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COVID-19 Update: Record-Breaking Cases & Hospitalizations, Statewide High Incidence, New ODH Administrative Structure

(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.

RECORD-BREAKING CASES & HOSPITALIZATIONS

Governor DeWine announced today that Ohio is once again breaking records in regard to COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

- Between yesterday and today, health officials have reported a total of 4,961 new positive coronavirus cases in Ohio, the highest number of new cases in a 24-hour period to date.
- There are currently 2,075 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 which is a 55 percent increase in hospitalized patients compared to two weeks ago.
- Of the hospitalized patients, 541 people are in intensive care. The previous record for intensive care admissions was 533 in April.

"This virus is flaring up, and we have to push it down - the economy depends on it," said Governor DeWine. "If the virus continues to aggressively spread, people will lose confidence in their ability to safely go to stores, restaurants, and other businesses. If we want to keep our economy moving, we must all live with this virus and we must all be more careful."
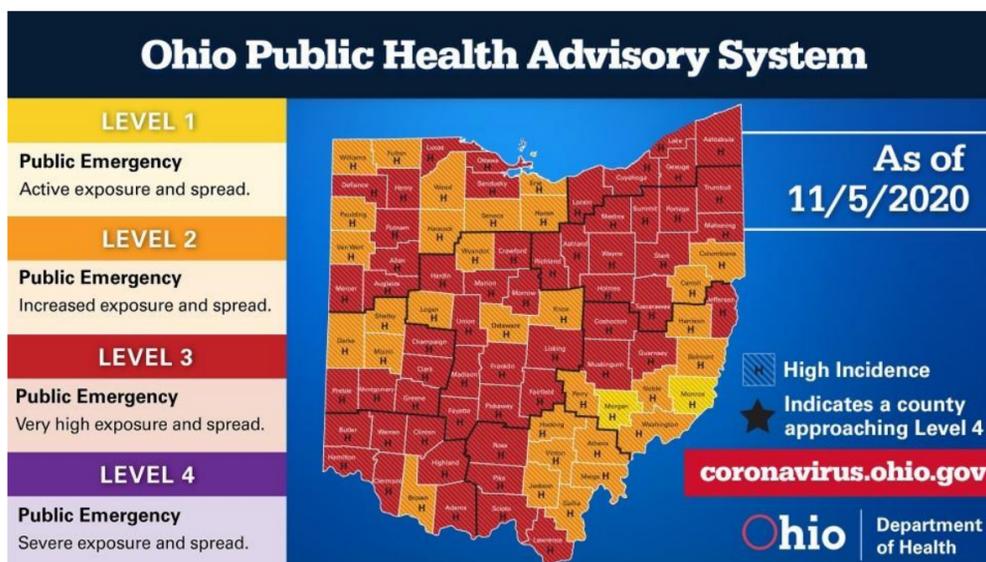
Governor DeWine stressed that the new record number of cases is not due to increased testing capacity in the state. Since September 24, the total number of tests in Ohio has increased by approximately 44 percent, but positive cases have increased 280 percent in the same time period. If a person is tested multiple times, they are only counted once.

STATEWIDE HIGH INCIDENCE

New health data compiled by the Ohio Department of Health revealed today that all 88 counties in Ohio are now considered "high incidence" as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"There have been so many cases in the past two weeks that the risk of catching this virus in every county of this state is very real and very concerning," said Governor DeWine. "Again, I ask everyone to recognize their personal responsibility in slowing the spread of this deadly disease. It's up to every citizen in Ohio to choose to slow the spread by wearing masks, distancing, and making overall smart decisions."

According to today's updated Ohio Public Health Advisory System map, 56 counties are currently rated as having a very high risk of exposure and spread (Red Level 3), up from 43 counties last week. This represents the highest number of Red Level 3 counties since the launch of the advisory system in July. As of today, 86 percent of Ohioans are living in a Red Level 3 county.

A county-by-county breakdown outlining the presence of COVID-19 in all of Ohio's 88 counties can be found on the Ohio Public Health Advisory System's website.

NEW OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH STRUCTURE

Governor DeWine announced multiple key additions to the existing administration at the Ohio Department of Health (ODH).

Chief Medical Officer Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff: Dr. Vanderhoff previously served for more than a decade as a Senior Vice President and as the Chief Medical Officer at OhioHealth. He has years of experience leading large teams in successfully dealing with important healthcare issues in Ohio and prepared OhioHealth to deal with the threat of Ebola and the H1N1 flu pandemic.

Director Stephanie McCloud: Director McCloud previously served as Governor DeWine's administrator of the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, managing an agency of 1,800 colleagues and over $28 billion in assets. She has considerable experience in the area of mental health and addiction treatment which is a priority in Ohio's health improvement plan.

Senior Deputy Lance Himes: Himes had previously served as the interim director of ODH where he has played an integral role in running and managing many aspects of the pandemic response operation. He will lead the coordination of the state's vaccine distribution plan and will continue to work directly with Ohio's local health commissioners.

Chief of Staff Kathleen Madden: Madden had previously served as Assistant Director at the Ohio Office of Budget and Management and will now play a key role in keeping ODH's pandemic and non-pandemic programs and operations on track. She will work to prioritize and resolve critical issues, provide oversight and guidance to ODH staff, and ensure that ODH funds are spent responsibly and strategically.

Other key members of the ongoing COVID-19 response who will continue their roles in assisting ODH are:

Adjutant General Maj. Gen. John Harris, Ohio National Guard: Maj. Gen. Harris will continue work to ensure complex operations, such as COVID testing and contact tracing, are

well-coordinated, monitored, and improved when necessary. He will also work directly with Senior Deputy Himes on the planning and logistics of the forthcoming vaccine distribution program.

Director Ursel McElroy, Ohio Department of Aging: Director McElroy will continue to direct virus prevention efforts for older adults in the community and in long-term settings, including nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

Director Lori Criss, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services: Director Criss will continue to lead efforts to address the increasing mental health needs of citizens during the pandemic.

NEW OHIO BWC ADMINISTRATOR

Governor DeWine announced that John Logue, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation's (BWC) Chief of Strategic Direction, will become the new administrator of Ohio BWC effective on November 16.

Logue has worked for 26 years in the industry. Before returning to BWC in 2019, he most recently served as the vice president of client services for International Absence Management Company where he focused on Ohio workers' compensation.

CURRENT COVID-19 DATA

There are 235,170 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 5,461 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 20,015 people have been hospitalized, including 3,969 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting 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 or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.

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