

## WEEK IN REVIEW

Friday, January 22, 2021

# Ohio Governor Mike DeWine Week in Review

*For the week ending January 22, 2021*

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

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In honor of the life and service of Toledo Police Officer Brandon Stalker who was killed in the line of duty on [Monday](#), Governor DeWine ordered that all U.S. and Ohio flags be flown at half-staff upon all public buildings and grounds throughout Lucas County and at the Ohio Statehouse, the Vern Riffe Center, and Rhodes State Office Tower in Columbus. Flags will remain lowered until sunset on the day of Officer Stalker's funeral.

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On [Tuesday](#), Governor DeWine highlighted the vaccine distribution timeline for Phase 1B of Ohio's vaccination program, which began for those ages 80 and up. Governor DeWine was [joined by several Ohioans who received a vaccination as part of Phase 1B](#).

**Week of January 25:** Vaccinations are anticipated to begin for those ages 75 and up. Vaccinations will also be available to those with severe congenital, developmental, or early-onset medical disorders, **and** who have a developmental or intellectual disability.

A representative from the local county developmental disabilities board will reach out to help coordinate receipt of the vaccination for Ohioans with severe congenital, developmental, or early-onset medical disorders, as well as a developmental or intellectual disability.

During the week of February 15, Ohioans with any of these conditions, and do not have a developmental or intellectual disability, will be eligible to receive the vaccination. Additional information on how these individuals can choose to receive their vaccines is forthcoming.

"This group has been identified by medical professionals as having a high risk of death if they caught COVID-19," said Governor DeWine. "It's critical that we continue to prioritize Ohioans who are most vulnerable."

Each provider will begin administering vaccines the day after they receive their shipment. All vaccines must be distributed within seven days.

**Week of February 1:** Vaccinations are anticipated to begin for those ages 70 and up following the same process outlined above.

**Week of February 8:** Vaccinations are anticipated to begin for those ages 65 and up following the same process outlined above.

The Ohio Department of Health has launched a tool on [vaccine.coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://vaccine.coronavirus.ohio.gov) to assist residents looking for a provider that has been allocated vaccines.

The tool is searchable by zip code and county, but it will not be updated in real-time. It is critical that those eligible to receive a vaccine consult local resources to determine up-to-date vaccine availability.

## **K-12 SCHOOLS**

Vaccinations will also be available for personnel in Ohio schools in Phase 1B. As of Tuesday, 96% of public school districts have committed to returning to school at least partially in-person by March 1.

Schools committed to at least partially returning to in-person by March 1 have been designated a local Educational Service Center as a working partner. Additional details will be confirmed between the working partners and school districts.

School districts are also choosing a retail pharmacy partner, secured by the state, or an existing local partnership, to administer the vaccinations to school personnel. Beginning the week of February 1, vaccination administration will be coordinated with school-provider partnerships, and a majority will be closed clinics for school personnel only.

## **CYBERSECURITY**

Lt. Governor Husted outlined various resources available to Ohioans who are interested in earning a credential, or pursuing a career, in cybersecurity. Strengthening the state's talent and workforce in this industry is a key component to improving cybersecurity efforts and protecting citizens and businesses from cyberattacks.

Resources include:

- Industry-recognized credentials are offered at high schools across Ohio. Learn more at [education.ohio.gov](https://education.ohio.gov).
- Cybersecurity programs offered at institutions of higher education: [Ohioc3.org](https://ohioc3.org)
- The Ohio Cyber Range supports curriculum development, cyber contests for k-12 to college students, internship programs, and more. Learn more at [OhioCyberRangeInstitute.org](https://OhioCyberRangeInstitute.org)

- TechCred: Offers tech-focused credentials, including many on cybersecurity. Visit [TechCred.Ohio.Gov](https://www.techcred.org) to learn more.

## **OHIO DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE**

Governor DeWine announced his nomination of former Ohio Supreme Court Justice Judith L. French as Director of the Ohio Department of Insurance. French brings more than 30 years of experience, and will lead the department in providing consumer protection through education and fair, but vigilant, regulation while promoting a stable and competitive environment for insurers.

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On **Thursday**, Governor DeWine announced that the state is purchasing 2 million at-home, rapid COVID-19 tests using telehealth services where the results are delivered in minutes without the need to send the test to a lab for processing. Developed by Abbott, [BinaxNOW](#) is an easy-to-use antigen test that detects the virus when people are most infectious.

To facilitate the delivery of the BinaxNOW test to the home and the guided collection and testing process, Abbott has partnered with digital health solutions provider [eMed™](#), who will deliver their results through Abbott's complementary NAVICA™ app in a matter of minutes. eMed™ will report the rapid test results in the electronic lab reporting system.

“Abbott has been a valued partner throughout this pandemic and this new partnership will help us continue aggressive testing at colleges and universities, and pursue access to rapid testing in every county in Ohio,” said Governor DeWine. “These tests combined with the telehealth solutions provided by eMed™ will provide equitable access to testing for those who may not be able to access traditional testing because of their working hours, have mobility or transportation issues, or have caregiving responsibilities.”

“The partnership with the State of Ohio is proof of our ability to get millions of tests in the hands of people who need them,” said Dr. Patrice Harris, eMed™ CEO. “We are proud of this joint accomplishment which fortifies our belief that serial testing, when deployed in accordance with public health best practices, CDC and FDA guidance, plays a critical role in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 and getting our society and economy on the right track.”

This partnership will provide at least 2 million of the BinaxNow tests for Ohioans as, Abbot, eMed™, and the Ohio Department of Health pursue innovative efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **OHIO COUNTY COVID DATA**

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](#).

All 88 counties have a level of spread that is at least three times more than what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers high incidence.

"As we have seen recently, our number of new cases seems to be flattening," said Governor DeWine. "We are still much higher than where we want to be, and still much higher than where we've been most of this pandemic."

Governor DeWine also discussed key measurements regarding incidence cases per 100,000 residents over two weeks, as well as regional COVID-19 ICU utilization.

"Out of any 200 Ohioans, at least 1 has tested positive for COVID during the past 2 weeks," said Governor DeWine. "Additionally, we still have more than 1 out of 4 patients who are COVID positive in our ICUs, which means our hospitals are still spending a lot of time and effort to treat these patients who are critically ill with COVID-19."

## **UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FRAUD**

Unfortunately, identity theft is a nationwide problem and no state is immune. Many who did not apply for unemployment benefits, may receive a 1099 form from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, indicating that they are likely a victim of identity theft and their personal information was used to file a fraudulent claim.

Here is what they can do:

1. Report identity theft at [unemployment.ohio.gov](https://unemployment.ohio.gov), and click on the red button that says "ID Theft: What to do" to report suspected identity theft. ODJFS will send a confirmation email with resources available to victims of identity theft.
2. File your taxes following guidance regarding identity theft from the [IRS](https://www.irs.gov) and the [Ohio Department of Taxation](https://www.tax.ohio.gov).
3. Protect your identity from future fraud by consulting resources from the [Ohio Attorney General](https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov), the [Ohio Department of Public Safety](https://www.ohio.gov), and the [Federal Trade Commission](https://www.ftc.gov).

## **PPE DONATION**

Lt. Governor Husted thanked the many businesses and organizations that have donated supplies and equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE) since the start of the pandemic.

The latest donation, 250,000 disposable masks from the Home Depot, adds to the millions of masks, gowns, gloves, face shields, and sanitizer donated by organizations ranging from large

national companies and foundations to small Ohio businesses. The donated supplies are added to the State's stockpile and distributed around the state as needed.

## **INNOVATEOHIO, OBM DUPLICATE PAYMENT TOOL**

Lt. Governor Husted also provided an update on InnovateOhio's Duplicate Payment tool, which is a project developed with the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) that identifies duplicate payments in the state government accounting system. On Thursday, **an additional 72 duplicate payments were identified, totaling \$168,277 in savings, using the InnovateOhio Duplicate Payment Tool.**

Since the project's launch, it has identified **\$1.37 million in savings**. This update brings the total number of confirmed duplicate payments to **258 since January 2019**, across **33 different agencies**, boards, and commissions.

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On **Friday**, Governor DeWine provided brief virtual remarks at the start of an online event focusing on the [Ohio Governor's Expedited Pardon Project](#).

The project was launched by Governor DeWine in 2019 to accelerate the lengthy clemency process for certain citizens who have a felony conviction but have become contributing members of society. In the first year of the project, nine people received a pardon through the expedited program, but it is estimated that thousands of other Ohioans also qualify.

"I am sure there are thousands of Ohioans, that if we had the facts in front of us, that we would look at that and say 'that person certainly should be given a pardon'," said Governor DeWine. "But it's getting them in front of us, getting the paperwork and background check done, and getting the information to honestly make that evaluation, that is what we need."

Approximately 200 people participated in the event, which was hosted in partnership between the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and the CARES Justice Institute in Dayton. Governor DeWine thanks the special guest presenters, Judge Walter Rice, United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio; Bishop Mark McGuire, CARES Justice Institute; and Joann Sahl, University of Akron School of Law.

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Also on **Friday**, Governor DeWine signed the following Executive Order:

[Executive Order 2021-01D: Implementing Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Reductions to Balance the Biennial Budget While Partially Restoring Fiscal Year 2021 Education Payments](#)

Additionally, Governor DeWine issued the following statement:

“In the springtime, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy, and on Ohio’s revenues, was dire. With this, reductions were made to the state’s biennial budget.

“With this Executive Order, we are finalizing current year budget reductions at \$390 million across all agencies, which is less than the cuts implemented last year.

“Because the cuts implemented today are less than last year’s reductions, OBM Director Murnieks is authorized to allot to the Department of Education an additional \$160 million; and to the Department of Higher Education an additional \$100 million of enacted fiscal year 2021 General Revenue Fund appropriations previously withheld.

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Also on **Friday**, Lt. Governor Husted, Director of InnovateOhio, announced a new pilot project aimed at expanding broadband using existing technology through MARCS towers located in Scioto and Jackson Counties, in Southeastern Ohio. The innovative project builds upon the goal of BroadbandOhio by enhancing and expanding high-speed internet access to unserved and underserved Ohioans, particularly those in the Appalachia region of the state, by creatively leveraging state assets.

Lt. Governor Husted was joined by Matt Damschroder, Director of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services, and John Carey, Director of the Governor’s Office of Appalachia. Multi-Agency Radio Communications System towers, also known as MARCS towers, are part of a statewide, wireless, digital communication network that allows emergency and law enforcement personnel to communicate instantly during emergencies. This project will give Internet Service Providers an opportunity to apply for a grant through the state to attach to **six towers** in Scioto and Jackson Counties, ultimately providing low-cost internet to unserved households in the area.

The grant application period opened on **January 22, 2021**, and will close at **5 p.m. on Friday, February 26, 2021**. Visit [Development.Ohio.gov](https://development.ohio.gov) to apply.

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Also on **Friday**, Governor Mike DeWine announced that the Ohio Department of Health will extend Ohio's 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew until January 30, 2021 ([order](#)).

The curfew does not apply to those going to and from work, those who have an emergency, or those who need medical care. The curfew is not intended to stop anyone from getting groceries or going to the pharmacy. Picking up carry-out or a drive-thru meal and ordering for delivery is permitted, but serving food and drink within an establishment must cease at 10:00 p.m.

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As of Friday, there have been 853,982 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 10,599 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 44,519 people have been hospitalized, including 6,485 admissions to intensive care units.

In-depth data can be accessed by visiting [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).

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.