



Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for March 16, 2021

Kentucky COVID Update

The Governor reported 819 new COVID-19 cases today, with a positivity of 3.87%. The state has nine “Red” counties at this time. There were 24 new deaths recorded today.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES						
CONFIRMED CASES AS OF FEB. 3, 2021						
Active staff	Total staff	Staff Deaths	Active inmates	Total inmates	Inmate Deaths	
55	929	5	271	6,884	43	
CONFIRMED CASES AS OF MARCH 3, 2021						
Active staff	Total staff	Staff Deaths	Active inmates	Total inmates	Inmate Deaths	
56	1,012	5	245	7,159	44	
CONFIRMED CASES AS OF MARCH 16, 2021						
Active staff	Total staff	Staff Deaths	Active inmates	Total inmates	Inmate Deaths	
48	1,070	5	628	7,806	46	

*As of March 16, three inmates are currently hospitalized

As noted in the story that follows this one, audits in other states are beginning to show that some COVID-19 deaths have gone unreported. Governor Brashear said that during his Thursday update this week they will have a report on the audit that has been done on Kentucky’s COVID deaths.

J. Michael Brown, Secretary of the KY Department of Corrections, gave an update on current numbers within the state’s correctional facilities. One of the efforts they are preparing to undertake is a program to vaccinate people in their fourteen facilities. Mr. Brown

said that they have enrolled all 14 of their facilities as vaccine providers, and the plan is to use the Jonson & Johnson vaccine as supplies become available.

Here is a link to the YouTube update from today: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOrrHdmECfk>

States Are Finding More Unreported Covid-19 Deaths Ohio found 4,000 unreported Covid-19 deaths. West Virginia found 168.

(WSJ) While [Covid-19](#) deaths head lower, raising hopes that the U.S. is turning a corner as vaccinations continue, states around the country are steadily finding previously unreported deaths that are causing data confusion. The issues largely involve systems that states are using to try to report Covid-19 data in near real time, and not deaths reported more slowly through death certificates. These front-line numbers are the ones that fuel state dashboards and data trackers, like the closely watched one created by Johns Hopkins University, which help policy makers and the public closely monitor pandemic trends.

Ohio in February announced more than 4,000 additional deaths while reconciling its data, and Indiana added about 1,500. Smaller revisions have also recently come from Virginia, Minnesota and Rhode Island. On Thursday, authorities in West Virginia said medical providers hadn’t properly reported 168 deaths to the state’s public-health department.

Full story (may require subscription): <https://www.wsj.com/articles/states-are-finding-more-unreported-covid-19-deaths-11615730402>

B117 deadlier than other COVID-19 strains, more data affirm

(CIDRAP) The B117 COVID-19 variant, which was first identified in the United Kingdom in October 2020, may pose a 61% higher risk of 28-day mortality, according to a study published today in Nature. The finding is in line with last week’s BMJ study that reported B117 had a 64% higher 28-day risk of death among people older than 30, although both studies note absolute 28-day mortality risk remains low for most populations.

Read full story: <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/03/b117-deadlier-other-covid-19-strains-more-data-affirm>

Related - Scientists discover possible new coronavirus mutation in Brazil

Learn more: <https://news360.com/article/551091935>

Related story #2 - Moderna Announces First Participants Dosed in Study Evaluating COVID-19 Booster Vaccine Candidates

Read more: <https://investors.modernatx.com/news-releases/news-release-details/moderna-announces-first-participants-dosed-study-evaluating/>

[Biden Administration Takes Action Through HHS to Increase Number of Vaccinators](#)

As part of President Biden’s national strategy to defeat the pandemic, and following his speech outlining the Administration’s next steps in the war-time effort to speed COVID-19 vaccinations, the US Department of Health and Human Services has taken action to expand the pool of qualified professionals able to serve as vaccinators. HHS has used its authority under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP Act) to add additional categories of qualified people authorized to prescribe, dispense, and administer COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the US Food and Drug Administration, including dentists, EMTs, midwives, optometrists, paramedics, physician assistants, podiatrists, respiratory therapists, and veterinarians. This action also authorizes medical students, nursing students, and other health care students in the professions listed under the PREP Act with proper training and professional supervision to serve as vaccinators. (HHS, 3/12/2021)

CMS Offering Funding Opportunity for EMS ET3 Programs to Reduce Inappropriate/Overuse of EMS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) is releasing a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Emergency Triage, Treat and Transport (ET3) Model. Through the NOFO, CMS will fund state and local governments, their designees, or other entities that operate or have authority over a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) to establish or expand Medical Triage Lines aimed at reducing inappropriate use of emergency ambulance services and increasing efficiency in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) systems.

The NOFO complements the ambulance payment component of the ET3 Model, which began implementation on January 1, 2021 and for which the final list of Participants was posted today. Applicants to the NOFO must share at least one ZIP Code with the ambulance providers and suppliers that are [participants](#) in the model. Under the ET3 Model, CMS provides greater flexibility to ambulance care teams to address emergency health care needs of Medicare Fee-for-Service (FFS) beneficiaries following a 911 call, by paying ambulances to transport beneficiaries to Alternative Destinations or to facilitate Treatment in Place with a Qualified Health Care Partner, either in-person or through telehealth.

The NOFO is available at [grants.gov](#) under **Opportunity Number CMS-2F2-21-001**.

For more information, please see the [ET3 Model's webpage](#). Stay up to date on the latest ET3 Model news and updates by [subscribing to the ET3 Model listserv](#) or contact us at ET3Model@cms.hhs.gov.

CDC in Talks with Dollar General to Expand Vaccinations

(WebMD) The CDC is exploring a partnership with the retail chain Dollar General to deliver the coronavirus vaccine to rural sections of the nation.

"In rural areas, residents often don't have access to big-box stores," CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, MD, said this week at the Health Action Alliance's virtual National Business Summit, according to USA Today. "We're exploring a promising collaboration with Dollar General stores, which have locations that include refrigeration capacity within 10 or 15 miles of our rural communities in all but four states."

Dollar General confirmed the discussions in a statement on its website, but it was unclear if vaccinations would be given at Dollar General stores. USA Today noted that Dollar General stores do not have pharmacies, which is where vaccinations are given at chains such as Kroger or Publix.

Dollar General has about 16,000 locations -- three times the number of Walmart stores and more stores than either CVS or Walgreens. Those three chains are administering the vaccine at their pharmacies.

Full article: <https://www.webmd.com/vaccines/covid-19-vaccine/news/20210312/cdc-in-talks-with-dollar-general-to-expand-vaccinations>

Moderna Starts Covid-19 Vaccine Trial in Kids Younger Than 12 Years Old

(Forbes) Called the KidCOVE study, it will be conducted in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health, and will test the vaccine on 6,750 kids ages 6 months to 11 years old. The study is an "age de-escalation" study, meaning that older children will get the vaccine first, and as it is shown to be safe it will be given to progressively younger kids. It is also a "dose escalation" study, meaning that the researchers will start with smaller doses of the vaccine, and work up to normal adult doses once the low doses are proven to be safe.

Read more: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/leahrosenbaum/2021/03/16/moderna-starts-covid-19-vaccine-trial-in-kids-younger-than-12-years-old/>

Related – Fauci says [Vaccines for Kids as Young as First Graders Could Be Authorized by September](#)

AstraZeneca Vaccine Unfairly Under Fire Over Clot Risk? *Statistics, WHO, hematologists argue the risk isn't real*

(MedPage Today) Thromboembolic and bleeding risk has been cited by a number of countries in halting use of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine, but the company and health agencies argued against a causal link.

Denmark and Norway were first to stop administering AstraZeneca's vaccine last week over isolated cases of bleeding, blood clots, and low platelet count. Others followed.

In a statement released Sunday, AstraZeneca said it has seen no evidence of increased risk of pulmonary embolism, deep vein thrombosis, or thrombocytopenia either overall or for specific age groups, genders, batches, or particular countries.

It said there had been 15 deep vein thrombosis (DVT) events and 22 pulmonary embolism (PE) cases reported among the some 17 million recipients of its vaccine in the European Union and U.K. as of March 8.

Read full story: <https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/covid19/91641>

**KY Preparedness Program Looking for a new
Regional Readiness and Response Coordinator for HPP Region 7
[Jackie Campbell has announced her retirement as of March 31st.]**

Job posting: <http://gohire.org/job/healthcare-coalition-readiness-and-response-coordinator-hccrc-for-region-7-kentucky-appalachian-healthcare-coalition-kdph/>

**Johns Hopkins: Health Security Headlines
Extracts from [March 15, 2021](#) and [March 16, 2021](#)**

[Association of Acute Symptoms of COVID-19 and Symptoms of Depression in Adults](#) (*JAMA Network Open*) Among more than 3900 individuals with prior COVID-19 illness surveyed between May 2020 and January 2021, 52.4% met criteria for moderate or greater symptoms of major depression. In regression models, these symptoms were more likely among younger respondents compared with older respondents and among men compared with women as well as among those with greater self-reported overall COVID-19 severity compared with those with lower severity.

[Bombshell Analysis Traces New Ebola Outbreak to Survivor of West Africa Crisis](#) (*STAT News*) A survivor of the massive 2014-2016 West African Ebola outbreak almost certainly triggered an outbreak currently underway in Guinea, according to a new genetic analysis, news that has landed like a bombshell in the community of researchers who study the dangerous virus. The analysis suggests that a survivor of the historic Ebola outbreak continued harboring the virus at least five years after being infected, eventually transmitting it to someone. Previously, the longest an Ebola survivor was believed to have shed the virus was about 500 days.

[Reinfection Rates Among Patients Who Previously Tested Positive for COVID-19: a Retrospective Cohort Study](#) (*Clinical Infectious Diseases*) Protection offered from prior infection was 81.8% (95% confidence interval 76.6 to 85.8), and against symptomatic infection was 84.5% (95% confidence interval 77.9 to 89.1).

[COVID-19 Vaccine Second-Dose Completion and Interval Between First and Second Doses Among Vaccinated Persons — United States, December 14, 2020–February 14, 2021](#) (*MMWR*) Among persons who received a first dose and for whom sufficient time had elapsed to receive the second dose, 88.0% had completed the series; 8.6% had not received the second dose but were still within the allowable interval to receive it. Among all 2-dose recipients, 95.6% received the second dose within the recommended interval.

[WHO Points To Wildlife Farms In Southern China As Likely Source Of Pandemic](#) (*NPR*) A member of the World Health Organization investigative team says wildlife farms in southern China are the most likely source of the COVID-19 pandemic. China shut down those wildlife farms in February 2020, says Peter Daszak, a disease ecologist with EcoHealth Alliance and a member of the WHO delegation that traveled to China this year. During that trip, Daszak says, the WHO team found new evidence that these wildlife farms were supplying vendors at the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan with animals.

[Covid-19 Meant a Year Without the Flu. That's Not All Good News](#) (*WIRED*) The 2019–20 flu season basically didn't happen. Same for a couple other respiratory viruses. But that could make future seasons worse.

[Scientists Find New Invasive Mosquito Species In Florida](#) (*NPR*) Scientists have identified a new species of mosquito in Florida. It's called *Aedes scapularis*. Lawrence Reeves, an entomologist and research scientist with the University of Florida, identified them among mosquitoes he collected near Everglades National Park in 2019. Collecting mosquitoes is easy, he says, using traps baited with dry ice. The traps emit carbon dioxide, mimicking the odors that attract mosquitoes to people and other mammals.

**UK Healthcare's Psychosocial Support for
Healthcare and Behavior Healthcare Providers during COVID-19**
[Well@Work Podcast- Episode 16- Mindfulness Self-Compassion](#)
<https://youtu.be/1PH6KoG5K4w>

**Highly Contagious, Deadly *Diphtheria* Infection
May Become Resistant to Antibiotics and Vaccines**

Discover more: <https://news360.com/article/550858870>

FBI Releases Report on Nashville Bombing

(FBI) The Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Tennessee, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Metro Nashville Police Department, Tennessee Highway Patrol, and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation have concluded a significant portion of the investigation into the explosion that occurred on December 25, 2020, at approximately 6:30 a.m. Central Time, in downtown Nashville, Tennessee.

Following the explosion, the FBI worked closely with our law enforcement partners on a coordinated and comprehensive investigation. After recovering more than 3,000 pounds of evidence from the blast site, combing

through more than 2,500 tips, and conducting more than 250 interviews, the investigative team has reached the following conclusions.

The investigation found that Anthony Quinn Warner of Antioch, Tennessee, acting alone, built and ultimately detonated the vehicle-borne improvised explosive device. His actions were determined to not be related to terrorism. Read more: <https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices/memphis/news/press-releases/fbi-releases-report-on-nashville-bombing>

Feds release investigative docs on August 2019 Kentucky pipeline blast

(ABC) Heat from a deadly gas pipeline explosion in Kentucky burned so hot it melted the siding on a home 1,100 feet (about 355 meters) away, according to a federal investigation. The rupture of the 30-inch-width regional gas pipeline in August 2019 in Lincoln County killed a woman and sent five others to the hospital. The National Transportation Safety Board, which is investigating the blast, released hundreds of files related to the investigation this week.

Full story: <https://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/feds-release-investigative-docs-kentucky-pipeline-blast-76418355>

NTSB Public Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=99981>

Kentucky Senate Votes To Criminalize Insulting Police

(From [IACP Lead](#)) The [Washington Post](#) (3/12, Iati) reports the Kentucky state Senate on Thursday “moved forward a bill that would make it easier to arrest protesters for insulting a police officer.” The Post adds the bill “would make it a misdemeanor to taunt or challenge an officer with words or gestures ‘that would have a direct tendency to provoke a violent response from the perspective of a reasonable and prudent person.’” The Post says that the bill also “would expand the category of protest behavior considered illegal, heighten sentences for offenses related to ‘riots’ and prevent early release for those violations.”

US House Passes Two Gun Control Bills

(From IACP [The Lead](#)) The [AP](#) (3/11, Jalonick) reports that Democrats, “emboldened by their majorities in the House and Senate,” are “making a new push to enact the first major new gun control laws in more than two decades – starting with stricter background checks.” On Thursday, the House “passed two bills...to require background checks on all firearms sales and transfers and to allow an expanded 10-day review for gun purchases.” [Axios](#) (3/11, Chen) reports the [House voted 227-203](#) to pass the bill that “would require background checks for all gun purchasers.” According to Axios, the bill “became the first gun control legislation considered by Congress in nearly 25 years after it was first passed by the House in 2019.”

US To Direct \$2.5B to Address Mental Health, Addiction Crisis

(From IACP [The Lead](#)) [Axios](#) (3/11, Mucha) reports that President Biden is directing \$2.5 billion to address the mental illness and addiction crisis, according an HHS official. According to the official, \$1.65 billion will go toward the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant while \$825 million will be allocated through a Community Mental Health Services Block Grant program. Axios says “confronting the mounting mental health and substance abuse crisis will be an imperative for the Biden administration, even as its primary focus is on combating the broader COVID-19 pandemic.”

U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized drugs, counterfeit IDs and more in Louisville in February

(KyForward) U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers are working 24 hours a day, seven days a week to keep Americans safe from the dangerous items and activities that threaten communities around the U.S. CBP officers in Louisville seized a total of 518 pounds of illicit drugs and 676 counterfeit IDs, which includes fake ID and passports, during the month of February.

The narcotics arrived from Mexico, Canada, Netherlands, United Kingdom, China, Hong Kong, and other high-risk countries. CBP officers seized: 229 pounds of prescription medication/chemical, 198 pounds of Marijuana, 33 pounds of cocaine, 32 pounds of Ketamine, 24 pounds of Crystal Methamphetamine and two pounds of Fentanyl. All these narcotics would have been worth close to one million dollars.

The 676 counterfeit ID and passports were seized in shipments arriving from other countries destined for different states across the U.S. Most of the fakes were for college kids, but these IDs could be used for other nefarious activities like identity theft, worksite enforcement, critical infrastructure protection, fraud linked to immigration-related crimes such as human smuggling and human trafficking, and these documents can also be used by those individuals associated with terrorism to minimize scrutiny from travel screening measures. CBP Officers coordinate findings with CBP’s Fraudulent Document Analysis Unit (FDAU), Homeland Security Investigations and other federal partners to combat this illicit activity.

Full story: <https://www.kyforward.com/u-s-customs-and-border-protection-seized-drugs-counterfeit-ids-more-in-louisville-in-february/>

FBI Issues Cyber Message about Ransomware Threat to Schools

(FBI Alert CP-000142-MW) FBI issued an unclassified alert this morning saying they are getting reports indicating a recent increase in PYSAs targeting education institutions in 12 US states and the United Kingdom. PYSAs, also known as Mespinoza, is a malware capable of exfiltrating data and encrypting users' critical files and data stored on their systems. The unidentified cyber actors have specifically targeted higher education, K-12 schools, and seminaries. These actors use PYSAs to exfiltrate data from victims prior to encrypting victim's systems to use as leverage in eliciting ransom payments. **The full FLASH Alert is a PDF attachment.**

Cryptocurrencies a Growing Target of Theft

Learn more: <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/north-korean-hacks-show-virtual-currency-vulnerabilities-031121>

'We're going to lose fast':

U.S. Air Force held a war game that started with a Chinese biological attack

Learn more: <https://news.yahoo.com/were-going-to-lose-fast-us-air-force-held-a-war-game-that-started-with-a-chinese-biological-attack-170003936.html>

Related story: Could the bioweapons treaty be another tool for addressing pandemics?

Find out more: <https://thebulletin.org/2021/03/could-the-bioweapons-treaty-be-another-tool-for-addressing-pandemics/>

ASPR TRACIE Reminder - Register Today!
Healthcare System Cybersecurity Response:
Experiences and Considerations Webinar

Presenters on this webinar will discuss their experiences and tangible lessons learned in responding to cybersecurity incidents. This webinar builds upon the recently released [Healthcare System Cybersecurity: Readiness and Response Considerations](#) document and accompanying [overview presentation](#) that describes how to use the resource. The webinar will take place on Thursday, March 18, 2021 from 1:30-2:45 PM ET.

[Register today](#)

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 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 KHEREF are supported by US DHHS ASPR HPP funds through a contract with Kentucky Public Health.