



# **COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting**

## **April 3, 2020**



## General Information

As of the time of this meeting (4-3-2020 at 4:30 pm) there are 476 confirmed cases and 2 deaths in the County.

- Gender, age and geographic distribution of cases are available on the [Health Department website](#).
- Dr. Bogen from the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) joined the call to share some updates.
  - Daily Cases
    - She explained that the number of confirmed cases (476 today) is not inclusive of all cases in the County, representing only those people who have been tested.
      - While in an ideal world we would test everyone, testing is limited by availability of supplies.
      - Because there are also “false negative” test results (i.e., someone who is COVID-19 positive but receives a negative test result), anybody with symptoms should act as if they have the coronavirus regardless of their test result.
    - We are still at the early stages of this pandemic in our region.
  - Data reporting
    - ACHD is working on a dashboard that will report the number of cases in a geographical area as a rate per 10,000 residents. It will be available sometime next week and will allow us to identify hotspots.
  - Clinical picture
    - Symptoms include fever, respiratory symptoms (sore throat, congestion, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath), body aches and headaches, GI symptoms and loss of taste/smell.
    - Some people have mild or no symptoms and yet can still infect others.
    - The range of duration of symptoms is variable.
  - Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
    - If you are out in the fresh air and maintaining social distance, you are not likely to get COVID-19. You do not need a medical grade mask.
    - If you must have sustained personal contact, like a doctor or nurse, you are at risk and need medical grade masks.
      - There is a national shortage of supplies. If you have supplies, ration them and extend the use of each one to make them last longer.
  - Mental health issues
    - Going outside in a safe way is important to maintain mental health, unless you are sick or have been in contact with someone who is sick.
  - Call numbers
    - 2-1-1 is getting 250-300 calls a day, some of which are forwarded to Poison Control or Health Plans for follow up.

DHS Key Indicators

The following indicators showed a change over the past week compared to about a month ago (3-1-2020 through 3-7-2020):

- Calls to child welfare are down 63%. We are worried about vulnerable babies and children and encourage you to continue calling the hotline.
- Calls to the Link (through which people access homelessness services) are down 33%.
- IRES petitions (which lead to involuntary commitment) are down by 35%.
- Calls to the Senior Line are down by 43% and Older Adult Protective Services are down by 64%. Please call if you are concerned about an individual.
- Calls to the Director's Action Line (DAL) (a primary mechanism to raise concerns or issues with or to DHS) are down 27%.
- Admissions to the jail are down by 77%.
- Average number of people in the jail is down by 25%.
- Number of cases filed (a good proxy for arrests) is down by 78%.
- Recidivism rate of people released from the jails is less than 1% so far.

The following indicators remained stable compared to the week of 3-1-2020 through 3-7-2020:

- Children in out-of-home care – this may be because it's not the easiest time to return kids home
- Number of people in emergency shelters
- Calls to ReSolve crisis hotline

2-1-1 call data (these data only represent calls, not texts or messages):

- Trends were similar to last week (week of 3-23-2020):
- Employment and income-related calls are decreasing overall due to a sharp decrease in income tax-related calls, but we are seeing an increase in financial assistance and unemployment benefits calls.
- There has been an increase in food-related calls, specifically for food pantries, home delivered meals and help buying food.

We are continuing to improve our website, now located at [www.bit.ly/COVID19DHSProviders](http://www.bit.ly/COVID19DHSProviders).

- You can find daily briefings, slides and frequently asked questions.
- We're posting information under various subjects like child welfare, food assistance, homelessness and housing, and payments and DHS operations. We keep adding things to these sections so keep checking back.
- You can reach us by email at [DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us). We will answer all questions and elevate issues to inform the network.

Staffing Challenges

- As a reminder, when you have used all your staff resources and invoked all your contingency plans (Level 3 Status), please contact your Deputy Director or [DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us) to help you address the problem.

## **Legislative/Policy Updates**

### Federal Update

Nonprofits are eligible to apply for the SBA Paycheck Protection plan.

- Applications are being accepted as of today (4-3-2020).
- Link: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/paycheck-protection-program-ppp>

### State and local updates

PA State Treasurer Joe Torsella's office has extended the Commonwealth a \$2 billion credit line to meet shortfalls in the General Fund due to tax revenue losses.

COVID-19 Working Capital Access Program, PA's state-funded loan program for small businesses in crisis, exhausted its \$61m in funds within a week of being offered and shut down.

- The program received nearly 900 applications totaling more than \$75 million in loan requests before shutting down.

The PA Legislature will move soon to delay until the end of December the deadline for all five-year child welfare clearance recertifications due by mid-July.

As a reminder, here are some updated dates for PA residents:

- Driver's Licenses expiring before 4-30-2020 will now expire on 5-31-2020.
- The primary election will occur on 6-2-2020.
- Income Tax filing deadline is now 7-15-2020.
- REAL ID deadline is now 10-1-2021.

## **Food**

We have added formula and diapers to the [food map](#). Beverly's Birthdays is distributing these items.

Next week is "spring break," meaning there will be some changes to school districts' food distributions.

- Check the [food map](#) for changes.
- PPS will be providing food in many of the same locations.

### Food Bank Update

- Some income eligibility policies have been relaxed, allowing food to be put in emergency distribution boxes more easily.

Provider Food Access Calls are held Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3:30. See slide presentation for call-in information.

### AAA food information

- No new updates since 4-1-2020.

### **Program Updates**

#### AAA

- The Senior Line call center is receiving an increasing number of calls from younger-aged older adults inquiring about assistance with grocery shopping.

#### OCS

- For childcare resources, please share ELRC contact information ([elrc5@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:elrc5@alleghenycounty.us) or 412-350-3577) with your essential employees.
  - We will be launching a new technology next week to better match families to childcare.
  - We have identified three additional childcare needs that we are working on solutions for:
    - Children with disabilities
    - COVID-19 positive households
    - Crisis respite care for families that need support
      - As a reminder, Jeremiah's Place is open 7am - 7pm Monday – Friday.
      - Referrals from case workers/social workers will be accepted on behalf of families.
      - The program is operating at very limited capacity given the circumstances, so service is offered on a first come/first served basis.
      - Call Jeremiah's Place at 412-924-0726 from 9am-5pm to make arrangements.
- We have moved employment information and resources to [our website](#).
- Homeless network
  - We continue to work on isolation and quarantine space.
    - As a reminder, the CYF Youth Facility (FamilyLinks Teen Healing Center) is open! We hope to share more news on other facilities soon.
  - HUD is offering opportunities for CoCs to request waivers. DHS is currently reviewing what is available and will make a request to HUD within the next few days. We will keep you posted on what flexibility we do have.
    - In the meantime, do not terminate anyone from your program.
  - The provider call is on Tuesdays at 9:30am. Call-in information is in the slide presentation.
  - DHS is working to schedule a call with emergency shelters and the Health Department Contact Kate Holko ([Kathryn.Holko@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:Kathryn.Holko@alleghenycounty.us)) if you are interested in participating.

#### Behavioral Health

- CMS has been hosting regular stakeholder calls; transcripts can be found [here](#).
- Community Care issued [guidelines on providing MAT for OUD patients](#).

- PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) released the following guidance:
  - [Guidance on the provision of vocational rehabilitation services](#)
  - [Guidance on the provision of Supported Employment Services](#)
- Updates have been made to the Behavioral Health Commitment Protocol.
  - We will have more guidance on this early next week.
- Early intervention
  - No new updates since 4-1-2020.

### OID/Autism

- ODP Announcement addresses social distancing and tracking COVID-19 positive individuals.
- ODP is drafting additional changes to Appendix K of the Waiver Agreement - stay tuned for the draft.
  - This will affect regulations 6100, 2380, 2390 and 6500.
- Continue to follow local information and directives, along with those from the PA Department of Health and the State Office of Developmental Programs. There are links to COVID-19 updates on MyODP.org at <https://www.myodp.org/mod/page/view.php?id=26808>.
- The WarmLine (1-855-284-2494) can also assist individuals with OID or Autism or their caregivers.

### CYF

- The following resources for providers are available from our partners at A Second Chance Inc.:
  - [Emotional Support for Healers Webinar](#)
  - [Responding to the Needs of Family: A Practitioners Perspective Webinar](#)
- Resources for Supporting Families
  - [Helping families cope](#) – The National Child Trauma Stress Network has put together this guide to assist families cope during these uncertain times. It also includes a chart that shows how children of different ages may feel during this time.
  - [Psychological impact training](#) – This 1-hour podcast talks about the psychological impact on your clients and communities (1 free CE is available).
  - [Helping clients navigate uncertainty](#) – This short video presents a 3-step approach to assisting clients in uncertain times.
- Resources for Supporting Children
  - [Children’s Comic](#) – This comic explains COVID-19 in a child friendly way and with illustrations.
  - [Talking to kids about Coronavirus](#) – This article from the Child Mind Institute talks about how to have a conversation with your child about COVID-19.
  - [Department of Education](#)
- If women who have been released from jail during the quarantine need help, they can contact Mom’s Turn by emailing [vsirockman@achildsplace.org](mailto:vsirockman@achildsplace.org) or by phoning 412-748-1764 or 412-346-4983.
  - Mom’s Turn will do their best to help them find the resources they need.

- The WarmLine is available at 1-855-284-2494 for those who are experiencing anxiety, stress, or just need someone to talk to. Please share this number with your staff, families and anyone who could benefit from this type of support.
- Don't forget to promote the Census!

#### Courts/Jail

- No new updates since 4-2-2020.

#### Transportation

- State guidance on MATP should be available early next week.

#### **How to Reach Us**

- Email us at [DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us) with questions. Use the subject line to indicate the type of question you are submitting (e.g., program area, DHS operations).
- See the slide presentation for other key contacts.

**SEE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS RAISED AT TODAY'S CALL**