



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**To: Pennsylvania Hospital Leadership**  
**From: Rachel, L. Levine, MD, Secretary of Health**  
**Date: March 16, 2020**  
**Re: Hospital Guidance Regarding CoVID-19**

Dear Pennsylvania Hospital Leaders,

Thank you all for your great work during this demanding time as we work toward mitigating the CoVID-19 outbreak. I appreciate your tremendous efforts to keep Pennsylvania safe and healthy.

The Department of Health is issuing guidance that will allow for the expansion of health services during the CoVID-19 outbreak. The guidance will inform providers and hospitals that you should be incorporating your emergent needs associated with CoVID-19 into your Emergency Preparedness Plan. Emergent needs would include the use of telemedicine, remote locations, and use of non-licensed and off-site space for the treatment of patients.

Specifically, you should adhere to the following requirement in the interim to ensure compliance with Department of Health regulations:

- Report into the PSRS system that you have implemented your Emergency Preparedness Plan. On the report under “describe the event” section, the following information should be included:
  - A statement that the Emergency Plan is being implemented due to CoVID-19
  - Location(s) that are impacted
  - Services being implemented that have not previously been approved (if applicable)

I encourage you to be over-inclusive in incorporating your needs into your Emergency Preparedness Plan. Please note that you do not need approval from the Department to implement the elements of your plan.

The guidance will also give providers and hospitals direction from the Department on the following subjects:

- Visitor policies
- Hospital Laboratory Testing
- Other PSRS reporting requirements, including reporting the presence of a CoVID-19 positive patient in your hospital.
- Elective Surgeries and Procedures
- Suspension of Services

I encourage you to continue to communicate with your established Regional Healthcare Coalitions (HCC). Each HCC has an established coordinator through the Hospital and Healthsystem Association (HAP). This coordinator serves as a resource to you during your

response. Additionally, the Department of Health utilizes the emergency management platform, Healthcare Knowledge Center Incident Management System (KC-HIMS). Your ability to provide information and collaborate with the Department is greatly appreciated.

I am grateful for your unwavering dedication to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all Pennsylvanians. The Department of Health is working 24/7 to monitor the CoVID-19 situation and we will continue to provide guidance as necessary. Please refer to the Department's [website](https://www.health.pa.gov/) - <https://www.health.pa.gov/> for the most up to date information or call 1-877-PAHEALTH (1-877-724-3258).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RL Levine MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the initials "RL" being prominent.

Rachel L. Levine, MD  
Secretary of Health Commonwealth of Pennsylvania