



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting
March 27, 2020



General Information

Our next provider briefing will be on Monday, 3/30/2020 at 4:30 pm.

As of the time of this meeting (3-27-2020 at 4:30) there are 158 confirmed cases and 2 deaths in the County.

- Gender and age distributions of cases are available on the [Health Department website](#).
- Today the Health Department also released a map of cases by municipality.

We are continuing to improve our website, now located at 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 it.
- You can reach us by email at DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us. We will answer all questions and elevate issues and other important information so as to inform the network.

Data Indicators across key DHS services

- Comparing time periods before and after COVID-19, we have seen changes in the following indicators:
 - Average daily calls for child welfare services are down by 52%.
 - There was a 30% reduction in people calling the Link for homeless services.
 - IRES (mental health information and referral) calls have decreased about 23%, but the numbers were small to begin with.
 - Calls to Older Adult Protective Services have gone down by 53% and abuse reports are down by 35%.
- The following indicators remain stable at this time:
 - The number of children in care remained stable, perhaps because the courts may be slowing down exits.
 - The number of people in emergency shelters has been stable.
 - The number of calls to ReSolve's crisis hotline have been very stable.
 - Calls to the Senior Line have been very stable.
- We will publish key indicators on a dashboard soon.
- For graphs and maps, see today's slide presentation.

2-1-1 Data

- The average number of calls to 2-1-1 has been stable.
- 2-1-1 has seen a big decrease in calls in the category of employment and income.
 - The decrease is due to a significant decrease in tax preparation calls.
 - The decrease hides the fact that calls about employment benefits increased.
- Starting around 3/18/2020, there has been a significant increase in COVID--19 related calls and calls for food.
 - The increase is in calls about both food pantries and home-delivered meals.

- These data reflect only phone calls, not texts or chats.
- For graphs and maps, see the slide presentation.

Supply Requests

- As a reminder, Allegheny County Emergency Services (ACES) is managing all requests for hard-to-find items that cannot be obtained through normal means due to global supply chain challenges.
 - Items include: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as sterile or nitrile gloves, N95 masks, gowns and hair covers, and cleaning supplies such as Clorox wipes and hand sanitizer.
 - How to request hard-to-find supplies:
 - If your agency is affiliated with a larger healthcare agency such as Mercy Behavioral Health, UPMC or Allegheny Health Network, please reach out to your parent agency contact to submit supply requests.
 - For all other providers, please complete the Allegheny County Emergency Services (ACES) [Resource Request Form](#) and email it to Richard.Colella@AlleghenyCounty.us AND Michael.Spurr@AlleghenyCounty.us.
- For all other items, email DHS-COVID19Planning@AlleghenyCounty.us and we will do our best to help you find what you need.
- Please only request what you really need and limit requests to supplies needed for the next two weeks. You can submit additional requests as needed.

Legislative/Policy Updates

The "Phase 3" Stimulus legislation was signed today.

- It provides new funding for homeless assistance grants and housing programs; childcare assistance and Head Start; food banks, child nutrition programs, SNAP and senior nutrition programs; public health agencies, community health centers, PPE and medical supplies; and states and counties for their response efforts.
- It provides monetary support to individuals and families (one-time \$1,200 check for individuals, \$2,400 check for married couples and \$500 per child) and increased unemployment insurance support, including a 4-month, \$600 increase to the maximum payment.
 - Non-traditional workers (e.g., freelance, part-time or gig workers) are eligible to apply.

State and local updates

- Gov. Wolf will sign a bill authorizing the transfer of \$50 million from special funds to a reserve fund through which much-needed medical equipment and supplies for health care providers can be purchased.
- Following the lead of the IRS, the City of Pittsburgh pushed back the income tax filing deadline to July 15th.
- City of Pittsburgh sanitation workers returned to work after a one-day disruption over access to safety equipment and policies.

Food

If you are aware of any households quarantined and in need of food, call 2-1-1 for assistance.

Please keep referring to our [Food Distribution Map](#) as it continues to change.

Marnie Schilken from the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank joined the call to share information about the food bank's efforts.

- They have had 430 walk-ins, compared to about 80 in the same period last year.
- Their COVID-19 telephonic concierges have fielded a total of 1,018 phone calls.
- Very few of the food bank's 350 partner agencies have closed. Most continue to serve.
 - 219 of the Senior Food Program sites are operating with no change in service.
 - 21 have closed and the food bank is working on a distribution plan for getting boxes to those who need them.
- Grab and Go programs at schools throughout the food bank's 11-county service are being tracked at the [Grab and Go Sites section of our website](#).
- *Although this information is not public yet*, today was the first day of a pilot program with 412 Food Rescue, designed to deliver meals to peoples' homes.
 - The program was conceived and implemented in one week.
 - 65 households were served today.
 - The food bank intends to expand the program.
- A number of organizations have requested emergency boxes of food for their clients.
 - Organizations simply need to sign an agreement with the food bank.
- If you have questions, please contact Marnie at mschilken@pittsburghfoodbank.org.

AAA food information

- Things are stable and we are getting meals out to people, thanks to the Aging providers and the hard work of all involved.

Program Updates

AAA

- No new updates since 3/26/2020.

OCS

- Although the state put out a map of childcare centers, we still encourage you to call the ELRC for the most accurate data about which centers are open and have availability.
 - For childcare resources, please share ELRC contact information (elrc5@allegHENYcounty.us or 412-350-3577) with your essential employees.
- About half of the County's Family Centers (FCs) are getting deliveries of diapers and formula.
 - We hope to integrate this information into the food map.
- Employment information and resources have been moved to [our website](#).

- Auberle’s Employment Institute is available via phone/video chat to assist individuals with writing resumes, mock interviews, job searching, career assessments and completing job applications. For more information, contact Abby Wolensky at abbyw@auberle.org or (412) 673-5856 ext. 1317.
- Homeless network
 - We hope to soon have opening dates for isolation and quarantine space.
 - **Next week only** the provider call will be on a different day/time, Wednesday April 1st at 9:30am. See slide for call-in information.

Behavioral Health

- Some staff are expressing unease and uncertainty about delivering essential services face to face, but staffing is still stable.
- Attestations:
 - If a service is funded by both HealthChoices and base dollars, an attestation must be completed and include a statement that the request applies to both HealthChoices and base.
 - If the service is only funded through base, an attestation must be completed and forwarded to Allegheny County via DHS-COVID19Planning@alleghenycounty.us.
- Submitting mental health claims in CIPs for telehealth should be done as follows:
 - For mental health providers that batch their claims: Please use **28-telehealth** as the service code. We will convert this to the CMS code of 02 on the back end.
 - For mental health providers that manually enter claims in CIPS: Use the drop-down place of service – Telehealth.
- Alternative Payment Arrangements (APAs)
 - We are moving on this quickly to allow providers to keep their doors open.
 - For more information visit: <https://providers.ccbh.com/covid-19-info/providing-treatment>.
- Drug and Alcohol
 - Tadiso is continuing services with modified hours, see slide presentation for details.
 - DDAP guidance on telehealth for COEs can be found at https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/DHS_details.aspx?newsid=501
 - DDAP is delaying the approval of all trainings through May 17th. For more information visit <https://www.ddap.pa.gov/Get%20Help%20Now/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>.
- Early intervention
 - Conducting initial evaluations via telehealth will begin on Monday, 3/30/2020.
 - Social work and nursing services are still not approved but OCDEL is working on a solution.
 - Family interest in tele-intervention services is increasing. Interest in participation currently averages 50-60% and is as high as 80% at some providers.

OID/Autism

- More of our families are in need of food.
- We are getting phone calls from families about the impact of health and safety restrictions on visitation.

CYF

- Funding and staffing remain stable; service locations and supplies continue to be unstable.
- Referrals and allegations are down over 50% and we are very concerned.
 - These children would normally be seen at the pediatrician and school, but they are “invisible” to us right now.
 - We are seeing an uptick in violence in other cities.
 - Children’s Hospital reports an increase in medication ingestions; we are encouraging the use of lock boxes.
 - Please continue to reach out and check in with families. You are the eyes and ears for all of us.
- We are examining the frequency and duration of virtual visits and continuing face-to-face visitation.

Courts/Jail

- Today’s jail population is 1,707, down from 1,792 yesterday.
 - The jail has released almost 500 nonviolent inmates since March 18th.
 - This will also be tracked on the soon-to-be published key indicator dashboard.
- AGen has reported no disruption to services: their medication needs and distribution upon leaving the jail remain intact.
- The jail is following all testing guidelines from the CDC, health department and WHO. They are conducting health screenings, including temperature checks, and using isolation when necessary.
- There have been no positive cases of COVID-19 thus far.

Transportation

- We are continuing to work on contingency plans anticipating the potential need to transport those who have been exposed and/or who tested positive.

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).
- See the slide presentation for other key contacts.

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