

## **A Message to All Members of the Campus Community**

### **The COVID-19 Surge: Pandemic Fatigue and Personal Activities**

**This document updates the travel guidance issued by the College in August. Please read the following carefully, particularly if you are planning travel for personal reasons. Please also refer to the updated “Policy on Personal Activities During COVID-19, Self-Quarantine, Testing and Returning to Work” on our COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.berea.edu/covid-19/>.**

#### **An Urgent Reminder about the pandemic and our obligations as Bereans.**

Nine months into this national health emergency, the virus has infected over 8.7 million Americans. The daily count of infections has risen over 32 percent in the last week alone, with a daily average of more than 68,127 cases nationwide. In Kentucky and over 30 other states, the pandemic is rising toward a third peak. Hospitalization rates are also increasing in many locales. While most healthy persons recover, some suffer greatly, and to our great dismay, over 225,000 Americans have died thus far. For those who do recover, the long-term effects are, as yet, not fully understood. *It is therefore essential that all of us as Berea take stock of where we are for the health and safety of all.*

#### **We are tired of the virus, but it is not tired of us.**

There is another challenge: “pandemic fatigue” threatens to amplify risks to our health and to our families, friends, and co-workers. It is widely agreed that the best protections against contracting or passing on COVID-19 are social distancing, wearing of masks, and avoiding large crowds and locations with high infection rates. We are all growing tired of these necessary precautions and yearn for the closeness of extended family and friends, especially as the holiday season approaches. Many of us have chosen to travel to visit family and vacation spots to escape from the realities and stressors of the pandemic. *Such decisions can endanger your health, your family’s health, and our community’s health.*

#### **The pandemic is not over, and it is not yet under control.**

On college campuses in America, there have been more than 214,000 confirmed cases, with over 5600 cases in Kentucky. In the past month, another small college in Kentucky reportedly had 100 persons in quarantine. Were that to be the case at Berea, our campus would be closed for the remainder of the fall term with ensuing consequences for our students, faculty, and staff. The spring term could also be dramatically impacted. In addition, as many know all too well, our Child Development Laboratory (CDL) has been forced to close for at least two weeks because of positive cases among staff, children, and their families. This closure has had a significant impact on our employees and their families who depend on the CDL for childcare. *We must be vigilant in our safety guidelines in order to continue to limit spread of the virus on campus.*

**The risks of personal travel, activities, and hosting visitors cannot be underestimated.**

Berea College continues to follow Kentucky Health at Work Guidelines. The most recent guidance regarding out-of-state travel calls for a 14-day self-quarantine if traveling to one of the (currently) 11 states on Kentucky's Travel Advisory list (<https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>). In addition to its other COVID-19 testing and reporting policies applicable to all members of the campus community, the Administrative Committee has updated its employee guidance found in "Policy on Personal Activities During COVID-19, Self-Quarantine, Testing and Returning to Work" on our COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.berea.edu/covid-19/>. Employees should read and be informed by these requirements, which include the possibility of suspension without pay or termination for non-compliance.

**Our students and co-workers are relying on all of us to stay the course with social distancing, mask wearing, and avoidance of places and circumstances known to carry a higher risk of contracting the virus. Again, we are all in this together, and we must all take extra measures during the pandemic for the health and wellness of all Bereans.**