

**WEEK IN REVIEW**

Friday, November 13, 2020

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine Week in Review*For the week ending November 13, 2020*

Throughout the week, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine was joined by Lt. Governor Jon Husted, and provided updates on Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other state initiatives.

On [Monday](#), Governor DeWine was joined by incoming Ohio Department of Health Chief Medical Officer Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff and leaders of the Ohio Hospital Association to discuss the status of hospital capacity in Ohio as the number of COVID-19 cases continues to surge throughout the state.

As of Monday, there were over 2,500 hospitalizations statewide, up from 2,000 hospitalizations last Thursday. A total of 154 hospitalizations were reported between Sunday and Monday alone.

"In Ohio, we are seeing an unprecedented spike in hospital utilization and it is impacting all areas of the state. While we are better prepared with personal protective equipment and physical capacity, what we are seeing now is an increasing demand on our staffing," said Dr. Vanderhoff. "If we don't control the spread of this virus, we won't be able to care for those who are acutely ill without postponing important, but less urgent, care. We anticipate that this kind of shift could happen in a matter of weeks if trends don't change."

"The COVID-19 pandemic is becoming more dire for Ohio as hospitalizations have escalated 350 percent in the past 50 days to 2,533 COVID patients in Ohio hospitals today," said Mike Abrams, president and CEO, Ohio Hospital Association. "Our hospitals are capable of managing capacity needs, but we must stem the spread now. This steep climb creates a severe strain on our caregivers who are braving the frontline of this pandemic. We can stop this spread, and we call on Ohioans to join hospitals and caregivers to take action now and do the right thing to slow the spread."

At the beginning of the pandemic, Governor DeWine worked with the Ohio Hospital Association to develop a comprehensive statewide public health system to ensure that all Ohioans have access to quality care during the pandemic. As part of this process, the state was divided into three healthcare zones. Leaders of each zone provided an update on hospital capacity in their regions.



ZONE 1

Of all hospitalizations in the state, more than 50 percent are in Zone 1, but there are currently enough hospital beds, personal protective equipment (PPE), medication, and ventilators. Total beds utilized and intensive care beds utilized in Zone 1 stands at 70 to 75 percent as of Monday. This zone, however, is seeing many caregivers becoming ill with COVID-19. At the Cleveland Clinic alone, there are currently 300 caregivers out due to the coronavirus.

"It's not because they're catching COVID in the hospital. What we're seeing is they're catching it in the community," said Robert Wyllie, MD, of the Cleveland Clinic. "What we're asking everyone to do is double down. Now is the time to wear a mask and socially distance - if not to protect your family and friends, do it to protect the caregivers who protect COVID patients and other hospitalized patients."

ZONE 2

Last Monday, Zone 2 hit a milestone of 400 patients in the hospital, and by Friday, the number surpassed 500 patients. As of Monday, there are over 560 COVID-19 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in Zone 2.

Because patients are normally admitted 7 to 14 days after symptoms arise, hospitals are expecting to see hospitalizations continue to increase for at least two weeks after COVID-19 cases peak which could impact non-COVID care.

"We need the citizens of Ohio do to the same things they did in the spring and summer - take seriously masking, distancing, washing hands, and especially avoiding large gatherings of people you don't live with where you can't control your environment and you can't protect yourself or loved ones from someone in that crowd who is asymptomatic positive," said Andrew Thomas, MD, MBA, of The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

ZONE 3

Zone 3 has had an unprecedented increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations since the beginning of October. There were over 670 patients hospitalized on Monday, as compared to 300 patients at the peak of the previous surge in July. In the greater-Cincinnati area, the positivity rate had been approximately 3 percent but is now standing at approximately 8 percent.

In Zone 3, the growth of hospitalizations is doubling every three weeks. Right now, Zone 3 can accommodate the current capacity of patients, but if the doubling of cases continues to accelerate, this zone could exhaust resources and may have to defer non-COVID care.



"If we do what we did in the past - adhering to social distancing, wearing a mask, washing hands, and not expanding your personal bubble, we can bring the spread of this virus under control," said Richard Lofgren, MD, MPH, FACP, and president and CEO of UC Health.

RURAL HOSPITALS

Ronda Lehman, president of Mercy Health, Lima region, also discussed the hospital capacity in their hospital system, which encompasses many rural communities. There is currently adequate capacity of PPE, ventilators, and hospital beds, however, hospitalizations are increasing. On October 5, the hospital system had 17 COVID-19 patients, and on Monday they were treating 75 patients who are COVID-19 positive.

"This is a stark challenge for us because this is in addition to the normal fall flu and critical illness admissions, and it's not sustainable," said Lehman. "This is not a metro problem, this is a statewide and countrywide problem. Those in small communities should recognize that their behaviors do have a substantial impact to their neighbors, their local hospitals, the people they worship with, the people they go to school with, and the people they care about in their circles."

On [Wednesday](#), Governor DeWine called on citizens to recommit to their individual efforts to prevent coronavirus spread as Ohio moves through its most intense, widespread, and dangerous surge of cases to date.

Ohio is currently facing a record number of coronavirus-related hospitalizations and intensive care admissions, with nearly 3,000 people in the hospital, including more than 700 people in the ICU as of Wednesday. During the first week of November alone, 104 Ohioans infected with the coronavirus died.

"With this new wave of COVID-19, the onset of flu season, and an already-exhausted group of healthcare workers, there are serious concerns that there won't be enough people to fully staff our healthcare facilities in the next few weeks," said Governor DeWine. "If we don't change this, Ohio won't be able to provide appropriate care for COVID patients or for Ohioans who require other emergency care for things like accidents, strokes, and heart attacks. Hospitals will again be forced to postpone important, but less urgent, care."

Although testing capacity in Ohio has nearly doubled, the number of people testing positive for the coronavirus has increased almost four times. At the end of September, Ohio averaged under 1,000 new cases per day; on Tuesday, Ohio hit a record high of more than 6,500 new cases reported in a single 24-hour period.



“As we wait for the vaccine, which could come as soon as December, we have so much to protect,” said Governor DeWine. “What each Ohioan does in his or her own life impacts every citizen and every place we desperately want and need to keep open— our schools, nursing homes, hospitals, and businesses.”

To reinforce the necessity of wearing masks and slowing virus spread, Governor DeWine announced two forthcoming orders:

REVISED MASK ORDER

Although most people and businesses have properly followed COVID-19 safety guidelines issued in Ohio’s July 23, 2020, mask order, others are not following the order.

To protect frontline workers and customers, the Ohio Department of Health will reissue Ohio’s mask order and add the following provisions:

- Each store will be required to post a sign outlining face-covering requirements at all public entrances to the store;
- Each store will be responsible for ensuring that customers and employees are wearing masks; and
- A new Retail Compliance Unit, comprised of agents led by the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation, will inspect to ensure compliance. A first violation will result in a written warning and a second violation will result in closure of the store for up to 24 hours.

NEW SOCIAL GATHERING ORDER

Ohio’s April order that limits public events and private gatherings of more than 10 people is still in effect, however, there has been rampant spread of the virus as a result of banquets, wedding receptions, and social gatherings following funerals.

To address the tragedies that have resulted from such events, the Ohio Department of Health will issue an order that will place significant new restrictions on these social activities. Specifically, open congregate areas will no longer be permitted to open, and everyone will be required to be seated and masked unless they are actively consuming food or drinks.

Bars, restaurants, and fitness centers may remain open, but this will be reassessed one week from tomorrow for potential closure.

“If the current trend continues and cases keep increasing, we will be forced to make these closures,” said Governor DeWine. “I am very well aware of the burden this will place on employees and owners, but these are places where it is difficult or impossible to maintain mask-wearing, which we know now is the chief way of slowing this virus.”



For Governor DeWine's entire address, visit ohiochannel.org or read his prepared remarks at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

On **Thursday**, Governor DeWine announced that new health data compiled by the Ohio Department of Health found that all 88 counties in Ohio remain at "high incidence" as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to today's updated Ohio Public Health Advisory System map, 68 counties are currently rated as having a very high risk of exposure and spread (Red Level 3), up from 56 counties last week. This represents the highest number of Red Level 3 counties since the launch of the advisory system in July.

Both Franklin and Tuscarawas counties met six of seven advisory-system indicators and are approaching Purple Level 4.

Ohio also had another record-breaking day for new cases reported in a 24-hour period, with 7,101 cases reported between Wednesday and Thursday. A total of 268 new hospitalizations were reported, as well as 35 more deaths.

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 ZIP CODE DASHBOARD

Governor DeWine announced the creation of a new zip code dashboard. Ohioans can now view data from their local communities and filter data by probable or confirmed case status, county, a specific zip code, or a specific time period.

Case counts will also be available on a downloadable, filterable chart sorted from the most cases to the least. To protect confidentiality, case counts for zip codes with fewer than five cases or less than 100 total residents will not be displayed.

The new zip code dashboard can be found at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

NEW FLU DASHBOARD

Governor DeWine also announced a new flu dashboard that expands the statewide data that the Ohio Department of Health shares on seasonal flu activity each year.



The new dashboard shows flu trends over time with charts that indicate whether flu hospitalizations or cases of flu-like illness are on the rise or decline as compared to the previous week and compared to the five-year average data.

Hospitalization data is broken down by region, county, date, sex, age, race, and ethnicity. The data shows only positive flu PCR tests reported by public health laboratories and selected clinical laboratories that participate in the national flu monitoring system.

Additional data will be added moving forward, and the dashboard will be updated every Friday at 9 a.m.

The new flu dashboard can be found at flu.ohio.gov.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Governor DeWine announced that the state is setting aside \$30 million to assist the state's 113 local health departments. Each department will receive \$200,000 and will have the flexibility to determine how to best use the funds as they see fit to fight COVID-19.

The remaining money will be used to hire contact tracers to support local health departments. Contact tracers will deploy where they are needed across the state to assist in identifying individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and prevent further spread.

GRANT ASSISTANCE STILL AVAILABLE

Lt. Governor Jon Husted reminded Ohio small businesses that the application period for the Small Business Relief Grant and Bar and Restaurant Assistance Fund is now open.

The Small Business Relief Grant provides a \$10,000 grant to small businesses with at least one but no more than 25 employees. The grant funding will help businesses pay for a variety of expenses, including mortgage or rent payments; utility payments; salaries, wages, or compensation for employees and contractors; business supplies or equipment; and other costs. Grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. To ensure the grants are spread throughout the state, \$500,000 will be set aside for businesses in each of Ohio's 88 counties. When a county's allocation is depleted, businesses in that county will be eligible to receive grants from the remaining funds in the overall grant program.

The Bar and Restaurant Assistance Fund provides \$2,500 for those permit holders who haven't been able to fully use their liquor permit. Businesses with an on-premise consumption permit through the Ohio Department of Commerce will be eligible to receive \$2,500 per unique business location. Businesses need to have an active on-premise permit as of close of business on October 23, 2020.



More information can be found at [BusinessHelp.Ohio.gov](https://www.BusinessHelp.Ohio.gov).

BRENT SPENCE BRIDGE

Governor DeWine [signed a proclamation](#) declaring a state of emergency in Hamilton County due to the catastrophic crash that heavily damaged the Brent Spence Bridge which connects Cincinnati and Kentucky.

Although Kentucky leads all bridge maintenance, Governor DeWine authorized the Ohio Department of Transportation to assist with repairs so that the bridge can reopen as soon as possible.

The state of emergency declaration will allow Ohio to recover bridge repair expenses from the Federal Emergency Relief Program.

GOVERNOR'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

First Lady Fran DeWine announced that the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library Program is now being offered to children in all of Ohio's 88 counties.

Kids from birth to age five statewide are now eligible to receive a free book in the mail each month, no matter what county they live in.

When First Lady DeWine started this program with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, only a handful of counties offered the books and 13 percent of Ohio children were enrolled.

Parents are encouraged to enroll their kids in this free literary program. To sign up, visit ohioimaginationlibrary.org Learn more about the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library in the video below.

On **Friday**, Governor DeWine announced that Ohio Department of Health Interim Director Lance Himes signed the [health order](#) to enforce mask-wearing in retail locations across the state in compliance with the statewide mandatory mask order signed on July 23, 2020.

“Every retail employee has the right to work in an environment that is as safe as can be, which means all customers must wear masks. Further, each Ohioan who goes out to shop has the right to know that every store they enter will be safe and the people they encounter in that store will be wearing a mask,” said Governor DeWine. “We know that masks work. They are the easiest, most cost-effective way to limit the spread of COVID-19.”



The order takes effect beginning at 12:01 a.m. on November 16, 2020.

As of Friday, there are 282,528 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 5,700 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 21,856 people have been hospitalized, including 4,164 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting coronavirus.ohio.gov.

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