Gov. Wolf, Sec. of Health Outline COVID-19 Mitigation Guidance for Montgomery County, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
March 12, 2020

Governor and Secretary of Health Take Aggressive Action to Stop Spread

Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine this afternoon provided an update on the state's COVID-19 mitigation efforts, including one new presumptive positive case in Pike County, bringing the state's total to 22, and guidance on how to reduce the spread of the virus.

"In Montgomery County, we are aggressively moving to a mitigation phase, and statewide we are providing guidance to help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus," said Gov. Wolf.

The governor provided applicable guidance to reduce the spread of the virus in the state over the next 14 days, specifically for commonwealth facilities and public buildings in Montgomery County, which with 13 cases has the most presumptive positive cases in the state.

Guidance for Montgomery County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Applicability

- The following guidance will be in place starting tomorrow, March 13, for fourteen days.
- We will evaluate our options throughout that period, and continue to communicate to you as we learn more.

Montgomery County

- A no visitor policy will be implemented for correctional facilities, nursing homes, and others to be evaluated.
- Schools in Montgomery County will be closed starting tomorrow, as will child care centers licensed by the Commonwealth.
- Adult day care centers will be closed.
- Freedom of travel will remain, but the Governor and the Commonwealth ask all people to refrain from non-essential travel.
- Essential services will be available: police, fire, and emergency medical services, essential services for vulnerable populations.
- Supermarkets, pharmacies, and gas stations will remain open. The Governor and the Commonwealth recommends that non-essential retail facilities close.
- AMTRAK will begin operating a reduced schedule and the Ardmore stop will close to AMTRAK trains for two weeks, beginning tomorrow. The Wolf Administration is also working directly with SEPTA to evaluate potential impacts and will continue to provide service updates as things evolve.

Commonwealth Employees

- The Office of Administration will provide a message to all Commonwealth employees regarding those who work or live in Montgomery County.
- This includes individuals who live in Montgomery County and work in other counties and those who live in other counties and work in Montgomery County.
- Individuals will be instructed to work from home.
- The Commonwealth is authorizing a 10 workday paid absence for individuals who don't have telework capabilities.
- Facilities that are in Montgomery County that are Commonwealth facilities and provide essential services will remain open.
- Facilities that are administered by Montgomery County will follow the same procedures as the county.

Statewide

- The Wolf Administration strongly encourages the suspension of large gatherings, events, conferences of 250 individuals or more.
- The Wolf Administration discourages individuals from traveling to recreational activities like gyms, movie theaters and shopping malls.
- The Wolf Administration encourages religious leaders to exercise discretion in order to mitigate the spread of illness.

State correctional facilities and veterans homes have already introduced a statewide visitor ban to ensure the safety of inmates, residents, staff and visitors.

COVID-19 Case Information Update

The Department of Health advised that the state now has 22 presumptive positive cases of COVID-19, including one new presumptive positive case in Pike County – an adult who is in isolation at home and who came in contact with someone from another state who tested positive for COVID-19.

State presumptive positive totals as of 2 p.m. include:

Montgomery County: 13
Bucks County: 2
Philadelphia County: 1
Monroe County: 2
Delaware County: 1
Wayne County: 1
Northampton: 1
Pike County: 1

The Department of Health stressed the role Pennsylvanians play in helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean surfaces frequently.
- If you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

Quotes from Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary Rachel Levine

"I strongly encourage the statewide suspension of large gatherings, events, conferences of 250 individuals or more and discourage people from traveling to recreational activities such as gyms, movie theaters and shopping malls," Gov. Wolf said. "And while people are free to travel, I ask that everyone refrain from non-essential travel. We all need to do our part to help stop the spread of the coronavirus. The time to do this is now. We cannot wait."

"Essential services in Montgomery County – police, fire, and emergency medical services, public transportation, essential services for vulnerable populations such as our facilities for people with intellectual disabilities and autism – will still be operational," Gov. Wolf said. "Supermarkets, pharmacies, and gas stations will remain open, but we do recommend that non-essential retail facilities close."

"This situation is quickly evolving, even for us here at the Department of Health," Dr. Levine said. "It can be overwhelming and scary to hear that you should stay home. Aside from practicing good health habits, we want you to practice good self-care to ensure your body is getting the proper nutrients from fruits, vegetables and getting enough sleep."

"As this situation evolves, we will continually update Pennsylvanians through our website, health.pa.gov, our Facebook page and our Twitter account," Dr. Levine said. "It's important to remember that the most accurate and timely information regarding this outbreak is available through the Department of Health."

Updated Coronavirus Links: Press Releases, State Lab Photos, Graphics

For the daily COVID-19 Report, visit here.

For all press releases regarding coronavirus, please visit here.

Find the latest information on the coronavirus here.

Photos of the state's lab in Exton are available for download and use

Coronavirus and preparedness graphics are available here near the bottom of the page: On.pa.gov/coronavirus

https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/gov-wolf-sec-of-health-outline-covid-19-mitigation-guidance-for-montgomery-county-commonwealth-of-pennsylvania/