



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting
February 25, 2021



General Information

DHS Provider Meetings are held once per week on Thursday at 4:30pm.

As a reminder, please contact Nakia.Granberg@alleghenycounty.us to share stories, pictures or videos of the impact of your work on the clients you serve.

COVID-19 Mobile Testing Schedule

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.

- You can use the [county testing map](#) to help clients looking for testing locations.
- Individuals who are unable to drive can contact the COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-856-2774 for additional options and resources.

Dr. Bogen, Director of the Health Department, joined the call to share updates.

- Reflecting on the pandemic
 - March-May 2020: There were many unknowns and a lack of PPE and testing. Stay-at-home orders were in effect and case rates remained low.
 - June-August: Summer surge of cases due to loosening of mitigation strategies.
 - Sept-Oct: Low case numbers with some mitigation in place
 - Nov-Dec: Largest surge with many deaths (highest in December)
 - 2021: Vaccine phase
- Current State
 - Cases are going down across the state. In Allegheny County, all early warning indicators are going down, with only a slight increase in percent of hospital ER visits due to COVID-like illnesses.
 - We do have a few variant cases.
- Comparing Vaccines
 - While Pfizer and Moderna are both mRNA vaccines that require 2 doses (up to 42 days apart according to the CDC), J&J's is adenovirus-based and only needs one dose. There are also differences in shipping quantity and storage. Changes in Pfizer vaccine storage may be approved next week.
 - The J&J vaccine has an 85% effectiveness to prevent severe disease and 100% prevention of hospitalization and death. There is currently post-approval surveillance of all vaccines. They are continuing to demonstrate the same level of effectiveness.
- Vaccine Distribution Phases
 - Allegheny County used the CDC guidance on phases to conduct planning. In January, the PA HHS director changed the guidance and recommended including anyone over 65 and those aged 16-64 with specific healthcare conditions (about 350-400,000 people or about a third of the county's population). This unexpected expansion occurred at a time when very little supply of vaccine was available. It will be a while until we get to phase 1B.
 - Teachers fall into 1B unless they are 65+ or have 1A health conditions.
- Vaccine Distribution Progress
 - Somewhere around 330-340,000 doses have been sent to Allegheny County. Last week there were some delays. Many doses have been given to people who do not live in Allegheny County, but may work here or have crossed a border to get vaccinated here.
 - Challenges: limited supply (but manufacturers are working to ramp up production), limited local control of distribution (the state Department of Health makes all decisions),

vaccine hesitancy and equity of distribution (we don't have good county-wide data right now)

- Our Plan
 - Most vaccines are not being given by the health department; they are being given by hospitals, pharmacies and FQHCs. It is hard to plan because we don't know what we are getting until a few days beforehand.
 - We run the Monroeville and Castle Shannon sites which give 800-900 doses per day. We plan on opening more sites as supply increases. We are currently focusing on those 65 and older because in Allegheny County, 9 out of every 10 people who die from COVID-19 are 65 and older. We have vaccinated 25% of those 65 and older so far.
 - There are differences in death and hospitalizations based on race. 82% of the Black community that has died of COVID has been 65+ as opposed to 90% of the White community.
 - We are also doing community-based and -led events at churches, partners in Homewood and the Hill District, and senior living facilities in partnership with DHS.
 - Web and 2-1-1 registration (for people who do not have access to a computer).
- Testing and quarantining
 - If you are 14 days past your 2nd vaccine dose, you do not need to quarantine if you are exposed within the next 90 days. At this point we do not know the longer-term outcomes and how long you remain protected.
 - We have seen a drop-off in interest in testing. It's still really important to continue to do testing.

All [PA State metrics](#) continue to decline in Allegheny County.

- Through 2/24/2021: 100,501 Allegheny County residents have received only one shot and 54,305 have been fully vaccinated. About 13% of Allegheny County's population has received at least one shot.

DHS has [released three solicitations](#):

- RFI for Racial Equity Training and Support Directory
 - Re-release of RFI to add additional resources to directory
 - Next deadline is March 15
 - Ongoing solicitation; deadlines occur quarterly
- RFQ for Forensic Psychological and/or Psychiatric Evaluators
 - Next deadline March 1
 - Ongoing solicitation; deadlines March 1 and September 1 each year
- CCBH/DHS RFP for Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility
 - Proposals due April 1
 - Proposals submitted through CCBH, not DHS, but you can find the RFP on our Solicitations page

Bridging the Digital Divide

- As a reminder, free public Wi-Fi is available at 10 sites. Find the locations at www.wifi.alleghenycounty.us.
- As a reminder, the Digital Divide Device Program has re-opened! Previously submitted eligible requests will be filled as supply comes available. We welcome the submission of new requests

for clients in need. The link to submit new requests can be found here: [DHS Device Request Form](#). This is for anyone, not just CYF-involved youth and families.

SAMHSA Grant Webinar

- SAMHSA's Office of Behavioral Health Equity will host Elevate CBOs Webinar Series: Grants 101, a webinar on competitive SAMHSA grant applications for CBOs serving under-resourced racial and ethnic minority and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations.
- The session will provide an overview of the grant application process at SAMHSA, clarify what is and is not required in submitting grant applications, and include a question-and-answer session.
- Thursday, March 4, 2021, from 2 to 4 p.m.
 - [Register](#) by Monday, March 1

Upcoming Food Distributions:

- Drive-up food bank distributions are happening on 2/27 (Wilkinsburg), 3/1 (Duquesne), 3/9 (Allegheny Valley) and 3/11 (Glassport) – [details and registration here](#).
- There is also a Sysco/412 Food Rescue Distribution on 2/24 at 1 pm at 1575 Electric Avenue, Pittsburgh
- Other regularly occurring distributions:
 - Farmers to Families Food Box Program, Saturdays at 10 am through April, 301 College Drive in Monroeville
 - Hill District Distribution, Saturdays 8 am-2 pm through April, 1435 Bedford Ave, Pittsburgh
 - Pop-Up No-Cost Produce Markets occur twice monthly in the Hill District, Northside, Sharpsburg, East Liberty, Homewood and Wilkinsburg. See slide presentation for details.
- Don't forget the [Food Bank's network of food pantries](#) for more consistent access to food.

Legislative/Policy Updates

Federal Updates

- The US Small Business Administration established a 14-day, exclusive Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan application period for businesses and nonprofits with fewer than 20 employees
 - From February 24 through March 9, 2021, only businesses with fewer than 20 employees can apply for a PPP loan ([link](#) for more information).
 - The regular application window reopens for all eligible entities March 10-31, 2021.

State and Local Updates

- Pennie, PA's health insurance exchange, is holding an additional open enrollment period through May 15
 - Anyone who experiences a qualifying life event is eligible to enroll anytime during the year.
 - Pennie connects eligible applicants to Medicaid or CHIP.
 - For more information and enrollment assistance: [pennie.com](#) or 844-844-8040.

- PA Constitutional Amendments in upcoming elections
 - Amendment allowing the General Assembly to pass a resolution to end an emergency disaster declaration by the Gov after 21 days will be on the May 18 ballot.
 - Amendment creating judicial districts for all appellate state courts has been tabled and will not be on the May ballot but could be on the November 2 ballot.
- PA House and Senate State Government Committees discussed the Census Bureau's announcement that census data would be delayed until Sept. 30, 2021 due to COVID-19.
 - Census data is unlikely be usable until the second quarter of 2022, which will cause delays in redistricting for both congressional and state legislative districts, which will in turn delay the 2022 primaries until districts can be drawn.
- County Council will consider a revised bill next week to create a County Citizen Police Review Board.
 - Board would consist of nine members with the power to investigate allegations of police misconduct.
 - Only the Allegheny County Police Department would be required to participate; municipal police departments and the county sheriff's department may opt-in.

Program Updates

OCS

Hello Baby has launched!

- We are launching virtual programming this month: Ask a Nurse, Hello Mommy and Hello Daddy. Please get the word out. Postcards are being printed and given to new moms at hospitals.
- <https://familycenters.alleghenycounty.us/classes>
- <https://hellobabypgh.org/events-list/>

Summer Programming for High School Students: Students can get paid for taking college courses!

Limited spots available. <https://neighborhoodlearning.org/summercollege>

Health of the Homelessness System

- Providers are still operating, sheltering, taking in new clients.
- Not seeing new Section 8 vouchers or habitability inspections being scheduled yet.
- Fewer adult shelter beds available at year-round shelters (EECM had 1 vacancy this morning & Light of Life had 8). Please call ahead before sending anyone.
- Beds filling up most nights at Smithfield and McKeesport winter shelters. People can still come; the overflow is sent to Safe Haven.
- Shepherd's Heart winter shelter (females) usually has open beds.
- Youth shelter beds are available at DOCS for all genders.
- Family Shelters have space available for families of all sizes. Kudos to Johnna Kerner and team for helping 7 families to self-resolve, diverting them from entering the homelessness system.
- Two Warming Centers are open when winter shelters are closed during the day. Open Warming Centers are at the Red Door on Stanwix and at McKeesport Downtown Housing. The Catholic Charities Warming Station on 9th Street will be closed today and tomorrow, reopening on Saturday.

- Isolation and Quarantine facilities have spaces available as needed. Prioritization policy for highly vulnerable referrals still in place.
- Our full HUD award is coming: all programs funded last year will be funded this year at \$21.8M dollars total.
- Rental Assistance is on the way. The Treasury issued its program guidance and we are working quickly to finish up the application; we'll announce a launch date soon.
 - We are mobilizing with the Magisterial District Courts to have staff present on the days they are processing eviction hearings. We are grateful for the moratorium but there are instances where people can be evicted, and we will be there to connect those people with resources.
- We are also working on extending winter shelter this year. We are working with our partners to keep the sites open longer. We will keep you posted.
 - Smithfield (men/women/non-binary) will likely be open through June.
 - McKeesport Downtown Housing likely will likely be open until April 9.
- COVID has had a significant impact on the performance of our CoC providers. We had waivers in place. Employment and income, time form enrollment to move in, non-cash benefits and exits to permanent housing have all been impacted. We are providing TA and adjusting our performance rubric benchmarks.
- The Homeless Outreach and Coordination Committee is organizing camp clean-ups.
 - To volunteer: <https://forms.gle/sMvLqMEHpq7XkKf49>
 - Do you know a space that is abandoned and requires attention? Contact HOCC Co-Chair, Laura Drogowski at laura.drogowski@pittsburghpa.gov.
- Kudos to Terri Laver for 38 years of service!

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. 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