



Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for March 17, 2021

Scam artists 'spoofing' Kentucky law enforcement phone numbers, posing as officials

Learn more: <https://www.wave3.com/2021/03/17/scam-artists-spoofing-kentucky-law-enforcement-phone-numbers-posing-officials/>

Gov. Beshear Provides Update on COVID-19

(From [Press Release](#)) On Wednesday, Gov. Andy Beshear announced the state's positivity rate has declined to 3.73%. As of 4 PM there were 963 new cases reported, with 441 hospitalized, 109 in an IUC, and 60 on vents. There were 27 new deaths recorded today.

CDC investigating new COVID variant brought into eastern Ky. nursing home

(WSAZ) Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said Tuesday that state and CDC state officials are investigating a new COVID variant brought into an eastern Kentucky nursing home.

The governor and state health director Dr. Steven Stack said the variant resulted in 41 people testing positive -- 27 residents and 14 health care workers. They said it was brought into the facility, apparently from an unvaccinated person.

Stack said the variant does not appear to be connected to the UK variant or the Brazilian or South African variants.

Five residents were admitted to the hospital, four who had not been vaccinated. Stack said it is an early indication that vaccines appear to be working against variants.

Story source: <https://www.wsaz.com/2021/03/16/cdc-investigating-new-covid-variant-brought-into-eastern-ky-nursing-home/>

CDC IDs new COVID-19 variants of concern, as hot spots reemerge

(CIDRAP) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said two coronavirus variants first detected in California, B.1427 and B.1429, are now considered as [variants of concern](#). The CDC said the variants may be 20% more transmissible.

Variants, especially B117, may be behind the emergence of hot spots in parts of the Upper Midwest, Northeast, and Mid-Atlantic, according to the [Washington Post](#). The increase in cases in those regions comes after almost 2 months of declining cases, deaths, and hospitalizations following the third winter holiday surge of virus activity.

Full story: <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/03/cdc-ids-new-covid-19-variants-concern-hot-spots-reemerge>

Pfizer pediatric vaccine trial to begin this summer in Kentucky

Learn more: <https://www.wkyt.com/app/2021/03/17/pfizer-pediatric-vaccine-trial-to-begin-this-summer-in-kentucky/>

CDC: 90% of COVID-19 vaccine recipients comply with 2-dose regimen

(UPI) Nearly 90% of people in the United States who received the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine through February completed the two-dose cycle, according to [figures](#) released Monday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Among those who received both shots of the two-dose vaccines, 96% received the second dose within the recommended time frame, the agency said.

Full UPI story: https://www.upi.com/Health_News/2021/03/15/coronavirus-vaccine-doses-study/4831615821344/

Vaccine passports should be free, private and secure... *but who will be issuing them?*

(USA Today) The federal government shouldn't be involved in verifying that people have been vaccinated against COVID-19, the White House says, but whatever process is developed should be free, private and secure.

"It's not the role of the government to hold that data and to do that," Andy Slavitt, White House senior adviser for COVID-19 response, said in a briefing Monday.

As more people are vaccinated, both here and around the world, it will likely become more important to provide proof of vaccination – to get on a plane or a cruise ship, hold certain jobs or even enjoy a night out.

Read more: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2021/03/15/covid-19-vaccine-passports-free-private-secure-white-house-coronavirus/4703360001/>

U.S. COVID-19 cases underestimated by half, antibody testing suggests

(UPI) Up to 16 million people in the United States may have had undiagnosed, asymptomatic COVID-19 as of September 2020 -- twice as many as previously estimated -- an analysis published Tuesday by [JAMA Network Open](#) reported. Just under 7% of about 62,000 people in the United States with no symptoms of infection tested in the study had antibodies against the virus, the data showed.

Antibodies are cells produced by the immune system to fight off infection, and their presence in blood suggests that people either are battling the virus or were recently.

The nearly 16 million asymptomatic cases is more than twice the number of confirmed cases -- about 7.5 million -- reported in the United States by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at the end of September.

Since the start of the pandemic last March, public health officials and researchers have suggested that the number of cases and deaths linked with the virus, both in the United States and globally, may be [undercounted](#).

This is due to the number of infected people who may experience no symptoms, believed to be up to 80% of those with the virus, experts say.

Read more: https://www.upi.com/Health_News/2021/03/16/coronavirus-COVID19-asymptomatic-undiagnosed-cases-study/9541615914561/

Feds Allocate More Than \$12 Billion to Expand COVID-19 Testing

(HHS) As part of the [National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness - PDF](#), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will invest \$10 billion from the American Rescue Plan to ramp up screening testing to help schools reopen, \$2.25 billion to scale up testing in underserved populations, and provide new guidance on asymptomatic screening testing in schools, workplaces, and congregate settings. The Departments of Health and Human Services and Defense also have awarded a \$255 million contract for the production and delivery of 50 million Abbott BinaxNOW rapid point-of-care antigen tests for COVID-19 to support continued screening testing in long-term care facilities. These measures are part of President Biden's strategy to increase COVID-19 testing nationwide as vaccinations increase.

Full HHS release: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/03/17/biden-administration-invest-more-than-12-billion-expand-covid-19-testing.html>

FDA releases adverse events dashboard for EUA treatments, J&J vaccine fact sheet in more languages

(From [AHA Today](#)) The Food and Drug Administration yesterday launched a [dashboard](#) that will provide weekly updates on adverse events submitted to its adverse event reporting system for COVID-19 drugs and biological products authorized for emergency use.

Homeless line up for COVID-19 vaccinations at Louisville Mission

(WDRB) Hundreds of homeless people in Louisville have the opportunity to get their COVID-19 vaccinations on Monday. On Monday morning, Norton Healthcare was administering COVID-19 vaccines to the homeless population at Wayside Christian Mission in downtown Louisville. Those who came for the shots were given the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Link to this article: https://www.wdrb.com/news/homeless-line-up-for-covid-19-vaccinations-monday-at-wayside-christian-mission/article_b6c409f2-859d-11eb-874b-0b83e6eb89af.html

Extent of COVID-19 vaccine waste remains largely unknown

(AP) As millions continue to wait their turn for the COVID-19 vaccine, small but steady amounts of the precious doses have gone to waste across the country. It's a heartbreaking reality that experts acknowledged was always likely to occur. Thousands of shots have been wasted in Tennessee, Florida, Ohio and many other states. The reasons vary from shoddy record-keeping to accidentally trashing hundreds of shots. However, pinning down just how many of the life-saving vials have been tossed remains largely unknown despite assurance from many local officials the number remains low.

Full AP story: <https://apnews.com/article/covid-19-vaccine-waste-largely-unknown-d2624a6dfefaa4b6a10cc0704ab5ab9d>

FEMA plans to start COVID funeral reimbursement program in early April

(KHOU) Next month, FEMA plans to start the process of reimbursing funeral costs for those who died of COVID-19, the agency's acting administrator said Tuesday. Part of that process will include a toll-free phone number where people can apply for funeral assistance. [<Read More >](#)

Pandemic Makes U.S. Spring Party Season a Time of Risky Revelry

(Bloomberg) The convergence of St. Patrick's Day, spring break and the sunset of mask mandates is creating fresh fear of a Covid-19 resurgence in the U.S., even as cases drop and vaccinations accelerate. Last week, Miami Beach police arrested hundreds as spring break lured an influx of visitors, breaking up at least one crowd with pepper balls. In Savannah, Georgia, bars are teeming with people celebrating the city's Irish heritage. Houston authorities quashed plans for barefaced parties to mark the end of Texas's mask mandate. [<Read More >](#)

CDC says large employers can set up temporary vaccination sites

(The Hill) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued guidance on Tuesday saying that employers with large spaces and workforces can set up temporary vaccination sites. The new guidance says that employers should consider establishing workplace vaccination programs if they have a "large number of workers on site with predictable schedules" and a "location with enough space to stand up a vaccination clinic while maintaining social distancing through the entire process, from screening to post-vaccination observation." [<Read More >](#)

University of Kentucky Healthcare opens new neurology clinic focused on pediatric and adolescent patients.

Learn more: <https://www.kyforward.com/university-of-kentucky-healthcare-opens-new-neurology-clinic-focused-on-pediatric-and-adolescent-patients/>

On an Isolated Island Beach, Researchers Find Superbug *Researchers suspect global warming has helped organism jump to humans* *First time, a drug-resistant hospital superbug has been found in the wild*

Learn more: <http://newser.com/s303758>

KY Attorney General unveils updates to website focused on helping sexual assault survivors, law enforcement

(KY Forward News) The Kentucky Attorney General's office on Monday announced updates to a website dedicated to seeking justice for survivors of sexual assault. The recently re-designed website, kentuckybacklog.com, equips multi-disciplinary teams of law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim advocates with tools to aid in the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault crimes.

kentuckybacklog.com also supports survivors by supplying resources to aid them in navigating the criminal justice system and healing from sexual assault, including a search function to determine the testing status of Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence (SAFE) kits.

Read more: <https://www.kyforward.com/attorney-general-unveils-updates-to-website-focused-on-helping-sexual-assault-survivors-law-enforcement/>

AP Analysis: Prospects For Gun Bills "Cloudy" Amid Push For Biden's Support

(From [IACP The Lead](#)) The **AP** (3/16, Jaffe) reports that though President Biden's "views on gun regulation have evolved along with his party...to a near-unanimous call to do something about gun violence after a spate of mass shootings," such policies "are lower on his list of priorities" in the early months of his presidency "and their prospects in the Senate cloudy." The two bills passed by the House last week would be "the first significant movement on gun control since Democrats took control," and "are among a number of major bills House Democrats have pushed through...that now face an uncertain fate in the Senate. Supporters of the background check bills are hoping to see Biden become more actively involved." White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki "said Biden is looking forward to working with Congress 'to advance priorities, including repealing gun manufacturers' liability shields,'" and that he "will look for opportunities to be engaged" on the background check bills.

KY House bill capping monthly insulin costs heads to Governor's desk after senate withdraws changes

(KY Today) A House bill that would cap the monthly cost of insulin has passed its final legislative hurdle after the Senate agreed to withdraw its changes made to the legislation on Tuesday. House Bill 95, sponsored by Rep. Danny Bentley, R-Russell, would cap the monthly co-payment at \$30 per month.

Learn more: <https://www.kyforward.com/house-bill-capping-monthly-insulin-costs-heads-to-governors-desk-after-senate-withdraws-changes/>

Johns Hopkins: Health Security Headlines
Extracts from [March 17, 2021](#)

Many People Who Die of COVID-19 have the Virus in their Hearts (*Science*) Three-quarters of people who died of COVID-19 harbored the SARS-CoV-2 virus in their hearts, according to the most detailed study of cardiac tissue to date. Those people were also more likely than patients without cardiac invasion to experience abnormal heart rhythms before they died. The study offers insight into how the disease may damage the heart—and how certain treatments may help.

How Microbes in Permafrost Could Trigger a Massive Carbon Bomb (*Nature*) In May, as the temperatures in northern Sweden begin to creep to several degrees above freezing, scientists will once again descend on the squelchy peat of Stordalen Mire. They'll tread across sagging wooden boardwalks, past clusters of clear plexiglass boxes placed among the cotton grass.

DoD Testing Shows Bio-Agents Degrade Rapidly in Open Air

(Global Biodefense) The experiments revealed that in open air, simulants decayed 10 to 1,000 times faster than in laboratory settings. These data indicate that laboratory tests underestimate the rate of agent decay that occurs outdoors, and on their own, laboratory tests are not sufficient in understanding the decay process outdoors. Find out more: <https://globalbiodefense.com/2021/03/10/dod-testing-shows-bio-agents-degrade-rapidly-in-open-air/>

EIS/Global Resilience Commission Webinar:

Water Infrastructure Resilience: What if there is no second chance?
Wednesday, 24 March 1100 - 12:00 EST
[Advance Registration](#)

KY Public Health is Recruiting Two Healthcare Regional Coordinators!

HPP Region 4 (HEART): <https://gohire.org/job/healthcare-coalition-readiness-and-response-coordinator-ky-region-4/>

HPP Region 7 (Appalachia HCC): <http://gohire.org/job/healthcare-coalition-readiness-and-response-coordinator-hccrc-for-region-7-kentucky-appalachian-healthcare-coalition-kdph/>

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.