



Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for January 25, 2021

KY COVID-19 Positivity Rate Falls Below 10%

(From [press release](#)) Gov. Andy Beshear announced Kentucky's COVID-19 positivity rate has fallen below 10% for the first time since Dec. 31. Today's new case report was also the lowest for a Monday since Jan. 4. As of 4 PM, there were 1,268 new cases, and a positivity rate of 9.93%. There were 39 new deaths reported today.

Kentucky is [working](#) to become the fastest state to vaccinate school staff so that all schools can safely reopen for in-person classes. The Governor announced that Kentucky has administered 88% of all initial vaccine doses sent to the state's vaccination program.^[1] This Thursday, the Governor will provide an update on how Kentuckians in Phase 1A, 1B and 1C can sign up for an appointment at new regional Kroger vaccination centers as well as other partner locations.

To view the [full daily report](#), [incidence rate map](#), information on [testing locations](#), [vaccines](#), [contact tracing](#), [school reports and guidance](#), [guidance for health care providers](#) and the White House Coronavirus Task Force reports for Kentucky and more, visit kycovid19.ky.gov.

Governor Announces Utility Assistance is Available

(From [press release](#)) Gov. Andy Beshear announced up to \$38 million is available to local governments to help Kentuckians with overdue utility bills in their jurisdiction. Each unit of local government may request up to \$200,000 for assistance in their communities. The Department for Local Government (DLG) will administer the funding from the Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus Response (CDBG-CV) program established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Households are eligible for up to \$250 per month for six consecutive months if:

- ✓ They live in a city or county approved for funding;
- ✓ Have been financially impacted by COVID-19;
- ✓ Are struggling to pay water, sewer, electric, gas or other heating and cooling bills; and
- ✓ Have received notice for disconnect between January 21, 2020, and present day and/or up to two months following.

Once a household's application is approved, the local nonprofit community service provider will transfer funds directly to a utility provider on their behalf. [More details in [press release](#).]

CDC Clinicians ZOOM Call

[Treating Long COVID: Clinician Experience with Post- \(Free CE\) Acute COVID-19 Care](#)

Thursday, January 28 at 2-3 PM ET

Please click on the Zoom link below to join:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1606808037?pwd=NUx3a1hQd2tVWVZBU0JobFgxUDJ2Zz09>

New CDC director said Biden administration is struggling with lack of vaccine data

(NBC) The newly appointed director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned Sunday that the federal government remains in the dark about just how much vaccine is currently available and warned that states like New York won't be able to quickly replenish its limited supply.

"One of the biggest problems right now is I can't tell you how much vaccine we have, and if I can't tell it to you then I can't tell it to the governors and I can't tell it to the state health officials," Dr. Rochelle Walensky told "Fox News Sunday."

Learn more: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/new-cdc-director-said-biden-administration-struggling-lack-vaccine-data-n1255455>

First Known Case of Brazilian Covid-19 Variant Identified In Minn.

(NY Post) The first known case of [the contagious Brazilian coronavirus variant](#) in the US has been found in Minnesota, local health officials said Monday. The variant was found in a resident of the Twin Cities area with "recent travel history to Brazil," the Minnesota Department of Health [said in a statement](#).

The patient started feeling ill in the first week of January and tested positive on Jan. 9, according to officials. Epidemiologists are speaking with the patient to track their travel history, contacts and symptoms of the disease.

The mutation — like those that have been documented in the UK and South Africa — is believed to be more contagious than the original strain that caused the COVID-19 pandemic. It's unclear if the variant causes more severe illness than the original coronavirus strain.

Read more: <https://nypost.com/2021/01/25/first-case-of-brazilian-covid-19-mutation-found-in-minnesota/>

----- From [AHA Today News](#) -----

Pfizer finishes enrolling children 12-15 in COVID-19 vaccine study

Pfizer Inc. has completed enrolling children aged 12 to 15 in a COVID-19 vaccine study, the drug maker confirmed Friday. Vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna Inc. are not currently available for use in children due to a lack of studies. Pfizer [said](#) the Phase 3 clinical trial began in late July 2020 and completed enrollment of 46,331 participants in January, including over 2,200 participants aged 12-15. The company also plans to study the vaccine in pregnant women, among other populations. The Food and Drug Administration last month authorized emergency use of the vaccine for individuals age 16 and older.

FDA revises emergency use authorizations for N95 decontamination systems

The Food and Drug Administration Jan. 21 reissued [emergency use authorizations](#) for 10 systems authorized to decontaminate certain N95 respirators used by health care personnel when the COVID-19 pandemic results in an insufficient supply of new respirators. Among other changes, the reissued EUAs authorize the systems to decontaminate each compatible N95 respirator only four or fewer times, depending on the system.

FDA EUA link: <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-emergency-use-authorizations-medical-devices/decontamination-systems-personal-protective-equipment-euas>

Hundreds of Rural Hospitals Were at Immediate Risk of Closure *BEFORE* the Pandemic *More Rural Hospitals Are at High Risk of Closing in the Future*

Over 500 rural hospitals –more than one-fourth of the rural hospitals in the country –were at immediate risk of closure even before the coronavirus pandemic because of continuing financial losses and lack of financial reserves to sustain operations. These hospitals had:

- **Persistent Financial Losses:** The hospitals had a cumulative negative total margin over the most recent 3-year period for which financial data were available; and
- **Low or Non-Existent Financial Reserves:** The hospitals either (a) had total liabilities exceeding all assets other than buildings and equipment, or (b) had assets greater than liabilities, but only by enough to sustain continued losses for at most 2 years.

Almost every state had at least one rural hospital at immediate risk of closure, and in 22 states, 25% or more of the rural hospitals were at immediate risk.

Over 300 additional rural hospitals are at high risk of closure in the near future because of:

- Low Financial Reserves
- High Dependence on Non-Patient Service Revenues

The report indicates that Kentucky has 69 rural hospitals, with 16 at risk of closing (23%). It says 12 (17% are in immediate risk, and 4 at high risk.

In comparison with some of our neighbors, Indiana has 53 rural hospitals with 20 (38%) at risk of closing; Ohio has 70 rural hospitals, of which 19 (27%) are at risk; Tennessee has 51 rural hospitals, of which 30 (59%) are at risk; and West Virginia has 24 rural hospitals with 11 (46%) at risk.

CHQPR Report: https://www.chqpr.org/downloads/Rural_Hospitals_at_Risk_of_Closing.pdf

Source report on ***Crisis in Rural Health Care***: <https://ruralhospitals.chqpr.org/>

Drill down to KY map & info: <https://ruralhospitals.chqpr.org/>

Johns Hopkins: Health Security Headlines Extracts from [January 25, 2021](#)

Full-dose Blood Thinners Decreased Need for Life Support and Improved Outcome in Hospitalized COVID-19 Patients (*NIH*)

In large clinical trial conducted worldwide, full dose anti-coagulation (blood thinner) treatments given to moderately ill patients hospitalized for COVID-19 reduced the requirement of vital organ support—such as the need for ventilation. A trend in possible reduction of mortality was also observed and is being further studied. With large numbers of COVID-19 patients requiring hospitalization, these outcomes could also help reduce the overload on intensive care units around the world.

U.K. Defends Vaccine-Dose Delays as Approach Gains Traction (*Bloomberg News*)

The U.K. defended its decision to delay second doses of vaccines as the best way to combat the coronavirus, while more countries adopt a similar strategy in a race against rising cases and new strains. U.K. Health Secretary Matt Hancock said Sunday there is high confidence the first dose provides “decent efficacy” against the virus and that the country’s plan will speed vaccinations across the country.

Moderna Says its Covid-19 Vaccine Is Less Effective Against One Coronavirus Variant (STAT News)

Moderna is studying adding booster doses to its vaccine regimen after finding its Covid-19 vaccine was less effective against a coronavirus variant that was first identified in South Africa, the company said Monday. In lab research that involved testing whether blood from people who had received the vaccine could still fend off different coronavirus variants, scientists found that there was a sixfold reduction in the vaccine's neutralizing power against the variant, called B.1.351, than against earlier forms of the coronavirus, Moderna reported.

Exclusive: U.S. Goal to Squeeze More COVID Shots from Pfizer Vials Hampered by Syringe Production

(Reuters) The world's largest syringe maker does not have the capacity to substantially increase U.S. supplies of specialty syringes needed to squeeze more doses from Pfizer Inc COVID-19 vaccine vials in the coming weeks, an executive said in an interview.

Merck Discontinues Development of SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 Vaccine Candidates; Continues Development of Two Investigational Therapeutic Candidates (AP)

Merck announced that the company is discontinuing development of its SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 vaccine candidates, V590 and V591, and plans to focus its SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 research strategy and production capabilities on advancing two therapeutic candidates, MK-4482 and MK-7110. This decision follows Merck's review of findings from Phase 1 clinical studies for the vaccines. In these studies, both V590 and V591 were generally well tolerated, but the immune responses were inferior to those seen following natural infection and those reported for other SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 vaccines. Merck continues to advance clinical programs and to scale-up manufacturing for two investigational medicines, MK-7110 and MK-4482 (molnupiravir); molnupiravir is being developed in collaboration with Ridgeback Bio.

Mental health experts prepare for 'second wave' of pandemic trauma among frontline workers

(WDRB) Mental health experts are seeing an uptick in calls during the pandemic. However, they are preparing for when frontline workers, whom the community calls during an emergency, will need help themselves. "It's a daily concern typically, this worry, this fear, and that's been going on 10, 11 months," said Caitlin Macy, clinical supervisor for acute child psychiatric services at Seven Counties Services.

Learn more: https://www.wdrb.com/news/mental-health-experts-prepare-for-second-wave-of-pandemic-trauma-among-frontline-workers/article_b8960654-5e29-11eb-ac33-837dba30e721.html

Could cats and dogs have to be vaccinated to curb virus spread?

Cats and dogs could have to be vaccinated against Covid-19 in future, a group of scientists from the University of East Anglia has said, noting that pets could infect humans with new variants.

Learn more: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9182525/Transmission-Covid-19-pets-humans-poses-significant-long-term-risk-scientists-say.html?ITO=applenews>

What Parents Need to Know About the New Federal Allergy Recommendations

New Recommendations Suggest Feeding Babies Peanuts, Eggs, and Other Allergens Early On

Read more: <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/a35229438/new-dietary-guidelines-usda-kids-allergens/>

Some Police Departments Sharing Use-Of-Force Policies

(IACP New) The AP (1/19) reported, "Some police departments are opening themselves up for more public scrutiny" of their use-of-force policies, following the "high-profile police-involved killings of unarmed Black citizens." Law enforcement historically "has been reluctant to share" the force policies with the public over concerns "it will be used against them before they've had an opportunity to identify and fix the problems." Additionally, "public opinion whether a police-involved death or injury was justified is often formed based on hindsight and assumptions that don't account for critical-decision factors." Still, "since June, at least 57 of the 100 largest U.S. police departments have adopted more restrictive force policies."

President Orders Study of Domestic Violent Extremism

(IACP News) The AP (1/22, Tucker) reports that President Biden "has directed law enforcement and intelligence officials in his administration to study the threat of domestic violent extremism in the United States, an undertaking being launched weeks after a mob of insurgents loyal to Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol." The article notes that the effort "is being coordinated by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security, and will be used as a foundation to develop policy, the White House said."

U.S. Soldier from Ohio Conspired to Plot Attacks on 9/11 Memorial, Maximize Lethality on Troops

Learn more from NBC: <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/u-s-soldier-allegedly-conspired-to-plot-attacks-on-9-11-memorial-sources-say/2837595/>

SAVE THE DATE

2021 Kentucky Trauma and Emergency Medicine Symposium

October 21-22 at Galt House, Louisville
Optional pre-conference workshops October 20th
Continuing Education credits provided.

InfraGard Webinars

January 28 @ 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm CST / 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm EST

The Anubis Clock: We are all on borrowed time against the attackers.

Presented by InfraGard Houston | Contact: peter.chaves@infragardhouston.org

Join Aamir Lakhani, Manager, FortiGuard Labs, to get a real-world introduction to “the bad guys” in 2021. Aamir will explore and reveal some of the top hacker tools, techniques, Darknet markets, and DeepWeb exploits that attackers are currently using to attack, exploit, and breach organizations around the globe. Learn how we are all on borrowed time against the attackers and tips for how you can take control of the race against the Anubis Clock. [More information](#)

January 28 @ 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm EST

The Ransomware Threat Landscape

Presented by InfraGard Maryland | Contact: president@infragardmd.org

Join the leadership of the Infragard Maryland Members Alliance as we present our first webinar of 2021 on the ransomware threat landscape. This event will feature a panel of cybersecurity experts and will include discussion of new families of ransomware, trends such as naming and shaming, and legal implications of dealing with threat actors. [More information](#)

January 29 @ 10:00 am - 11:30 am PST / 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm EST

The SolarWinds Cyber Attack – Supply Chain Threats & Private Sector Impacts

Presented by InfraGard San Diego | Contact: rusty.sailors@protectingtomorrow.org

Join InfraGard San Diego to receive a timely update directly from law enforcement and private sector experts regarding the SolarWinds Orion cyber attack, which has affected approximately 18,000 public and private sector customers. According to a joint statement from the FBI, NSA, ODNI and CISA, an advanced persistent threat actor, likely Russian in origin, is responsible for most or all of the ongoing cyber compromises of both government and non-governmental networks. Speakers will discuss critically important information about the SolarWinds Orion supply chain attack – one of the most significant in history – and what businesses can do in response. Following the one-hour briefing, InfraGard members will have an opportunity for a 30-minute live Q&A. [More information](#)

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 (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.