



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting

July 2, 2020



General Information

As a reminder, we are currently holding these DHS Provider Meetings just once per week, on Thursdays.

A new Health Department Order takes effect on July 3rd

- One-week closure of bars, restaurants and casinos
- Cancellation of gatherings and events over 25 people
- Voluntary stay-at-home protocol

Human Services Block grant meetings were held on June 29th and 30th.

- A meeting recording and the PowerPoint can be found at: <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/News-Events/Meetings-Hearings/Community.aspx>.
- You may still submit your comments to DHS-Ideas@AlleghenyCounty.US.

How to report a positive coronavirus test:

- If a member of your staff has tested positive for COVID-19, including presumptive positive, or has been exposed to a confirmed case, notify DHS by emailing DHS-PrivacyOfficer@alleghenycounty.us (preferred method). Alternatively, you may report via phone to Brian Bell, Allegheny County Privacy Officer, at 412-350-2887.

There are candidates seeking work in human services who are credentialed and have experience. If you are an agency that would like to gain access to this recruitment platform and these potential candidates, request access via this link: https://bit.ly/SWPA_HHSprovider.

COVID-19 Metrics

There is a bit of a lag in these data and we expect things to get worse.

Allegheny County is below the following benchmark:

- Decline in new cases: we saw a 267% increase in cases in the previous week.
- Decline in total hospitalizations: a 47% increase in average daily number of people in the hospital in the last week.
- Diagnostic testing capacity: We have changed this metric to a ratio of testing to cases. Testing is not keeping pace.
- Rate of transmission below 1: It is at 3.6 and has been increasing for 3 weeks.

Allegheny County is approaching the following benchmark:

- New cases below threshold: we are now above the PA threshold.

Allegheny County is meeting the following benchmarks:

- Decline in Deaths: We have a very low death rate and a decline in deaths.
- ICU bed capacity: we have not hit 90%. We are at about 79%.
- Percent of Positive tests: It is now 7.3% but we are going up.

See the slide presentation for visualizations of the three phases of the pandemic: First 2 weeks, Shutdown and Reopening. Some key takeaways:

- In the reopening period, we are seeing a huge spike in positive cases among 20-29-year-olds.
- Cases affecting white people were initially high and have decreased, while cases affecting black people were low and increased over time.
- Gender differences are not significant.

PA DCED's [COVID-19 Relief Statewide Small Business Assistance](#)

- Provides grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 to small businesses that have been economically impacted by COVID-19. Follow the link for details about eligibility and application process.

Re-envisioning Crisis Prevention & Response: Exploring alternatives to police response and building upon DHS's existing system of services:

- Background
 - A disproportionate number of individuals who encounter police and end up incarcerated, or otherwise harmed, have underlying human services needs. See the slide presentation for supporting data.
 - Policing and incarceration harm Black people at much higher rates.
 - Law enforcement, judges and the jail are tasked with too much.
- Goals
 - Decrease the number of people in active crisis in public spaces.
 - Reduce unnecessary law enforcement encounters, arrests and the inappropriate use of force or incarceration for individuals with underlying human services needs, and reduce the number of Black people negatively impacted by our criminal justice system.
 - Eliminate the practice of confining people in the jail so that they may receive behavioral health supports and treatment.
 - Increase and simplify access to culturally competent, trauma-informed human services for adults in the community.
- Potential Strategies
 - Prevention: proactive outreach, and simplify and promote ways to find care
 - New kinds of first responders: mobile crisis response, pre-arrest diversion, co-responding opportunities
 - Communication and Training on procedures and protocols
 - Remove systemic incentives and provide alternatives to placing people in jail
 - Reallocate resources
- Next Steps
 - Ongoing best practice research
 - Engage community in co-design
 - Convene a crisis response stakeholder group

We are continuing to improve our website, located at www.bit.ly/COVID19DHSProviders.

- [The Operational Changes Tracker](#) is still live.
- You can reach us by email at DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us. We will answer all questions and elevate issues to inform the network.
- Please submit stories and photos of how you are meeting needs during this time to Evelyn.Whitehill@AlleghenyCounty.US.

Legislative/Policy Updates

State and Local Updates

- The Governor's disaster declaration will stay in effect. PA Supreme Court ruled (5-2) yesterday against the General Assembly's attempt to end the Governor's COVID-19 disaster declaration by a resolution that could not be vetoed.
- Gov. Wolf signed SB 637 on Wednesday, which removes barriers to state occupational licensing for individuals with a criminal record, unless their criminal history is directly related to the occupation in which they are seeking a license.
- Gov. Wolf set to sign two police reform bills that passed the General Assembly unanimously.
 - HB 1841 requires departments to conduct background checks that require an applicant's former department to disclose information on the officer's employment history, including disciplinary actions, complaints and reasons for separation.
 - HB 1910 requires officers to be trained every other year in how to interact with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and to receive annual instruction on de-escalation and harm-reduction techniques. It also requires officers to undergo a mental health evaluation for post-traumatic stress disorder within 30 days of an incident in which the officer used lethal force or at the request of a supervisor.

Food

There is a Drive-Up Food Distribution happening Monday at noon at the Food Bank at 1 N Linden St in Duquesne.

The Food Access Call is on Tuesdays at 3:30 pm. Call-in information can be found in the slide presentation.

Program Updates

OCS

- Homeless network
 - Quarantine and Isolation spaces are still open for individuals and families and have available spaces! We plan to keep these open through at least December.
 - To make a referral for a family, Contact Remy Harris (Remy.Harris@alleghenycounty.us)
 - Homeless referrals: Jessica.McKown@alleghenycounty.us
 - Office of Behavioral Health referrals: Diane.Johnson@alleghenycounty.us
 - Allegheny County Jail referrals: Jennifer.Batterton@alleghenycounty.us
 - Immigrants and Internationals referrals: bgreen@jfcspgh.org
 - We have ordered more cell phones for clients who need to communicate with providers or access telehealth. Please contact Gabe Krivosh (Gabriel.Krivosh@alleghenycounty.us) for additional information.
 - [Applications](#) are now available [for PHFA's CARES Rent Relief Program](#), to provide a maximum of 6 months of rent assistance for eligible renters. In partnership with ACED,

we are handling the [renter program locally](#). Please contact Cassandra.Collinge@allegHENYcounty.us for more information.

- Please help us get the word out!
- ACTION Housing has a dedicated hotline to answer applicant questions: 412-248-0021 or ahicarestrrp@actionhousing.org
- The eviction moratorium is still set to expire on July 10th.
- Please provide Public Comment on the federal strategic plan to end homelessness at <https://www.usich.gov/public-input/>.
- We've moved the Provider Network Meeting to every other Tuesday at 9:30 am; the next one is on July 7th. Call-in information can be found in the slide presentation.

OBH

- [Governor Wolf announced](#) today that the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) is awarding grants to provide employment support services for individuals with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) to the following local organizations:
 - Allegheny Intermediate Unit
 - East End Cooperative Ministry
 - Life's Work of Western PA
 - Westmoreland Co. Community Action

CYF

- Strategies for home visits
 - Call ahead and ask the following questions:
 - Do you have any symptoms of a respiratory infection such as cough, sore throat, fever or shortness of breath?
 - Have you had contact with any person exhibiting these symptoms or with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 within the past 14 days?
 - Has anyone in your home been confirmed to have COVID-19 via a test?
- We are pulling back on home passes for the weekend for children in congregate care.
- Family visitation: We have started visitation, prioritizing children under the age of three. Hold a teaming meeting on how to get the visit done safely.
- We are working this weekend on additional measures and guidance.
- [Be a Lifeline](#) video – please check in on your neighbors. Please give ChildLine or 412-473-2000 a call if you are worried.

How to Reach Us

- Email us at 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).
- The COVID Hotline is 2-1-1 and the Health Department's line is 687-2243.
- See the slide presentation for other key contacts.

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