WEEK IN REVIEW
Friday, October 16, 2020

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine Week in Review

For the week ending October 16, 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 **Tuesday**, Governor DeWine cautioned that the continuing increase in COVID-19 cases indicates that significant numbers of infections are likely this winter unless citizens take steps to mitigate and control the spread of the virus.

"Although a vaccine is on the way in the future, we can't control the timetable of the development of a vaccine - but we can control how much this flares up until then," said Governor DeWine. "We have avoided the large outbreaks that other countries and other states have seen, and so far, the combined efforts of Ohioans have kept the virus in check. We can't let our guards down now. We need to continue taking basic safety measures of wearing masks, keeping distance, and avoiding large gatherings."

In the last seven days, Ohio COVID-19 cases have averaged 1,475 cases per day by report date as compared to an average of approximately 1,000 cases per day only two weeks ago. Ohio's current positivity rate is 4.1 percent as compared to 2.7 percent on September 23 and 24. A total of 51 counties are considered high incidence and/or Alert Level 3 on Ohio's Public Health Advisory System.

A new public service announcement featuring former Ohio State coaches Jim Tressel and Urban Meyer encourages everyone to stay in the game and to stick to the game plan.

CHILDHOOD VACCINES

In Ohio and across the country, there has been a decrease in vaccinations administered to protect against diseases like measles, chickenpox, whooping cough, and polio, and Governor DeWine encouraged parents not to delay their children's well-visit vaccinations.

"While we do not have a vaccine yet for COVID-19, we can prevent more than a dozen other diseases from harming our children and our communities," said Governor DeWine. "It is

critical that Ohioans and providers remain vigilant about keeping children up to date on these vaccines."

In the coming days, the Ohio Department of Medicaid will launch several initiatives to encourage childhood immunizations among its members. These efforts will be aimed at increasing safe, convenient access to vaccinations by providing mobile vaccination clinics and reducing administrative barriers for providers.

Governor DeWine also unveiled a new public service announcement that stresses the importance of childhood vaccines.

LAB CAPACITY DASHBOARD

Governor DeWine announced the creation of a new Lab Capacity Dashboard to help pharmacists, nursing homes, colleges and universities, employers, and others administering COVID-19 tests find a lab to run their samples. This new resource will help connect groups that are testing with available labs in order to ease turnaround times and inform Ohioans of their COVID-19 status.

The new dashboard provides self-reported information about labs that can run tests, including hours of operation, types of tests they accept, estimated turn-around time, and locations. Labs with available capacity can sign up on the website to be included in this dashboard.

BINAX-NOW TESTING PLAN

Governor DeWine discussed plans for Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 antigen screening tests that the federal government is providing to Ohio.

This week, Ohio is deploying thousands of these screening tests to colleges and universities to help them implement proactive screening plans. Next week, Ohio will begin sending tens of thousands of screening tests to nursing homes for both routine and outbreak testing requirements.

Governor DeWine emphasized that lab-based PCR tests are still considered the "gold standard" test that provides the most accurate results, and antigen tests can have false positives and false negatives.

"The opportunity to test more broadly and more often make this an important step forward in our fight against COVID-19 spread, even with the lower sensitivity and specificity of these tests," said Governor DeWine. "We do have protocols to follow up on results that are most likely to be false, but we need to be aware that this is part of testing at this scale."

Governor DeWine also cautioned that testing should not be considered a substitute for precautions such as wearing masks, social distancing, and avoiding large gatherings.

Also on **Tuesday**, Governor DeWine signed House Bill 160, sponsored by Representative Catherine Ingram, revises several liquor laws.

House Bill 242, sponsored by Representatives George Lang and Don Jones, prohibits local governmental entities from banning or collecting a tax on auxiliary containers. This bill sunsets in 12 months once effective.

House Bill 364, sponsored by Representative Gayle Manning, designates February 13th as Aortic Aneurysm Awareness Day.

House Bill 669, sponsored by Representatives D.J. Swearingen and Jeff LaRe, codifies two relief measures for bars and restaurants that were instituted in response to the pandemic.

Additionally, Governor DeWine signed the following bills earlier in October.

House Bill 66, sponsored by Representative Derek Merrin, enacts the Theft Victims' Resolution Act.

House Bill 339, sponsored by Representative Derek Merrin, enacts the Insurance Code Corraction Act.

Lt. Governor Husted traveled to Dayton to break ground on a project to expand U.S. 40 near the Dayton International Airport. This expansion project will improve highway safety, as well as promote additional economic opportunities for the region.

On **Thursday**, Governor DeWine released Ohio's updated Public Health Advisory System map. New health data compiled by the Ohio Department of Health found that 29 counties currently have a very high risk of exposure and spread (Level 3):

Adams, Butler, Clark, Cuyahoga, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Highland, Lawrence, Licking, Lucas, Madison, Mahoning, Marion, Mercer, Montgomery, Muskingum, Pike, Portage, Putnam, Richland, Ross, Stark, Summit, Scioto, Union, and Warren

"We have 70 counties that are either red or high incidence. That's 10 million Ohioans or 85% of the population, living in an area with a high risk of community transmission," Governor DeWine said.

Governor DeWine reviewed the seven indicators of the Ohio Public Health Advisory System, which assess the degree of the virus' spread in each county. The seven indicators are:

- Indicator 1: New cases per capita
- Indicator 2: Sustained increase in new cases
- Indicator 3: Proportion of cases not in congregate setting
- Indicator 4: Sustained increase in Emergency Department visits for COVID-like illness
- Indicator 5: Sustained increase in outpatient visits for COVID-like illness
- Indicator 6: Sustained increase in new COVID hospital admissions
- Indicator 7: Intensive Care Unit bed occupancy

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.

INCREASED SPREAD IN CASES

Governor DeWine also announced the state's positivity rate was 5.4% and the seven-day average was 4.2%. This is up from September when the positivity rate was 2.7%. He reported that Ohio has 1,042 COVID inpatients in hospitals, which is a significant increase from the 563 patients on September 20, 2020.

Governor DeWine spoke with Dr. Nick Dreher, medical director of the Population Health Innovation Institute at MetroHealth System, and Dr. David Margolius, division director of internal medicine at MetroHealth System about the recent rise in COVID-19 cases in Ohio.

Dr. Margolius told Ohioans that if they are planning to spend time with family and friends, they need to do it safely, by wearing a mask and practicing social distancing. Dr. Dreher reminded Ohioans that they know how to fight the spread of COVID-19 and need to continue following the proper prevention methods to avoid stress on Ohio's hospital systems.

"The only way, the only way we can beat this virus back is to follow the prevention methods we have been talking about since the beginning of the pandemic," said Governor DeWine. "Stay home when you are sick. Social distance. Wear a mask. Always."

Also on **Thursday,** Governor DeWine signed House Bill 17. House Bill 17, sponsored by State Representative Timothy Ginter, expands the homestead tax exemption to surviving spouses of safety officers killed in the line of duty. This includes firefighters, E.M.T., police officers, sheriffs, and Ohio State Highway Patrol.

On **Friday**, Governor DeWine spoke with media across the state about the recent rise of COVID-19 cases throughout Ohio.

"We are seeing an upward trend in both COVID-19 cases, as well as hospitalizations throughout the state," said Governor DeWine. "We need to stay on top of this virus and control how quickly it is being spread."

CURRENT COVID-19 DATA

As of Friday, there are 177,991 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 5,054 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 16,910 people have been hospitalized, including 3,522 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.