

**WEEK IN REVIEW**

Saturday, February 20, 2021

**Ohio Governor Mike DeWine Week in Review***For the week ending February 19, 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.

On **Tuesday**, Governor DeWine announced that both Pfizer and Moderna have advised that direct vaccine shipments to providers may be delayed one to two days due to inclement weather.

That day, many providers continued with their scheduled vaccination appointments, but some canceled appointments due to snow emergencies. For future weather advisories, Ohioans who haven't heard from their provider and are concerned about whether or not their appointment is still scheduled should contact their provider or visit their website. Ohioans who need to cancel their vaccination for any reason should contact their provider to reschedule.

**CENTRAL SCHEDULING SYSTEM UPDATE**

Governor DeWine announced that Ohio's centralized scheduling website has been created, and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is now working with vaccine providers to enroll them in the system. The website will serve as a singular location for Ohioans to confirm that they are eligible to be vaccinated, identify nearby providers, and schedule their vaccine appointment.

Ohio and approximately 40 other states chose not to use the centralized system that the federal government intended to develop. Instead, Ohio chose to build its own centralized scheduling system. Despite the significant build time and configuration, the system was built within Ohio's intended timeframe.

ODH will work directly with vaccine providers to integrate their current systems into the statewide system and assist them in working through current waitlists to potentially integrate these commitments into the centralized system. Providers will be expected to use this system as Ohio looks to the future, and guidance will be provided in the near future regarding deadlines.



"Once most participating providers have signed up, the next phase will be to make the site live to those seeking to be vaccinated," said Governor DeWine. "Our goal is for Ohioans to have a positive customer experience when we launch the site to make appointments."

Outside partners, including the Area Agencies on Aging, will be available to help Ohioans who do not have access to the internet with appointment scheduling.

### **VIRTUAL TOWNHALLS**

As part of Ohio's continuing efforts to ensure equity in Ohio's vaccination program, ODH is holding virtual town hall meetings focused on specific minority communities. These virtual meetings will involve local medical professionals and community leaders who will guide these conversations to discuss the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The meetings are intended to jumpstart conversations and give local leaders and attendees the tools they need to better inform members of their communities about vaccine facts, enhance access to trusted resources, and drive conversations in their own communities about why vaccinations are important.

The town halls will be streamed on Facebook and YouTube. More details are available at [coronavirus.ohio.gov/townhall](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/townhall).

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On **Wednesday**, Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted were joined by JobsOhio, The Ohio State University, Nationwide Children's Hospital, Franklin County, the City of Columbus, and state legislators to unveil the Columbus Innovation District. The Columbus Innovation District will bring together globally recognized education and healthcare research institutions to bolster the creation of in-demand jobs and fuel \$3 billion in economic impact for Columbus and Ohio over the next 10 years.

The Columbus Innovation District will be a hub for innovation and growth in Ohio, expanding science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) educational opportunities, positioning Ohio to compete nationally for growing tech and healthcare employers.

"The Columbus Innovation District will be the third anchor in our strategy to build on Ohio's growing dominance as a world leader in medical research and healthcare talent," said Governor DeWine. "These districts will attract researchers, who can create, develop, and share their ideas with the world from Ohio."



The Columbus Innovation District aims to generate 20,000 new jobs in central Ohio over the next 10 years, involving an estimated 10,000 direct STEM jobs in the technology and healthcare industries, as well as 10,000 indirect jobs in the community at large.

“With this announcement, Columbus becomes the third regional innovation district we’ve launched in Ohio in the last year, advancing world-class research, supporting intellectual property commercialization and new business startups while developing the STEM and computer science talent needed for healthcare and businesses to thrive,” Lt. Governor Husted said. “The people of Ohio will ultimately benefit from the fact that OSU and Nationwide Children’s, in collaboration with JobsOhio, share the common mission of advancing innovation, investment and economic prosperity in Ohio – now and for the future.”

On **Thursday**, Governor DeWine announced that vaccine shipments in Ohio and across the country continue to be delayed as a result of continued bad weather. Ohioans with upcoming vaccine appointment should confirm that their appointment has not been canceled before leaving home.

Because of these weather delays, it is expected that providers will give vaccinations over the weekend as shipments arrive.

### **VACCINE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

On Thursday, Ohio launched its COVID-19 Vaccine Maintenance Program for nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Each month, facilities can host a vaccine clinic for residents and staff if there is the need for vaccinations. The program ensures that vaccinations in long-term care facilities continue for new residents and staff or current residents and staff who have now decided to be vaccinated.

### **NURSING HOME VISITATION**

Governor DeWine announced that he has assembled a team of doctors and nurses to develop a plan for safe nursing home visitation. Members of the team are experts in infectious disease control, skilled nursing, and other types of long-term care settings.

Ohio's existing visitation order does allow compassionate care visits. Examples of compassionate care situations could include:

- A resident who was living with their family before recently being admitted to a home, is struggling with the change in environment and lack of physical family support.
- A resident who needs cueing and encouragement with eating or drinking, previously provided by family or caregiver(s), is experiencing weight loss or dehydration.



- A resident, who used to talk and interact with others, is experiencing emotional distress, seldom speaking, or crying more frequently.

The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is available to assist citizens with questions about compassionate care visits. The office can be reached at [OhioOmbudsman@age.ohio.gov](mailto:OhioOmbudsman@age.ohio.gov) or 1-800-282-1206.

### **PHASE 1B MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

This week, vaccine eligibility opened up to Ohioans born with the medical conditions outlined below, or those who were diagnosed in early childhood whose conditions continued into adulthood. Following anecdotal reports of individuals with these conditions being denied vaccination appointments, particularly those with cystic fibrosis, Governor DeWine stressed that vaccine providers should vaccinate those of any age with any of the following conditions.

### **VACCINE DATA COLLECTION**

Governor DeWine again asked vaccine providers to collect and report accurate and complete data on vaccine administrations including race, ethnicity, age, and category of eligibility. This information is critical to understanding uptake rates among specific communities or occupations and also helps inform future policy and allocation decisions. The Ohio Department of Health will continue to reach out to all providers to make sure this critical information is being entered into the system.

### **RICHLAND COUNTY CLINIC**

Lt. Governor Husted traveled to Richland Public Health (RPH) in Mansfield to tour their vaccine clinic and thank the staff and healthcare providers for their efforts to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine. Most of the 100 Ohioans being vaccinated during the visit were receiving their second dose.

During the press conference, Lt. Governor Husted had the opportunity to look on as two Richland County residents received their shot: Ms. Doris Rheinbolt received her second dose and Mansfield Mayor Tim Theaker received his first dose, respectively.

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On **Friday**, Governor DeWine visited Lawrence County to tour areas impacted by winter ice storms that brought down trees and caused widespread power outages.

Governor DeWine issued a [proclamation](#) on **Wednesday** declaring a state of emergency in Lawrence County due to dangerous and damaging conditions caused by the storm.



"The impacts of these weather events are affecting the life, health, safety, and welfare of citizens in Lawrence County where ice, snow, and debris on the roadways are impeding the ability to restore utilities and access emergency services," said Governor DeWine. "With the oncoming snowfall that is expected to complicate the local response, this state of emergency will activate state agencies to assist in clearing debris from roads and with ongoing measures to restore power."

Governor DeWine on **Friday** activated the Ohio National Guard to help ensure the safety of southern Ohio residents impacted by the ice storms.

Members of the 1191st Engineer Company in Portsmouth [were placed on state active duty](#) to assist local authorities in Lawrence and Gallia counties with the removal of downed trees that are interfering with work to restore power and are obstructing area ditches, creeks, and streams.

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Also on **Friday**, Governor DeWine announced three appointments to fill judicial vacancies, among other appointments to boards and commissions.

- Eric Allen Marks has been appointed to the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas, General Division.

Marks, of Toledo, will assume office on March 1, 2021, and will be replacing Judge Myron Duhart, who was elected to the Ohio Sixth District Court of Appeals. Marks must run for election in November 2022 to retain the seat and complete the unexpired term ending December 31, 2024.

- Michael King has been appointed to the Franklin County Municipal Court.

King, of Columbus, will assume office on March 1, 2021, and will be replacing Judge William Pollitt, who died last year. King's appointed term will expire on January 3, 2022. He will need to run for election in November 2021 for a full term commencing January 4, 2022.

- Michelle Fisher has been appointed to the Ashtabula County Court.

Fisher, of Orwell, will assume office on March 1, 2021, and will be replacing Judge David Schroeder, who was elected to the Ashtabula Court of Common Pleas. Fisher's appointed term to the Western County Court will expire on December 31,



2022. She will need to run for election in November 2022 for a full term commencing January 1, 2023.

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As of Saturday, there have been 952,306 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 16,749\* confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 49,317 people have been hospitalized, including 7,023 admissions to intensive care units.

\*The Bureau of Infectious Diseases and the Bureau of Vital Statistics continue to reconcile death data. This process is ongoing as the teams complete a deep review of the data. This review will result in some fluctuations in death numbers moving forward.

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.