



# Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for February 23, 2021

## Gov. Beshear Recommends Schools Return to Some Form of In-Person Learning March 1

Gov. Andy Beshear announced he is issuing a new [executive order](#) that recommends all school districts, including private schools, offer or expand some form of in-person instructional opportunities beginning March 1. If district personnel have not yet finished their vaccine series as of March 1, the executive order recommends some form of in-person instruction begin seven days after they have received their second vaccination.

Lt. Gov. Coleman said the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) [issued](#) a comprehensive, 136-page manual, [KDE COVID-19 Guidance 2.0](#), which will assist with the shift back into school buildings.

COVID Update: As of 4 PM today there were 1,497 new cases, with a positivity rate of 6.3%. There are 894 hospitalized, with 242 in an ICU and 121 on vents. Only 16 new deaths were recorded today.

Yesterday, in accordance with a [proclamation](#) from the White House, Gov. Beshear [directed](#) that flags at all state office buildings be lowered to half-staff until sunset on Friday, Feb. 26, to commemorate the milestone of more than 500,000 American lives lost to COVID-19.

More in the full press release: <https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=629>

### Schools may see a burst of the common cold when they reopen, research suggests

(STAT) A curious thing happened when Hong Kong reopened schools after closing them because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It bears watching here.

Hong Kong closed its schools to in-person learning from late January 2020 to late May — and then again in early July, when more Covid cases were detected. Within a few weeks of schools reopening in October, they started to see large numbers of kids getting sick, despite mandatory mask-wearing, additional spacing between desks, and other measures to lower the risk of spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19.

But the children weren't infected with the virus. Nor did they have influenza, which would have been another possibility. They were infected with rhinoviruses — one of the most common causes of the common cold. Full story: <https://www.statnews.com/2021/02/23/schools-may-see-a-burst-of-the-common-cold-when-they-reopen-research-suggests/>

### Johnson & Johnson says it can provide 20M vaccine doses by late March

(Politico) Johnson & Johnson can deliver 20 million doses of its single-shot coronavirus vaccine to the U.S. government by the end of March, an executive [will testify on Tuesday](#). "Assuming necessary regulatory approvals relating to our manufacturing processes, our plan is to begin shipping immediately upon emergency use authorization, and deliver enough single-doses by the end of March to enable the vaccination of more than 20 million Americans," Johnson & Johnson's Richard Nettles, vice president of medical affairs for the company's pharmaceutical unit Janssen, will tell a House Energy & Commerce subcommittee Tuesday.

The company has applied to the Food and Drug Administration for emergency authorization. FDA is expected to grant that as early as this weekend, after an expert FDA panel convenes Friday to discuss the effectiveness and safety of J&J's vaccine.

Full story: <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/02/22/johnson-johnson-vaccine-march-470994?cid=apn>

### **Related - Why the Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Has Gotten A Bad Rap — And Why That's Not Fair**

(NPR) Two COVID-19 vaccines are being distributed in the U.S. right now, and this week an FDA advisory committee will vote on whether a third should join them.

If granted emergency use authorization, Johnson & Johnson's one-dose vaccine would become available in the U.S., along with those from Pfizer and Moderna.

In clinical trials, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine appears to be [66% effective at preventing moderate to severe cases of COVID-19](#) — compared to about 95% for Moderna and Pfizer. That has some people wondering if they should avoid the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Absolutely not, says Dr. Ashish Jha, dean of the Brown University School of Public Health.

"What I've been saying to my family is, as soon as the J&J vaccine is authorized, if that's what you can get, you should get it as soon as it's your turn in line," says Jha.

He points out that the 66% vs. 95% effectiveness isn't the right comparison for several reasons. He notes that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was tested in different settings — the U.S., several Latin American countries and South Africa, where some worrisome variants of the virus were first seen.

"So that 66% number really represents an amalgamation of a variety of different clinical trials. Moderna and Pfizer were not tested in those circumstances," Jha tells *All Things Considered*. "And even if you just look at the U.S. data, the Johnson & Johnson number then starts getting much closer to the Moderna and Pfizer numbers." But all of that misses what Jha says is the most important point. Keep reading to learn more:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/02/22/970235986/why-the-johnson-johnson-vaccine-has-gotten-a-bad-rap-and-why-thats-not-fair>

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**Pharmacists say 'pooling' Covid vaccines could save thousands of doses**

(NBC) As millions of people across the country line up for their coronavirus vaccination shots, health officials are struggling to meet the surging demand, the [result of short supplies](#).

"It's more valuable than liquid gold, truth be told," said Melanie Massiah-White, chief pharmacy officer for Inova Health System, a nonprofit hospital network based in Northern Virginia.

Some pharmacists say a simple solution could get thousands more people vaccinated each week, but the Food and Drug Administration is standing in the way. It's called "pooling" — and it's not a new concept. Pharmacists have been doing it for years with everything from flu vaccines to some chemotherapy medications to antibiotics. It involves taking what's left over in a drug vial and combining it with what's left in another vial to create a full dose

Learn more: <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/pharmacists-say-pooling-covid-vaccines-could-save-thousands-doses-n1258149>

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**A quarter of Ky's community health center visits are via telehealth;  
bill would codify temporary rules**

(KyForward News/Kentucky Health News) A bill to codify telehealth provisions that were put into place during the pandemic to temporarily relax some of the regulations has passed out of committee and awaits a hearing in the full House.

A key component of the bill is that it continues to allow audio-only visits, which she said is imperative because the state has many places without broadband and many patients who are not adept at using the technology.

The bill also requires parity of payment for services that are delivered in a like manner to an office visit, and allows licensing boards of each profession to have input around what types of visits would be conducive to telehealth services.

Learn more: <https://www.kyforward.com/a-quarter-of-kys-community-health-center-visits-are-via-telehealth-bill-would-codify-temporary-rules/>

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**Johns Hopkins: Health security Headlines  
Extracts from [February 23, 2021](#)**

[Superspreading Drives the COVID Pandemic — and Could Help to Tame it](#) (*Nature*) Uneven transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus has had tragic consequences — but also offers clues for how best to target control measures.

[Reassessing COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment in Anticipation of a US B.1.1.7 Surge: Stay The Course or Pivot?](#) (*CIDRAP*) In the seventh Viewpoint report, published February 23, 2021, CIDRAP and other top US experts note that, with a likely surge of the B.1.1.7 SARS-CoV-2 variant in the US, there is a small window to maximize protection from COVID-19 vaccines by focusing first doses on people 65 years old and older and delaying second doses to other groups.

[Effectiveness of BNT162b2 mRNA Vaccine Against Infection and COVID-19 Vaccine Coverage in Healthcare Workers in England, Multicentre Prospective Cohort Study](#) (*the SIREN Study*) (Preprints with the Lancet) BNT162b2 mRNA and ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 adenoviral vector vaccines have been rapidly rolled out in the UK. We determined the factors associated with vaccine coverage for both vaccines and documented the vaccine effectiveness of the BNT162b2 mRNA vaccine in our healthcare worker (HCW) cohort study of staff undergoing regular asymptomatic testing.

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The KHEREF 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](mailto:Preparedness@kyha.com) (include your current email address). The preparedness program for the Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA) and KHEREF are supported by US DHHS ASPR HPP funds through a contract with Kentucky Public Health.