



# Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for August 24, 2021

## Governor announces more than 4,600 new cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday

(WYMT) The Governor announced 4,638 new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday. This is the fifth highest daily total of new cases for the Commonwealth since the pandemic began. The statewide total increased to 547,657. 1,335 of Tuesday's new cases were children 18 and younger. 2,014 Kentuckians remain hospitalized (an increase of 121 since Monday) with 589 in the ICU (an increase of 60 since Monday). 338 patients remain on a ventilator (an increase of 37 since Monday). In a video released to [social media](#), Governor Beshear mentioned that the state set new records for both hospitalizations and patients in the ICU. Gov. Beshear also announced 17 new deaths on Tuesday, bringing the state's death toll to 7,575.



The state's positivity rate climbed to 12.89%, making it the 58th consecutive day with an increase in the positivity rate. You can also find more information, including how to protect your family, by visiting Kentucky's official COVID-19 website: <https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>

Full story: <https://www.wyml.com/app/2021/08/24/governor-beshear-announces-more-than-4600-new-cases-covid-19-tuesday/>

## CDC: Unvaccinated 5 times more likely to get COVID-19

(CIDRAP) Today in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published new data from Los Angeles County collected from May to July, which show [unvaccinated people](#) were 5 times more likely to get COVID-19 than vaccinated peers and 29 times more likely to be hospitalized for their infections.

***It's more evidence that the pandemic in the United States is a pandemic of the unvaccinated***, said CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH at a White House press briefing today.

White House COVID-19 Coordinator Jeff Zients said the administration oversaw 6 million shots in arms in the past 7 days, the highest 7- day total in 6 weeks.

In a second *MMWR* [report today](#), results from the ongoing HEROES-RECOVER study of COVID-19 among frontline workers showed unvaccinated workers were much more likely to become infected during the current Delta surge, but vaccine effectiveness (VE) dropped from roughly 90% to 66%.

Full story: <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/08/cdc-unvaccinated-5-times-more-likely-get-covid-19>

## Related CIDRAP story: [Patients, not staff, source of most hospital COVID spread](#)

## Health care leaders say unvaccinated driving Louisville COVID-19 hospitalizations

Learn more: [https://www.wdrb.com/in-depth/health-care-leaders-say-unvaccinated-driving-louisville-covid-19-hospitalizations/article\\_0386f4e8-04fb-11ec-8235-e73af5746743.html](https://www.wdrb.com/in-depth/health-care-leaders-say-unvaccinated-driving-louisville-covid-19-hospitalizations/article_0386f4e8-04fb-11ec-8235-e73af5746743.html)

## Pikeville Medical Center reopen respiratory triage unit as COVID cases rise

(WSAZ) Health care professional feel as if they took one step forward with COVID-19 vaccinations, but now they feel as if they're taking two steps back. Pikeville Medical Center (PMC) opened the respiratory triage unit (tent) to handle the influx of COVID-19 patients tied to the delta variant. The unit hadn't been used since 2020. "We've stopped elective procedures that would require admission and the reason why is we need beds," said Dr. Aaron Crum, Chief Medical Officer at Pikeville Medical Center.

Patients arriving at the emergency department will be treated in two separate groups. Those with mild symptoms will receive treatment in the triage unit. Those with more serious conditions will be taken to the COVID ward.

Video report and full story: <https://www.wyml.com/app/2021/08/23/pikeville-medical-center-reopen-respiratory-triage-unit-covid-cases-rise/>

## National Guard will be deployed across Kentucky to help overwhelmed hospitals.

### *Health care workers high-fived when they heard the news*

([CNN/WPSD](#)) Kentucky hospital officials high-fived one another during a news conference Monday as they learned multiple National Guard teams would be deployed to hospitals across the state dealing with rising [COVID-19 cases](#) and hospital staffing shortages.

Between 21 and 25 of the state's regional hospitals are at a critical staffing shortage stage, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said in a news conference Monday.

"Covid is burning through our population here in Kentucky," Beshear said, adding that the state is coming off its third highest week of cases in the entirety of the pandemic.

Initially, five National Guard teams of 75 people will be deploying in two-week increments starting September 1, Beshear said. There will be other missions into the fall, including mobile vaccination teams, support for local health departments and continued food bank support, Beshear said. The governor said he also formally submitted a resource request for FEMA assistance. **(More follows.)**

Story: [https://www.wpsdlocal6.com/coronavirus\\_news/national-guard-will-be-deployed-across-kentucky-to-help-overwhelmed-hospitals-health-care-workers-high/article\\_c12042dc-04d5-11ec-b9ef-8349564d354f.html](https://www.wpsdlocal6.com/coronavirus_news/national-guard-will-be-deployed-across-kentucky-to-help-overwhelmed-hospitals-health-care-workers-high/article_c12042dc-04d5-11ec-b9ef-8349564d354f.html)

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**Related extract from Governor's [Aug 23rd Press Release on KY National Guard](#)**

**Kentucky National Guard COVID-19 Mission Extended**

Gov. Beshear said on Aug. 18, President Joe Biden extended reimbursement to states for mobilizing National Guard personnel in support of COVID-19 response efforts beyond the original deadline of Sept. 30, through the end of the calendar year.

"In Kentucky, this means we'll have our Kentucky Guardsmen continuing to help combat the surge we're seeing due to the delta variant," said **Gov. Beshear**. "Our Kentucky Guardsmen have been on mission since March 2020 to help our commonwealth combat COVID-19, and we're appreciative of their continued support."

The Kentucky National Guard will provide logistical and administrative support to local hospitals beginning Sept. 1. There will be a dedicated National Guard central command for this mission and deployments will be in two-week increments. The initial deployment will include 75 Guardsmen, in five teams of 15 people.

Starting locations are:

- The Medical Center at Bowling Green;
- St. Claire Regional Medical Center, Morehead; and
- Pikeville Medical Center.

*Other Kentucky National Guard fall missions include:*

- Mobile Vaccination Teams (local schools, universities, detention centers, among others);
- Supporting local health departments; and
- Food bank support.

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**Related story - Gov. Beshear requests FEMA support for understaffed hospitals**

(WBKO) Governor Beshear said he is submitting a resource request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for additional health care professionals to help where Kentucky needs them most

"We've requested eight teams that include eight registered nurses and two certified nursing assistants per team. We've also requested two EMS strike teams, which include personnel and trucks," Beshear said. "Our hospitals need this support, and we will do what it takes to make it happen. Until then, we need everyone to wear a mask indoors and get vaccinated. We hope FEMA will approve this request quickly."

If federal approval is received, medical teams will support:

- St. Claire Regional Medical Center;
- Pikeville Medical Center;
- Saint Joseph London;
- The Medical Center at Bowling Green; and
- Baptist Health Hardin.

Full story: <https://www.wbko.com/app/2021/08/24/gov-beshear-requests-fema-support-understaffed-hospitals/>

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**WKYT Investigates - Thinking small:  
How Ky. EMS agencies prepare for pediatric patients**

(WKYT) Children make up a small percentage of patients. Experts say that's why they have to be ready when the call does come in. **Video report & story:** <https://www.wyvt.com/2021/08/23/wkyt-investigates-thinking-small-how-ky-ems-agencies-prepare-pediatric-patients/>

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**[KenTenn EMS \(Fulton, KY\) warns of ambulance wait times due to full hospital beds](#)**  
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**Johns Hopkins: Health Security Headlines**  
**Extracts from [August 24, 2021](#)**

**[Some Parents Push to Give Covid-19 Vaccine to Children Under 12, Against Government Guidance](#)** (*Wall Street Journal*) Some parents eager to vaccinate their children under 12 against Covid-19 are hoping that the Food and Drug Administration's full approval of Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE's vaccine could make that happen even before the FDA authorizes shots for emergency use for that age group.

**[Why Pfizer's FDA Approval Matters And What It Means For Vaccine Mandates](#)** (*NPR*) The Food and Drug Administration has given its full approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, calling it a "key achievement for public health." The two-dose vaccine is now fully approved for people ages 16 and older. For those who are ages 12 to 15 and for those who are immunocompromised and need a booster shot, the vaccine is still available under an FDA emergency use authorization. The approval, says the FDA, means "the public can be very confident that this vaccine meets the high standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality the FDA requires of an approved product."

**[Mississippi Is Pleading With People To Stop Using A Livestock Drug To Treat COVID-19](#)** (*NPR*) Mississippi health officials are pleading with residents not to take a medicine meant for cows and horses as an alternative to getting the COVID-19 vaccine. In a state with the nation's second lowest rate of vaccination against the coronavirus, a jump in the number of calls to poison control prompted an alert Friday from the Mississippi State Department of Health about ingesting the drug ivermectin. The department said that at least 70% of recent calls to the state poison control center were related to people who ingested a version of the drug that is formulated to treat parasites in cows and horses. Ingesting the drug can lead to a rash, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, neurologic disorders and potentially severe hepatitis requiring hospitalization, according to the alert written by Dr. Paul Byers, the state's top epidemiologist.

**[Possible case of 'Havana syndrome' in Vietnam delays Vice President Harris' visit](#)** (*ABC News*) Vice President Kamala Harris' visit to Vietnam on Tuesday was interrupted by a report of an "anomalous health incident," the U.S. embassy in Hanoi said in a statement -- the latest case of the mysterious onset of medical symptoms more commonly referred to as "Havana syndrome."

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**Rising number of U.S. cardiac arrests linked to opioid abuse, study says**

(*HealthDay News*) There's been a sharp rise in opioid-related cardiac arrests in the United States and they now equal those associated with other prime causes, a new study finds.

Of more than 1.4 million cardiac arrest hospitalizations nationwide between 2012 and 2018, more than 43,000, or 3.1%, occurred in opioid users, and there was a significant increase in opioid-associated cardiac arrest over the seven-year study period.

Rates of in-hospital death among cardiac patients were about 57% among opioid users and 61% among those who didn't use opioids, the researchers found.

But certain risk factors were markedly higher in opioid users. For example, the study found that opioid users had higher rates of alcohol abuse (about 17% versus 7%), depression (about 19% vs. 9%) and smoking (37% vs. nearly 22%) than those who didn't use opioids.

Full report: [https://www.upi.com/Health\\_News/2021/08/24/cardiac-arrests-linked-opioids-study/6231629753646/](https://www.upi.com/Health_News/2021/08/24/cardiac-arrests-linked-opioids-study/6231629753646/)

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**FBI alerts organizations to OnePercent Group ransomware attacks, mitigations**

(*AHA Today*) The FBI yesterday alerted U.S. organizations to ransomware attacks by a group using phishing emails to access victim networks and download Cobalt Strike threat emulation software. The alert includes indicators of compromise associated with attacks by the so-called OnePercent Group and recommended mitigation actions for affected organizations.

John Riggi, AHA senior advisor for cybersecurity and risk, said, "The relatively low profile OnePrecent ransomware group is using common tactics such as phishing emails for initial compromise, then common technical tools such as Cobalt Strike and Powershell to spread the ransomware throughout the victim network. As we have seen several high-impact ransomware attacks targeting hospitals and health systems since Aug. 2, I recommend that any and all ransomware alerts issued by the government be given special attention. I and the AHA are closely coordinating with FBI, the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency and HHS to exchange information relevant to ransomware attacks for the benefit of the field."

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](mailto: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.