



Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for January 28, 2021

Gov. Beshear Announces Four New Regional Vaccine Sites, Website to Help Eligible Kentuckians ‘Find a Vaccine’

COVID-19 cases, positivity rate continue to decline; most deaths ever reported Thursday

(See press release for more)

Gov. Andy Beshear announced the state, in partnership with Kroger Health, will open its first regional vaccination site at the Kentucky Horse Park in Fayette County next week. Three additional [regional sites](#) are opening through partners Ephraim McDowell Hospital in Danville and Western Baptist and Lourdes Mercy both in Paducah.

The Governor also unveiled a new state website, [vaccine.ky.gov](#), and hotline that help Kentuckians determine if they are eligible to receive a vaccine and then helps them find one in their region.

As of today, there were 2,947 new cases reported. The Governor said this was the lowest Thursday in four weeks. The positivity rate was 9.04%, which is the fourth day it has been under 10%. There were 60 new death recorded. For more detail go to [kycovid19.ky.gov](#).

KHA to Host KDPH Webinar: [COVID Vaccine Confidence](#)

On Tuesday, February 2, Dr. **Emily Messerli** from the Immunization Branch of the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) will present education for those who are working to defuse COVID-19 vaccine hesitance.

Join Zoom Meeting on February 2 at 11:00 a.m. (ET)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89696860207?pwd=QmhmaHJyYmRVaTBwUXVvdWQvMGFOQT09>

Meeting ID: 896 9686 0207

Passcode: 2501

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Related - Nearly Half of Americans Want COVID Vaccine ASAP

Learn more: <https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=251413>

The Americas surpasses one million deaths from COVID-19

(PAHO) “Today, we mark another tragic milestone in our region: over one million people in the Americas have now died from complications of COVID-19. We’ve lost more people to this virus than the entire population of many cities,” Pan American Health Organization Director Carissa F. Etienne said today.

Speaking at a press briefing, she said “the weight of this loss is incalculable,” noting that over 44 million people in the Americas have now been infected with COVID-19, including more than two million in the last week.

The PAHO Director outlined the course of the pandemic in North America, with the highest number of cases and growing pressure on hospital capacity, and in the Caribbean, where some smaller countries are seeing a rapid acceleration of cases.

“By contrast, most countries in Central America – except for Honduras and Guatemala – are seeing a decrease in COVID-19 infections over the previous week,” Etienne said. In South America, “while hospitalizations are on the rise throughout much of the region, including in Colombia, Chile and Peru, the situation in Brazil is particularly worrisome,” she added.

Full report: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/americas-surpasses-one-million-deaths-covid-19>

Germany recommends AstraZeneca vaccine for only those under 65

(UPI) German public health officials recommended the use of the Oxford/AstraZeneca [COVID-19](#) vaccine, but said it should be given only to people under age 65. The country's health agency, the [Robert Koch](#) Institute, said there's not enough data [to determine](#) how effective the vaccine is for the elderly.

Learn more: https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2021/01/28/Germany-recommends-AstraZeneca-vaccine-for-only-those-under-65/7911611858574/

South African COVID variant detected in South Carolina

(CIDRAP) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today [confirmed](#) the first US cases of B.1.351, a variant of COVID-19 first discovered in South Africa, in South Carolina.

According to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), the variant was detected in two people with no known travel history and no contact with one another.

"The arrival of the SARS-CoV-2 variant in our state is an important reminder to all South Carolinians that the fight against this deadly virus is far from over," said Brannon Traxler, MD, [DHEC Interim Public Health Director](#). "While more COVID-19 vaccines are on the way, supplies are still limited."

The CDC said today it is still early days for understanding the implications of the variants now being identified across the globe. "At this time, we have no evidence that infections by this variant cause more severe disease," the agency said.

Full story: <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/01/south-african-covid-variant-detected-south-carolina>

Related - Novavax COVID-19 vaccine works, but less so against variants

(AP) Novavax Inc. said Thursday that its COVID-19 vaccine appears 89% effective based on early findings from a British study and that it also seems to work — though not as well — against new mutated versions of the virus circulating in that country and South Africa.

The announcement comes amid worry about whether a variety of vaccines being rolled out around the world will be strong enough to protect against [worrisome new variants](#) — and as the world desperately needs new types of shots to boost scarce supplies.

The study of 15,000 people in Britain is still underway. But an interim analysis found 62 participants so far have been diagnosed with COVID-19 — only six of them in the group that got vaccine and the rest who received dummy shots.

Read more: <https://apnews.com/article/novavax-covid-19-vaccine-works-b12421678bb74d840f8c7da6b7d8ce6b>

House Opens Investigation of Pandemic Ventilator Purchases Overseen by White House

([Washington Post](#)) A House subcommittee is investigating a government deal to buy \$70 million worth of ventilators for the coronavirus pandemic response that a [Washington Post](#) investigation found were inadequate for treating most covid-19 patients.

Covid-19 sniffing dogs: What does the science say?

Learn more: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/28/health/covid-19-miami-heat-dogs-explainer-wellness/index.html>

Johns Hopkins: Health Security Headlines from January 28, 2021

[Time to Double or Upgrade Masks As Coronavirus Variants Emerge, Experts Say](#) (*Washington Post*) The discovery of highly transmissible coronavirus variants in the United States has public health experts urging Americans to upgrade the simple cloth masks that have become a staple shield during the pandemic. The change can be as simple as slapping a second mask over the one you already wear, or better yet, donning a fabric mask on top of a surgical mask. Some experts say it is time to buy the highest-quality KN95 or N95 masks that officials hoping to reserve supplies for health-care workers have long discouraged Americans from purchasing.

US terrorism alert warns of politically motivated violence

[*Follow-up to yesterday's breaking story.*] (AP) The Department of Homeland Security issued a [national terrorism bulletin](#) Wednesday warning of the lingering potential for violence from people motivated by antigovernment sentiment after Preshttps://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/ntas/alerts/21_0127_ntas-bulletin.pdfident Joe Biden's election, suggesting the Jan. 6 [riot at the Capitol](#) may embolden extremists and set the stage for additional attacks. The department did not cite any specific plots, but pointed to "a heightened threat environment across the United States" that it believes "will persist" for weeks after Biden's Jan. 20 inauguration.

Full AP story: <https://apnews.com/article/us-terrorism-alert-75156eae27532bd9e5cbfe35e6485a3b>

Referenced during the webinar was the US DHS document “*Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence*” Here is a PDF version of the report:

https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0920_plcy_strategic-framework-countering-terrorism-targeted-violence.pdf

Create your emergency plans using FEMA preparedness guides

The Federal Emergency Management Agency offers comprehensive preparedness guides to help state, local, tribal and territorial agencies to create their emergency plans. [Get the guides](#)

GM hopes to eliminate gas vehicles, have all-electric portfolio by 2040

(Detroit Free Press) General Motors "aspires" to have all of its global new light-duty vehicles, including full-size pickups and SUVs, be zero emission by 2035. It also targets 2040 for its global products and plants to be carbon neutral. GM made the announcements Thursday, stopping short of saying all of its vehicles *will* be zero emissions, which means either battery-electric or hydrogen fuel cell propulsion.

Carbon neutral means that all vehicles and plants will be zero emissions and GM will buy carbon credits to offset those that are not.

Full story: <https://www.freep.com/story/money/cars/general-motors/2021/01/28/gm-emissions-electric-gas-light-duty-vehicles/4290489001/>

Related story - NTSB issues recommendations addressing responder safety risks from battery fires in electric vehicles

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) released a report, [Safety Risks to Emergency Responders from Lithium-Ion Battery Fires in Electric Vehicles](#) (Safety Report 20/01) in November 2020 with outcomes from investigations into several incidents involving electric vehicle fires. This month, the NTSB released [safety recommendations](#), based on the findings of Safety Report 20/01.

Safety issues with high-voltage, lithium-ion batteries used in electric vehicles first gained widespread attention when a Chevrolet Volt caught fire three weeks after a crash test in May 2011. Challenges for responders remain, due to lack of standardized emergency response guidance for incidents involving electric vehicles with high-voltage batteries.

The NTSB created [a short video on the safety risks to responders](#), which summarizes the findings of Safety Report 20/21. The electric vehicle incident investigations discovered three key safety risks: thermal runaway, stranded energy, and battery reignition.

In the full report, the NTSB calls on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and electric vehicle manufacturers to provide standardized, vehicle-specific guidance for emergency responders in addressing the implications of these safety risks for fire suppression, mitigation, and safe storage.

The NTSB also recommends that organizations concerned with emergency responder safety inform their members about the circumstances of the fire risks described in the report and the guidance available to emergency personnel who respond to high-voltage lithium-ion battery fires in electric vehicles.

The [full Safety Report 20/21](#) is available on NTSB's website. (Source: [NTSB](#))

Rate of guns seized at airport checkpoints jumped in 2020

(AP) Security screeners confiscated guns at airport checkpoints at a record pace last year although the total number of guns dropped along with the steep plunge in travelers because of the pandemic.

The Transportation Security Administration said Tuesday that screeners found 3,257 firearms on passengers or in their carry-on bags in 2020, or about 10 for every million travelers. About 83% of the guns were loaded.

The rate was double that in 2019, when screeners found 5 guns for every million passengers. However, with 500 million more travelers screened in 2019, TSA officers found a record 4,432 guns that year.

Full AP story: <https://apnews.com/article/guns-seized-airports-jumped-2020-ef4296e996f9836f464c51850c572545>

Survey: Most Mayors Believe Police Budgets Are At the Right Level

(IACP News) [The Hill](#) (1/27, Lonas) reports the Menino Survey of Mayors conducted by Boston University's Initiative on Cities found "that 80 percent of mayors think the police budget for their city is 'about right.'" Additionally, of the 130 mayors surveyed "29 percent said they would not support reallocating resources, 28 percent said they would support moving some resources and 23 percent said they would consider moving few resources elsewhere." The survey also found that "52 percent of mayors believe that police treat white people 'somewhat better,' while 32 percent believe white and Black people are treated equally."

Authorities Target Emotet, NetWalker in Cyber Policing Efforts

(IACP News) The AP (1/27, Corder, Bajak) reports that authorities from the US, European Union, the UK, and Canada “joined forces to disrupt what may be the world’s largest network for seeding malware infections,” the botnet known as Emotet. The operation, which successfully took control of Emotet’s infrastructure, “appears to strike a major blow against criminal gangs that have used that network for years to install ransomware for extortion schemes and to steal data and money.” Separately on Wednesday, the FBI also “announced the arrest...of a Canadian as part of a bid to disrupt” NetWalker, “a ransomware gang that has targeted the health care sector,” seizing “half a million dollars in cryptocurrency.”

Apple to crack down on tracking iPhone users in early spring

(AP) Apple CEO Tim Cook fired off a series of thinly veiled shots at Facebook and other social media companies Thursday, escalating an online privacy battle pitting the iPhone maker against digital services that depend on tracking people to help sell ads. Cook said, “What are the consequences of not just tolerating but rewarding content that undermines public trust in life-saving vaccinations? What are the consequences of seeing thousands of users join extremist groups and then perpetuating an algorithm that recommends more?”

Full story: <https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Apple-to-crack-down-on-tracking-iPhone-users-in-15904150.php>

Feel Good Story....

Drivers Stranded in Storm Get Surprise Vaccinations

(Newser) Oregon health workers who got stuck in a snowstorm on their way back from a COVID-19 vaccination event went car to car injecting stranded drivers before several of the doses expired. Josephine County Public Health said on [Facebook](#) that the "impromptu vaccine clinic" took place after about 20 employees were stopped in traffic on a highway after a vaccination clinic. Six of the vaccines were getting close to expiring, so the workers decided to offer them to other stranded drivers. The shots were meant for other people, but "the snow meant those doses wouldn't make it to them before they expired," the health department said.

Not wanting to waste them, staff walked from vehicle to vehicle, offering people a chance to receive the vaccine. A county ambulance was on hand for safety. All the doses were administered, including one to a Josephine County Sheriff's Office employee who'd arrived too late for the vaccination clinic but ended up stopped with the others, officials said. Josephine County Public Health Director Mike Weber said it was one of the "coolest operations he'd been a part of."

Source: <https://www.newser.com/story/301852/snow-stranded-them-then-an-impromptu-vaccine-clinic.html>

...and a “not so comfortable” ending

China Is Now Using Anal Swabs for Coronavirus Detection

(Newser) Coronavirus testing is getting even more uncomfortable. At least that’s the case in China, where health authorities have begun using anal swabs to test for the virus, [Gizmodo](#) reports. According to a report by Chinese state media’s [Global Times](#), “Studies have shown that the coronavirus survives longer in the anus or excrement than those taken from upper body tracts.” Not everyone agrees with the new testing method, the [Washington Post](#) notes, reporting that the move to use anal swabs instead of nasal or throat swabs has prompted “widespread discussion and some outrage.” A poll on Chinese social media platform Weibo found that 80% of respondents “could not accept” the method.

Full story: <https://www.newser.com/story/301829/coronavirus-testing-in-china-is-getting-more-uncomfortable.html>

<p>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.</p>
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