



Issues/Program List for Withers Broadcasting Paducah, Kentucky, Studios

**WREZ-FM (Metropolis, Illinois)
WZZL-FM (Reidland, Kentucky)
WGKY-FM (Wickcliffe, Kentucky)
WRJJ-FM (LaCenter, Kentucky)**

The following programs are weekly broadcasts provided as timely and pertinent information or the community needs of Paducah, Kentucky, and the surrounding region in western Kentucky and southern Illinois.

Sundays at 5:00 am, the stations air InfoTrak.

Sundays at 5:30 am, the stations are Kentucky News Connection

Weekly program information can be found on the proceeding pages.



Call Letters: WZZL, WREZ, WRJJ, WGKY
Time Aired: Sundays at 5:00 am

Weekly Public Affairs Program

QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT, APRIL-JUNE, 2021

Show # 2021-14

Date aired: Sunday, April 4, 2021

Eric Sussman, PhD, adjunct real estate professor at the University of California Los Angeles

Prof. Sussman explained the recent trend of "We buy houses" and "Cash for homes" signs on roadsides and other forms of advertising. He explained what types of real estate investors are behind the signs and how the transactions typically are structured. He also outlined the pluses and minuses for home sellers.

Issues covered:
Consumer Matters
Real Estate

Length: 7:16

Shanna H. Swan, PhD, Professor of Environmental Medicine and Public Health at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City, author of *"Count Down: How Our Modern World Is Threatening Sperm Counts, Altering Male and Female Reproductive Development, and Imperiling the Future of the Human Race"*

Prof. Swan's research has found that sperm counts among men in the industrialized world fell nearly 60 percent from 1973 to 2011, in part because of the hormonal effects of chemicals widely used in consumer products. She said if trends continue at the current rate, most couples may have to seek assisted reproduction by the year 2045. She believes that the chemical industry urgently needs to develop chemicals that can be used in everyday products that are non-hormonally active.

Issues covered:
Personal Health
Reproduction
Consumer Matters
Environment

Length: 9:55

Matthew E. Rossheim, PhD, MPH, CPH, Assistant Professor in the Department of Global and Community Health at George Mason University

Supersized alcopops are ready-to-drink flavored beverages that taste like energy drinks, but contain up to five standard alcohol drinks in a single serving. Prof. Rossheim led a recent study that found that 46% of all calls to U.S. poison control centers involving supersized alcopop consumption were made for consumers below the legal drinking age. He explained what regulatory and policy changes might help to address the problem.

Issues covered:
Underage Drinking
Youth at Risk

Length: 5:11

Show # 2021-15

Date aired: Sunday, April 11, 2021

Richard Watts, personal advisor and legal counsel to the super wealthy, author of *"Entitlement: How Not to Spoil Your Kids, and What to Do if You Have"*

Mr. Watts said well-intentioned parents are creating a "me" generation of children who lack the wisdom and satisfaction of accomplishment that can only be learned through struggle and adversity. He offered examples of parental decisions that create a sense of entitlement in children in families of all income levels. He also outlined simple ways for parents to be a good example for children.

Issues covered:

Length: 9:53

Parenting
Education

Matt Schulz, Senior Industry Analyst at CreditCards.com

It pays for consumers to reach out to a credit card provider when faced with unwanted fees and high interest rates. Mr. Schulz said 87% of credit cardholders who asked for a late fee waiver were successful and 69% who requested a lower interest rate received one. His organization's study found that only about half of consumers have made any request at all for credit card leniency.

Issues covered:

Length: 7:22

Personal Finance

Dana King, MD, MS, Professor and Chair of the Department of Family Medicine at the West Virginia University School of Medicine

Dr. King led a study that examined whether retired, late middle-aged adults led a healthier lifestyle than those who were still in the workforce. He found that the spare time found in retirement did not translate to healthier lifestyle choices. He said that 90% of Americans of any age are not making healthy choices. He explained discussed the possible reasons why.

Issues covered:

Length: 4:38

Senior Citizens
Personal Health
Retirement Planning

Show # 2021-16

Date aired: Sunday, April 18, 2021

Ravi Hutheesing, Founder of Ravi Unites Schools, a school network that enables teachers to have groups of students participate in online real-time audio-video interactions with peers around the world, author of *"Pivot: Empowering Students Today to Succeed in an Unpredictable Tomorrow"*

Mr. Hutheesing outlined the ways that the COVID-19 lockdowns exposed the strengths and weaknesses of America's education system. He explained how cultural connections with other students around the world can be a great tool to help a student reach his learning potential. He also discussed the best ways to address the high dropout rate among minority students.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:50

Education
Technology
Minority Concerns

Francisco Lopez-Jimenez, MD, Preventive Cardiologist at the Mayo Clinic

People with coronary artery disease are often prescribed a statin, the cholesterol-lowering drug that reduces the risk of a heart attack or stroke. Dr. Francisco Lopez-Jimenez, discussed whether are statins used enough, who should be taking them, and why some patients refuse to take them.

Issues covered:
Personal Health

Length: 8:31

Holly Wade, Executive Director of the National Federation of Independent Business Research Center

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that over 100 million Americans are out of the labor force and a record 94 million are not looking for a job. Ms. Wade said that 91% of small businesses said they had few or no qualified applicants for job openings in the past three months. She discussed the reasons behind this trend and what it will take for it to reverse.

Issues covered:
Employment
Economy
Government

Length: 5:02

Show # 2021-17

Date aired: Sunday, April 25, 2021

Chris Carosa, Certified Trust & Fiduciary Advisor, author of *"The Parent's Guide to Turning Your Teen into A Millionaire"*

Less than 15 years from now, the Social Security program will only be able to pay 77% of its obligations to retirees. Mr. Carosa explained how parents can help their children retire with a sizable nest egg, through what he calls a "Child IRA." He said teenagers and parents can contribute to Roth IRA accounts to take advantage of decades that could accrue to \$2 million or more.

Issues covered:
Retirement Planning
Parenting

Length: 9:24

Paul Greenberg, James Beard Award-winning author

Mr. Greenberg discussed a "Climate Diet," a list of steps anyone can take to shrink their carbon footprint. He outlined changes in travel, commuting, diet, investing, and other ways to reduce the use of energy and resources.

Issues covered:
Environment
Consumer Matters

Length: 7:58

Steve G. Jones, EdD, clinical hypnotherapist, President of the American Alliance of Hypnotists, author of 22 books on hypnotherapy

Dr. Jones discussed the most common misconceptions about clinical hypnotherapy. He outlined the problems that hypnotherapy can solve, and he explained why self-hypnosis may be useful. He said everyone can be hypnotized, although some are more suggestible than others.

Issues covered:
Hypnosis
Mental Health

Length: 4:54

Show # 2021-18

Date aired: Sunday, May 2, 2021

Reynold Henry, MD, MPH, General Surgery Chief Resident at Los Angeles County and USC Medical Center

Uncontrolled bleeding continues to be one of the most common causes of preventable death from a traumatic injury. Dr. Henry led a recent study that found that the use of tourniquets before patients arrive at a hospital has increased significantly in recent years. He said the trend has improved survival rates and decreased the need for blood transfusions. He explained the basic steps for applying a tourniquet.

Issues covered:
Personal Health
Emergency Preparedness

Length: 9:24

Katherine May, author of "*Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times*"

Ms. May discussed how to deal with difficult times of life when unforeseen circumstances derail a person, such as an abrupt illness, the death of a loved one, a job loss, or a divorce. She calls these periods of dislocation "wintering." She explained what nature can teach us about slowing down, and how to use rest and retreat to cope with life's darkest moments

Issues covered:
Mental Health

Length: 7:58

Daniel Hartung, Pharm.D., M.P.H., Professor in the Oregon State University College of Pharmacy

More than 70,000 American lives were lost to drug overdoses in 2019, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the problem grew even worse during the pandemic. Prof. Hartung led a study that found that 20% of pharmacies refuse to dispense a key medication, buprenorphine, to treat the addiction. He explained possible reasons behind the problem, and why the availability of this drug is so important in the battle against the opioid epidemic.

Issues covered:
Substance Addiction
Government Policies

Length: 4:54

Show # 2021-19

Date aired: Sunday, May 9, 2021

Christy Kane, PhD, Trauma Psychologist, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, CEO of 360 Focus Mental Health, author of *"Fractured Souls and Splintered Memories: Unlocking the 'Boxes' of Trauma"*

Dr. Kane said America suffered from a mental illness pandemic even before COVID-19 appeared, but the problem greatly accelerated from 2019 to 2020. She said data indicates that the need for mental health services for children increased by 98% in the past year. She also estimated that 90% of the overall population is struggling mentally to deal with changes related to COVID-19.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:53

**Mental Illness
Pandemic**

Jennie Romer, Recycling Expert, author of *"Can I Recycle This? A Guide to Better Recycling and How to Reduce Single-Use Plastics"*

Americans love to recycle but Ms. Romer said many are misinformed when it comes to what items are recyclable and what are not. She outlined the most common items that consumers incorrectly believe can be recycled and why. She explained why only 9% of the plastic ever produced has been recycled.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:22

**Recycling
Environment
Government Policies**

Thomas Beckman, MD, Fellow in Advanced General Internal Medicine at the Mayo Clinic

Many patients seek a second opinion before treatment for a complex medical condition. Dr. Beckman led a study at Mayo that found that only 12 percent of second opinions confirm that the original diagnosis was complete and correct. He explained what illnesses should merit the pursuit of a second opinion.

Issues covered:

Length: 4:58

Personal Health

Show # 2021-20

Date aired: Sunday, May 16, 2021

Jeff Korzenik, Chief Investment Strategist for Fifth Third Bank, author of *"Untapped Talent: How Second Chance Hiring Works for Your Business and the Community"*

Mr. Korzeniak believes that businesses have overlooked a historically untapped talent pool: former convicts. He explained why recruiting ex-cons, also known as "second chance hiring," will be a crucial part of successful leadership in coming decades, and why it is crucial to overcoming racial inequality, injustice, family dysfunction, and intergenerational poverty.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:39

**Employment
Prison Reform
Racism**

Dima Mazen Qato, PharmD, MPH, PhD, Hygeia Centennial Chair and Director for the Program on Medicines and Public Health at the USC School of Pharmacy, Senior Fellow at the USC Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics

33% of neighborhoods in the nation's largest cities are "pharmacy deserts," according to a study led by Prof. Qato. She explained why the problem is a greater concern than similar shortages of pharmacies in rural areas. She suggested that taxpayers should pay pharmacies more for Medicare and Medicaid prescription reimbursements and that pharmacies should be placed in community health centers in low-income areas.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:36

**Minority Concerns
Personal Health
Government Policies
Poverty**

Bill Westrom, consumer finance expert, co-author of "*Master Your Debt: Slash Your Monthly Payments and Become Debt Free*"

The typical American carries thousands of dollars of credit card debt, personal loans, car loans and student loans. Mr. Westrom outlined several easy strategies to save money and retire debt as quickly as possible.

Issues covered:

Length: 4:54

Personal Finance

Show # 2021-21

Date aired: Sunday, May 23, 2021

Julie Broderick, BSc, MSc, PhD, Assistant Professor of Physiotherapy, Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin

Dr. Broderick led a study that found that the physical condition of homeless people in their twenties, thirties and forties is similar to 70 and 80-year-olds in the general population. She found that only 31% could attempt to climb one flight of stairs, and only 38% could walk for 6 minutes. She discussed the possible reasons behind this finding, and potential solutions to address it.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:39

**Homelessness
Substance Abuse
Government**

Jeffrey Michael, EdD, Distinguished Scholar in the Department of Health Policy and Management and the Leon S. Robertson Faculty Development Chair in Injury Prevention at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, former senior official at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

There's been little change in the number of traffic deaths in the United States for many years. Dr. Michael was the co-author of a report that recommends the adoption of the "Safe System" approach to road design. The "Safe System" utilizes things like roundabouts and lane designs intended to slow traffic near pedestrians, to significantly reduce the chances for mistakes by drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and reduce the intensity of crashes when they do occur.

Issues covered:

Length: 8:36

**Traffic Safety
Government**

Roy Remme, Ph.D., postdoctoral scholar with the Natural Capital Project at Stanford University at the time of the research

Dr. Remme led a Stanford study that demonstrated that city parks and green spaces lead to measurable improvements in health. He said the study offers proof for city planners and other officials of the importance of green spaces for promoting physical activities, particularly for elderly, minority and low-income populations.

Issues covered:

**Urban Planning
Personal Health
Minority Concerns**

Length: 4:54

Show # 2021-22

Date aired: Sunday, May 30, 2021

Robert T. Kiyosaki, investor, entrepreneur, author of *“Rich Dad Poor Dad: What the Rich Teach Their Kids About Money That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not”*

Mr. Kiyosaki discussed the difference in how wealthy people view and use money, compared to middle- and lower-income Americans. He said it is not necessary to earn a high income to become rich. He explained why he thinks it is such a problem that few students receive any financial education in school. He also discussed the best job categories for young people who are ready to choose a career.

Issues covered:

**Personal Finance
Parenting
Education**

Length: 10:03

Thomas Beckman, MD, Fellow in Advanced General Internal Medicine at the Mayo Clinic

Many patients seek a second opinion before treatment for a complex medical condition. Dr. Beckman led a study at Mayo that found that only 12 percent of second opinions confirm that the original diagnosis was complete and correct. He explained what illnesses should merit the pursuit of a second opinion.

Issues covered:

Personal Health

Length: 7:03

Dennis C. Miller, businessman, former CEO of a New Jersey hospital, author of *“Moppin’ Floors to CEO”*

Mentors often make a huge difference in a young person’s career. Mr. Miller explained why older generations may be key to enhancing the career prospects of Millennials. He offered ideas for how to locate a mentor. He also explained why volunteering may be a wise career move for older members of the workforce.

Issues covered:

**Career
Senior Citizens
Volunteering**

Length: 4:40

Show # 2021-23

Date aired: Sunday, June 6, 2021

Irwin Redlener, PhD, Director of Columbia University's National Center for Disaster Preparedness

Dr. Redlener said that a limited nuclear attack can be survivable. He said sheltering in place is the best way to avoid the radiation that would follow a nuclear detonation. He outlined emergency supplies that every household should have on hand, and he discussed the reasons that public officials are reluctant to discuss the topic.

Issues covered:

Disaster Preparedness

Length: 8:41

Olympia LePoint, mathematician, rocket scientist, author of *"Mathaphobia: How You Can Overcome Your Math Fears and Become a Rocket Scientist"*

Ms. LePoint was a professional rocket scientist for NASA programs from 1998 to 2007, and was involved in 28 successful shuttle launches. She discussed the shortage of females in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) careers and why it is important to encourage young women to enter these fields.

Issues covered:

Women's Issues

Education

Career

Length: 8:36

David M. Neyens, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Department of Industrial Engineering at Clemson University

In a future filled with self-driving cars, how quickly will human drivers be able to regain control in the event of a system failure or sudden emergency? Dr. Neyens led a study that found that driver reaction times were poor. He said car designers will need to find ways to give drivers much earlier warnings. He added that driver education programs will also need to change significantly, once driverless cars hit the mass market.

Issues covered:

Automotive Safety

Driver Education

Length: 5:08

Show # 2021-24

Date aired: Sunday, June 13, 2021

Kimberly Mehlman-Orozco, PhD, human trafficking expert, author of *"Hidden in Plain Sight: America's Slaves of the New Millennium"*

Dr. Mehlman-Orozco discussed the most common scenarios in human trafficking cases and why the pandemic lockdowns made the problem worse. She said jurors and judges often are unaware that human trafficking victims are typically controlled by coercion and mental manipulation, rather than via physical kidnapping or other means of force. She explained what to do if someone suspects they know a person who is a victim of human trafficking.

Issues covered:

Human Trafficking

Crime

Length: 8:59

Wayne Applewhite, business leadership expert, author of *"You Know it's a Verb, Right?"*

Mr. Applewhite explained how someone can avoid career burn-out and find a balance between work and life. He talked about the importance of notetaking, schedules and lists in maintaining a productive work environment. He said clear communication from bosses is the key for organizations transitioning back to work in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Issues covered:

**Employment
Career**

Length: 8:12

Mike Kucharski, Co-Owner and Vice President of JKC Trucking, one of America's largest refrigerated trucking companies

Mr. Kucharski said 25% of needed truck drivers are no longer on the nation's highways. He explained how such a severe shortage affects consumers. He also outlined the attractive aspects of a career in truck driving, and how much training and time is required to become licensed.

Issues covered:

**Consumer Matters
Employment
Supply Chain**

Length: 4:58

Show # 2021-25

Date aired: Sunday, June 20, 2021

Ira D. Glick, MD, Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Stanford University Medical Center, Emeritus

Most mass shooters die during the crime, but Prof. Glick led the first study that closely examined medical and court records of the perpetrators who survived. He found that a large majority of perpetrators had psychiatric disorders for which they had received no medication or other treatment. He believes that mental health providers, lawyers, and the public should be made aware that some unmedicated patients do pose an increased risk of violence and should receive treatment, whether they want it or not.

Issues covered:

**Mental Health
Crime**

Length: 8:02

Michael J. Barry, M.D., Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, Director of the Informed Medical Decisions Program within the Health Decision Sciences Center at Massachusetts General Hospital, Vice Chair of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

An alarming rise in colorectal cancer cases among young people has led the US Preventive Services Task Force to establish new guidelines. Dr. Barry co-wrote the revised standards and explained why screenings for colorectal cancer should begin at age 45 — five years earlier than was previously recommended. He also discussed the importance of screening for African Americans, who have the highest rates of colorectal cancer incidence and deaths.

Issues covered:

**Cancer
Personal Health
Minority Concerns**

Length: 9:07

Daniela Viana Costa, PhD, Public Policy Economist at the Penn Wharton Public Policy Initiative

Dr. Viana Costa was the co-author of a study that examined the long-term economic effects of school closures/remote learning during the pandemic lockdowns. She found that the reduced education will create productivity losses, leading to a 3.6% decrease in GDP and a 3.5% decrease in hourly wages by 2050. She explained why younger students were hit hardest by the lack of learning, and possible steps that schools may take to reduce the decline.

Issues covered:
Education
Economy

Length: 5:04

Show # 2021-26

Date aired: Sunday, June 27, 2021

Melvin J. Gravely, II, PhD, civic leader, President and CEO of TriVersity Construction Company, author of *"Dear White Friend: The Realities of Race, the Power of Relationships and Our Path to Equity"*

The racial divide in America appears to have expanded significantly in the past year or so. Mr. Gravely said the great majority of white Americans are not racists, but they are "benefiting bystanders." He believes that Americans can solve racial problems together. He explained how he defines equality versus equity, and suggested that people should expose themselves to new friends and ideas to expand their understanding of why others feel as they do.

Issues covered:
Racism
Minority Concerns

Length: 9:50

David E. Fisher, MD, PhD, Director of the Mass General Cancer Center's Melanoma Program, Director of Massachusetts General Hospital's Cutaneous Biology Research Center

Dr. Fisher led a recent study that found that vitamin D deficiency strongly exaggerates the craving for and effects of opioids, potentially increasing the risk for dependence and addiction. He said that his findings suggest that addressing the common problem of vitamin D deficiency with inexpensive supplements could play a part in combating the ongoing scourge of opioid addiction.

Issues covered:
Opioid Addiction
Nutrition

Length: 7:27

M. Granger Morgan, PhD, Hamerschlag University Professor of Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University and co-director of the National Science Foundation's Center for Climate and Energy Decision Making

Prof. Morgan discussed his recent study that compared strategies for providing emergency power to residents during a large, long-duration power outage, particularly in rural and suburban communities. He said cooperative strategies such as sharing a higher capacity generator among multiple homes cost 10 to 40 times less than if each household used its own generator. He discussed the regulatory hurdles that currently block these solutions.

Issues covered:
Disaster Preparedness
Infrastructure

Length: 5:06

March 30, 2021

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

“Take It From Me”: KY Health Groups Encourage Residents to Roll up Sleeves

Nadia Ramlagan

LOUISVILLE, Ky. -- Kentuckians 40 and older are now eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines.

As the state continues to ramp up vaccination efforts in rural areas, health advocacy groups have launched a new campaign featuring Kentuckians who've already gotten their shots sharing answers to common questions and concerns.

More than 1.2 million Kentuckians have received at least their first dose of the vaccine, around 40 % of the state's adult population.

Jason Phillips, a Simpson County resident and "Take It From Me" campaign participant, said his family and friends supported his decision to get vaccinated.

"And I feel like it's sort of my duty to go out and do my part by getting the vaccine," Phillips explained. "And I certainly understand that people could be hesitant or reluctant to do so, but I felt like it was the right thing to do."

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study released Monday found the coronavirus vaccines made by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech are highly effective in preventing COVID-19 infections in real-world conditions among groups at higher risk of contracting the virus, including health-care personnel, first responders and other essential workers.

The study found after receiving the second dose of either vaccine, risk of infection was reduced by 90%, two or more weeks after vaccination. With just one dose, the participants' risk of infection was reduced by 80%.

Ben Chandler, CEO of the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, said he hopes campaign spokespeople will give those who are vaccine-hesitant a higher level of comfort about getting their shots, particularly in the face of fast-spreading virus variants.

"If we get over 70% of the population vaccinated, the virus will essentially have no place to live, it will die off or suddenly weaken considerably," Chandler pointed out. "If we want our lives to get back to normal as a general matter, we've got to get everybody vaccinated."

The "Take It From Me" campaign is a collaboration of the Kentucky Medical Association, Kentucky Foundation for Medical Care, the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, the Kentucky Hospital Association and the Kentucky Primary Care Association.

Residents can visit kycovid19.ky.gov or call the state's hotline number at 855-598-2246 for more information on vaccination and to find free or reduced-cost transportation to and from appointments.

April 9, 2021

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

SNAP Benefits Hike Will Help Feed More KY Kids

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. - Kentucky will soon receive an extra \$12.8 million per month for its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits program, and groups fighting hunger in the state say the increase will especially help feed more children.

Katrina Thompson, executive director of the group Feeding Kentucky, said since March of last year, the state has relied on loosened federal restrictions to provide extra SNAP benefits and expand food access to households with children who normally rely on school meals.

She explained the U.S. Department of Agriculture will give states additional funding through the end of September.

"So what this will do is, it'll especially benefit Kentucky kids," said Thompson, "as about 71% of the SNAP participants in Kentucky are families with children."

Groups like Feeding America say they expect food insecurity to increase locally in every county and state this year - a combination of prolonged unemployment and permanent income loss from the pandemic.

Thompson said she also hopes Congress and the USDA continue the flexibility they've allowed in the SNAP program to help states feed those who have needed it most as the novel coronavirus spread across the nation.

"It's really allowed for innovation from our schools, and from our summer meal providers," said Thompson, "to be able to help feed these children."

Thompson pointed out that nationwide, Black, Latino and Native American households are disproportionately affected by food insecurity. She said the extra resources give households a boost when they've faced barriers accessing food banks.

"We've only been able to feed as many Kentuckians as we have because of these programs being as flexible as they are," said Thompson.

She added in the coming weeks, Kentucky households that have not received at least \$95 per month in SNAP benefits - because they were already or nearly receiving the current maximum benefit - will now qualify to receive extra money for food.

4/18

April 15, 2021

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Poll: Half of Vaccine-Hesitant KY Adults Open to Changing Minds

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- Half of Kentucky adults who are reluctant to get a COVID-19 vaccination say they'd be open to changing their minds if they had more information, according to a new poll by the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky.

Allison Adams, vice president for policy at the Foundation, said if public health-officials can reach the Kentuckians who are reluctant to get a COVID vaccine with facts and data, and more of them decide to be vaccinated, the state will likely be in a much stronger position in terms of herd immunity.

"It is generally safer to achieve herd immunity through vaccinations than someone getting sick, because we know Kentuckians have gotten really sick, and many have died," Adams explained.

The poll highlights the demographic groups - one in three men, four in ten Republicans, and one-third of people living in suburban or rural communities - who reported they would "probably or definitely not" roll up their sleeves for the vaccine.

Of those reluctant to get the vaccine, the groups who said they're open to changing their minds with additional information include 47% of Republicans, 53% of people in rural counties, and 53% of high school graduates.

"So that's important for us to learn and understand as we build our partners and collaborations, and recruit messengers, as well as craft the right message," Adams outlined.

The poll also found Kentuckians are nearly split on whether they believe getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a personal choice or part of everyone's responsibility to protect the health of the community.

Adams emphasized it's okay to ask questions about the safety and efficacy of the vaccines.

"Whether that's your healthcare provider, whether that's your person at church or your best friend," Adams suggested. "Go and ask those questions, so that you can have that informed decision."

According to the survey, older Kentuckians are more likely to have already received or still intend to get the shot, along with college graduates.

April 23, 2021

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Chauvin Verdict “Disappointing Reminder” of Louisville's Breonna Taylor Case

Nadia Ramlagan

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - In what's being described as a landmark verdict this week, former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was convicted of second- and third-degree murder for the 2020 killing of George Floyd.

Kate Miller, advocacy director at the American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky sees the Chauvin verdict as a positive step toward police accountability nationwide, but notes that Kentuckians have yet to see justice for Breonna Taylor - the 26-year-old emergency medical technician killed by police in her Louisville home last year.

"But as a Kentuckian," said Miller, "it was a disappointing reminder of the absence of accountability for law enforcement officers involved in the murder of Breonna Taylor."

None of the officers - who fired more than two dozen rounds into Taylor's home during a botched drug raid - have been charged. Last fall, the City of Louisville announced a \$12 million wrongful death settlement with Taylor's family, as well as a local ban on no-knock warrants.

Miller said justice advocacy groups will continue to seek accountability for the three officers involved in Taylor's death.

"But I can confidently say that Louisvillians and Kentuckians are not done fighting," said Miller, "and that we are committed to continue our campaign to make sure that communities are made safer through alternatives to policing and incarceration."

In a series of tweets following the Chauvin verdict, Breonna Taylor's mother, Tamika Palmer, said while justice has been served, advocates are not done fighting for justice for all the victims and families who feel they haven't received theirs.

April 29, 2021

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Kentuckians with ACA Marketplace Plans Now Can Save on Coverage

Nadia Ramlagan

LEXINGTON, Ky. -- More than 122,000 Kentuckians may be able to find marketplace health coverage for \$10 or less per month after premium tax credits, and more than 7,000 people could be eligible for zero-cost plans.

The changes come under several new provisions in President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan aimed at lowering health-insurance costs, especially for those who lost their employer-sponsored coverage during the pandemic.

Chet White, a Lexington resident, said he relies on marketplace coverage for himself and his child, and typically paid around \$550 each month, until he called to reapply and receive new tax credits that significantly lowered his monthly premium.

"I called CareSource, told the lady what I wanted to do, and she walked me through the whole application process again and I basically just re-applied for insurance," White recounted. "Come to find out, it saved me, I believe, \$340 this month for the remainder of this year."

Kentuckians already enrolled in a marketplace plan can go back and update their application to see the new increased subsidies applied to their monthly premiums. The Affordable Care Act's special enrollment period has been extended to August 15, which gives residents an additional three months to sign up.

Priscilla Easterling, outreach coordinator at Kentucky Voices for Health, said another new provision will soon be available to Kentuckians who received unemployment insurance. People who received at least one week of employment compensation in 2021 qualify for a zero-dollar monthly premium beginning later this summer.

"It's worthwhile going to healthcare.gov and just checking out what the options are and what the cost would be," Easterling urged. "There's a large group of people who are going to be able to get those increased health-care subsidies."

Easterling noted while this opportunity will not be available on healthcare.gov until July, she advised consumers to go ahead and submit an application to enroll.

White emphasized the reapplication process was easy and said it has been a game changer.

"It gives me some room to do other things, and to save, and to save for my kids, and do some stuff to my house," White explained. "It was a huge relief and felt like a burden was lifted from me."

Kentuckians with questions or who want to update or submit an application over the phone can call the marketplace directly at 1-800-318-2596. To get local help or more state-specific information, use the find the kynector tool online or call 1-855-459-6328 for help finding a kynector in your county.

Community Health Workers Urge People with Diabetes to Consider Vaccine

Nadia Ramlagan

WHITESBURG, Ky. -- People with Type 2 diabetes face an increased risk of severe illness if they become sick with the coronavirus, and in eastern Kentucky, community health workers urged people with the condition to consider getting their shots.

Earlier this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention moved to prioritize all Americans living with diabetes for COVID-19 vaccination.

Jeanie Wheeler, a retired nurse, volunteer firefighter and Johnson County resident, lives with type 2 diabetes, and while she stays healthy and manages her blood sugar, Wheeler said she didn't hesitate to get the vaccine.

"I had no issues with deciding that the vaccine was the way to go," Wheeler stated. "And for me, I was always for vaccinations for my children. My daughter is a front-line worker; she had her vaccine."

All Kentuckians age 16 and up are now eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine. For more about the vaccine, or how to find it near you, talk to your doctor, call your county health department, or go to vaccine.ky.gov.

Denesa Watts, licensed diabetes educator for the Kentucky River District Health Department, said anyone with hesitation around the vaccines should know their doctors, nurses and health professionals are getting vaccinated themselves.

"We really encourage people with diabetes to talk to their physicians and to consider having that COVID vaccine," Watts asserted. "We know that the risk of getting sick from COVID-19, it's likely to be lower, if their diabetes is well managed."

Wheeler added emergency responders have jumped at the chance to stay protected while coming into close contact with people in their communities.

"We have career firefighters as well as the volunteers, and they have all been more than willing to take the vaccine and protect themselves," Wheeler observed. "It's not like anyone is forcing you to do that. But it's just a personal decision that you have to make yourself."

Health professionals say thousands of volunteers with diabetes were part of the clinical trial for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and the results found the vaccines to be safe and effective.

May 13, 2021

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Health-Care Subsidy Savings Help Female Heads of Households

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- Changes outlined in President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan are lowering health-insurance costs for many Kentuckians enrolled in marketplace plans, and experts say the savings could be game-changing for women head of households and single moms.

Cheryl Caskey, Franklin County resident who works for a small nonprofit, said she started using healthcare.gov in 2019 when she switched jobs.

Caskey explained after recently resubmitting her application to take advantage of the new subsidies, she went from paying \$150 a month to \$29 a month for her premium.

"It is really nice because the health insurance before was fairly expensive, and a significant portion of my monthly bills," Caskey remarked. "And so this does relieve a little bit of pressure each month."

She added the \$120 in savings helps her afford her prescription co-pays with much less stress.

Kentuckians already enrolled in a marketplace plan can go back and update their application to see the new increased subsidies applied to their monthly premiums. The Affordable Care Act special enrollment period has been extended to August 15.

Christina Libby, health outreach navigator for the Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky, said women and moms struggling to pay health-care expenses or who are saddled with medical debt can end up losing their housing.

She added some people previously applied for coverage and were discouraged by the cost.

"If you have ever applied for Marketplace coverage, and your initial thought was that it was too expensive, please re-apply because these changes with the American Rescue Plan have made it so much more accessible," Libby urged.

It's estimated more than 122,000 Kentuckians may be able to find marketplace health coverage for \$10 or less per month after premium tax credits, and thousands could be eligible for zero-cost plans.

Caskey noted for her, the process was simple.

"I definitely encourage people to take advantage, if they still can," Caskey added. "I really hope that it is something that remains permanent."

Kentuckians with questions or who want to submit an application over the phone can call the marketplace directly at 1-800-318-2596. To get local help, find the Kynector tool online or call 1-855-459-6328 to reach a Kynector in your county.

May 19, 2021

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Kentucky AG Wants Facebook to Scrap Kids' Instagram

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. - Kentucky's attorney general is part of a group that wants Facebook to stop its plans to create a kids' version of Instagram.

The group contended that using social media can be detrimental to children's health, and that kids aren't equipped to navigate the challenges. Attorney General Daniel Cameron signed the letter, along with more than 40 other state attorneys general. Children's advocates have said they're also concerned about the potential for sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

Dr. Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates, explained that the internet and social media are key tools for perpetrators.

"That is how they access the ability to interact - to get to know, to become familiar - with potential victims," he said, "so this is not some arcane argument."

Earlier this year, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg confirmed plans for an Instagram platform for kids in a congressional hearing on misinformation. In a statement, a Facebook spokesperson said the company wants to deliver experiences for kids that give parents visibility and control over what their children are doing.

A National Council for Missing and Exploited Children report found that in 2020, more than 20 million images related to child abuse had been shared on Facebook and Instagram.

Brooks also pointed to research showing the link between kids' social media use and increases in cyberbullying, mental distress and suicidal ideation.

"The potential for negative consequences in mental health for children is profound," he said.

In addition to parents, Brooks said state leaders should carefully monitor emerging social-media technology aimed at kids.

"We are so glad that Kentucky's attorney general joined with those other 43 attorneys general to try to stand up for kids, against the absolute profiteering incentive that Facebook is bringing to the table," he said.

In a Pew Research Center survey last summer, 71% of parents of children younger than age 12 said they are "somewhat concerned" their child might spend too much time in front of screens.

May 24, 2021

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Oil Refineries' Benzene Pollution a Concern in Eastern KY

Nadia Ramlagan

CATLETTSBURG, Ky. - A Marathon oil refinery in eastern Kentucky is emitting benzene into the air at levels higher than what the federal Environmental Protection Agency says require action to curb.

Benzene is a well-known carcinogen that can cause leukemia. According to a report from the Environmental Integrity Project, benzene readings at the Boyd County refinery jumped 233% between 2019 and 2020.

Ilan Levin, associate director at the group, said last year's levels were 11% above the EPA action level.

"These are not necessarily Clean Air Act violations," said Levin. "But the data indicates clearly that we've got a problem at many of these U.S. refineries."

Levin added in 2015, the EPA required all refineries in the U.S. to install benzene pollution monitors.

Nationwide, more than 530,000 people live within three miles of a refinery. The EPA estimates 57% are people of color and 43% live at incomes below the poverty line.

Levin said he believes lax regulation and oversight of oil refineries threaten public health, and said the EPA should respond more rapidly to short-term spikes in benzene emissions.

"Actions often include investigations, requests for information from these refineries," said Levin. "That's what EPA needs to do for a handful of these refineries, especially those that are getting worse."

Levin explained benzene often wafts into communities at levels higher than what's being reported, because refineries can point to other nearby sources and claim the emissions aren't theirs.

He said the data adds to a growing body of evidence about who's most likely to suffer the consequences of air pollution.

"That points to the fact that people of color, and lower-income folks, are disproportionately hit by industrial pollution," said Levin.

He notes the same communities were hit especially hard by COVID-19, where residents lack affordable health care and have higher rates of chronic illness that make them especially vulnerable to air pollution.

Hunger Crisis Continues to Take Toll on Military Families, Vets

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- As the nation observes Memorial Day, advocates for military families and veterans said many are going hungry.

A report by the hunger-fighting group MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger found food pantries operate on or near almost every military base in the country.

The House Rules Committee recently held a roundtable highlighting persistent food insecurity in the military and among veterans.

Liza Lieberman, director of communications for MAZON, said service members typically do not call attention to their situation because of shame, stigma, and even fear of retribution.

"So we don't have the exact numbers unfortunately," Lieberman explained. "But we know that there is increased need and that there has been for many years."

She added legislation such as the bipartisan Military Hunger Prevention Act (Senate Bill 1488 and House Bill 2339), introduced by lawmakers earlier this year, would create a basic-needs allowance to help low-income military families put food on the table.

Lieberman observed spousal unemployment is another factor contributing to food insecurity.

"This rate was really high, like 24%, 25% even before the pandemic," Lieberman emphasized. "And now, I think the latest statistics is that 42% of military spouses who were working are no longer working during the pandemic."

She also pointed out the landscape of who is enlisting has changed over the past few decades. Rather than single young men, personnel are a diverse group of adults, many supporting children.

"Especially those serving in our military, or who have proudly served, they should not have to do that on a regular basis," Lieberman asserted. "And we really hope that policymakers will take that seriously and do the right thing, because we think we've offered some pretty common-sense solutions that could make a real difference for these families."

She noted while data is limited, research shows one in four women veterans struggle with hunger, and more than one in four post-9/11 veterans report problems with being able to regularly purchase meals and groceries, about twice the rate of the general population.

June 7, 2021

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Experts Say Prematurely Ending Federal UI Could Harm KY Economy

Nadia Ramlagan

FRANKFORT, Ky. - More than twenty states are voluntarily ending their participation in a federal unemployment program, but Gov. Andy Beshear says he's not ready to do that yet.

Experts say prematurely ending the extra \$300 a week authorized by the American Rescue Plan could harm Kentucky families and the economy. The extra pay is slated to expire on September 6.

Dustin Pugel, senior policy analyst with the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy pointed out the money has helped gig workers, independent contractors, and other workers left out of the system.

"Unemployment insurance hasn't been meaningfully changed since it was created 80 years ago," said Pugel, "in terms of its function and who it serves."

Beshear has he said would consider ending the extra benefits before the fall.

U.S. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell - R-Louisville - and others have called for immediately ending participation the program, arguing the extra money is preventing people from seeking employment and harming businesses who need workers.

Pugel added the benefit has brought almost \$4 billion into Kentucky since the start of the pandemic.

"And since the \$300 benefit was reinstated it's brought in \$360 million," said Pugel. "And I credit this benefit in large part to ensuring that we didn't have an even worse employment situation."

And while critics say the program disincentivizes people from seeking work, Pugel says the data indicates otherwise.

"But we're seeking the exact opposite," said Pugel. "Leisure and hospitality accommodation and food services, they really rebounded incredibly compared to how many jobs they lost."

He says that if Kentucky were to get rid of the \$300 a week in benefits it would cost the state an estimated \$229 million.

June 16, 2021

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KY Families Can Soon Visit Relatives in Prison

Pandemic Delayed Visits More than a Year

Nadia Ramlagan

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - Kentucky families soon will be able to visit loved ones in some prison facilities.

Gov. Andy Beshear said prison visitations and regular programs and activities may resume the week of June 20. The new policy applies only to prisons run by the departments of Corrections and Juvenile Justice.

Marcus Jackson, organizing coordinator for Smart Justice Advocates at the ACLU of Kentucky, said some county jails and federal prisons are choosing not to reopen to visitors. He noted that many families are in the dark about the online signup process for visits or haven't received confirmations.

"And a lot of the family members are completely confused about how this is even going to occur," he said. "People are having to take off work, and these people haven't seen their loved ones in over a year."

Vaccinated family and friends of people in state custody must schedule an appointment to visit before they arrive. Jackson said visitation dates and times for each facility are on the Department of Corrections and Department of Juvenile Justice websites.

Jackson said he believes the mental-health effects of the pandemic on people in prison could be felt for years. He explained that evidence-based rehabilitative programs - from educational classes to recreational activities - along with family visitation, are necessary for successful re-entry into life after incarceration.

"But when the pandemic hit in the mode that they went into, all of that ceased," he said. "So, it stopped being about rehabilitation at that moment, and it was basically solitary confinement."

He added that prison visitors must be vaccinated, wear a mask and practice social distancing, and two visitors are allowed for each individual. According to the Department of Corrections, 76% of the state's prison population has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

June 24, 2021

Available files: mp3 wav jpg

Report: KY Kids' Well-Being has Stalled, But Tax Credits Could Help

Nadia Ramlagan

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - New survey data taken during the pandemic offers a clear picture of how Kentucky kids and families are faring. The Commonwealth ranks 37th in the nation when it comes to overall child well-being, according to the 2021 Kids Count Data Book released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Dr. Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates, said there are opportunities to help families struggling with food insecurity, housing and mental health.

"If the federal child tax credit was made permanent," said Brooks, "we know that positively impacts 93% of kids in Kentucky, so if we want to talk about economic well-being and if we want to take actionable steps, that's really important."

The report found that in 2020, one in five Kentucky adults with children had little or no confidence in his or her ability to make the next rent or mortgage payment, with the highest rates experienced by Black and Hispanic families.

Fifteen percent of Kentucky families reported sometimes or often not having enough food to eat throughout last year, and more than one in four Kentucky adults living in households with children felt down, depressed or hopeless in 2020, with only slight improvement seen by March of this year.

Leslie Boissiere, vice president for external affairs for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, explained that both state and federal child tax credits are critical to eliminating structural inequities in the tax code.

She said more than half of Black children historically have been ineligible for the full Child Tax Credit because their household incomes are too low, while less than 25% of White children faced this barrier.

"We are excited and grateful that lawmakers passed the expansion," said Boissiere. "And we're calling on them to make that expansion permanent. We'd like to ensure that we don't have the largest-ever one-year reduction in the number of children who live in poverty followed immediately by the largest ever one-year increase."

Brooks said the data also show the state should maintain a focus on increasing access to high-quality child care, and points out the American Rescue Plan funds used to stabilize the child-care sector should include measures to recruit and retain early care educators.

He noted that women of color make up a large percentage of the early-childhood care workforce and continue to shoulder the weight of underinvestment.

"So this report actually, oddly, leaves me optimistic," said Brooks. "Because there are very palpable, very practical, very achievable, and very common-ground solutions."

He added that policies like paid family leave for state employees are additional steps the state could take to encourage

private employees to offer paid time off and increase family and economic stability, particularly for households with young children.