



Kentucky Foundation
for Medical Care



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joint Statement: Kentucky Flu Activity Rises to Widespread Levels

The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services issued a [news release](#) this morning updating flu activity in Kentucky. The Kentucky Medical Association, the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and the Kentucky Foundation for Medical Care, which jointly launched the “Focus on Flu” campaign in September to help prevent another epidemic-level flu season like the one last year, issued the following statement:

“While the number of flu cases in Kentucky are so far comparable to last year’s numbers at this time, Metro Louisville appears to be experiencing a significant increase in flu activity. The gathering of friends and family over the holidays is likely a contributing factor to the increase in flu cases, as the virus is easily spread from person to person and can be passed before an infected person even exhibits symptoms (2). Across the state, four adult deaths and one pediatric death have now been linked to the flu in Kentucky this flu season. The loss of life is a reminder of how serious influenza can be.

“While just 38 percent of Kentucky adults and 43.5 percent of the state’s children got their flu shots in 2016-2017 (1), a recent Kentucky Health Issues poll indicated that 54 percent of those surveyed reported getting a flu vaccine within the last twelve months. Although this data is encouraging, that still leaves almost half the population vulnerable to this potentially deadly virus.

“It’s not too late to get a flu shot, which can protect you but also help prevent further spread to others. We’re particularly concerned about infants who are too young to get the vaccine as well as those with compromised immune systems for whom exposure to the flu poses the greatest danger. But even otherwise healthy people are at risk of serious illness, hospitalization and death from the flu.

“The best advice is to get your shot as soon as possible. Consult a physician if you have flu symptoms and prevent the spread by washing your hands frequently, covering your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough. And if you get sick, limit your contact with others for at least 24 hours after your fever subsides.”

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About the Kentucky Medical Association

Established in 1851, the Kentucky Medical Association is a professional organization for physicians throughout the Commonwealth. The KMA works on behalf of physicians and the patients they serve to ensure the delivery of quality, affordable healthcare.

Members of the KMA share a mission of commitment to the profession and service to the citizens of this Commonwealth that extends across rural and urban areas. From solo practitioners to academicians to large, multi-specialty groups, KMA is the ONLY state association representing every specialty and type of medical practice in Kentucky.

About the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky

Funded by an endowment, the mission of the nonpartisan Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky is to address the unmet health needs of Kentuckians by developing and influencing policy, improving access to care, reducing health risks and disparities, and promoting health equity. Since the Foundation opened its doors in 2001, it has invested nearly \$28 million in health policy research, advocacy, and demonstration project grants across the Commonwealth. Follow the Foundation on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, and visit our website at www.healthy-ky.org.

About the Kentucky Foundation for Medical Care

Founded by the Kentucky Medical Association in 1971, the Kentucky Foundation for Medical Care (KFMC) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization committed to improving the health of all Kentuckians through medical education and public health initiatives.

Note to Reporters and Editors: Additional Focus on Flu campaign information and visuals are available [here](#).

- (1) <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/fluview/reportshtml/reporti1617/reportii/index.html>
- (2) <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/spread.htm>