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## COVID-19 EDITION

### Pennsylvania Department of Health COVID-19 Resources

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) is providing regularly updated information and resources on the COVID-19 pandemic on its [webpage](#). In addition to daily updates on the number of confirmed cases, information includes the number of negative cases, age range breakdown, cases by county and mortality data. Resources include FAQs on the virus and how it is spread, symptoms and testing. Hospital data is available showing hospitalizations and resources by county including ICU beds, pediatric ICU beds, medical/surgical beds and ventilators available and in use. Resource links for individuals are listed on unemployment compensation, financial help, food assistance, driver services and other topics. Links with information for businesses are also listed.

Many of these resources are available in multiple languages. [Graphics](#) are available for use on social media in English and Spanish.

Coronavirus factsheets, resource links and press releases can be found on the [website](#) as well. These include information on at-risk-individuals, testing, information for WIC, mental health, children, breastfeeding, homemade masks, self-isolation, stigma and other topics.

The DOH can be reached 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258).

### DOH and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Response



In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, DOH has activated the Incident Command System and has been closely monitoring the situation both globally and in Pennsylvania. DOH has been working closely with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) to coordinate the commonwealth's response. Additionally, the Governor has issued a "Stay at Home" order for the entire state which includes the closure of non-life sustaining businesses. Currently there is a red, yellow, green phase [reopening plan](#) being implemented. The department is

# National Health Observances

## May

National Mental Health Month

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month

May 10 - 16 - National Women's Health Week

## June

Men's Health Month

National Safety Month

PTSD Awareness Month

June 15 - 21 - Men's Health Week

recommending that every Pennsylvanian follow these mitigation strategies:

- Wear a mask when you are outside of your home. Instructions on how to make a homemade no-sew mask can be found [here](#);
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow when coughing or sneezing;
- Avoid touching your face;
- Clean high touch surfaces frequently;
- And practice social distancing by staying home and remaining at least 6 feet away from others when engaging in life sustaining activities.

The COVID-19 response team is working around the clock to ensure the safety and health of the commonwealth. This is a new situation for everyone, and we'd like to emphasize the importance of checking in on the mental and physical wellbeing of others. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, text 'PA' to 741-741. A statewide resource list for individuals, businesses, and schools can be found [here](#). The department is committed to providing the most up to date information through the daily press briefings and our [website](#), which is updated daily with COVID-19 case counts and other guidance and resources.

## Pennsylvania State Data Center Report on COVID-19



The Institute of State and Regional Affairs at Penn State Harrisburg has released a [report](#) to help guide strategic planning in response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Pennsylvania. The report compares counties in Pennsylvania based on medical risk factors relating to COVID-19. Rather than mapping current hot spots of COVID-19, this report's purpose is to highlight areas where the outcomes from COVID-19 may be more severe. To highlight which Pennsylvania counties have the most vulnerable populations, the institute collected data relating to age, prevalence of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, available hospital staff and beds, and proximity risk, all factors associated with COVID-19 risk identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more information, contact [pasdc@psu.edu](mailto:pasdc@psu.edu).

## Census 2020 and COVID-19

The U.S. Census Bureau has suspended in-person interviews for its surveys. The bureau has modified all of its data collection [protocols](#) to eliminate personal visits. Where feasible, census



## Events

Pennsylvania Coalition for Oral Health, oral health policy stakeholder webinar, May 27, 9 am

National Council for Behavioral Health Medical Director COVID-19 webinar, May 27, 3:00 pm

Pa. Association of Community Health Centers annual conference and clinical summit, October 6 – 8, Lancaster PA

field workers will call survey participants to collect the necessary information over the phone. The following are modifications extending the Census operations schedule:

- The online self-response phase is now August 14;
- Interviews of those who did not respond online, by phone or by mail will take place through August 14;
- Administrators of facilities like nursing homes, prisons and student housing may choose to count their residents requiring less in-person contact, now through June 19;
- Service providers at soup kitchens, shelters and food vans may count the people they serve through May 1;
- Census takers will count homeless people under bridges, in parks, in all-night businesses, etc. through May 1;
- Census takers will count people staying at campgrounds, RV parks, marinas and hotels if they do not usually live elsewhere through May 18.

You can find your county and municipality's Census response rates on the response rate [map](#).

## Smoking Cessation and COVID-19



Coronavirus (COVID-19) attacks the lungs, which is why there has never been a more important time for smokers to quit to avoid damaging their lungs. The harmful impact of smoking on the lungs is well documented. There is conclusive evidence that smoking increases the risk for [respiratory infections](#), weakens the [immune system](#) and is a [major cause](#) of a number of chronic health

conditions, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart disease and diabetes. These factors put smokers at [risk](#) when infected.

Many smokers can't quit on their first attempt and need several tries, but the benefits are well worth it. Keep trying. Go for a walk. Smell the flowers. Remember that without tobacco you'll breathe easier often after just two days.

Resources:

- 1-800-QUIT-NOW
- [PA.QuitLogix.org](http://PA.QuitLogix.org)
- [www.cdc.gov/tips](http://www.cdc.gov/tips)
- [www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org)

For information on the DOH smoking cessation programs contact [Will Sunday](#).

## Disclaimer

The information provided in this newsletter is intended to be of general information to Pennsylvania's HIPP partnerships. It is not intended as an endorsement or recommendation of any specific process, service, product, company, or funding source outside of the Department of Health auspices. Further examination and research of information is recommended.

## Environmental Health, Smoking and COVID-19



The Department of Health's environmental health team monitors and responds to environmental public health issues. In the wake of COVID-19, questions about how the environment contributed to the spread and severity of the disease and how the disease affected the environment will be important topics for research. In an [interview](#) on March 20, 2020, Dr. Aaron Bernstein, Director of Harvard's Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment, answered questions about coronavirus and the environment. When asked if air pollution makes COVID-19 symptoms worse, he responded that "given what we know, it is likely that people who are exposed to more air pollution and who smoke are going to fare worse if infected with COVID-19 than those who are breathing cleaner air and who don't smoke." This is greater justification for reducing the levels of [air pollution and smoking](#) in our state as COVID-19 persists and afterwards. For more information contact [Stephanie Hasanali](#).

## Vulnerable Communities and COVID-19



"The State of Health Equity in Pennsylvania (2019)" [report](#) states, "there are other areas in Pennsylvania where residents are more vulnerable. These residents' health is at risk because they don't have the same access to health care, education, jobs, clean environment and safety. Given Pennsylvania's unique geography and population distribution, this reality affects many: urban and rural populations; racial and ethnic minorities; gender and sexual minorities; the young and old and many more." This pandemic exacerbates poor health outcomes for vulnerable populations. Pennsylvania DOH is

taking a proactive approach to safeguard residents.

Materials and [resources](#) are translated into various languages, briefings are done in Spanish and sign language. These include fact sheets, symptoms, what to do when sick, how to stop the spread, hand washing instructions and graphics. For a comprehensive approach, a COVID-19 Health Equity Response Team from staff and external stakeholders was formed. The goal is to develop a strategy to mitigate the potential of unintentional harm, loss of life, suffering and long-term multi-generational impact for vulnerable communities.

For support on health equity, more information and contact information can be found on the [Office of Health Equity](#) web page.

## Contact Us

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## Changes to Every Kid Healthy Week Due to COVID-19

Due to CDC guidelines on slowing the spread of COVID-19, Action for Healthy Kids is no longer encouraging schools to host Every Kid Healthy Week (EKHW) events this year. We advise schools follow the guidance from their own districts and states and recommendations from the CDC and federal government regarding gatherings.

While EKHW will remain on the calendar, we encourage schools and parents to focus on celebrating health and well-being at home. You can find activity ideas on our EKHW [resource page](#), in our [Game On Activity Library](#), and in this curated list of [at-home activities](#). Those celebrating EKHW at home are invited to follow along with each day's theme, share your activities on social media using #EveryKidHealthyWeek and [tell us](#) how you celebrated.

### EVERY KID HEALTHY WEEK 2020 SCHEDULE



## Pregnancy and COVID-19



Pregnant women risk complications due to COVID-19, but not necessarily [because of the virus](#). Modified prenatal [health services](#) are being implemented and hospitals' increasingly [stringent guidelines](#) regarding visitors may require women to labor without a support team to advocate on their behalf, increasing risks of birth trauma. COVID-19-positive mothers may be separated from newborns at birth to prevent transmission; separation contributes to breastfeeding difficulties and postpartum depression.

To circumvent restrictions and minimize COVID-19 infection risks, more women are [seeking alternatives](#) to hospital birthing. Unfortunately, anecdotal reports have indicated that provider shortages and financial constraints may lead to a rise in unassisted homebirths, possibly increasing rates of maternal morbidity and mortality. Insurers, providers and advocates are working together to develop safe, affordable and accessible non-hospital birthing options for women delivering during the pandemic. For more information, go to the DOH [pregnancy resources](#) webpage.

Other resources include CDC [provider information](#) regarding COVID-19 and pregnancy and breastfeeding, CDC [Considerations](#) for Inpatient Obstetric Healthcare Settings and ACOG [resources](#) for providers. For more information on these DOH programs, contact [Shanna Klucar](#) in the Bureau of Family Health.

## Celebrating Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month

Despite many schools and residential facilities being closed during the current COVID-19 pandemic, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month still serves as an opportunity to spotlight this important topic. Programs such as the [Personal Responsibility Education Program](#) (PREP) funded by the department provide young people with tools around communication, healthy relationships and refusal skills, while also encouraging teens to consider how pregnancy or parenting could affect long-term goals. Even in the midst of a pandemic and the recommended social distancing protocols that come with it, the risk of unplanned pregnancy continues. New opportunities to serve vulnerable populations are being explored including virtual education. [Adagio Health](#) is making sure that young people and participants in programs like PREP can still receive services and access trusted adults for guidance. Working with teens on healthy decision-making enabling them to protect themselves from unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection is a year-round effort.

## Alcohol Dependence and COVID-19



April is nationally recognized as Alcohol Awareness Month, which could not be more relevant as we mitigate from COVID-19. In the commonwealth, [Fine Wine & Good Spirit](#) stores have been closed as a not life-sustaining function but could have consequences for individuals who suffer from alcohol use disorder. The reopening process started May 15 and additional information can be found at the above link. It is important to know that alcohol withdrawal can be life threatening. Help and resources are available for individuals and their loved ones. Pennsylvania's [Get Help Now](#) hotline, 1-800-662-HELP, is available 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week, 365 days-a-year to directly connect individuals to treatment providers to safely detox or can provide supportive community resources. By calling the hotline, individuals can bypass an overwhelmed health care system due to COVID-19 and access appropriate services in the drug and alcohol treatment system. For more information contact [Rachel Kostelac](#) with the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs.

## Extension COVID-19 Resources for Families



Penn State Extension has resources available for families and children to protect people and reinvigorate businesses affected by COVID-19. Traumatic events effect the emotional health of children and they are at-risk of developing trauma-related health issues. Support the emotional wellness of children by being

connected, empathetic and calm. This time can be especially stressful on adolescents and parents can help their teenagers deal with stress. Parents can slow down and appreciate the time spent with children. This is an opportunity to spend more time playing, listening and talking with children, forming positive relationships and discovering more about each child. The more you know about a child, the better you can support them during this difficult time. Read more on the [Penn State Extension Family Resiliency](#) webpage where you can find articles on the [emotional health of children](#), [working from home](#), [teens and stress](#), and [slowing down](#) during the pandemic.

## Grant Opportunities

- **Health, equity and climate change grant:** [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) is providing up to \$600,000 over 2.5 years to public entities, public charities, or nongovernmental organizations to bring ideas from around the world to U.S. cities to address the intertwined issues of health, equity, and climate change. Proposals are due May 28.
- **Grants to alleviate impacts of COVID-19 on organizations working to end child sexual abuse:** The [Just Beginnings Collaborative](#) is offering up to \$5,000 to community organizations to provide health and safety resources for children and families. Applications are due May 29, 2020.
- **Community food projects grants:** The [National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) is providing multiple grants of \$35,000 for planning, \$125,000 for projects and \$400,000 for four-year projects to public food program service providers and private nonprofit entities to meet the food needs of low-income individuals. Applications are due June 3, 2020.
- **Nursing education programs:** The Health Resources and Services Administration is providing funding for nursing education programs to accredited schools of nursing, health care facilities or a partnership of such a school and facility. The [Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention Simulation Education Training Program](#) expands the use of simulation-based technology and observational learning opportunities for nursing students. This grant is for four grants up to \$500,000 and applications are due June 1, 2020. Two awards of \$500,000 are available in the [Nursing Workforce Diversity-Eldercare Enhancement Program](#) to provide advanced geriatric education and training opportunities for underprivileged nursing students. Applications are due June 4, 2020. The [Advanced Nursing Education Nurse Practitioner Residency Integration Program](#) provides five grants of up to \$1 million to prepare new primary care or behavioral health nurse practitioners to work in integrated, community-based settings. Applications are due June 8, 2020.

- **Opioid messaging campaign grant:** The Pa. Commission on Crime and Delinquency [Pa. Start Messaging Campaign](#) is providing one grant of up to \$102,000 to support, advocate and supplement existing or future programming, targeting caregivers and influencers of a correspondingly younger target demographic before risky behaviors, unhealthy choices, etc. have had time to develop. Applications are due June 9, 2020.
- **Expansion of supportive service to grandparents and other relatives raising children grants:** The [Brookdale Foundation](#) is providing \$10,000, renewable for \$5,000 in the second year to multiple nonprofit organizations for the creation or expansion of services for grandparents and other relatives who have taken on the responsibility of surrogate parenting due to the absence of the parents outside the foster care system. Applications are due June 10, 2020.
- **Maternal health grants:** Grants of up to \$200,000 are available to organizations from the Johnson & Johnson [Maternal Health QuickFire Challenge](#) to help mothers survive and prevent adverse consequences from pregnancy and childbirth. Applications are due June 19, 2020.
- **Elevate Prize:** The [Elevate Prize](#) supports 10 extraordinary leaders, activists, innovators and risk-takers each year, working across sectors, issues and geographies. Funding is \$300,000 over two years with potential for additional funding. Applications are due June 29, 2020.
- **Grants for new primary care residency programs:** The [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) is providing funding under the Rural Residency Planning and Development Program to support the development of new rural residency programs in family medicine, internal medicine, public health and general preventive medicine, psychiatry, general surgery and obstetrics and gynecology. Eleven grants of \$8,250,000 are available to accredited medical residency training programs. Applications are due June 30, 2020.
- **Telehealth focused rural health research center grant:** The [Telehealth Focused Rural Health Research Center Program](#) is providing \$1,900,000 in funding for two research centers to conduct and maintain an evaluation of nationwide telehealth investments in rural areas and populations. Applications are due July 1, 2020.
- **Pennsylvania WalkWorks grants:** Funds are available through the [Pa. Department of Health](#) to municipalities and planning organizations for projects to improve active transportation and connectivity to common destinations including walking, biking, wheeling and public transit. The amount of funding depends on the type of project and varies between \$3,000 and \$20,000. Applications are due July 2, 2020.

- **Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) grants:** Grants of up to \$500,000 are available from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) to organizations, higher education institutions and all levels of government to build a state-level surveillance infrastructure that ensures the capacity to collect, analyze, and use ACE data to inform statewide ACE prevention activities; and to support the implementation of data-driven, comprehensive, evidence-based ACE primary prevention strategies. Applications are due July 13, 2020.
- **Rural community grants:** The [Foundation for Rural Service](#) is offering grants ranging from \$250 to \$5,000 for rural community and economic development, such as telehealth, safety and other projects to community organizations, schools and municipal governments. Applications are due September 13, 2020.
- **Cross-sectional innovation to improve rural postpartum mental health:** The [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality](#) is providing funding to improve postpartum mental health care for rural American families. Applications are accepted from organizations and individuals. There are two grants for \$50,000 and five for \$15,000. Applications are due September 15, 2020.
- **Innovative approaches to solving problems in health and health care grants:** “Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health” is a [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) project to advance health equity and progress toward a culture of health through focusing on evidence, social interaction, food and work. The average Pioneer grant in 2019 was \$315,031. Proposals will be accepted throughout the year on a rolling admission.
- **COVID-19 collective fund for trans communities:** The [Borealis Philanthropy](#) has launched a fund to provide financial resources to trans-led organizations and transgender, gender nonconforming and non-binary communities who are organizing in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Grants range up to \$10,000 or up to \$20,000 for partnerships and coalitions. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis as long as funds remain available.