



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting
March 31, 2020



General Information

As of the time of this meeting (3-31-2020 at 4:30p) there are 325 confirmed cases and 2 deaths in the County.

- Gender, age and geographic distribution of cases are available on the [Health Department website](#).
- Health system partners are meeting separately to plan beds, overflow and other issues related to their COVID-19 response..

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 back.
- You can reach us by email at DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us. We will answer all questions and elevate issues to inform the network.

As a reminder, here is the procedure for reporting COVID-19 cases to DHS:

- If there is already a mechanism in place to report, follow that process (e.g., incident report process for behavioral health); no need to duplicate reporting.
- If no other mechanism is in place, report if client is positive or presumptive positive for COVID-19.
 - HIPAA allows disclosure of client name and diagnosis to DHS for public health purposes.
 - Report to DHS-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, requirement for staff to return to work). You do not need to report staff's name.

Legislative/Policy Updates

State and local updates

- The state is aware of the FBI fingerprinting challenge which is hindering hiring efforts and has raised the issue with the feds.
 - The state is working with the fingerprinting provider (IdentoGO) to reopen some closed offices.
- 830,000+ PA unemployment claims have been filed over the last two weeks.
- Gov. Wolf's request for a federal Major Disaster Declaration was approved late yesterday.
 - This declaration makes additional federal funding available for unemployment assistance, crisis counseling, disaster loans and SNAP.

- PA DHS received a partial approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for a waiver to grant flexibility of requirements for providers of Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
 - This will ensure greater availability and access to care.
 - The state is creating guidance based on these changes and we will update you once we receive that guidance.
- PA AG Shapiro is in talks with PA banks to grant a 90-day reprieve for mortgages, car loans and consumer loans, with PNC being the first to agree.

Food

We are continuing to experience a significant increase in demand, according to reports from the Food Bank.

- The Link has also experienced an uptick in calls regarding food insecurity.

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

Please keep referring to our [Food Distribution Map](#) which we are continuing to update.

AAA food information

- No new updates since 3-30-2020

Program Updates

AAA

- No new updates since 3-30-2020

OCS

- For childcare resources, please share ELRC contact information (elrc5@allegHENYcounty.us or 412-350-3577) with your essential employees.
 - There are about 230 open seats, but families are hesitant to use them.
- We have moved employment information and resources to [our website](#).
- Homeless network
 - We continue to work on isolation and quarantine space.
 - The CYF Youth Facility (FamilyLinks Teen Healing Center) is open! We hope to announce the other two facility opening dates soon.
 - Facility 1 is ready, see slide presentation for a picture.
 - As a reminder, these HUD updates were shared yesterday:
 - Providers do not need to worry about performance benchmarks at this time. Please just worry about serving the people currently in your programs.
 - 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:
 - Use virtual inspections

- Collect all possible documentation
- Take pictures of documents
- Ask landlords to work around documentation needs such as proof of SSN and photo ID.
- Make use of electronic document signing.
- There is no additional funding to expand RRH assistance beyond 24 months; if clients require assistance beyond 24 months, providers will need to serve fewer clients to stay within budget.
 - **Do not** terminate anyone who has run out of rental assistance. Please reach out to Rob Eamigh at Robert.Eamigh@AlleghenyCounty.US for help with this issue..
- Paying for client cell phones is not an allowable HUD expense.
 - DHS has freed up other funding streams to pay for cell phone costs, with limited funding available for disbursement soon. Contact Gabe (gabriel.krivosch@alleghenycounty.us) for more information.
- **This 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

- PA DHS received partial approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for a waiver to grant flexibility within requirements for providers of Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to ensure greater availability and access to health care and public assistance programs. [CMS latest waiver update](#).
 - The State is creating guidance based on these changes.
- Licensing Visits
 - As a reminder, OMHSAS announced that licensing visits will be suspended indefinitely while they explore alternatives
 - Official guidance from PA DHS can be found [here](#).
- Learning Opportunities and Resources
 - [Telehealth Learning Series](#)
 - [State Project ECHO COVID-19 Series](#) (available on 4-2-2020)
 - [Vaping 2020 and Beyond](#) (available on 4-6-2020)
 - Office of National Drug Control Policy [list of virtual recovery groups](#)
- Early intervention
 - Social work and nursing services are still not approved but are being examined,
 - OCDEL is working towards a solution and we will keep you posted.

OID/Autism

- We are hearing encouraging updates about creative staffing solutions that are keeping a stable environment for the individuals we serve.

CYF

- Virtual Visits
 - It is important to prepare families for virtual visits; families should have an understanding of the expectations for these visits.
 - Zoom is the preferred platform because of its capabilities to add callers and share documents.
- Dr. Jerry Milner (acting commissioner of ACF) shared that we can soon expect more guidance from the federal government about reporting and fingerprinting.

Courts/Jail

- No new updates since Friday 3-27-2020.

Transportation

- No new updates since 3-30-2020.

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