

CITY NEWS

Mayor Fischer says city is vigorously enforcing COVID-19 restrictions on local businesses

April 2, 2020

Mayor Greg Fischer today said that the city has received more than 1,100 complaints about businesses that aren't complying with restrictions imposed to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Although most of the Louisville community is doing the right thing by staying home and avoiding crowds, the Mayor said the city has been forced to take action against some establishments that aren't getting the message.

Thus far, the Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness has issued shutdown orders to seven Louisville businesses that were operating in defiance of the COVID-19 restrictions.

LATEST NEWS ([/web/20200604193639/https://louisvilleky.gov/covid19](https://web/20200604193639/https://louisvilleky.gov/covid19))

"Most of us are doing the right things needed to stop the spread of COVID-19, but we will not hesitate to take action against establishments that don't seem to be getting the message," the Mayor said.

Deputy Director of Metro Public Health & Wellness Connie Mendel, who leads the city's health inspection team, said complaints that come into Metro311 are typically investigated within one to three days.

In addition to non-compliant businesses, common complaints have been essential businesses not observing social distancing; large groups of people gathering in businesses or residential areas; businesses not following good sanitation procedures; and employees being forced to work while sick or next to a co-worker who is sick.

"We will close a business if it is not allowed to be open under the governor's executive order, or is unwilling to operate safely," Mendel said. "If they are unwilling to operate safely, we may even issue orders for businesses that are essential."

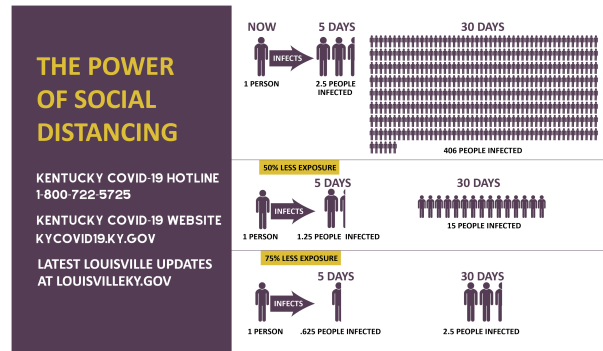
Mayor discusses COVID-19 crisis with local hospital officials

Mayor Fischer held an online town hall this morning to discuss the COVID-19 crisis with leaders of Louisville's major health systems.

The Mayor spoke with Dr. Jody Prather of Baptist Health, Dr. Steve Hester of Norton Healthcare, and Dr. Jason Smith of U of L Health to get their assessment of the situation at their local hospitals.

"We've been working with them for years on simulations and practicing different scenarios to prepare for a situation like this. Now, it's real and our collaboration is strong," the Mayor said.

Louisville hospitals have yet to experience a surge in COVID-19 cases, but the experience in other cities indicates that the situation could change quickly. Healthcare officials say they are focusing all their resources on caring for patients while ensuring the health and safety of healthcare workers.



The Mayor continued to emphasize the need to “flatten the curve” and allow our hospitals to manage the inevitable increase in COVID-19 patients over the coming weeks and months. He reiterated the need to stay at home, avoid crowds, practice social distancing, and wash your hands frequently.

“We are seeing unprecedented cooperation among our healthcare systems and local government,” the Mayor said. “And their clear message to all of us is this – if you want to help, if you want to keep our hospitals from being overwhelmed like we’re seeing elsewhere, if you want to keep more people from dying, stay home.”

COVID-19 impacting those in recovery

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to upend normal life for thousands of Louisvillians, Mayor Fischer said today that a group that is especially being impacted is people who are in recovery for substance abuse.

“One of our duties at city government is thinking about how this crisis affects people who are already in challenging circumstances,” the Mayor said. “And that includes our friends, neighbors and family members who are in recovery from substance use disorder.”

Mayor Fischer noted that the city had been seeing positive results since it issued “Coming Together: A Plan for Hope, Healing and Recovery” in 2018, but the pandemic presents a new challenge.

“One the greatest gifts I’ve had as mayor is seeing people who have struggled with substance abuse say, ‘I can overcome this’,” the Mayor said. “It’s been a real blessing for me to get to know people in recovery and the people who help them.”

Jenni Kelley, who leads the local chapter of Young People in Recovery, said virtual support meetings have replaced in-person gatherings for people who are fighting to stay sober in Louisville.

“We are shifting gears to a virtual network,” said Kelley, who has been in recovery for 12 years. “The recovery community in Louisville is very resilient.”

Kelley cited two websites – www.louisvillerecoveryconnection.org and www.intherooms.org (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200604193639/http://www.louisvillerecoveryconnection.org> and www.intherooms.org /) – as places to go to find support resources such as virtual recovery meetings like Alcoholics Anonymous.

Kelley said the lessons she has learned from being in recovery have better equipped her to handle the COVID-19 crisis.

“We get these amazing coping skills that the entire world could use right now,” Kelley said. “I’m quarantined at home right now due to an exposure at work, but I don’t feel alone.”

New data on social distancing in Louisville

Mayor Fischer said new data indicates many Louisvillians are observing safe social distancing and staying home during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The tech company Cuebiq studied anonymized cell phone data to look for mobility trends across the country from February 28 to March 27 and found a 74 percent reduction in travel in Jefferson County during that period, according to a report in the New York Times.

“That’s a significant change. By and large, the less we’re traveling, the less we’re interacting face-to-face, the less we can spread the disease,” the Mayor said.

But Mayor Fischer noted that Louisville is below the average – an 84 percent decrease – for states where the governor has issued a “stay at home” order like the one in effect in Kentucky.

“It’s clear that we still have progress to make. The bottom line is we have to travel even less. And stay home even more,” the Mayor said. “I know this isn’t easy, but the people, the businesses and the cities that manage to do that are going to be healthier. And they will get to emerge from this crisis sooner. Overall, we’re doing

well. We're not seeing the rapid increase in cases that other cities are seeing. We're on the right track. Let's keep going. Take care of ourselves and each other."

Green lights for Metro Hall and City Hall

Mayor Fischer announced that Metro Hall and City Hall are now lit with green lights to honor those who have lost their lives to the COVID-19 virus.

"Our hearts and our prayers go out to the people who are mourning loved ones who've lost their lives to COVID-19," the Mayor said. "And I want to thank to all the people throughout our city who are already doing this. I appreciate that."

Mayor Fischer reminded everyone that the best way to honor those who have suffered due to the virus is to continue staying at home as much as possible, practicing social distancing, and washing your hands frequently.

Online town hall on Thursday

The city will host a Facebook Live online town hall on Friday.

Guests will be Dr. Steven Kniffley and Dr. Shannon Cambron, who will answer questions about trauma and recovery during this turbulent time.

Go to [Facebook.com/MayorGregFischer](https://www.facebook.com/MayorGregFischer) at 10 a.m. Friday to participate in the town hall.

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Film Viewing- Iron Jawed Angels

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Resilience & Community Services Hearing

([/web/20200604193639/https://louisvilleky.gov/events/resilience-community-services-hearing](https://www.louisvilleky.gov/events/resilience-community-services-hearing))

CITY NEWS

City announces latest round of Louisville Metro Council COVID-19 grants

([/web/20200604193639/https://louisvilleky.gov/news/city-announces-latest-round-louisville-metro-council-covid-19-grants](https://www.louisvilleky.gov/news/city-announces-latest-round-louisville-metro-council-covid-19-grants))

Mayor announces external top-to-bottom review of LMPD

([/web/20200604193639/https://louisvilleky.gov/news/mayor-announces-external-top-bottom-review-lmpd](https://www.louisvilleky.gov/news/mayor-announces-external-top-bottom-review-lmpd))

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