



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
August 13, 2020

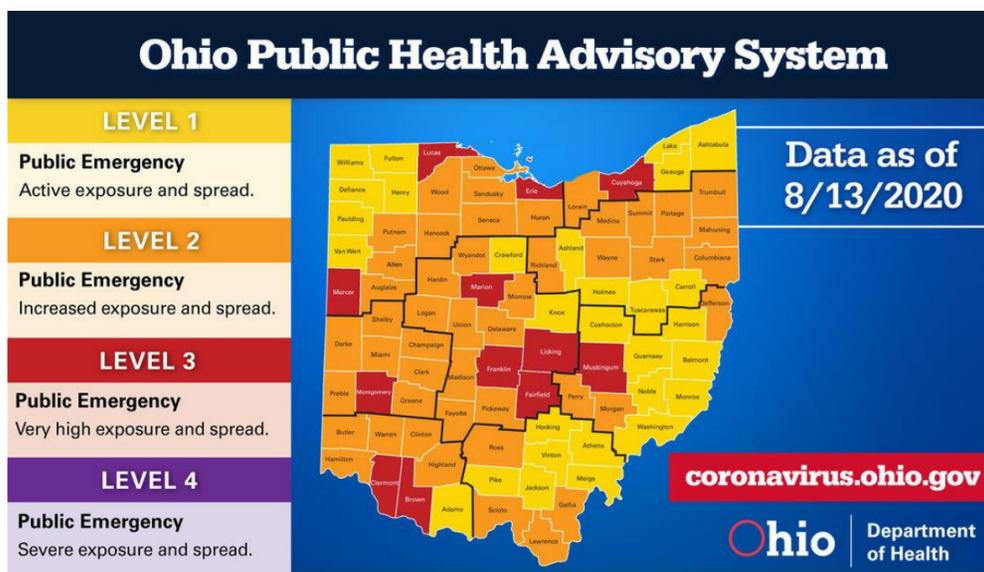
**MEDIA CONTACTS:**  
Dan Tierney: 614-644-0957  
Jill Del Greco: 614-644-0957

## COVID-19 Update: Improving Minority Health, Updated County Risk Levels

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

### UPDATED COUNTY RISK LEVELS

Governor DeWine announced today that new public health data has led the Ohio Department of Health to designate 12 counties as being in a Red Alert Level 3 Public Emergency as defined by the [Ohio Public Health Advisory System](#).



### Increase to Level 3: Continue at Level 3: Decrease to Level 2: Decrease to Level 1:

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown</li> <li>• Clermont</li> <li>• Muskingum</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cuyahoga</li> <li>• Erie</li> <li>• Fairfield</li> <li>• Franklin</li> <li>• Licking</li> <li>• Lucas</li> <li>• Marion</li> <li>• Mercer</li> <li>• Montgomery</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allen</li> <li>• Medina</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adams</li> <li>• Defiance</li> <li>• Fulton</li> <li>• Henry</li> <li>• Knox</li> <li>• Lake</li> <li>• Paulding</li> <li>• Williams</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|--|

Detailed information all of Ohio's 88 counties can be found on the [Ohio Public Health Advisory System's website](#). The system was developed to provide local health departments, community leaders, and the public with data and information on the severity of the COVID-19 spread in the counties in which they live. The system consists of four levels with specific [risk-level guidelines](#). Each level is calculated with data gathered on [seven public health indicators](#).

### IMPROVING MINORITY HEALTH

Today, Governor DeWine released the final Minority Health Strike Force report and the state's executive response.

The Minority Health Strike Force was formed in April to examine the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on minority communities, as well as broader health disparities and racial injustices. Currently, African Americans represent 14 percent of Ohio's population but are 24 percent of positive COVID-19 cases, 32 percent of COVID-19 hospitalizations, and 19 percent of COVID-19 deaths in Ohio. Similarly, at least 6 percent of those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in Ohio are Latino, despite only representing 3.9 percent of Ohio's population.

The [COVID-19 Minority Health Strike Force Blueprint](#) lists 34 recommendations on dismantling racism, removing public health obstacles, improving the social/economic and physical environments, and strengthening data collection to better track disparities.



In response to the Strike Force's report, Governor DeWine issued [Ohio's Executive Response: A Plan of Action to Advance Equity](#). The action plan outlines efforts to reinforce the DeWine Administration's commitment to advancing health equity and establishing Ohio as a model for justice, equity, opportunity, and resilience.



As part of his commitment to equity, Governor DeWine also announced the creation of the new Ohio Governor's Equity Advisory Board.

The Board will work to improve Ohio's work to dismantle racism and promote health equity. Board members will draw on the expertise within Ohio's communities of color and will represent diverse viewpoints from sectors like education, healthcare, public and private business, community organizations, and members of the criminal justice community.

"We are committed to solutions, because as I have stated before, racism is a public health crisis. Each of us has a responsibility to be mindful of and work to counteract racial and other disparities that hold Ohioans back from reaching their full God-given potential," said Governor DeWine. "I will not shy away from addressing these long-entrenched inequalities among our fellow Ohio citizens. Fortunately, we have many great partners in this mission, and we are grateful to the individuals and organizations that provided feedback to the strike force and who have worked with my administration on this issue."

"Being a person of color should not dictate your health outcomes. As the Health Commissioner for the City of Cincinnati and member of the COVID-19 Minority Health Strike Force, I am proud of the work of my fellow strike force members to address these health inequities. The interim report and blueprint address short term and long term recommendations, as we need sustainable efforts to address these multi-faceted issues. The Governor's response to the blueprint is action-oriented and his formation of the Governor's Equity Impact Board shows that he is serious about the plan being implemented and committed to all Ohioans," Dr. Melba R. Moore, Cincinnati Health Department Health Commissioner.

"The COVID-19 Ohio Minority Health Strike Force Blueprint sets a foundation that promotes sustained long-term and lifetime wellness and focuses on individuals and communities of color who disproportionately are afflicted with health disparities and chronic disease conditions. We understand that improvements to healthcare access and social and economic factors and determinants of health are critical to addressing disparities and improving health outcomes for all Ohioans. I commend Governor DeWine for taking the blueprint and quickly working with his administration to outline concrete next steps to improve the health and wellbeing of all Ohioans and advance equity across the state of Ohio," Dr. Charles Modlin, MD, Executive Director Minority Health, Founder / Director Minority Men's Health Center & Urologist, Cleveland Clinic

#### **CURRENT COVID-19 DATA**

There are 105,426 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 3,755 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 12,023 people have been hospitalized, including 2,743 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).

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](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov) or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.