



**COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting**  
**December 17, 2020**



## General Information

DHS Provider Meetings are held once per week on Thursdays. There will be no meetings on Thursday, 12/24 or Thursday 12/31. Have a safe and happy holiday and new year!

### COVID-19 Mobile Testing Schedule

As a reminder, each Monday, the Allegheny County Health Department provides an updated mobile testing schedule on its [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter](#). Testing is ongoing at sites around the County, and individuals can [register here](#); some sites allow for walk-ins.

- 300 JHF Drive, 12/17
- You can use the [county testing map](#) when working with a client and looking for testing locations.
- The McKeesport Testing Site remains open.
  - Make an appointment for a free test. You do not need insurance. Registration and testing information available at [bit.ly/McKeesportCOVIDTestSite](http://bit.ly/McKeesportCOVIDTestSite).
  - No testing on 12/24, 12/25, 12/31 or 1/1.

We still need your help with CRF Billing:

- CRF Expenses must be spent by 12/30/2020.
- Due date for December invoices will likely be 1/5/2021.

This is our Final Call for Laptop and headset requests:

- Supply of Laptops is limited—there are fewer than 50 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](mailto:dhs-covid19supplies@alleghenycounty.us)
- There are no hotspots available at this time, but service charges for existing hotspots will be covered into 2021 (for 12 months from the activation date).

As a reminder, Public Wi-Fi is live at 9 sites! Find the sites at [www.wifi.alleghenycounty.us](http://www.wifi.alleghenycounty.us)

Upcoming opportunity to learn more about incarcerated women:

- Remote trainings are being held by A Child's Place PA on January 14th, 21st and 28th. Register by contacting Vicki Sirockman at 422-728-8287 or [vsirockman@achildplacepa.org](mailto:vsirockman@achildplacepa.org).

DHS released December 2020 Updates for Congregate and Long-term Care providers and providers conducting in-person operations, as well as the communication protocol for COVID-19 cases. We will continue to update these. Enhancements to DHS Guidance documents stem from PA's November 2020 [Mitigation and Enforcement order](#), the November 2020 updates to [PA DOH's Mask Order](#) and ACHD's updated [Isolation and Quarantine](#) guidance.

As a reminder, the Communication Protocol for COVID-19 Cases is:

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 the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) that an individual being served in the program is presumed or has tested positive for COVID-19:

- [LuAnn.brink@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:LuAnn.brink@alleghenycounty.us)
- Brian Bell, DHS's Privacy Officer, [DHSPrivacyOfficer@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSPrivacyOfficer@alleghenycounty.us)
- Your DHS program office contact

All [PA State metrics](#) have increased in Allegheny County except for ER visits for COVID-19-like illnesses, which decreased slightly from 1.4% to 1.2%.

- The current positivity rate is 23%.
- The number of people tested per new case is the lowest it has been since the beginning of the pandemic.
- Since mid-October, we have seen a 692% increase in the case rate per 100,000 residents.
- Total net hospitalizations continue to rise.
- ICU bed usage hovers around 90%.

## Legislative/Policy Updates

### Federal Updates

- Lots of last-minute negotiations occurring for a \$900b Federal stimulus bill to accompany the \$1.4t bill to fund the government through September 30th, 2021.
  - While nothing is certain yet, the following are key parts of the negotiation and may be included: individual stimulus checks, childcare provider assistance, emergency funding for substance abuse prevention and treatment and mental health treatment, extension of unemployment assistance with supplemental \$300 per week, emergency food assistance (SNAP increases and funding for food banks and food pantries), emergency rental assistance and extension of eviction moratorium through January 31, healthcare providers, COVID-19 testing, tracing and vaccine development and distribution, education funding, extension of student loan forbearance through April 1, 2021, investment for low-income and minority communities through community development financial institutions (CDFIs) and minority depository institutions (MDIs), Small Business Administration PPP Loans (inclusive of restaurants and live venues, and a simplified loan forgiveness process for PPP loans of \$150,000 or less)
- No funding for state and local governments included in this bill

### State and Local Updates

- Pittsburgh City Council amended the Mayor's budget allocations this week, including major funding shifts from the police budget, and plans to have a final vote next week.
  - About \$5.3m was moved from police to public safety to fund the Stop the Violence initiative. The Stop the Violence Fund is seeded with \$250,000 plus percentages of the police budget that increase gradually from 6% in 2021 to 10% in 2026. It is intended to pay for programs aimed at prevention and treatment.
  - Councilman O'Connor championed an amendment that was unanimously approved moving \$4.1m from the Mon-Oakland Connector transit initiative towards housing and small business programs, including:
    - \$1.9m for the City's Housing Opportunity Fund

- \$500,000 to housing in federally designated areas
- \$420,000 to the Urban Redevelopment Authority's small business programs
- \$270,000 to the Avenues of Hope business district funding for historically Black neighborhoods

## Program Updates

### OCS

#### Childcare

- Good News:
  - Tuesday 12/15 was the first day of the fiscal year in which there was NO WAITING LIST for the childcare subsidy, thanks to state funding!
  - We have identified some funding streams that will allow community learning hubs to remain open in 2021.
- COVID-19-Related Challenges:
  - 28 providers closed temporarily in December due to potential/positive cases of COVID-19. This has impacted over 500 children receiving the childcare subsidy as they've had to make alternative arrangements while their facilities were closed.
  - An additional 61 providers are temporarily closed due to challenges with reopening during COVID-19. Reasons for temporary closure include being located in a closed K-12 school, insufficient staff who are comfortable working right now, enrollment challenges and more.
  - 20 Allegheny County childcare providers have permanently closed since the start of COVID-19. There are currently over 600 licensed childcare providers still open and serving children across Allegheny County, so this is a low percentage of the overall system capacity.
- Resources:
  - Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC): Physical offices are not open to public, but all services available virtually @ (412) 350-3577 and [elrc5@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:elrc5@alleghenycounty.us).
  - Community Learning Hubs: [Community Learning Hubs - Trying Together](#)

#### Food

##### Upcoming Food Distributions:

- Distribution reservations are filling up in advance. Please make sure families are making reservations! This system allows cars to pick up for more than one family at once.
  - 12/23 at 12 pm, 412 Food Rescue and the Pittsburgh Aviation Animal Rescue Team (PAART) are teaming up to feed people AND pets. This is a no-contact, drive-through giveaway in Heinz Field's Gold Lot 1 parking lot. No registration is required.
  - 1/4, Duquesne, 1 N Linden St, 3-5 pm, [Register Here](#)
  - 1/16, McKeesport, 1960 Eden Park Blvd, 10 am-12 pm, [Register Here](#)
- Don't forget about pantries, which distribute about 80% of food.

##### Housing and Homelessness system update

- Our providers are still operating at this time. We are continuing to move people into permanent housing.

- Adult shelter beds are available in the year-round shelters and at the three winter shelters: Smithfield (men), Shepherd’s Heart (women) and McKeesport Downtown Housing (all). Smithfield is most likely to fill up on any given night, but we have overflow processes in place.
- Transition age youth DOCS shelter has, on average, one bed available.
- There are a few units open for smaller families, but no units are open for larger families.
- Isolation and Quarantine facilities are open for referrals, and currently taking in record numbers of people.
- Contact Allegheny Link (866-730-2368) for screening and referral for utility assistance.
- Through 12/3 we had 64 reported incidents of coronavirus among clients and staff; 26 were positive. Numbers were very low until September, but we’ve seen increases in recent months.
- Upcoming Training Schedule
  - January 27<sup>th</sup>, at 1pm – Landlord/Tenant Topics: Standard lease breakdown, Tenant Responsibilities, Landlord Responsibilities
    - [Click here to join the meeting](#) or call in (audio only) +1 267-368-7515 Conference ID: 919 769 821#
  - February 24<sup>th</sup>, at 1pm – Housing Crisis: Hoarding / Infestations, Housing Cost Burdened, Eviction Prevention, Condemnations, Change of Ownership/Common Real Estate Scams
    - [Click here to join the meeting](#) or call in (audio only) +1 267-368-7515 Conference ID: 129 530 437#
  - Virtual trainings being scheduled now: Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Informed Care, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)
- Upcoming Meetings
  - Housing & Homelessness Provider Calls
    - Every other Tuesday @ 9:30 am
    - Next Call: January 5th
    - Featuring: Just Mediation
    - [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)
    - [+1 267-368-7515](#)
    - Conference ID: 883 836 652#
  - Ask a Navigator Office Hours
    - Every Tuesday, 10:30 am-11 am
    - [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)
    - [+1 267-368-7515](#)
    - Conference ID: 947 434 365#

## OBH

- No provider closures; services still operating
- Office of Behavioral Health and Community Care actively monitor for capacity and access concerns.
- Approximately 37% of HealthChoices-funded ambulatory services were delivered via telehealth. Providers are working under a flexible waiver.
- Safe Haven hotel is open and available to referrals from behavioral health system
- School-Based:
  - Operating via telehealth and in-person when possible and/or needed

- Actively providing services through 17 School Based Outpatient providers, 10 Community School Based Behavioral Health Teams (CSBBH), Educational Service Coordinators, and School Based Partial Programs
- Residential Services:
  - 14 adult mental health residential providers are operating as during pre-pandemic.
  - Children’s Residential Treatment Facilities (RTFs) are also operating as normal.
  - Diversion & Acute Stabilization / inpatient units are open and operating.
- Non-Residential:
  - Community Based Services are mostly operating via telehealth with in-person as needed.
- Drug and Alcohol
  - Pathway to Care and Recovery is open and the number of referrals is increasing.
  - Centers of Excellence reporting continued services and warm hand-offs.
  - Certified Assessment Centers are open and operating.
  - Prevention/Intervention providers are offering virtual services with in-person when needed.
  - Recovery Housing has available capacity.
  - 51 Residential providers have available capacity
- Student Assistance Program
  - 9 Student Assistance providers are currently serving all 43 school districts in Allegheny County.
  - Funding for Student Assistance Program providers moved from fee-for-service to program-funded, to give them flexibility to provide holistic support to families, support school districts, and educate teachers about identifying students who may be struggling with their mental health/substance use in an online/hybrid environment.
- Early Intervention
  - Early Intervention Services shifted back to full tele-intervention on 11/16/20, with in-person available for those at increased medical risk.
  - New referrals and utilization of services are down with over 1,000 fewer referrals than last year. We know there are children in need and are diligently working to find ways to reach those children.
  - Public service announcements developed & deployed, tracking resulting referrals
    - Radio ads continuing through December 30
    - Facebook and Instagram ads reached 12,440 people
    - [View the public service announcement at this link](#)
  - Training and support webinars are scheduled for Early Intervention parents and professionals to address compassion fatigue, Zoom fatigue and COVID-19 fatigue.
- Peer Support and Advocacy Warmline (PSAN) Warmline
  - Expanded capacity and hours: Warmline: 1-866-661-WARM (9276), 9:00 am – 1:00 am daily
  - 70% increase in calls in November 2020 compared to November 2019
- Medical Assistance Transportation Program (MATP)
  - Call center fully operational, handling an average of more than 8,000 calls per month
  - Ridership steadily increased after shutdown orders lifted and remains steady but not yet back to pre-COVID levels. As providers offer more remote services, the need for transportation to services has lessened.
  - Special transport service has been arranged for clients who receive life-sustaining treatment (e.g., dialysis) and test positive for COVID-19.

- Crisis Services
  - Telephone and Mobile Crisis Intervention are open and operating via telehealth, with in-person services when needed; Walk-in open
  - Crisis Residential is open at a limited capacity due to COVID-19.
  - Overall, with the exception of Crisis Residential, services trended downward during the Q4 of FY 20 and are now trending back to normal levels.
- Information, Referral and Emergency Services (IRES) (412-350-4457)
  - Call center fully operational
  - Call and petition volumes on par with pre-COVID numbers, with over 9,500 calls and 4,600 petitions from March 16 through December 16.
- As a reminder, PA OMHSAS invites you to attend one of several stakeholder groups and provide your thoughts on behavioral health care in Pennsylvania:
  - [Stakeholder Group 1](#): Adult Members and their natural supports and/or family members-January 4<sup>th</sup> 12:30 pm-2:00 pm
  - [Stakeholder Group 2](#): Children and youth, young adults 18 through 21 and their families or other preferred support people-January 4<sup>th</sup> 2:30 pm-4:00 pm
- Please see the slide presentation for a list of Allegheny County, state and national behavioral health resources. Keep these handy and we encourage you to share them.

### AAA

- In-Home Services
  - Most are stable, except adult day centers, which remain closed. We are focusing on making sure these centers remain stable and can open in the future.
  - Personal Care, In-home supports utilization is down 10-15%, due to some families placing holds on services until COVID is more under control.
- Food Services
  - We continue to see growth and there has been a 33% increase in grab-and-go meals from the start of the pandemic. The numbers of emergency boxes, shelf stable boxes and home delivered meals are stable.
- Protective Services
  - Continuing to investigate cases, with adequate PPE; however, cases have increased significantly. We are pursuing additional funding.
- SeniorLine
  - Calls are high, operating stably
- Ombudsman
  - Assisted with 6 facility closures since late fall, as a result of fewer people placing their loved ones in facilities due to the pandemic. We have seen many cases in facilities. The National Guard is on site at the Squirrel Hill health and rehabilitation facility.

### CYF

- You are invited to become an emergency respite caregiver through A Second Chance. Email [ASCICovidCombat@asecondchance-kinship.com](mailto:ASCICovidCombat@asecondchance-kinship.com) or call Davida Allen at 412-377-2511 or Tara Skibieli at 412-715-9242.

## ODS

- Providers are stable but weary and struggling to meet staffing needs. We have access to PPE. Our community participation service entities are at a standstill; more people are at their personal homes or community homes.
- Please develop or review your current emergency preparedness plan. Please consider any relocation needs you may have due to isolation or quarantine. Please reach out to our office; we can brainstorm with you.
- Helpful planning resources:
  - PA Department of Health
  - <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>
  - Center for Disease Control <https://www.cdc.gov/>
  - Allegheny County Health Department
  - <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Health-Department/resources/COVID-19/Covid-19.aspx>
  - Southwestern PA HCQU
  - <https://hcqu.kepro.com/resources/informational-materials/V>

## 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).
- 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**