



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 23, 2021

MEDIA CONTACTS:
Dan Tierney: 614-644-0957
Breann Almos: 614-644-0957

COVID-19 Update: Hospital Situation, Vaccine Incentives, School Bus Drivers

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine today provided an update on the increased impact that COVID-19 hospitalizations are having on our hospitals and a new vaccine incentive effort to help keep our children in school, in-person, five days a week.

LETTER FROM OHIO HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

“I received a letter from the Ohio Hospital Association outlining the dire conditions facing our hospitals who are on the front lines of treating patients with COVID. While they are doing everything they can to help these patients, they are facing a severe nursing and staffing shortage,” said Governor DeWine. “What they wrote is consistent with what we’ve been hearing from front-line health care workers.”

The [letter](#) reported that increasing cases are putting a strain on hospital resources. The data shows:

- In mid-July, Ohio hospitals were treating 200 COVID-19 patients, today that number is 3,702. That’s a 16-fold increase in two months.
- In mid-July, one out of 100 patients in the hospital were being treated for COVID. Today the ratio is one out of six. Today, 40% of patients on ventilators are being treated for COVID.
- In rural Southeast Ohio half of hospitalized patients are being treated for COVID-19 and two-thirds of the patients in the intensive care unit are being treated for COVID.

The [letter](#) described a situation where strained resources impact the ability to care for all patients. Some Ohio hospitals are diverting patients away from emergency departments, cancelling certain procedures, experiencing long wait times in emergency departments, and shutting down certain units to redeploy staff to critical cases.

OHIO VAX-2-SCHOOL

Governor DeWine emphasized that keeping kids in school, in-person, five days a week, remains a priority. We know that the best way to do that is to get students vaccinated. In addition to protecting kids from the severe effects of the virus, students who are vaccinated, do not have to quarantine if exposed, which means they won't miss out on school.



To encourage eligible kids to get vaccinated, Governor DeWine announced the Ohio Vax-2-School program, which will be open to Ohioans aged 12 to 25 years old, and will be similar to the scholarship portion of the successful Vax-a-Million program. Prizes will include 50 scholarships worth \$10,000 each and five \$100,000 scholarships to an Ohio college or university for career or technical education. Prizes will be announced Monday through Friday beginning the week of October 11th. More details will be announced, including how to register, in the coming days.

BUS DRIVERS

Governor DeWine also made a public plea, after hearing from school districts across the state about the shortage of bus drivers. He asked any Ohioan with a CDL license that also has a bus driver certification, who are not employed, to contact their local school district, to help drive school busses, temporarily.

He also spoke with Attorney General Dave Yost who agreed that, moving forward, the Bureau of Criminal Investigation would prioritize required background checks for school bus drivers, educators, nurses, and other health care professionals.

CASE DATA/VACCINE INFORMATION

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

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

All vaccine providers: vaccine.coronavirus.ohio.gov