several times a week. When events make it necessary, the Update may be sent out several times a day to keep our hospital and the healthcare community advised on preparedness news and information. Most of this information is compiled from open sources, and where possible reference links will be provided. There is an archive of [Emergency Preparedness Updates available here](#). If you would like to add or delete, or have something you would like to contribute to a future edition of the Emergency Preparedness Update, please contact [rbartlett@kyha.com](mailto:rbartlett@kyha.com) (include your current email address). The preparedness program for the Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA) and KHREF are supported by US DHHS ASPR HPP funds through a contract with Kentucky Public Health.