

**WEEK IN REVIEW**

Friday, November 27, 2020

**Ohio Governor Mike DeWine Week in Review***For the week ending November 27, 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 [Sunday](#), Governor DeWine signed the following bills into law.

[House Bill 404](#), sponsored by Representatives Susan Manchester and Bride Rose Sweeney, allows the boards of trustees for Ohio's public universities to meet electronically.

[House Bill 151](#), sponsored by Representative Rick Carfagna, temporarily grants qualified civil immunity to health care isolation centers to protect medical professionals from liability claims throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill also expands the authority of emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to provide medical services in hospitals, if needed.

On [Monday](#), Governor DeWine was joined by leaders of the Ohio Hospital Association to discuss the status of hospital capacity and healthcare personnel needs in Ohio as the number of COVID-19 cases continue to surge throughout the state.

Between Sunday and Monday, Ohio reported 282 new hospitalizations. Additionally, Ohio reported 11,885 COVID-19 cases in that period. Due to an electronic lab reporting technology issue, information from multiple labs was not processed for two preceding days and was consequently included in Monday's report.

"[Last] Thursday, Ohio hospitals had more than 3,800 COVID-19 patients, which was the highest patient count we had seen so far. Today, we are reporting 4,358 COVID-19 hospitalized patients," said Governor DeWine. "The virus is quickly spreading throughout our entire state and is dramatically impacting all of our healthcare zones and their ability to care for patients."

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

Zone 1 has seen a consistent climb in COVID-19 hospitalizations in recent weeks. Additionally, Zone 1 is experiencing a sharp increase in caregivers becoming ill with COVID-19.

“My biggest concern today is that within the Cleveland Clinic system, alone, we had 970 caregivers out due to coronavirus,” said Robert Wyllie, MD of the Cleveland Clinic. “These caregivers are not catching this in the hospital, but rather in the community. As the community spread increases, so does the number of caregivers who are in quarantine from exposure or who are sick with coronavirus.”



### ZONE 2

Two weeks ago, Zone 2 hit a milestone of 560 COVID-19 patients hospitalized throughout the region.

“On November 2, Zone 2 had 400 patients in our hospitals. And not even three weeks later, on November 21, we surpassed over 900 patients,” said Andrew Thomas, MD, MBA, of The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. “Until we see cases peak and start to come down in a sustained way, Ohio will continue to see hospitalizations rise.”



### ZONE 3

Additionally, Zone 3 has seen an increase in cases and hospitalizations throughout the region.

“In late September, Zone 3 had 90 hospitalizations. This was at a time when we were opening businesses, and kids were going back to school,” said Richard Lofgren, MD,



MPH, FACP, and president and CEO of UC Health. "This really speaks to us because we know how to keep this virus at bay. But, unfortunately this virus is now everywhere."

The increase in hospitalizations throughout the region has taken a toll on caregivers, as well. Several hospitals in Zone 3 have reported a nursing shortage.

## RURAL HOSPITALS

Ronda Lehman, PharmD, MBA, FACHE and president of Mercy Health, also discussed the hospital capacity among many rural communities.

"The number of coronavirus patients who require hospitalizations are happening at a faster rate than we are discharging them," said Lehman. "The ability to discharge patients safely with adequate care, such as providing oxygen or skilled nursing home placement, is also burdened like our hospital systems."

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On [Tuesday](#), new data compiled by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) showed that 98 more deaths were reported between Monday and Tuesday, which at the time was the second-highest number of deaths reported in a single day in Ohio since the start of the pandemic.

A total of 364 new hospitalizations were also reported throughout the state in that period, and 8,604\* additional positive COVID-19 cases were recorded.

Total hospitalizations are continuing to trend upwards, with 4,449 patients currently hospitalized as of Tuesday. Of these, 1,046 patients are in intensive care units.

The current surge in cases is believed to be linked to people gathering on and around Halloween.

"This holiday season, let's show each other how much we care by making the necessary sacrifices to ensure we will all be healthy to celebrate next Thanksgiving," said Governor DeWine. "Approximately one in four of all hospitalized patients in Ohio is infected with COVID-19, and this continues to put tremendous stress on Ohio hospitals in every corner of the state."

"The big fear is if we don't take the message of masking, distancing, and avoiding big groups seriously, Thanksgiving could result in our hospitals being overwhelmed," said Ohio Department of Health Chief Medical Officer Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff. "It's very serious. It's a matter of personal responsibility, and we owe it to each other."



*\*Total case numbers for Ohio are currently incomplete. Thousands of reports are pending review.*

## **BAR & RESTAURANT ASSISTANCE FUND**

Lt. Governor Husted announced that less than half of the eligible permit holders have submitted an application for the [Bar and Restaurant Assistance Fund](#) as of Tuesday.

Roughly 30 different permit types, including bars, restaurants, breweries, distilleries, wineries, casinos, and private clubs may be eligible. Ohioans can find a list of eligible permits, along with the application, at [BusinessHelp.Ohio.gov](#).

## **\$5 BILLION DIVIDEND FOR OHIO EMPLOYERS**

At the urging of Governor DeWine, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) board voted unanimously to approve issuing \$5 billion in dividends to Ohio's employers in mid-December to ease the financial pressures caused by the coronavirus pandemic. This is nearly four times the dividend BWC issued in October, bringing total dividends this year to nearly \$8 billion. Employers should expect to see their checks in the mail in mid-December.

## **OHIO TO WORK**

In September, a new initiative was announced in collaboration with JobsOhio called "Ohio to Work," to help Ohioans who are looking for a job during the pandemic.

The initiative pulls together employers, nonprofits, educators, and training providers to help Ohioans reskill and restart their careers.

Lt. Governor Husted said on Tuesday that the program is currently being piloted in the Greater Cleveland area, and October's first Virtual Career Fair had more than 30 employers with over 1,000 open jobs. More than 700 job seekers attended. The next Virtual Career Fair is Thursday, December 10. To register, visit [OhioToWork.com](#).

## **ADDITIONAL GUESTS**

During the briefing, Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted were joined by four Ohioans who discussed their experiences with COVID-19 and/or their experiences treating patients with serious complications from the coronavirus.

[Stephanie Marshall, a respiratory therapist at Grant Medical Center in Columbus](#), described treating patients struggling with respiratory complications and later being admitted to the hospital herself for serious COVID-19 complications.



[Susan Norvell, a Middletown resident](#), discussed her family's experience with COVID-19. All four people in her household were infected with coronavirus, and their experiences ran the full range from asymptomatic to mild symptoms to intensive care.

[Matthew Colflesh, MD, from Trinity Medical System in Steubenville](#), stressed that although the eastern part of the state did not see surges in the spring and summer, their hospitals are now becoming stressed with a high number of hospitalizations.

[Jasmine Shavers, a nurse at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton](#), discussed her experiences caring for patients in the hospital's all-COVID intensive care unit.

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Also on **Tuesday**, Governor DeWine signed [Executive Order 2020-39D: Directing Expenditure of Fiscal Year 2021 TANF Funds by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services](#).

Executive Order 2020-39D authorizes the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives ("GOFBCI") to expend up to \$13,285,000 during Fiscal Year 2021 on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("TANF") allowable expenses.

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On **Wednesday**, ODH released a travel advisory for Ohio citizens planning to travel to other states, which advises against travel to states with a positivity rate of 15 percent or more.

Ohio's positivity rate, which is the daily percentage of positive tests reported to ODH, has reached 14 percent.

"Like so much of the country, Ohio is now a high-risk area," said Governor DeWine. "We're asking that everyone heed the recommendations of the travel advisory, even if you aren't leaving the state. Please stay home, and ask your friends and family to refrain from visiting this Thanksgiving."

In addition to Ohio's travel advisory, the updated Ohio Public Advisory System map (below) was published on [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).

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Also on **Wednesday**, Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted issued a [proclamation](#) that declares Thanksgiving Day 2020 as a Day of Prayer, Gratitude, and Remembrance.



The proclamation recognizes the resilience and determination of Ohioans who are taking necessary steps to emerge from this crisis, care for their fellow citizens, and support Ohio's healthcare workers. The proclamation also encourages Ohioans to pause and acknowledge those currently suffering from COVID-19 and those who are grieving the deaths of loved ones who have died because of the virus.

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On **Thursday**, Governor DeWine wished Ohioans a happy Thanksgiving.

"Our prayer for our own family, and our prayer for your family, is really the same," said Governor DeWine in his social media address. "And that is that next Thanksgiving, when we are free of this virus, we'll all be together."

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On **Friday**, Governor DeWine signed Ohio's Certificate of Ascertainment, which identifies the appointed electors and final vote count in Ohio for each candidate in the U.S. Presidential Election held on November 3, 2020.

Ohio's Certificate of Ascertainment shows the most popular votes, 3,154,834, for Donald J. Trump and Michael R. Pence.

"As Chief Executive of the State of Ohio, I certified today the Certificate of Ascertainment, which is a part of the electoral process in our state," said Governor DeWine. "I want to thank Ohio voters for exercising their right to vote, as well as all of our poll workers, local election officials, and Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose for a smooth democratic election process in Ohio."

The Certificate of Ascertainment is the legal document that links the popular vote in Ohio to the electoral process. Federal law requires the Chief Executive of each state to certify the Certificate of Ascertainment.

The State meetings of the electors will be held on December 14, 2020. At the meetings, the electors vote for President and Vice President.

Under Ohio law, the candidate with the most popular votes in Ohio receives all 18 of Ohio's electoral college votes, which will be cast by the electors:

Ken Blackwell, Bonnie Ward, Barbara Clark, Keith Cheney, Mark Wagoner, Dave Johnson, Joy Padgett, Patti Alderson, Steve Loomis, Rob Scott, Patricia Weber, Robert



Paduchik, Karen Arshinkoff, James Wert, Jim Canepa, Jane Timken, Darrell Scott, Madison Gesiotto

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Also on **Friday**, Governor DeWine signed two bills into law.

[Senate Bill 178](#), sponsored by Senator Kirk Schuring, authorizes podiatrists to administer influenza vaccinations to people seven years old or older.

[Senate Bill 89](#), sponsored by Senator Matt Huffman, makes various changes in education and higher education.

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As of Friday, there have been 399,808 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 6,346 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 25,960 people have been hospitalized, including 4,571 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).

Please note that today's data may be incomplete while thousands of reports are pending review.

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.