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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Dan Tierney: 614-644-0957

Breann Almos: 614-799-6480

Jill Del Greco: 614-420-6954

COVID-19 Update: Vaccinations & Virus Spread, Unemployment System Enhancements, Law Enforcement Reform Efforts

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine provided the following updates on Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

VACCINATIONS AND VIRUS SPREAD

As of today, 38 percent of Ohioans have received at least one coronavirus vaccination shot. Although cases have plateaued, virus variants are more contagious among those who have not been vaccinated.

"Just because the numbers are getting better and more people are getting vaccinated, the virus is now more dangerous than it was a few months ago for those who haven't been vaccinated," said Governor DeWine.

"Unvaccinated Ohioans lack the same protection against this virus as those who are vaccinated," said Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff, chief medical officer at the Ohio Department of Health. "The virus is now in more contagious forms that put younger people at much greater risk, including the risk of ending up in the hospital. Essentially, the new variants have evolved to stick much more easily to our cells, so it takes less of the virus and less exposure to make one sick. Add to that the fact that more older Ohioans have been vaccinated, and it adds up to mean that if you're young and unvaccinated, what may not have been much of a concern to you this fall should be a concern now."

Dr. Vanderhoff also warned that Ohioans should not count on herd immunity until more people are vaccinated.

The vaccine is now more widely available and there is no shortage. Ohioans can visit gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov to look for open appointments or call 833-4-ASK-ODH to book an appointment over the phone. Ohio's mass vaccination clinic at the Wolstein Center

in downtown Cleveland is also now booking appointments for next week. First doses of the Pfizer vaccine will be offered. Appointments for the mass vaccination clinic can be booked via the aforementioned methods.

NEW PSAs

Governor DeWine introduced three new public service announcements today that encourage Ohioans to get vaccinated.

- [What's in the Vaccine?](#)
- [Take Your Shot](#)
- [Hopeful](#)

UNEMPLOYMENT SYSTEM UPDATES

In an effort to continually improve Ohioans' experiences with the Ohio Unemployment Office, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Interim Director Matt Damschroder shared several action updates.

The ODJFS team has been working with the Public-Private Partnership (P3 Team) to make improvements to the call center, which now has an average call handle time of less than 10 minutes (the lowest since the pandemic started). There is also real progress on the claims backlog. In addition, new tools have been implemented to enhance fraud detection including additional identity verification requirements and new IT measures, such as Experian and LexisNexis technology, to verify the identity of unemployment applications.

LAW ENFORCEMENT REFORM EFFORTS

Today, Governor DeWine outlined law enforcement reform efforts made in the past year, efforts that are pending, and efforts that will be announced in the near future.

"As we go forward as a nation, we must learn from the tragic death of George Floyd," said Governor DeWine. "His death laid bare some of our deep divisions in this country. My goal and my job every day is to do what I can do to unite people, to show them what they have in common."

Governor DeWine took several executive actions regarding law enforcement reform last year, including:

- On June 17, 2020, Governor DeWine ordered every cabinet agency to review use-of-force policies and ban the use of choke holds unless deadly force would be otherwise authorized.
- Governor DeWine ordered the Ohio State Highway Patrol to begin outfitting troopers with body cameras in addition to dash cameras. The purchase of these body cameras is underway.
- Governor DeWine established the Office of Law Enforcement Recruitment within the Office of Criminal Justice Services.

- Governor DeWine ordered the Ohio Community Police Collaborative to develop a standard for law enforcement's response to mass protests. That standard has been adopted.

[In his proposed budget that is now before the Ohio General Assembly, Governor DeWine recommended:](#)

- \$10 million in grant money to assist local police agencies to buy body cameras.
- \$1 million in grant funding to support local police agencies' innovative initiatives to recruit women and minorities into law enforcement careers.

Governor DeWine also announced today that legislation will soon be introduced by State Representative Phil Plummer that will increase accountability and transparency in law enforcement.

The bill is expected to:

- Establish a peace officer oversight board similar to oversight boards in other professions
- Establish a use-of-force database
- Establish an officer-discipline database
- Require the independent investigation of officer-involved critical incidents
- Establish an independent, sustainable funding source for law enforcement training in Ohio

[Many of these proposals were recommended by Governor DeWine and Attorney General Dave Yost in June.](#)

The forthcoming bill was developed with the help of the Ohio Attorney General's Office; veteran law enforcement officers; organizations, including the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police and Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association; and in consultation with civil rights leaders and activists.

STATEWIDE LITTER CAMPAIGN

Governor DeWine announced a new statewide litter campaign that will be led by the Ohio EPA, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and Ohio Department of Transportation. The campaign will prioritize and educate Ohioans on how a little litter contributes to the bigger, statewide problem. Part of the campaign will include various events held by the agencies and engagement with partner organizations, including a spring litter summit.

Additional information about the campaign is forthcoming.



CASE DATA/VACCINE INFORMATION

In-depth COVID-19 data for Ohio: coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Ohio's central scheduling system: gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov

Ohio mass vaccination information: coronavirus.ohio.gov/massvaccinationclinics

All vaccine providers: vaccine.coronavirus.ohio.gov

More vaccine information: coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine

Video of today's full update, including versions with foreign language translation, can be viewed on the [Ohio Channel's YouTube page](#).

For more information on Ohio's response to COVID-19, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.