Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation
Emergency Preparedness Update
for February 8, 2021

As New COVID-19 Cases Decline, Kentucky Focuses on Equitable Vaccine Access

(Press Release) On Monday, as new cases continue to decline, Gov. Beshear said the state is working to address equitable vaccine access. The Governor updated Kentuckians on the demographics of those vaccinated. The Governor said for the fifth straight week, the state has distributed more vaccines than it received in first doses from the federal government. Of all the first doses the state has received, 91% are already in a Kentuckians' arms.

Kentucky has received 490,975 COVID-19 initial vaccine doses and 444,930 Kentuckians have received their first vaccine dose. The federal long-term care vaccination program run through CVS and Walgreens has sent 80,925 first doses to Kentucky and the program has administered 69,202.

The Governor also announced the state's positivity rate (7.78%) has decreased to the lowest it has been since Nov. 10 and Kentucky has now had four straight weeks of declining test positivity and weekly cases. There were 1,003 new cases reported today, with 40 new deaths.

Video of press briefing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JILv-UwZ9IA

Scientists to US: Act now to leash virulent COVID variant

(COVID) The B117 SARS-CoV-2 variant, identified in 33 states thus far, will dominate other strains in the coming weeks, triggering major COVID-19 surges such as those seen in Portugal and the United Kingdom—unless the United States immediately scales up surveillance and mitigation efforts, according to a study published yesterday on the preprint server medRxiv.

A team led by scientists from the Scripps Research Institute sequenced SARS-CoV-2 genomes from 10 states using US COVID-19 testing facilities to track the emergence and spread of B117, the more transmissible and lethal variant that was first discovered in the United Kingdom in September and likely introduced to the United States during holiday travel.

Among the 460 SARS-CoV2 samples successfully sequenced from December 2020 through January 2021, 209 (45%) were B117. During January, the B117 growth rate among the samples doubled about every 10 days, suggesting 35% to 45% higher transmissibility than other strains (29% to 37% in California, 38% to 49% in Florida).

As of yesterday, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported 690 B117 cases in 33 states. B117 shares the N501Y mutation with other variants first seen in South Africa and Brazil but also has several other mutations in the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein that enable it to more easily enter human cells.

Full story: https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/02/scientists-us-act-now-leash-virulent-covid-variant

---

FDA updates EUA for COVID-19 convalescent plasma

(AHA Today) The Food and Drug Administration last week revised and reissued its emergency use authorization for COVID-19 convalescent plasma to treat hospitalized patients with COVID-19. The changes include updates based on additional clinical trials; clarify the authorization's limit to high-titer convalescent plasma for hospitalized patients early in the disease and those with impaired humoral
FDA Letter: https://www.fda.gov/media/141477/download

Team Kentucky Fund Donates $380,000 to Mission-Aligned Local Nonprofits

(Press Release) Gov. Andy Beshear announced a $380,000 donation from the Team Kentucky Fund to 19 qualified nonprofit organizations in equal shares of $20,000. Each nonprofit serves Kentuckians by preventing homelessness and/or assisting families impacted by the opioid epidemic. (See the press release for more detail and the programs gifted.)

Johns Hopkins: Health Security Headlines
Extracts from February 8, 2021

Decline in COVID-19 Hospitalization Growth Rates Associated with Statewide Mask Mandates — 10 States, March–October 2020 *(MMWR)* During March 22–October 17, 2020, 10 sites participating in the COVID-19–Associated Hospitalization Surveillance Network in states with statewide mask mandates reported a decline in weekly COVID-19–associated hospitalization growth rates by up to 5.5 percentage points for adults aged 18–64 years after mandate implementation, compared with growth rates during the 4 weeks preceding implementation of the mandate. Mask-wearing is a component of a multipronged strategy to decrease exposure

to and transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and reduce strain on the health care system, with likely direct effects on COVID-19 morbidity and associated mortality.

Biden Calls in Active-Duty Troops for COVID-19 Vaccination Effort (*Time*) Making good on President Joe Biden's promises for additional U.S. military support in the national fight against COVID-19, the Pentagon committed for the first time to deploy teams of active-duty service members to support mass vaccination centers.

Feds tracking down hacker who tried to tamper with Florida town's water supply

(CBS) A shocking case of computer hacking has been uncovered in Pinellas County, Florida. Federal investigators are trying to hunt down the person who tried to poison a public water supply — remotely.

According to investigators monitoring the water plant in the Tampa Bay city of Oldsmar, they noticed breaches starting Friday morning.

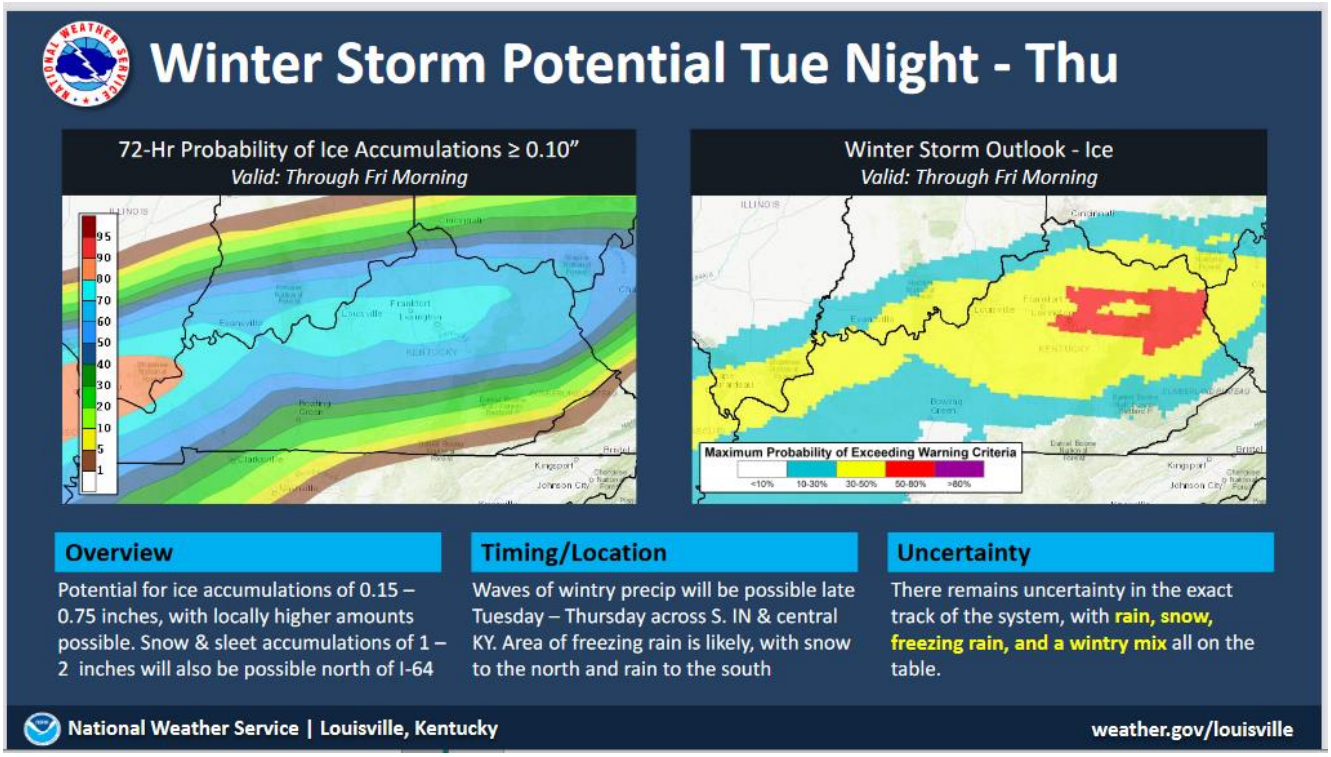
The hacker or hackers was controlling the computer system's mouse — opening various functions on the screen and changing the sodium hydroxide in the water supply from about 100 parts per million to 11,100 parts per million.

Now Secret Service and FBI cyber units are trying to determine who is behind the hack and whether it was someone in the U.S. or overseas. It occurred just two days before the Super Bowl in a city about 30 miles away from Raymond James Stadium.

Full story: https://www.cbsnews.com/news/florida-water-treatment-plant-hack-fbi-investigation/

***Related story* - TeamViewer was used for the hack**
Operator said hs computer just started doing things on its own!

Full story: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-cyber-florida-idUSKBN2A82FV



Bookmark and check this site often: https://alerts.weather.gov/cap/ky.php?x=1
[This will update overnight, and there is another NWS briefing call Tuesday – so watch for more info.]

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 added or deleted, 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.