



# **COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting**

## **July 23, 2020**



## General Information

We are continuing to hold DHS Provider Meetings once per week on Thursdays.

Please continue to submit stories and photos of how you are meeting needs during this time to [Evelyn.Whitehill@AlleghenyCounty.US](mailto:Evelyn.Whitehill@AlleghenyCounty.US)

As a reminder, 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](mailto:DHS-PrivacyOfficer@alleghenycounty.us) (preferred method). Alternatively, you may report via phone to Brian Bell, Allegheny County Privacy Officer, at 412-350-2887.

## COVID-19 Guidance Update

On July 17th, ACHD announced new guidance that takes state level guidance into account and remains in effect until revoked.

- Indoor and outdoor dining/alcohol consumption must end by 11 PM. Take-out and delivery for food/alcohol can continue after 11 PM. (State guidance makes it clear the number of indoor diners cannot exceed 25% of the fire code maximum.)
- Events/gatherings are limited to 25 people indoors/50 people outdoors. (State guidance allows 250 outdoors, but ACHD kept a lower limit.)

PA DCED published a new [Hazard Pay Grant Program](#):

- Funds may be used to provide hazard pay for direct, full-time and part-time employees earning less than \$20 per hour, excluding fringe benefits and overtime.
- Provides 10 weeks of increased pay and up to \$1,200 per eligible full-time equivalent (FTE), for up to 500 eligible FTEs, or \$600,000, per location.
- Eligible providers include residential care facilities and healthcare and social assistance agencies.

## COVID-19 Metrics

Allegheny County is not meeting the following benchmarks:

- Decline in new cases: we saw 941 new cases the week of 7/11, but we seem to be going in the right direction.
- New cases below threshold: our rate is 209 per 100,000 residents, above 50, but we seem to be going in the right direction.
- Diagnostic testing capacity: Our tests-to-cases ratio is remaining flat at 11:1.
- New cases below threshold: We are above the PA threshold of 50, at 209.
- Percent of positive tests: It is now 10.2% and increasing.

Allegheny County has an unknown status regarding the following benchmarks:

- ICU bed capacity: HACP data are no longer being published.
- Decline in total hospitalizations: HACP data are no longer being published but we know anecdotally that hospitalizations are increasing.

Allegheny County is meeting the following benchmarks:

- Decline in deaths: There were 3 deaths last week, a decrease. But, this is a lagging indicator behind cases and hospitalizations.

- Rate of transmission below 1: It was 0.93 during the week of 7/14.

Scott Hemphill, Chief Information Officer at DHS, joined the call to speak about DHS's efforts to bridge the digital divide.

#### The Digital Divide in Allegheny County

- 9% of households do not have an internet enabled device and 7% of households only have a smartphone, which is not sufficient for tasks such as conducting work or completing schoolwork.
- 13% of households do not have internet access; 40% of those households had an income of less than \$20,000 per year.

DHS is working to address the digital divide through:

1. Access to devices
  - a. 625 devices distributed out of 780 purchased or donated.
  - b. As a reminder, you can [request a laptop through this form](#).
2. Access to wi-fi
  - a. We are covering the Mon Valley Regional Office parking lot with free public wi-fi.
    - i. However, a parking lot is not an ideal space for those without a car, looking to complete schoolwork or looking for privacy.
    - ii. We have identified about 30 potential additional locations.
  - b. We are talking to Comcast Internet Essentials about buying in-home internet connectivity for 2400 households.
  - c. We are also looking at Verizon jetpacks (portable hotspots) and LTE enabled devices, but these are more expensive options.
  - d. We are also developing a community wi-fi resource map to identify other public hotspots and local businesses offering wi-fi.
3. Enhancing digital literacy
  - a. Assisting providers with online delivery & virtual programming
  - b. Directing tech support to Pitt's Community Tech Help Desk

In a live survey, attendees shared the following feedback on DHS's efforts to Bridge the Digital Divide:

- 48 out of 56 respondents find in-home internet access more valuable than public hotspots.
- Family Centers, Senior Centers and public parks were seen as high value sites for a public hotspot.
- Respondents rated their comfort with technology as 4.13 out of 5.
- 19 respondents desired additional technology support from DHS in implementing virtual services.

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

- [The Operational Changes Tracker](#) is now live.
- 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.

## Legislative/Policy Updates

### Federal Updates

- U.S. Senate is expected to unveil a \$1 trillion relief package soon, formalizing the starting point of negotiations for the next bill.
  - We'll continue to track and report on details as they are available.

### State and Local Updates

- VoteSafe Pennsylvania has launched a statewide bipartisan campaign to ensure safe voting options for the November election.
  - The coalition is led by former PA Republican House Majority Leader Dave Reed and former Democratic U.S. Rep. Patrick Murphy.
- Pittsburgh City Council is considering a proposal from the Mayor's Office to utilize Allegheny County Department of Health grant funding on an arrest diversion pilot program on the North Side, focusing on improving outcomes for justice-related individuals with behavioral health needs.
- Pittsburgh Food Policy Council and PghFoodTeam received a \$100,000 grant from the Aetna Foundation to reduce disparities in chronic disease outcomes through change to food access systems.
  - PghFoodTeam includes Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, ACHD and the City of Pittsburgh as well as community organizations..

## **Food**

There are two [upcoming Food Bank food distributions](#):

1. 8/1/2020, Wilkinsburg, 11 am
  - a. You must register ahead, allowing you to get multiple boxes (for up to 3 families) in one car if needed.
2. 8/10, Military Share Pittsburgh (in the Strip District), noon
  - a. For Veterans

There are many upcoming [Farmers to Families Food Distributions](#):

1. 7/25, McKeesport
2. 8/1, Hill District
3. 8/7, Clairton
4. 8/8, North Side
5. 8/14, Penn Hills
6. 8/22, North Shore
7. 8/29, Washington

The PPS Fresh Produce Distributions will continue every Thursday through 10/29/2020 at Millions, Carmalt, Perry, Faison and The Gifted Center.

Grab and Go meals are available to all children 18 and under at [Summer Youth Café](#); the meals will be available throughout the summer. Call 2-1-1 or text “FOOD” to 877-877 to find your site.

## **Program Updates**

### **OCS**

- Childcare
  - There are a lot of childcare implications from the school reopening decisions that are being made. We will have more details on potential solutions in the weeks to come.

## **OBH**

- The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers has [created a PSA](#) to remind folks that Early Intervention is still available. Please share with your network and encourage folks to not wait to address concerns about their child's development.
  - In Allegheny County, call The Alliance at 412-885-6000; outside Allegheny County call the CONNECT Helpline at 1-800-692-7288.

## **CYF**

- Family Resources brought back their [One Kind Word Program](#), which was developed by Family Resources and Family Communications, to change people's attitudes about stepping in to help parents and children struggling in a public setting, in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- We are inviting our staff and providers to become emergency respite caregivers through A Second Chance. Please promote this program. We are seeing an increased need and we need more placements for children whose caregivers are unable to care for them due to coronavirus symptoms or hospitalization. Email [ASCICovidCombat@secondchance-kinship.com](mailto:ASCICovidCombat@secondchance-kinship.com) or call Davida Allen at 412-377-2511 or Tara Skibieli at 412-715-9242.
- We want to create a shared framework with our foster care providers and collaboratively implement new strategies to improve safety, permanency and well-being of children and families in Allegheny County.
  - We are seeking your feedback on the [Foster Care Concept Paper](#) to inform this work and an upcoming RFP.
  - Thank you to those who have responded so far.
- Allegheny County, on behalf of its Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families, is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers for a residential program for victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) using the evidence-based treatment model CHANCE. The [RFP has been posted](#). Please share it with potential applicants.
- There is a free [University of Pittsburgh Diversity Forum](#) next week from July 28-30.

## **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).
- The COVID Hotline is 2-1-1 and the Health Department's line is 412-687-2243.
- See the slide presentation for other key contacts.

**SEE [FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#) FOR ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS RAISED AT TODAY'S CALL**