



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting
December 3, 2020



General Information

As a reminder, DHS Provider Meetings are held once per week on Thursdays.

Director Marc Cherna returned from a medical leave and shared the following message:

- We will not face reductions in our budget due to a continuation in state funding.
- We are optimistic about the transition in the white house and working with the new administration.
- Thank you to all of you for keeping things going while I was out.

Dr. Debra Bogen, Director of the Allegheny County Health Department (ACDH), joined the call to share a COVID-19 update.

- Over 1,000 new cases were reported today. This reflects a backlog of cases due to the long holiday weekend. We are nearing 30,000 cases in our county and there have been 524 deaths since March, with a 1-2-week delay in reporting, likely to increase in the next few weeks. We are seeing the biggest spike in daily cases yet. We are seeing exponential growth, about 2800 cases per week. Racial disparities in cases are trending down.
 - ACDH got a new roving testing van from Curative and are expecting a second mid-December. The department is putting the schedule on social media, our website and 2-1-1.
 - There is wide community spread and many don't know where they got the virus. Asymptomatic spread is happening. When people do know the source, it is usually from being close together in a closed space and sharing food or beverage, such as at a party. We are not seeing transmission in a workplace or school where people are wearing masks properly and distancing.
- ACDH is encouraging people to use the state positivity rate for consistency. We are at about a 9.5% positivity rate.
- The PA DOH is currently evaluating the new CDC guidances about quarantine recommendations. The CDC currently recommends a 14-day quarantine period, or 10 days after onset of symptoms, and we are still going with that recommendation locally.
 - If you have a household exposure, isolate at home for 10 days (or 7 days with a negative test) after the infected person is released from isolation. See slide presentation for a flow chart.
 - If you have a non-household exposure, isolate at home for 10 days (or 7 days with a negative test). See slide presentation for a flow chart.
- COVID-19 vaccines are on the way. The Pfizer vaccine is being reviewed on Dec 10th and Moderna on Dec 17th. The first shipments will be highly targeted and will go directly to health care providers and long-term care. Then it will go to other high-risk groups. We want to distribute this as quickly and equitably as possible, working with many partners. We are also trying to understand barriers to vaccination within immigrant communities and communities of color. Human services providers, childcare providers and people working in schools will likely be considered frontline workers when determining vaccine distribution. We will have more details in about a month.
 - The first three vaccines on the market all require more than one dose.

- All trials are still ongoing to assess long-term outcomes.
- Immunity kicks in about two weeks after vaccination, but they are still reviewing the data, and it should be made public by the FDA.
- The side effect profile for these vaccines is quite good, and typical of most vaccinations. You should be back to full response within 36 hours. You may feel sick from your immune system's response, including aches, fever, rash. These data should be made public on the FDA website. Hospitals are planning to stagger vaccinations to mitigate the impact of side effects on staffing levels.
- We don't know yet what age vaccinations can begin.
- If you have a CLIA-waived lab and are interested in rapid antigen testing, please email Debra.Bogen@AlleghenyCounty.US.

Upcoming food distributions:

1. Wilkesburg, 12/5, 11 am, 225 Penn Ave [Register here](#)
2. Duquesne, 12/7, 3 pm, 1 N Linden St [Register here](#)
3. Allegheny Valley, 12/8, 4 pm, Pittsburgh Mills Galleria [Register here](#)
4. McKeesport, 12/19, 10 am, 1960 Eden Park Blvd [Register here](#)
5. Duquesne, 12/21, 12 pm, 1 N Linden St [Register here](#)

There is a drive-up diaper distribution tomorrow from 11-1 in Greentree at 875 Greentree Road, Building 10.

As a reminder, we are asking for your help with CRF Billing:

- CFR Expenses must be spent by 12/30/20.
- If possible, please submit November invoices by 12/5.
- Due date for December invoices will likely be 1/5/21.

You are invited to join our Community Conversations to inform a campaign to support the County's ethnic and minority communities. Registration: <https://www.meeproductions.com/AlleghenyCounty/>

- Dec. 11 at 1 pm
- Dec. 16 at 3 pm
- Dec. 16 at 3:30 pm

A final call for laptop and headset requests

- Supply of Laptops is limited—there are fewer than 100 remaining! This is a FINAL CALL for device requests!
 - [Device Request Form](#)
- We still have plenty of headsets in stock! If you need a headset, please email us.
 - dhs-covid19supplies@alleghenycounty.us

Public Wi-Fi is live at 9 sites! Find the sites at wifi.alleghenycounty.us.

Global Links is fulfilling submitted requests and final deliveries will go out in mid-December. Deliveries will not resume until mid-January to allow for an annual inventory. The PPE request form will be deactivated during this time.

As a reminder, Allegheny County issued an [advisory](#) strongly encouraging residents to not have guests in their homes unless they are essential workers (e.g., home healthcare providers, childcare workers or educators), cancel traditional Thanksgiving celebrations and celebrate virtually with non-household members, avoid unnecessary travel, limit social event gatherings, and only leave home for work, school and essential needs.

- Our work, serving vulnerable people in need of our services is essential and will continue, using all the necessary precautions such as proper masking, distancing, conducting work outside, if possible, handwashing and hand sanitizing. DHS will continue to update this guidance as necessary. Contact your program lead with any questions.

Communication Protocol for COVID-19 Cases

In a single email to the following three individuals, the program administrator is to immediately notify the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (ACDHS) and ACHD that an individual being served in the program is presumed or has tested positive for COVID-19:

- LuAnn.brink@alleghenycounty.us
- Brian Bell, DHS's Privacy Officer, DHSPrivacyOfficer@alleghenycounty.us
- Your DHS program office contact

Legislative/Policy Updates

Federal Updates

- Congress faces a December 11th government funding deadline
 - Bipartisan group pushing to attach a 5th coronavirus stimulus package – worth \$908b – to the government funding bill. Unclear if it can pass.
 - Stimulus bill includes \$160b for state and local jurisdictions, \$288b more for small business PPP, extension of additional \$300/month in unemployment for 18 weeks retroactive to Dec 1st, and \$16b for vaccine development.

State and Local Updates

- Gov. Wolf signed a mostly flat-funded state budget bill, avoiding major cuts due to the use of \$1.3b in CARES Act funds.
 - The 2019-2020 PA General Assembly legislative session ended Dec.1st.
 - The 2021-2022 Session will begin with the swearing in of new members on January 5th. Republicans maintain majorities in both the House and Senate.

Program Updates

OCS

Housing and Homelessness system update

- We were recently awarded \$1.2M in ESG Code Blue funding, to keep the winter shelter and safe haven open.
- Winter Shelters opened on 11/15 and are open every night from 7 pm-7 am.
 - McKeesport Downtown Housing Emergency Shelter – All Welcome (open every night until March 15)
 - 523 Sinclair St, McKeesport, PA 15132
 - 724.244.6565
 - Women’s Winter Shelter (inclusive of transgender and nonbinary individuals)
 - Shepherd’s Heart Fellowship and Veteran’s Home
 - 13 Pride Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, Uptown
 - 412-618-7719
 - Men’s Winter Shelter (inclusive of transgender and nonbinary individuals)
 - Smithfield United Church of Christ
 - 620 Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, Downtown
 - 412-618-7467
- Warming Centers are open 7 days a week from 7:30 am-6:30 pm, and serve breakfast, lunch and dinner.
 - Susan Zubik Welcome Center
 - 212 9th Street, Downtown Pittsburgh, “Red Door” of St. Mary of Mercy Church
 - Boulevard of the Allies and Stanwix Street, 202 Stanwix Street
- We are partnering with ACHD to ensure that providers have overdose response plans and connect with Health Department resources such as Narcan, staff education and plan development assistance.
- Rent Relief Program Update
 - We have paid out nearly 2,000 payments in rent relief, over \$6,851,173. We have over 5961 applications pending. By the end of the week, ACTION housing will follow up with all pending individuals about missing documentation.
 - Documents are due by 4 pm on 12/7. Any applicant who does not submit required documents by that date will be denied.
 - This deadline is for the tenant part of the application. Landlords can still provide documentation later.
 - Other Rental Assistance Programs: Call the Allegheny Link @ 866-730-2368.
- New services available for youth aged 18 through 24
 - The HOPE Project, operated by Auberle, offers rapid, short-term assistance to young adults to prevent a housing challenge from becoming a homelessness experience.
 - Youth who are couch-surfing, doubling-up, facing eviction or experiencing challenges at home that could result in homelessness may contact Auberle directly. The point of contact at Auberle is Devon Goetze, 412.855.1157 or devong@auberle.org.
 - Bridge2Home is a Host Home project operated by Valley Youth House. Host Homes rely on volunteers to provide stable housing in their homes for a period of weeks to months.
 - Valley Youth House is currently accepting youth referrals and volunteers willing to serve as a host home. The point of contact at VYH is Carol Dunlap, 412.742.7474 or cdunlap@valleyyouthhouse.org.
 - While both of these programs take direct referrals, please note that young adults who are experiencing or facing a housing crisis can always contact the Allegheny Link for assistance at 866-730-2368.

OBH

- Early Intervention services are open and accepting referrals. The Alliance also developed and posted several targeted videos on its [website](#) and social media pages. These videos focus on specific concerns that a caregiver may have and encourage them to seek out services.

CYF

- COOP Updates were shared this morning, please connect with your monitor for further assistance.
- There is no cancellation of all visits. CYF staff are taking extra safety precautions. In-home visits will continue when necessary. Staff will prioritize face-to-face visits based on investigation, level of risk, or unknown or unassessed information. Clinical managers and supervisors will meet with caseworkers to determine which families need in-home visit vs. a virtual visit. Masking and physical distancing will be observed.
- We have a visitation area at CEA and our regional offices and they are clean, safe spaces for family visitation. We are prioritizing babies and infants for face-to-face visits.
- School Help resources
 - You can call or email the DHS COVID School-Help Resource Center when you have questions or concerns: Email: Focus_Attendance@alleghenycounty.us or call 412-918-9206
 - [5 Reasons Students Aren't Engaging in Distance Learning](#), Child Mind Institute
 - [Academic Support Initiative](#), Gwen's Girls
 - [Dr. G: How to support your kid's mental health during back-to-school transition](#), Kidsburgh
 - We are continuing to track how schools are delivering instruction at this time. You can visit your school district's website or [Allies for Children](#) for the latest updates.
- Holiday Mental Health Resources
 - Mental Health
 - Persevere PA — 1-855-284-2494 (TTY:724-631-5600)
The Department of Human Services' mental health support and referral helpline is available 24/7 and is a free resource staffed by skilled and compassionate caseworkers available to counsel Pennsylvanians struggling with anxiety and other challenging emotions.
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline — 1-800-273-8255 (Spanish: 1-888-628-9454)
The hotline is staffed 24/7 by trained counselors who can offer free, confidential support.
 - Crisis Text Line — Text "PA" to 741741
 - Substance Use
 - Get Help Now Helpline — 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
A toll-free helpline maintained through the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) that connects callers looking for treatment options for themselves or a loved one to resources in their community. Calls are anonymous and available 24/7.
 - Kinship Families
 - KinConnector — www.kinconnector.org; 1-866-KIN-2111
Grandparents, aunts, uncle and cousins who are finding themselves caring for

children who lost parents or whose parents are not able to be their primary caregiver should know that help is available via the KinConnector helpline. The helpline is staffed by Kinship Navigators – compassionate, knowledgeable social service professionals prepared to help families locate, understand and access resources that may be able to help them during the holiday season.

- You are invited to become an emergency respite caregiver through A Second Chance. Email ASCICovidCombat@asecondchance-kinship.com or call Davida Allen at 412-377-2511 or Tara Skibiell at 412-715-9242.
- This year we created a virtual version of our We Rock youth performance event, Thursday December 10th at 6:30pm on Zoom. Email Sarah.Barnett@AlleghenyCounty.US for Zoom access.

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. For basic needs assistance or general COVID-19 inquiries call the 24/7 COVID-19 Hotline at 1-888-856-2774. Language services are available.
- See the slide presentation for other key contacts.

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