



**COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting**  
**March 30, 2020**



## General Information

As of the time of this meeting (3-30-2020 at 4:30) there are 290 confirmed cases and 2 deaths in Allegheny County.

- Gender, age and geographic distribution of cases are available on the [Health Department website](#).
- We are seeing about a 3-day doubling rate of cases in Allegheny County.

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 topics like child welfare, food assistance, homelessness and housing, and payments and DHS operations. We keep adding 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.

## Philanthropy Update

- Existing funding
  - Contact your grantors about relaxing grant requirements, converting project funding to general operations and deploying new emergency funding.
- New funding opportunities:
  - [Richard King Mellon Foundation Request for Ideas](#) due April 26<sup>th</sup>. Priority given to applicants who address impacts on employees; social safety net; employment; academic assistance; and jump-starting the regional economy.
  - [Staunton Farm Foundation accepting Emergency Funding Requests](#) from behavioral health nonprofits.
- Opportunities for technical assistance from the Forbes Funds:
  - [tHRive meetings](#) (Mondays at 2pm) – navigating HR in the complex landscape of COVID-19.
  - [Financial Planning meetings](#) (Thursdays at 4p) – financial planning and sustainability in the midst of COVID-19.

Reporting positive and presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 (both client and staff) to DHS:

- If there is already a reporting mechanism in place (by regulation or policy), follow that process (e.g., incident report process for behavioral health); there is no need to duplicate reporting.
- If no other mechanism is in place, HIPAA allows the disclosure of client name and diagnosis to DHS (a covered entity) for public health purposes.
  - Report positive and presumptive positive cases to DHS-[privacyOfficer@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:privacyOfficer@alleghenycounty.us) (preferred) or by phone to Brian Bell, Allegheny County privacy officer, at 412-350-2887.
  - When reporting **client** illness, include client name in the report.
  - When reporting **staff** illness, report should include provider's response (e.g., quarantine requirement, efforts to identify other staff who had contact with affected staff, requirements for staff to return to work). You do not need to report staff's name.

## Legislative/Policy Updates

### State and local updates

- Schools will remain closed until further notice.
- On Sunday (3-29-2020), Gov. Wolf requested a major disaster declaration from the President, through FEMA, to provide additional support for state, county and municipal governments and certain nonprofits.
- The PA Department of Agriculture received federal approval to operate a Disaster Household Distribution program through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), to provide critical food supplies to Pennsylvanians affected by the pandemic.
- The City of Pittsburgh announced stricter social distancing requirements for City parks, playgrounds and trails due to high use over the last week. These requirements will be enforced by park rangers and law enforcement.

## Food

We are continuing to experience a significant increase in demand. Marnie Schilken joined the call to provide an update on the Food Bank's work.

- The Food Bank's walk-ins have increased from 15 to 123 per day.
- Our pantry network remains strong. Only 4% have closed. See our [website](#) for operating details.
- We will host a downtown drive-up distribution, serving an estimated 1300 cars, this Thursday at PPG Paints Arena.

A plan is in place for households that are quarantined and in need of food.

- Call (or have them call) 2-1-1 for assistance.

Food access calls are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3:30p. See slide presentation for call-in details.

Please keep referring to our continually-updated [Food Distribution Map](#).

- We are nearing home delivered meal capacity, especially for kosher meals. We are working on ways to meet increasing need.
- Food deliveries are being reduced to 2 days per week to reduce contact and risk while increasing efficiency.
  - More frozen meals will be delivered at a time.
  - Telephone contact will be increased.

## Program Updates

### AAA

- Our Ombudsmen are working to field complaints from long term care facilities via telephone.
- Additional fields have been added to the statewide SAMS/Wellsky database.
  - More direction will be forthcoming.
- The caregiver support program can pay for the purchase of COVID-19-related supplies for program participants.

- Contact the SeniorLine at 412-350-5460 for more information.

## OCS

- For childcare resources, please share ELRC contact information ([elrc5@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:elrc5@alleghenycounty.us) or 412-350-3577) with your essential employees.
  - There are over 200 open slots, but families are hesitant to use them.
  - We are also thinking about ways to provide 1:1 support to natural supports caring for children.
- We have moved employment information and resources to [our website](#).
- Homeless network
  - We continue to work on isolation and quarantine space.
    - We hope to have opening dates for you very soon!
  - HUD Updates
    - Providers do not need to worry about performance benchmarks at this time.
    - The NOFA process for this year is TBD and will likely be delayed.
    - Providers should continue to move clients into RRH and PSH units as quickly as possible:
      - Collect all possible documentation.
      - Take pictures of documents.
      - Ask landlords to work around documentation needs such as proof of SSN, photo ID, etc.
    - There is no additional funding to expand RRH assistance past 24 months.
      - If clients require assistance beyond 24 months, providers will need to serve fewer clients to stay within budget.
      - Please reach out to Rob Eamigh at [Robert.Eamigh@AlleghenyCounty.US](mailto:Robert.Eamigh@AlleghenyCounty.US) for help working through this.
    - Paying for client cell phones is not an allowable HUD expense.
      - DHS has freed-up other funding streams to pay for cell phone costs; limited funding will be available for disbursement soon.
      - Contact Gabe ([gabriel.krivosh@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:gabriel.krivosh@alleghenycounty.us)) for more information.
    - Providers paying hazard or incentive pay to their staff MUST have a policy in place, per HUD.
      - We encourage you to provide hazard pay if you are able.
    - HUD will soon be releasing a waiver, allowing for more flexibility to CoC and ESG program requirements.
      - We will let you know as soon as we hear more about this new flexibility.
  - **This week only** the provider call will be on a different day/time, Wednesday April 1<sup>st</sup> at 9:30am. See slide for call-in information.

## Behavioral Health

- Some staff are calling off sick, but services have not been adversely impacted.
- Two providers have suspended services at their physical locations:

- Family Links (D&A and MH only) is available for telehealth.
- ONALA's Carson St. Location is working on a plan for tele-based services.
- Licensing Visits
  - OMHSAS announced today that licensing visits will be suspended indefinitely while they explore alternatives.
- DDAP has suspended two regulations affecting Narcotic Treatment Programs (NTPs).
  - See [Licensing Alert 02-20](#) and [Licensing Alert 03-20](#) for more details.
  - Direct questions to the Division of Drug and Alcohol Program Licensing at (717)783-8675 or [RA-licensuredivision@pa.gov](mailto:RA-licensuredivision@pa.gov).
- Webinars and Resources
  - Telehealth Learning Series beginning 3/31/2020 <https://telehealthlearning.org/telehealth/>.
  - DDAP guidance on telehealth for COE's can be found at [https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/DHS\\_details.aspx?newsid=501](https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/DHS_details.aspx?newsid=501)
  - D&A media-only WebEx Conference:
    - To RSVP for this conference and receive connection information, email [rkostelac@pa.gov](mailto:rkostelac@pa.gov).
    - Please share this information with any media contacts.
- Early intervention
  - Social work and nursing services are still not approved but OCDEL is working towards a solution and we will keep you posted.

#### OID/Autism

- We are hearing more about losses in staff coverage, but services have not been adversely impacted.
- Supplies are a major concern. We are working closely with providers to track this.
- ODP Announcements
  - ODP Announcement 20-029 is relevant to providers of residential services.
    - Effective 4-2-2020, the state is adding more Without Day days for you to bill against.
    - This will allow you to bill and get paid in a timely fashion.
  - ODP Announcement 20-032 requirements and flexibility related to hiring, retaining and utilizing staff are in effect until further notice.
    - This is significant, as it allows flexibility when staff are being shared across agencies.
  - Continue to follow local information and directives, along with the PA Department of Health and the State Office of Developmental Programs.
    - Links to COVID-19 updates are available at MyODP.org: <https://www.myodp.org/mod/page/view.php?id=26808>.

#### CYF

- Funding and staffing remain stable; service locations and supplies continue to be unstable.
- Referrals and allegations are continuing to decrease.

- We are receiving reports about children being left home alone.
- With warmer weather, window safety is a concern; please ensure safe screens and supervision near open windows.
- The FamilyLinks Teen Healing Center, for teens who are COVID-19 positive or presumptive positive, opened today.
  - Providers should contact the CYF Call Center at 412-473-2000 and indicate that a youth is presenting symptoms of COVID19.
  - See slide presentation for more details and photos.
- Women’s Center & Shelter’s webpage specific to COVID-19 and its impact on intimate partner violence went live yesterday at [www.wcpittsburgh.org/covid](http://www.wcpittsburgh.org/covid), providing information and resources on safety planning, legal issues and more.

#### Courts/Jail

- No new updates since Friday 3-27.

#### Transportation

- MATP services remain stable.
  - State MATP guidance is forthcoming.
- 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](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**