FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
September 8, 2020

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COVID-19 Update: Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program, Non-Congregate Sheltering Order, Sports Spectator Variance

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

PANDEMIC ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER PROGRAM

Governor DeWine announced today that thousands of Ohio children, who qualify for free or reduced-price meals but are currently learning remotely, will soon receive additional money to purchase nutritious foods through the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program made possible by the Federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will issue this second round of benefits later this month to eligible children. Ohio previously issued more than $250 million in P-EBT benefits to more than 850,000 students through the program in the spring.

Parents do not need to apply to receive these benefits. The benefits will be automatically loaded onto existing Ohio Direction cards or a pre-loaded card will be sent in the mail.

NON-CONGREGATE SHELTERING ORDER

In response to a barrage of rumors surrounding Ohio's latest non-congregate sheltering order, Governor DeWine today stressed that there are no orders in Ohio to create "FEMA camps" to quarantine citizens against their will.

"This is not in our order, and there is no truth to the rumor," said Governor DeWine. "Families will not be separated, and kids will not be away from their loved ones."

The order, which was first issued on March 31 and then renewed on April 29 and August 31, creates a funding mechanism to allow for federal reimbursement for communities that choose to offer alternate locations for people to safely isolate or quarantine outside of their homes. If a citizen chooses to recover in a quarantine housing location, others in the household can remain at home and unexposed.

This option has been used in a handful of cases in Ohio.

SPORTS SPECTATOR VARIANCE

The Ohio Department of Health has granted a spectator variance to Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course for the Honda Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio taking place September 11-13, 2020. Attendance will be limited to 6,000 spectators, and social distancing and masks will be required in accordance with state health guidelines.

The variance for Mid-Ohio was granted, in part, due to its unique, large outdoor facility that can accommodate social distancing.

Governor DeWine previously announced 6,000 spectator variances for the Browns and Bengals for two upcoming games each.

GET IN LINE, ONLINE

Lt. Governor Husted today announced that the Ohio BMV was awarded the Customer Convenience Award for their 'Get in Line, Online' virtual queuing system, which allows a customer to secure a spot in line at the agency without actually being physically present. Once customers arrive to check-in, they move to the front of the line with minimal wait time.

InnovateOhio, which Lt. Governor Husted leads, worked in partnership with the Ohio BMV on this project.

"InnovateOhio and the Ohio BMV collaborated on the 'Get in Line, Online' system with the goal of using technology to improve customer service," said Lt. Governor Husted. "This award is a recognition that we are on our way to making Ohio the most innovative and creative state in the Midwest."

CURRENT COVID-19 DATA

There are 131,992 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 4,298 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 13,967 people have been hospitalized, including 3,042 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Rankings of Ohio's 88 counties by highest occurrence can be found below.

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-OHD.

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