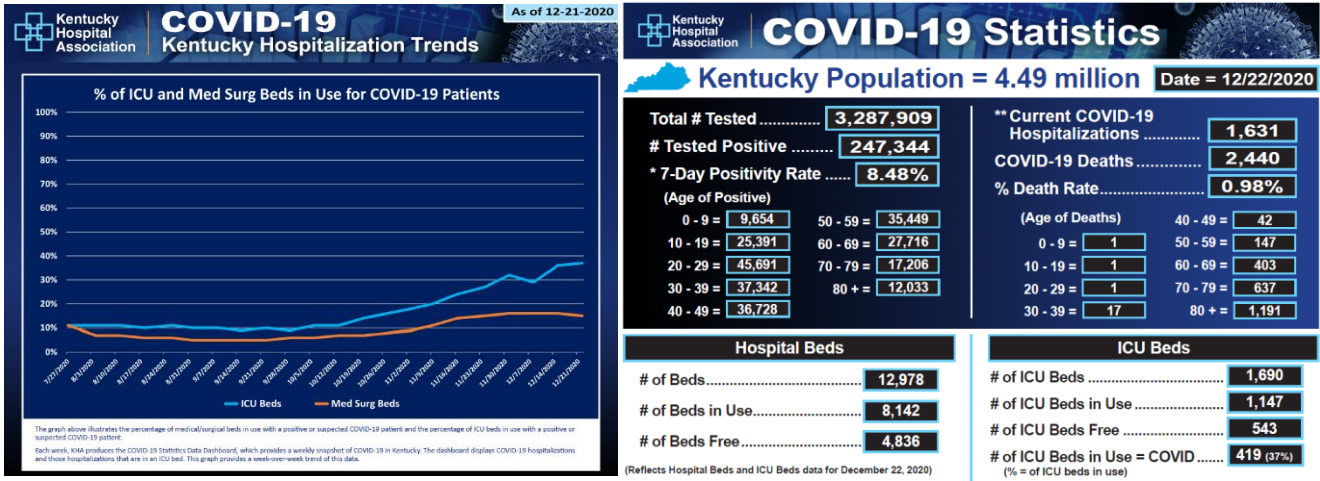




# Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for December 23, 2020



Updated regularly on <http://www.kyha.com/>

## Beshear says people 75 and older have 'compelling argument' to get virus vaccine after nursing homes and health-care workers

(KY Health News – AI Cross) Kentuckians 75 and older have a "very compelling argument" to be among those next in line to get vaccines for the novel coronavirus, Gov. Andy Beshear said Monday as vaccinations began at nursing homes in the state.

Last week, Beshear said that after nursing-home workers, staff and other health-care workers, the next group would be first responders and K-12 educators. Sunday, a **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** advisory committee said the next group should also include people 75 and older, as well as workers key to the function of society, including teachers, police officers, firefighters, corrections officers and grocery workers.

Beshear said he is "actively considering" adding people over 74 to the next group because the CDC "makes a very compelling argument," and in Kentucky, "our mortality rates are more attached to age" than in most other states.

More than 1,600 residents of Kentucky long-term-care facilities -- skilled-care nursing homes, personal-care homes and assisted-living facilities -- have died of Covid-19, two-thirds of the state's overall total.

Because they are "by far the most vulnerable population that Covid-19 preys upon," Beshear said as he announced that **Walgreens** and **CVS** began vaccinating nursing-home residents early Monday morning.

**See the Governor and other leaders get the needle:**

<http://kyhealthnews.blogspot.com/2020/12/beshear-legislative-leaders-chief.html>

## **First 10 Days after COVID Hospital Discharge Risky**

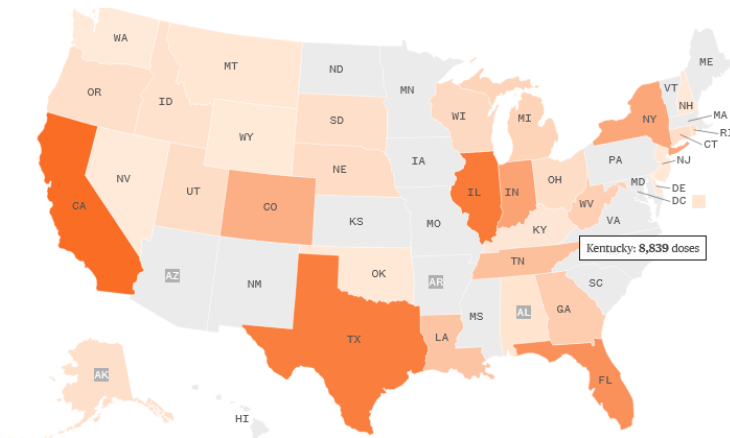
(Medicine Net) Being discharged from the hospital following a serious bout of **COVID-19** is far from a clean bill of health, new research warns, and the risk of re-hospitalization or death peaks early.

In the study, more than one-quarter of such patients ended up back in the hospital or died in the weeks after discharge. The researchers tracked almost 2,200 U.S. veterans discharged at 132 VA hospitals this past spring and summer. All had been hospitalized for **COVID-19**, and their post-hospital experience was compared with 5,300 peers who had been released following hospitalization for either non-COVID-related **pneumonia** or **heart failure**.

The findings showed that **COVID-19** patients were 40% to 60% more likely to be rehospitalized or die within 10 days following discharge compared with the other patients. In absolute terms, 9% of the discharged **COVID-19** patients ended up dying within two months, while one-fifth ended up rehospitalized.

The study was published online Dec. 14 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Learn more: <https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=250168>



**States are rolling out vaccination plans.**  
**Track the numbers inoculated across the country.**  
 (NBC) As of Dec. 21, [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported](#) that more than 614,117 initial doses of the two Covid-19 vaccines have been administered.

NBC News is tracking administered doses in each state by surveying health departments and examining daily reports. Some states have not yet reported data.

*This map will be updated as more vaccine reports become available.*

Explore and link to the map:  
<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/map-covid-19-vaccination-tracker-across-u-s-n1252085>

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**Tennessee Hospitals Are Disturbingly Close To Their Breaking Point**

(NPR) Many U.S. hospitals are struggling to find enough space and staff to treat COVID-19 patients. The surge in new cases has forced them to rethink how they use space, manage staff, and handle treatment.

Learn more: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/12/22/948908168/tennessee-hospitals-are-disturbingly-close-to-their-breaking-point>

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**Inside J&J's Latam COVID vaccine trial, a rush to recruit is followed by disappointment**

(Reuters) - Earlier this month, Johnson & Johnson abruptly called for an end to enrollment in its coronavirus vaccine trial and told scientists from six Latin American countries to wrap up their work within 48 hours, two researchers told Reuters. The halt was due to J&J's decision, announced later on that same day on Dec. 9, to cap the number of participants at about 40,000 people globally, down from a previous plan for 60,000. Wrapping up recruitment more quickly - while continuing to monitor volunteers already participating - would keep J&J on target to seek U.S. authorization for the shot early next year, the company has said, if it proves successful against a virus that has already killed nearly 1.7 million people.

Full story: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-vaccines-latinamer-idUSKBN28V1DE>

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**Dr. Deborah Birx will Retire**

Deborah Birx, MD, the White House's coronavirus task force coordinator, [said she will retire](#) because of criticism she and her family received over their travel during the Thanksgiving holiday; Birx said she was willing to help the Biden administration during the transition, however.

Dr. Birx is a well-respected public health official and has been a leading figure on the White House Coronavirus Taskforce since its formation in the early spring of 2020. She recently received criticism for visiting a second house of hers during Thanksgiving, while numerous government agencies were actively discouraging holiday travel as a means to abate the spread of Covid-19.

Learn more: <https://www.mediaite.com/news/dr-birx-says-shell-retire-because-her-family-has-been-treated-poorly-since-thanksgiving/>

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**Low U.S. Flu Rates Seen as Pandemic Rages**

Story link: <https://news360.com/article/545010932>

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**We All Know Smoke Is Bad For Your Health.**  
*It Could Be Worse Than You Think*

(NPR) – *[Expands on a story introduced December 21st]* - It's no secret that inhaling smoke is bad for your lungs. But now, scientists are suggesting smoke may also carry and spread infectious diseases.

The theory, [published in Science Magazine](#), is based on research that found wildfire smoke is teeming with thousands of species of microorganisms. Some of these microorganisms, including bacteria and fungal spores, are known to cause disease.

Until now, it's been widely accepted that the greatest risk to human health from smoke are the [tiny particles](#) from burning wood and other materials. Some of those particles are small enough to be inhaled into the lungs, triggering allergic reactions in some people or exacerbating lung diseases, like asthma in others.

The new research posits that when a wildfire burns plant or animal matter and disturbs soils, it exposes thousands of species of bacteria and fungi that otherwise might not easily become airborne. You might think the

high heat from fire would kill these organisms, but [one study](#) cited in the article found that some bacteria even multiply post fire. Scientists say the organisms latch onto smoke particulates, allowing them to travel thousands of miles across continents.

The possibility that smoke-transported microbes may be contributing to infections in human populations has yet to be studied. But it should be, the authors of the article argue. In some locations, growing rates of fungal diseases have coincided with increasing wildfire smoke — what the authors of the article call "compelling overlaps." The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also warns that firefighters are at higher risk of contracting valley fever, an infection caused by inhaling a fungus found in soil.

Whether the microbes in smoke actually cause infection or simply aggravate underlying respiratory issues, the article raises a new health threat that is "certainly alarming," says [Kelsey Jack](#), an associate professor of environmental and development economics at the University of California, Santa Barbara and co-chair of the climate group at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL).

Full story: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/12/23/948157452/we-all-know-smoke-is-bad-for-your-health-it-could-be-worse-than-you-think>

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**NIMS Alert 40-20: FEMA Releases 2020 National Preparedness Report**

FEMA released the [2020 National Preparedness Report](#), which only deals with actions taken in 2019. In its ninth year, this report presents an updated, risk-focused approach to summarizing the state of national preparedness. The National Preparedness Report published in 2021 will explore the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and evaluate the response to it, reflecting the data that becomes available as the incident continues. As an annual requirement of Presidential Policy Directive 8 and consistent with the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act reporting responsibilities, the National Preparedness Report (NPR) has assessed the nation's preparedness posture since 2012. This report provides partners across the nation with insights into risks, vulnerabilities, and capabilities to support decisions about program priorities, resource allocations and community actions.



***A Christmas Story***  
***Off-Duty Rescue Worker Saves Baby Elephant!***  
***Revived it with 10 minutes of CPR***

*Learn more and watch him in action!*

<https://www.newser.com/story/300368/man-revives-injured-baby-elephant-with-cpr.html>

*[Bet this isn't in the manual!]*

***Season's Greetings from ASPR TRACIE***

*For more than five years, ASPR TRACIE has been able to provide our stakeholders with the most current and useful information on*

*healthcare system preparedness.*

*They have been able to respond to more than 8,000 technical assistance (TA) requests and create more than 350 resources, housed on their [ASPR TRACIE-Developed Resources Page](#). Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, their Technical Assistance requests have increased by 135%. They also just celebrated our one millionth visitor to our website.*

*The team at [ASPR TRACIE](#) wish you and yours a peaceful, healthy holiday season, and look forward to continued collaboration in 2021.*

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 [Preparedness@kyha.com](mailto:Preparedness@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.