

New coronavirus cases have been among the unvaccinated

By Al Cross
Kentucky Health News

Making what they called the best argument for vaccination against the coronavirus, Gov. Andy Beshear and his health commissioner said Thursday that only 0.08 percent of recent virus cases in Kentucky are in people who have received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine.

At his weekly press conference, Beshear also announced a back-to-work incentive for Kentuckians getting extra unemployment benefits due to the pandemic, and a \$763 million allocation of federal pandemic relief funds to child-care centers. Here are the details:

Vaccinations: Health Commissioner Steven

Stack said 99.92% of the state's virus cases in the last four weeks, six out of 7,290, were in unvaccinated people. "That is functionally a hundred percent," he said. During the same period, unvaccinated people were 99 percent of those people hospitalized for Covid-19, and 93 percent of the deaths from the disease.

But only 49% of Kentucky's population has had at least one dose of vaccine, and just 42.5% are fully vaccinated, figures similar to states where the Delta variant of the virus is causing more hospitalizations.

"We've got to continue to talk about the vaccines," Beshear said. "The Delta variant's out there, and the threat is very

real." He said the 99% figures presented by Stack "ought to be some of the best evidence for everybody who's qualified going out and getting vaccinated."

Stack said the variant, which originated in India and is expected to become dominant in the U.S., is more contagious than others, but only slightly more resistant to vaccines, which are 88% effective against death or severe disease from the variant.

"If you get vaccinated, you have essentially got a 90-percent-plus reduction in your risk for death and serious disease and going in the hospital," Stack said. "The new Delta variant is dangerous; it's more dangerous for

younger people than the previous versions. We're gonna see more younger people get hurt. . . . Your risk is incredibly reduced if you get vaccinated."

Stack noted that new coronavirus cases in Kentucky have declined for seven weeks in a row, much as new cases around the world have dropped for eight straight weeks, and said, "This is the result of vaccination, hands down, pure and simple. Vaccines did this."

State Dept. for Public Health graph, adapted by Ky. Health News; for a larger version, click on it. Stack noted that the first of three drawings in the state's lottery-style sweepstakes for vaccinated people will be held next week, with the en-

try deadline Wednesday night. He said 472,938 adults had entered for a chance at \$1 million, and 26,636 youth, ages 12-17, had entered for a full postsecondary-education scholarship, five of which will be awarded in each drawing.

He said those numbers create "way better odds" than the state lottery, and he hopes they inspire people to get a shot. "I hope, though, they're even more inspired by the fact that 100 percent of the people getting sick now in Kentucky are ones who are not vaccinated."

Vaccinations are lagging again; the seven-day average is below 10,000 a day. Beshear said signups for the drawings indicate that they have spurred

vaccination, but it's hard if not impossible to tell how much. He said Ohio saw a boost when its drawings were announced, and when its first drawing was held.

Asked what the state might do about the possibility of the virus spreading from a free J.D. Shelburne concert Saturday in Spencer County, which has the state's second-lowest vaccination rate.

Beshear said he was unaware of the event, but said the county's vaccinations may be underreported due to ZIP code areas crossing county lines.

Stack agreed, but said that even without the anomaly, the county would still have one of the lower vaccination rates.

School board recognizes 30 retirees, June 29

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Supt. Saylor announced that Malorie York would serve as the new student representative. York will be a senior when school starts back in August and serves as the class president.

Jeremy Faulkner of Codell Construction stated that the technology center had received its' certificate of occupancy on Friday afternoon. He said that he felt confident that the construction project would be complete by July 23rd for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

He also said that the parking lot at the middle school would get resurfaced so everything would look new and seam-

less.

Peter Fisher gave a final update on the bus garage. He said that all of the issues at the bus garage had been addressed. Saylor asked the board to go ahead and approve the final payout for the contractor with the stipulation that the check would be held until he had a final meeting with him next week.

Board chairman Donna Isfort said that she had been questioned about the timeline of the renovations at the high school and which projects would be completed first.

Saylor replied that the baseball and softball renovations and the tennis court

would be ready in the spring of 2022. The track and football field would be ready in the fall of 2022, and that work could be done on the gym at the high school at any time.

The board went into closed session to go over the superintendent's yearly evaluation. After their return Donna Isfort announced that the board had given Saylor an exemplary evaluation and stated that he is very hard working and goes above and beyond what is expected of him.

Saylor asked for the board to approve a bank account that would be used for donations from the community for the

technology center. He said they could go through KDE but there was a lot of red tape involved and recommended opening an account locally that would require two signatures on the checks that were written from that account.

He added that a financial report would be provided to board members on that account.

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Wildlife moved to keep people safe

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"The venom of a timber rattler is a lot more dangerous than a copperhead's," Brooks stated. Rattlers try to lay low unless they feel endangered, but he said copperheads are just mean.

Both breeds of female snakes give birth to live babies. Brooks said the young rattlesnakes follow their mother's scent to get back to the den.

His next job was the night of June 30 to remove bats that were inside a residence.

"Bats freak me out probably more than the snakes do," Brooks said. "They're just a weird little creatures."

The bat population is also declining due to the White Nose Syndrome. Bats have been placed on the endangered species list.

Brooks said European bats are immune to the disease.

He stated that spelunkers who visited Europe are believed to have brought the disease to the United States by wearing the same clothing and using the equipment they used in Europe.

Brooks waits until it is dark to remove bats from homes, usually attics. He said the bats tend to come out after dark. He checks to make sure all bats have left the home, and he stops up the hole where they came in.

Brooks got into handling wildlife as a child. He worked locally as a police officer before spending eight years working for the state Parks Department at Natural Bridge.

While working at Natural Bridge, Brooks came close several times to getting bitten by rattlesnakes while doing rescues. Then he started wearing snake gators.

He added the only snake he cannot remove is the Copper Bellied Water Snake, which is on the federally endangered species list.

He also cannot relocate white tail deer and the black bears.

Sometimes, he is assisted by his wife, Tina. She drives the vehicle and hands him any equipment he needs.

If you need a snake or fuzzy creature removed, you can call Brooks at (606) 643-5830.

Man charged with receiving stolen goods

An arrest warrant for receiving stolen property was served June 26 by Bailiff Glenn Carroll on Charles Julius Molands, 29, of Irvine.

The arrest warrant had been obtained by Deputy Brad Smith on June 17.

It states that between February 14-21, 2020, that Molands was in receipt of stolen property.

Deputy Smith said he was contacted by the victim of the theft. The items were reportedly taken from several locations in Estill County.

The victim told Smith that he was contacted by an individual who stated that Molands was in possession of his stolen items.

The citation states those particular items were identified and returned.

Smith said when he began investigating, he discovered that in addition to the returned items, that Molands had pawned additional items.

The victim did an inventory check of his equipment and confirmed those items

were missing as well.

Deputy Smith stated the items were taken on two separate occasions and sold, and the value of the items taken each time was over \$500.

He questioned Molands, and Smith said the man admitted taking one of the items.

The items included a blue Makita miter saw valued at \$200 which was never recovered.

Recovered items included a Stihl chain saw, fence crimpers, a mig welder, and a Dewalt power drill.

Molands faces charges of receiving stolen property under \$10,000 and receiving stolen property under \$500.

He was released on his own recognizance, and his arraignment is scheduled for July 28.

Southeast KY Gem, Mineral & Fossil Club
The Southeast KY Gem, Mineral & Fossil Club will meet Monday, July 12 at 7 p.m. at the Wiseman town United Methodist Church pavilion, 1358 Wiseman town Road, Irvine. The program will be a "Show, Tell, & Trade". This will be an opportunity to get questions answered. Samples will be on display and visitors are welcome to attend and bring any rocks, agates, gems, fossils, etc. The group will also be making more plans for the Southeast KY Gem, Mineral, & Fossil Show to be held the weekend of September 25-26 at the Estill County Fairgrounds. Membership forms will be available for anyone interested in joining the group.

Man arrested for possession of drugs & weapon

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When he picked up the handgun to secure it, he stated that Henry became aggressive with Deputy Smith and pulled away.

The citation states that during a search, Officer Morris located a plastic baggie containing two more small plastic baggies. One of them contained a white crystal like substance, expected to be methamphetamine, and the other contained a gray powdery substance, expected to be heroin.

Officer Conrad said he ran the handgun through LINK/NCIC and it came back stolen out of Somerset, Kentucky.

Henry, of Timberline Trail, Irvine was charged with possession of a controlled substance, first degree and first offense (methamphetamine),

possession of a controlled substance, first degree and first offense (heroin), possession of a handgun by a convicted felon, receiving stolen property (firearm), and resisting arrest.

Bail for Henry has been set at \$10,000 cash.



Brian Henry
Photo/3 Forks Jail

Irvine man charged with having firearm

An Irvine man was arrested June 30 following a traffic stop by the Irvine Police Department.

According to the citation, Officers James Marshall and Jason Conrad stopped a vehicle at the intersection of Oak Street and Broadway because of excessive window tint.

It adds that Sheriff Chris Flynn was also looking for that same driver in reference to an investigation.

Officer Conrad said when he ran the driver's name through NCIC, it came back that he had a suspended license.

The officers stated they located an AR15 rifle in the back seat, which was within the driver's reach.

Officer Conrad ran a criminal background check on the driver through KSP Post #7. It reportedly came back that the driver was a convicted felon. IPD charged Justin Shane Roberts, 32, of Ann Street, Irvine with excessive windshield/window tinting, operating on suspended or revoked license, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Roberts is scheduled to be arraigned in Estill District Court on July 28.

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