

Columbus Dispatch – May 21, 2020; 70% of Ohio coronavirus deaths have occurred in long-term care facilities

<https://www.dispatch.com/news/20200521/70-of-ohio-coronavirus-deaths-have-occurred-in-long-term-care-facilities>

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There have been 1,247 coronavirus deaths in Ohio's nursing homes and other long-term care facilities, which is 70% of the state's 1,781 confirmed and probable coronavirus deaths, according to new data from the state health department.

The health department reported an additional 204 deaths and 885 cases in the past week when it updated its long-term care facility database late Wednesday night.

Of the 6,790 cases reported since April 15 in long-term care facilities, a little more than half — 3,859 people — have recovered from the virus while 878 people have died.

The health department data only reflects cases and deaths since April 15. The health department said Tuesday that 369 people had died in long-term care facilities before April 15, which accounted for 60% of all coronavirus deaths before Wednesday's update. The number of cases in long-term care facilities prior to April 15 hasn't been released.

The update reflects data from May 14 through Wednesday. During that period, the state reported an additional 3,272 confirmed cases. Long-term care facilities accounted for about 27% of those newly reported cases. Since April 15, about one-third — 33.6% — of Ohio's 20,237 confirmed cases have occurred in long-term care facilities.

The long-term care facility database includes probable cases, but the state does not break down how many probable and confirmed cases there are in facilities. Through Wednesday, 6.6% of the state's coronavirus cases have been classified as probable per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.

Gov. Mike DeWine has been pressured in recent weeks to commit to testing 100% of nursing homes and other facilities that house at-risk seniors. He has said the state would like to test everyone but does not have the number of tests to make that possible.

"We're going to test nursing homes as much as we have the capability of doing," DeWine said Monday. "I'm not satisfied with where we are. We've come a long way, but we have a long way to go."

Franklin County had the highest spike of deaths for any county in Ohio with 41. The five counties with the highest death tolls in long-term care facilities — Franklin (123), Lucas (121), Mahoning (87), Summit (72) and Cuyahoga (63) — account for more than half of deaths in nursing homes, assisted-living and intermediate care facilities since April 15.

Delaware County reported four new deaths in the past week after having just one through May 13. First and Main assisted-living facility has 18 of the county's 21 active cases.

Franklin County currently has 530 active coronavirus cases in its facilities. Scioto Community (56), Forest Hills Center (52) and Laurels of Worthington (38) have the most active resident cases in the county.

The 878 additional reported cases in the past week is the fewest number of new cases reported by the health department since it began publishing the database.