



WEEK IN REVIEW

Friday, February 26, 2021

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine Week in Review

For the week ending February 26, 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 **Monday**, Governor DeWine urged patience as COVID-19 vaccine providers work around the delayed shipment of some Pfizer vaccines and all Moderna vaccines due to last week's winter weather. Inventory is being backfilled by this week's new shipments.

For providers who canceled appointments last week, Governor DeWine is urging them to expand their appointment schedules to include evening and weekend hours to catch up.

NURSING HOME VISITATION

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Ohio's nursing homes has dropped significantly to 343 new cases last week compared to the peak of 2,832 new cases in December.

As the number of nursing-home cases continues to drop due to vaccinations in long-term facilities, Governor DeWine reminded nursing home staff and families of nursing home residents about the status of visitation in Ohio's nursing homes. Visitation is permitted at nursing homes in Ohio if the facilities meet the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) criteria to allow visits:

- No new onset of COVID-19 cases in the last 14 days;
- The facility is not currently conducting outbreak testing; and
- CMS reports the COVID-19 county positivity rate at less than 10 percent.

Compassionate care visits, which are special visits in which a family member or other visitor provides comfort, support, and assistance to a resident whose well-being is suffering or at risk, are always permitted regardless of the criteria above.

Governor DeWine [sent a letter on Monday](#) to all nursing homes in Ohio reminding them to check their county positivity rate every week to determine their visitation status and to remind them to allow for compassionate care visits. Ohio's nursing home facilities are required to report their visitation status to [Ohio's Long-Term Care Visitation Dashboard](#).

If you have a loved one in need of a compassionate care visit but are having trouble scheduling a visit, contact Ohio's Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman at OhioOmbudsman@age.ohio.gov or 1-800-282-1206.

PROGRESSION OF VACCINE ELIGIBILITY

Governor DeWine provided information on the progression of vaccine eligibility in Ohio. Because those ages 65 and older make up approximately 87 percent of all COVID-19 deaths in Ohio, no additional age groups are eligible for the vaccine at this time. Once the demand for the vaccine has been met for those 65 and older, those ages 60 and older will become eligible. After a period of vaccination for this age group, those ages 55 and older will become eligible, followed by those ages 50 and up.

Individuals in specific small groups that could have an increased risk of exposure to the virus may also potentially be included in the 60 and older vaccination phase.

PHASE 1B MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Last week, vaccine eligibility opened up to those Ohioans born with or who have early childhood conditions that are carried into adulthood, which put them at higher risk for adverse outcomes due to COVID-19. On Monday, Governor DeWine asked Ohio hospitals and doctors with access to the vaccine to begin to proactively reach out to these patients with the specific medical conditions outlined in [Phase 1B](#) to schedule vaccination.

OTHER PRIORITY POPULATIONS

In Ohio's eight state-operated developmental centers, more than 91 percent of residents have accepted their first vaccine as of Monday.

More than 14,000 Ohioans living with developmental and intellectual disabilities who also have a certain health condition they were born with or developed in childhood and carried into adulthood have also received their first dose of vaccine.

Ohio is working to complete the vaccination of residents and staff in congregate settings for residential treatment facilities, mental health residential care facilities, and recovery housing.

Also on [Monday](#), Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted announced the approval of assistance for five projects set to create 1,382 new jobs and retain 978 jobs statewide. During its monthly meeting, the Ohio Tax Credit Authority (TCA) reviewed economic development proposals brought to the board by JobsOhio and

its regional partners. Collectively, the projects are expected to result in more than \$80 million in new payroll and spur more than \$51 million in investments across Ohio.

Included in the announcement Rocket Mortgage's downtown Cleveland expansion plans. As outlined by Lt. Governor Husted, the company plans to bring 630 new jobs to the Northeast Ohio region, adding to its current workforce of 721.

Rocket Mortgage considered several cities for its expansion and ultimately chose Cleveland.

Partners on the project include the Ohio Development Services Agency, JobsOhio, the city of Cleveland, Team NEO, and the Greater Cleveland Partnership.

The five projects approved by TCA are detailed [here](#).

In remembrance of the more than 500,000 Americans who have died due to COVID-19, including more than 17,000 Ohioans, Governor DeWine on **Tuesday** ordered that the flags of the United States and the State of Ohio be flown at half-staff upon all public buildings and grounds throughout the state until sunset on February 26, 2021.

This [order](#) was issued in accordance with the order issued by the President of the United States of America.

Also on **Tuesday**, Governor DeWine and First Lady Fran DeWine received their second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine from Dr. Kevin Sharrett at Kettering Health Network's Jamestown office in Greene County.

The DeWines became eligible to receive their first shots earlier this month when vaccinations opened up to Ohioans age 70 and above. Currently, any Ohioan age 65 and older can be vaccinated.

To learn more about Ohio's vaccination plan, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine.

To find a vaccine provider in your area, visit vaccine.coronavirus.ohio.gov

Also on **Tuesday**, Governor DeWine and Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Director Mary Mertz announced that Ohio will develop a new state park around an important, yet often overlooked historical site in Greene County.

Oldtown, located at what is now the site of the Tecumseh Motel at 1575 U.S. 68 in Xenia, is the site of one of the largest-known Shawnee settlements in Ohio and is often cited by historians as the birthplace of Tecumseh.

On Monday, the State Controlling Board approved ODNR's proposal to purchase the motel for \$260,000 to transform the half-acre property into Ohio's 76th state park.

“Preserving this site gives us a unique opportunity to connect today’s generation of Ohioans with the past,” said Governor DeWine. “By protecting this property, we are preserving Tecumseh’s legacy and Ohio’s long, rich history.”



[Tecumseh](#) established himself as a Shawnee military and political leader who fought to preserve native land against American westward expansion and the U.S. military.

“By turning this historic land into a new state park, it’s our goal to restore and preserve Oldtown for the public to enjoy,” said ODNR Director Mertz.

ODNR plans to engage with the three sovereign and federally recognized Shawnee Tribes – the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, the Shawnee Tribe, and the Absentee Shawnee – to preserve and highlight this important historical site. The state park will include an interpretive center, and several markers memorializing historical events at Oldtown, including the marker pictured above, will be preserved.

On [Wednesday](#), in honor of the life and service of [Ohio Department of Natural Resources Officer Jason Lagore](#), Governor DeWine [ordered](#) that the flags of the United States and the State of Ohio be flown at half-staff upon all public buildings and grounds in Highland County, and at the Ohio Statehouse, Vern Riffe Center, and Rhodes State Office Tower in Columbus. Flags should remain lowered until sunset on the day of Officer Lagore's funeral.

This order is concurrent with the Governor's Tuesday flag lowering order in remembrance of the 500,000 Americans killed by COVID-19.

On [Thursday](#), Governor DeWine announced a loosening of restrictions for sporting and entertainment venues when safety protocols are followed.

"The vaccines have given us great hope, but until we have enough Ohioans vaccinated, we must continue masking and social distancing," said Governor DeWine. "Easing up on some prevention measures is intended to serve as a starting point. If the trajectory of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths continues downward, we hope to be able to relax more of these measures. If it gets worse, we may have to tighten up."

Sporting and entertainment events will be able to reopen with 25 percent maximum indoor capacity and 30 percent maximum outdoor capacity provided they follow established precautions such as mandatory mask wearing for employees and customers, spectator pathways that allow for social distancing, and seating in groups in six-foot intervals of no more than six people from the same household.

General admission (lawns, standing room, infields) will be permitted if masks are worn and if six-foot distancing can be marked and maintained.

New guidance for proms, banquets, wedding receptions, fairs, festivals, and parades is forthcoming.

PROVIDER EXPANSION

Next week, Ohio will receive 310,000 first doses of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. With this increase in doses, Ohio will add additional new vaccine provider sites including some Meijer and Walmart locations and more independent pharmacies.

Providers that are currently receiving vaccines - including RiteAid, Kroger, CVS, Walgreens, local health departments, and hospitals - can anticipate larger shipments.

Based on information provided by the federal government, once the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is available, Ohio will receive an additional 91,000 doses during the first week. Governor DeWine announced on **Friday** that vaccine providers should prepare for the potential increase in vaccines as early as late next week.

SCHOOL UPDATE

As of this week, all doses requested by schools through the state's vaccination program have been allocated to local providers. Some school staff already received their second dose, and other second dose clinics are underway.

Ohio began making vaccines available to K-12 teachers this month with the goal of having all of Ohio's K-12 students back to full or partial in-person learning by March 1. Right now, most students in Ohio districts have access to at least some in-person instruction.

Governor DeWine expressed gratitude to school leaders who have prioritized a return to in-person instruction. Ohio will continue to work with the handful of schools across the state that are struggling to meet the March 1 goal.

NURSING HOME CASES/HOSPITALIZATIONS

Ohio continues to see downward COVID-19 hospitalization trends, particularly in the 80+ age group which was among the first groups to become eligible for the vaccine. In December, those 80+ made up more than 25 percent of Ohio's COVID-19 hospitalizations. This month, that number has dropped to about 18 percent.

Ohio is also seeing a decline in COVID-19 cases among nursing home residents. In the past week, Ohio had 369 new nursing home cases, compared to 2,832 new cases in one week in December.

As part of the new COVID-19 Vaccine Maintenance Program, Ohio will continue vaccinating new nursing home residents, new staff hires, and those who have recently decided to take the vaccine.

Due to the decrease in cases reported in long-term care facilities, Ohio's Veterans Homes in Sandusky and Georgetown have resumed accepting new residents, and certain restrictions on visitors at state behavioral health hospitals will be lifted beginning on March 1.

HEALTH EQUITY WEBSITE

Governor DeWine announced the launch of a new health equity website on coronavirus.ohio.gov that highlights Ohio's efforts to achieve equity in its pandemic response and provides resources to help communities, agencies, and organizations across the state join in those efforts.

The new Communications Resources Hub will offer various print, digital, audio, and video resources to help Ohioans provide education about the vaccine to any number of communities. In addition to general resources, the website offers materials created for specific groups, including minorities and Ohioans who speak English as a second language.

OHIO PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY SYSTEM

For the first time in several weeks, Ohio's Public Health Advisory System has shown change in the amount of spread in some Ohio counties. Holmes, Mercer, Shelby, and Williams counties decreased to a [Level 2 \(Orange\) Public Health Emergency](#).

TECHCRED

Lt. Governor Husted reminded Ohioans about the benefits of TechCred, which helps Ohioans learn new in-demand skills while also helping employers build a stronger workforce with the skills needed in a technology-infused economy.

There are more than 1,000 pre-approved credentials offered through the program. These technology-focused credentials take only a year or less to complete and prepare current and future employees for the technology jobs Ohio employers need.

Businesses can be reimbursed up to \$2,000 for each credential earned by an employee and up to \$30,000 total each application period.

To learn more, visit: [TechCred.Ohio.Gov](https://www.techcred.ohio.gov).

On **Friday**, Governor DeWine detailed the foster care initiatives in his proposed Executive Budget for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023. The initiatives focus on improving the state's foster care system, expanding existing programs and children services, and prioritizing the best interests of children.

“We started our budget conversation by talking about our ‘Investing in Ohio Initiative,’ which will bring renewal and recovery across Ohio,” said Governor DeWine. “We are continuing that conversation by focusing on investments that will transform – for the better – the lives of vulnerable children throughout Ohio. The foster care system is at the top of my list for improvement.”

Based on the [recommendations](#) of the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council, Governor DeWine has proposed appropriations in the state's biennial budget for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 that are highlighted [here](#).

“While change won't happen immediately, I strongly believe that these investments will transform our foster care system to be more compassionate and child-focused, so it can better care for our most vulnerable children,” said Governor DeWine. “These investments will build on our existing policies and initiatives to ensure that no Ohio children are left behind and that all kids have the opportunity to reach their God-given potential and live healthy, productive lives.”

The proposed Executive Budget "blue book," including Governor DeWine's full budget recommendations and budget highlights, can be found on budget.ohio.gov.

Also on **Friday**, Governor Mike DeWine announced that he has signed the following Executive Order:

[Executive Order 2021-03D: Continuance and Reauthorization of the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council](#).

The Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council was established in 1992 by amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and is responsible for the development, implementation, and monitoring of the State Plan for Independent Living.

Also on **Friday**, Lt. Governor Husted traveled to Chillicothe where 300 Ohioans received their first-round dose of the Moderna vaccine administered by Hopewell Health Centers.

He had the opportunity to watch as nurses prepped the vaccine, and he thanked them for their tireless efforts working during this pandemic.

Mr. and Mrs. Dave and Sue Shoults (pictured) received their vaccine on Friday as the Lt. Governor looked on.

As of Friday, there have been 964,380 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 17,183* confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 50,118 people have been hospitalized, including 7,119 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.

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