



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Department of Human Services Restricts Visitation at DHS State-Run Facilities to Protect Health of Residents and Workers

Harrisburg, PA – The Department of Human Services has implemented a series of proactive measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of residents and staff at Pennsylvania’s state centers, state hospitals, youth development centers, and youth forestry camps. These measures, which are consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Pennsylvania Department of Health, include significant restrictions on visitation.

“The Wolf administration is committed to serving vulnerable populations every day, and that commitment will not waiver in the face of an emergency,” said DHS Secretary Teresa Miller. “We will take any and all steps necessary to protect the health and safety of anyone in one of our state centers, state hospitals, youth development centers, or youth forestry camps, and I have the utmost confidence in the DHS employees who work at these facilities to continue providing professional and compassionate care even under stressful circumstances.”

All visitors are currently prohibited from all state center and state hospital campuses, youth development centers, and youth forestry camps, and the policy will remain in place until guidance from public-health professionals changes. Exceptions to the policy are in place for visits of medical necessity, visits by probation departments or legal counsel, and family or clergy visits approved by the facility director. Residents of state hospitals maintain their rights to attorney consultations. Any visitor permitted will be screened for health concerns upon their arrival.

Whenever possible, staff at the hospitals and centers are encouraging and facilitating the use of phone and video technology to help residents stay in touch with loved ones and maintain their connections to activities and interests beyond the campus.

Pennsylvania’s four state centers, which serve individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism, are: Ebensburg Center in Cambria County; Polk Center in Venango County; Selinsgrove Center in Snyder County; and White Haven Center in Luzerne County.

Pennsylvania’s six state hospitals, which provide comprehensive psychiatric treatment and substance abuse services to people with mental illness, are: Clarks Summit State Hospital in Lackawanna County; Danville State Hospital in Montour County; Norristown State Hospital in Montgomery County; Torrance State Hospital in Westmoreland County; Warren State Hospital in Warren County; and Wernersville State Hospital in

Berks County. This also applies to South Mountain Restoration Center, a long-term care facility operated by the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Pennsylvania's youth development centers and youth forestry camps provide treatment, care, and custody services to Pennsylvania's most at-risk youth. The three youth development centers are South Mountain Secure Treatment Unit in Franklin County, North Central Secure Treatment Unit in Montour County, and Loysville Youth Development Center in Perry County. The commonwealth's two youth forestry camps are in Hickory Run State Park in Luzerne County and in Trough Creek State Park in Huntingdon County.

Other actions that have been implemented at the state centers and hospitals to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and protect residents and staff include but are not limited to:

- Updated emergency staff shortage plans and pandemic emergency plans
- Identified quarantine areas and established quarantine plans
- Posted signage at each facility with information from the PA Department of Health about COVID-19
- Increased frequency of cleaning/disinfection of doorknobs, light switches, etc.
- Provided additional training to staff and residents about hand washing and other infection-control measures
- Reviewed inventory of cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment and ordered additional supplies as needed
- Trained supervisors and managers to screen for COVID-19 symptoms

Visit the PA Department of Health's dedicated [Coronavirus webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19.

Guidance to DHS providers related to COVID-19 is available [here](#).