



FROM: Lisa Schaefer, Executive Director

DATE: 3/18/2020

RE: CCAP COVID-19 Update – March 18, 2020

Today Pennsylvania lost its first citizen to COVID-19. I make note of this to remind us our efforts to stop the spread of this virus and protect our most vulnerable citizens are both important and valuable, and that whatever inconveniences we are facing right now, our patience and perseverance are critical to the overall effort.

CCAP request for primary election delay

This morning, the CCAP Board of Directors approved a motion to request that Gov. Wolf take action to postpone the April 28 primary, in light of the public health concerns raised by the spread of COVID-19 and related recommendations to restrict large gatherings, and the indications that this situation will likely be going on for some time. A letter has been sent to Gov. Wolf with this request, which noted the challenges of providing poll worker training and losing polling places and poll workers with just six weeks left until the primary, and the need for quick action to postpone the primary to provide counties with some certainty as to how to proceed with their operations under these unprecedented challenges. We will provide additional information as we receive it.

DHS closes county assistance offices

Yesterday, DHS announced that all county assistance offices will be closed to the public through at least March 31, and are encouraging use of their online services; I believe this is related to the bullet point I referenced yesterday regarding county-administered facilities following the same procedures as those of the state. The full press release is available at https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/DHS_details.aspx?newsid=498.

DHS guidance for county MH programs and behavioral health services

DHS's Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) has developed operational guidance for counties and providers of behavioral health services, available [here](#) and telehealth guidance, available [here](#).

U.S. Department of Labor guidance

We also received guidance today from the U.S. Department of Labor on unemployment compensation for individuals affected by COVID-19, as well as guidance from OSHA on preparing workplaces for COVID-19. This guidance has been added to the CCAP COVID-19 web page at <https://www.pacounties.org/Pages/COVID-19-Resources-for-Counties.aspx>.