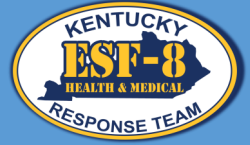




# COALITION CORNER

Healthcare Preparedness Newsletter  
SEPTEMBER 2023



## Announcements & Updates

📢 **Olivia Gregory** - Olivia Gregory has joined our coalition as an intern for her Fall semester. She will be assisting with various coalition activities but will primarily focus on improving engagement and participation from our region's long-term care facilities and other senior communities. Olivia is a junior student at the University of Kentucky studying Spanish and international economics while also pursuing a certificate in clinical healthcare management. She is from Mayfield, KY and is a certified nursing assistant with a goal of working in long-term care administration. She is an active member of Gamma Phi Beta sorority as well as a volunteer trainer for 4 Paws for Ability.



📢 **Final CSEPP Exercise** - The final full-scale CSEPP exercise took place on Sep. 20th. Overall the exercise went well, though issues were noted by some facilities regarding the volunteers' understanding of their role as well as confusion with some evaluators' post-exercise findings. As CSEPP comes to a close, a committee has been formed to evaluate opportunities to retain, in some capacity, the skilled workers that will no longer be needed at BGAD and how to address the financial impact of CSEPP's end. In addition, hospitals and other organizations with annual exercise requirements will need to quickly begin exploring other full-scale exercise possibilities. Our coalition will likely be asked to assist with this in 2024 and on.

📢 **HVA** - Currently reviewing our regional Hazard Vulnerability Analysis and identifying any necessary changes to risk probabilities and severity as well as our region's mitigation capabilities. In approximately 2 years, we will request all coalition members to once again share their HVA results so as to further improve the accuracy of our regional HVA. Preliminary discussions have included adjusting our pandemic and cybersecurity/cyberterrorism vulnerability scores.

📢 **MRC** - After having been awarded 2.25 million dollars through the MRC STTRONG Grant (yes, there's two T's ☺), Medical Reserve Corp regional coordinators have been directing their efforts at utilizing the funding to increase the overall capacity and ensure the long-term sustainability of the KY MRC program. The KHELPS website ([kentuckyhelps.com](http://kentuckyhelps.com)) is now live for volunteer sign-ups and regional trainings will begin soon. A new and creative initiative will involve utilizing student members of HOSA - Health Occupations Students of America - to engage with communities through volunteer recruitment efforts. The grant funding will help incentivize these students by offering scholarships to the state HOSA conference to the most successful groups.



📢 **Coalition App** - We are planning to roll-out the initial version of our proposed coalition app soon. This app will evolve and improve over time to suit our members' needs, but the primary benefits we hope to gain with the app are push notifications for drill, exercise, and real-world emergency communication, a regional asset inventory list with request capability, and increased coalition branding and promotion.

## Important Dates

**October 3rd**

October Triage Tuesday

**October 18th-19th**

2023 KY Statewide Trauma & Emergency Medicine Symposium

**October 26th**

Bluegrass Healthcare Coalition Meeting

**November 7th**

BGHC - LTC Subcommittee Meeting

## Upcoming Trainings & Exercises

**October 12th-13th**

ICS 400 @ Lexington-Fayette Emergency Mgmt.

**November 16th**

NDMS Bed Reporting Exercise



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**Hospital EEI Form** - The new Essential Elements of Information form was sent out by ReadyOp link to all facilities. This new form will aid us in collecting hospital status and bed information during and outside of disasters and emergencies. If you have yet to complete the initial link submission, please do so as soon as possible. Once you have completed the form and submitted it, opening the form link during subsequent drills or real-world events will auto-populate everything previously submitted thus making updates quick and easy. At this time, hospital status and bed updates may also be required within WebEOC until the soon-to-be-finalized ReadyOp dashboard containing this EEI information can be provided to our external partners that need access to it. If you need your link sent again, reach out to Dave or JT.

## Epi Updates -

- Capital Region** - A pertussis outbreak continues. Review your child's vaccination status and keep them home when sick. Investigated an interesting Malaria case in the region which was determined by the CDC to have been imported. The LHD and regional epi worked in submitting the blood smear to match local cases in the US and it was later cleared by CDC. It was determined to be imported based on travel history of the case and PCR results. Flu and COVID-19 respiratory season has begun. Some of the state and bluegrass regional epis are working on revamping the pandemic flu plan for the state and county health departments. Jessamine County HD is conducting a community health assessment on 9/26. Capital region will have a new regional epi support hopefully by next week.
- Lexington/Fayette** - Fayette County has seen a downward trend of COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the month when we peaked with 367 cases the week of August 27-Sept 2. The last time we had case counts that high was mid-February. Fayette County will hold a Free Flu Shot clinic on October 12, 3:00pm-6:30pm at Central Baptist Church, 110 Wilson Downing Rd. For more information, or to register, visit [LFCHD.org](http://LFCHD.org).
- Bluegrass Region** - No major updates to discuss. COVID-19 cases are similarly decreasing at this time, but flu cases have begun to rise.

## News to Know



### Free at-home COVID tests by mail are available to order again

Americans can once again order four free COVID-19 tests from the government with the reopening of the Biden administration's at-home testing program. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the reopening of the COVID test program and an investment of \$600 million across 12 domestic COVID-19 test manufacturers by the Biden administration. ([More](#))

Households can order four free tests through [COVIDTests.gov](http://COVIDTests.gov), which directs people to a U.S. Postal Service site. The tests are available at no cost and ship for free. Shipping will begin the week of Oct. 2. The tests that will be mailed will detect the [currently circulating COVID-19 variants](#), HHS said, and are "intended for use through the end of 2023."



### An El Niño winter is coming. Here's what that could mean for the U.S.

Fall has only just begun, but it's not too soon to look ahead to winter, especially since this one may look drastically different than recent years [because of El Niño](#). This winter will be the first in a few years to feel the effects of the phenomenon, which has a sizable impact on the weather during the coldest months of the year. El Niño is one of three phases of the El Niño Southern Oscillation, which tracks water temperature changes in the equatorial Pacific Ocean that can have rippling effects on weather patterns around the globe. The El Niño phase occurs when these ocean temperatures are warmer than normal for an extended period. This year's El Niño began in [June](#), is [expected to be strong this winter](#) and last at least into early next spring, according to NOAA's Climate Prediction Center. ([More](#))



### Save the Date and Register for the next KY Public Health Update Webinar, Tuesday, October 3 @ 11:30 AM ET

Topics will include (but may not be limited to): COVID-19, Flu, RSV and other pathogens; CDC Respiratory Disease Projections for Kentucky; Vaccine updates; Surveillance and Reporting Updates. **Please register for KY Healthcare and Public Health Update Webinar at:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1354702113510432853>

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