



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting
May 7, 2020



General Information

As of the time of this meeting (5-7-2020 at 4:30 pm) there are 1,439 confirmed cases and 117 deaths in the County.

- The Health Department's [dashboard](#) provides additional information.
- The Hospital Association of Pennsylvania's [dashboard](#) shows information such as bed utilization.

We invite you to submit your ideas about how to help people in Allegheny County – and encourage others to do so == at <https://neighborland.com/alleghenycounty/home?preview=c9ad1489989a4c44>.

Dr. Bogen, Director of the Health Department, joined the call to talk about the Health Department's efforts.

- Testing
 - All testing changes constantly. The testing is constantly getting better.
 - 2 types of testing
 - Diagnostic sample tests look for active infections.
 - Back of nose swab test is being done at most hospitals. This requires tester to wear PPE.
 - We are currently only testing people with symptoms or who have been exposed.
 - Front of nose swab test is less sensitive, and is offered at some pharmacies.
 - Oral swab test is not being used in Allegheny County. We are exploring this option for our FQHCs. Testers do not need as much PPE to administer this test, since the individual being tested collects the swab.
 - Antibody blood tests look for past exposure to the virus.
 - Must wait at least a few weeks after recovery to test.
 - Results vary in quality
 - We have a website [listing test sites](#).
 - We are working on getting testing into all FQHCs.
- Metrics to monitor the pandemic
 - Number of cases: We still do not have perfect access to testing.
 - Number of admissions: Very helpful metric. This is the most accurate measurement.
 - Bed availability: The hospitals are now allowing more non-emergency and elective procedures, so it is more helpful to monitor COVID beds than overall bed availability.
- Contact tracing
 - Step 1: Case investigation
 - The investigator will call the person to check on them, offer isolation guidance and information on symptoms, screen for needs, connect with health plan for follow up, get personal information and ask who they have been in contact with.
 - Step 2: Contact Tracing
 - We conduct separate follow-up to notify contacts that they were exposed, share information about quarantine and testing, and identify needs.

- It's important to notify and educate people because coronavirus can be asymptomatic.
 - The Health Department uses a flexible combination of internal staff, medical reserve corps and public health students to conduct investigation and tracing.
- Recovery and immunity
 - This is a very new virus, so we don't have the data to tell whether the infection provides immunity and for how long.
 - Doctors can test for a neutralizing antibody, but these tests aren't available yet.
- Reopening guidance
 - When things reopen, physical distancing measures must remain in place. People will need to continue wearing masks, especially in indoor spaces.
- Equity and Inclusion
 - We are working with partners like the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to make sure testing is available in all communities.
 - We are also working on telehealth access for the homeless population.

Jessica Ruffin, Senior Leader of Equity and Inclusion at DHS, joined the call.

- Based on our five listening sessions, we established a COVID-19 Equity Advisory Committee.
 - We have about 18 confirmed committee members, representing leaders across the government, nonprofit, education and faith communities, as well as business.
 - We will be seeking the committee's guidance and support in thinking through how to reduce the spread, reopen the county, and prepare for the future using lessons learned from COVID-19.
 - Our first meeting is Friday May 15th.
- We also summarized the five sessions and put together an FAQ document based on questions asked in the sessions, [linked here](#) under specialized resources.
 - You can email dhs-equity@alleghenycounty.us with any questions.

Susie Puskar, chief program officer at Partner4Work, joined the call to talk about Learn & Earn.

- Learn & Earn will continue this summer, although most programming will move online.
 - Jobs will start on June 29th
 - We will consider placing youth at some in-person sites, if they are safe and possible. We are monitoring the situation.
 - Online opportunities will consist of project-based work and online training.
- Applications are open at www.jobs4summer.org.
- Partner4Work is still looking for meaningful summer work opportunities.
 - Please reach out with any opportunities at summer@partner4work.org.
 - The workers **cannot** replace any laid-off workers.

As a reminder, the recruitment platform for essential health and human service workers launched this week.

- Please help spread the word!
- Link for providers to sign up: https://bit.ly/SWPA_HHSprovider
- Link for job seekers: http://bit.ly/SWPA_HHSjobs

We are continuing to improve our website, located at www.bit.ly/COVID19DHSProviders.

- The [Operational Changes Tracker](#) is now live.
- You can reach us by email at DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us. We will answer all questions and elevate issues to inform the network.
- Please submit stories and photos of how you are meeting needs during this time to Evelyn.Whitehill@AlleghenyCounty.US

Legislative/Policy Updates

Federal Updates

- 5th Federal stimulus bill: Support is growing among Senators from both sides of the aisle for more state and local stimulus funding.
 - House is eyeing an \$1 trillion state stimulus bill, but this is a non-starter in the Senate.
 - Current Senate discussions are focused on allowing existing CARES funds to be spent on lost revenue or passing a new stimulus bill of up to \$400b for lost revenue.

State and local updates

- Gov. Wolf signed an order to continue the moratorium on foreclosures and evictions until July 10th.
- Gov. Wolf announced an initiative to create a Commonwealth Civilian Coronavirus Corps to help track the virus and create jobs.
 - House and Senate Republican leaders met the announcement with skepticism.
- The County Executive is hopeful that Gov. Wolf will move Allegheny County to the "yellow phase" of re-opening at Friday press conference.

Food

- P-EBT benefits were approved today! P-EBT is a new benefit to help families who have children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. The benefit will be loaded onto an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, which is like a debit card. The benefits can only be spent on food items.
 - Households will receive \$5.70 per day per child for each missed school day, retroactively if they were already eligible for free or reduced-price lunches when schools closed or any time since then.
 - If families are already enrolled in SNAP, they will automatically receive this benefit on their card.
 - Coalition Against Hunger and Just Harvest published [an FAQ](#).
- Doorstep Delivery launched this week!
 - This is for households that cannot get to a pantry or distribution event. A 25-pound box of shelf stable food is delivered to the recipient's door.
 - For information, call the Food Bank at 412-460-3663, extension 655 or visit www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/gethelp.
- Food Distribution scheduled for tomorrow Friday, May 8 (10 a.m. -1 p.m.)

- PPG Paints Arena Parking Lots, 1001 Fifth Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15219
- The Food Bank published a [new flyer](#) with support resources.
- Beverly's Birthdays is coordinating with Circles to distribute baby supplies on May 19th from 10 am-1:30 pm. To participate, you must pre-register at <https://babiesintheburgh.eventbrite.com>
- Food Access Calls occur on Tuesdays at 3:30 pm. Call-in information can be found in the slide presentation.

AAA food information

- No new updates since 4-29-2020.

Program Updates

AAA

- No new updates since 5-1-2020.

OCS

- For childcare resources, please share ELRC contact information (elrc5@alleghenycounty.us or 412-350-3577) with your essential employees.
- We have moved employment information and resources to [our website](#).
- Homeless network
 - No new updates since 5-4-2020.
 - The Provider Network Meeting is held every Tuesday at 9:30 am.
 - Call-in information can be found in the slide presentation.

Behavioral Health

- May is Mental Health awareness month. Here are a few highlighted resources:
 - [NAMI Keystone PA Resources](#)
 - [Allegheny Family Network Video](#)
- DDAP is holding webinars about managing stress and self-care.
 - [Self-Care and Empathy](#)
 - May 8th, 13th, 19th and 27th from 9-10:30 am
 - [When All That Changes is Everything](#)
 - May 12th, 15th, 20th and 22nd from 10-11:30 am
- As a reminder, Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) released another round of [COVID-19 Changes](#), including:
 - Expansion of Medicare coverage for audio-only phone services during the coronavirus pandemic, including psychotherapy, health behavior assessment and intervention, and other behavioral health services.
 - Steps to allow for temporary expansion to help address capacity.
 - Allowing payment for certain partial hospitalization services – (e.g., individual psychotherapy, patient education and group psychotherapy) delivered in temporary expansion locations, including patients' homes.

- Early Intervention
 - No new updates since 5-1-2020.

OID/Autism

- The PADHS Disability Integration Taskforce published [a checklist](#) of things to take with you and to explain to people when going to the hospital.
- [ODP Announcement 20-052](#) “HCBS in Counties Designated by the Governor as Yellow Phase” provides service provision guidance.
- Videos in which self-advocates provide critical COVID information:
 - [Episode 1: How to Stay Healthy](#)
 - [Episode 2: What Should I Do If I Think I’m Sick?](#)
 - [Episode 3: What I Should Do If I Get Sick](#)
 - [Episode 4: What To Do If a Caregiver or a Family Member Gets Sick](#)
 - [Episodio 1 - Cómo mantenerse saludable](#)
 - [Episodio 2 - Lo que debo hacer si creo que estoy enfermo:](#)
 - [Episodio 3 - Lo que debo hacer si estoy enfermo](#)
 - [Episodio 4 - Lo que debo hacer si mi familiar o persona que me cuida se enferma](#)
- As a reminder, continue to follow local information and directives, along with the PA Department of Health and the State Office of Developmental Programs. There are links to COVID-19 updates on MyODP.org <https://www.myodp.org/mod/page/view.php?id=26808>

CYF

- May is National Foster Care Month. If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, visit [the DHS website](#) or call the Director’s Action Line at 1-800-862-6783.
- Our goals are for children to remain safe and achieve permanency. Here is how we have been doing during the pandemic:
 - 66% of children remained safely at home during the pandemic.
 - 70% of cases ending during the pandemic resulted in a return home.
 - We finalized 3 adoptions and 14 permanent legal custodianships during the pandemic.
 - When children had to change placements, 85% were moved to less restrictive settings.
- Students in grades 7-12 can earn high school credits through [Academy Schools Summer Distance Learning](#).

Courts/Jail

The judicial emergency in the Fifth Judicial District will continue through June 1, 2020, pursuant to Judge Clark’s [May 6, 2020 Order](#).

- Pittsburgh Municipal Court Arraignment Division will remain open to the public for Emergency Protection from Abuse Petitions. Temporary Orders for Protection from Abuse shall remain in effect until 15 days after the end of the judicial emergency unless otherwise indicated in the Temporary Order.
- Execution of orders for eviction or possession of residential properties in Allegheny County are stayed.
- Bail hearings, motions to lift detainers and other emergency matters will be addressed in daily motions court. Additional criminal division motions and proceedings will be phased in by teleconferencing as deemed appropriate by the Administrative Judge.
- The Court’s website contains [various forms and procedures](#) related to teleconferencing practice and operational changes.

Transportation

- No new updates since 4-9-2020. Services are available.

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 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