

## INTERVIEW BRIEFING

**PREPARED FOR:** Spokespersons

**PREPARED BY:** Nate Wardle/Brittany Lauffer

**SUBJECT:** Coronavirus

**DATE UPDATED:** 6/18/2020, 12:00 p.m.

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## SWOT:

**Strengths:** Discuss the steps Pa. takes to prepare for a potential infectious disease, emphasize vision of a Healthy Pennsylvania for all

**Weaknesses:**

**Opportunities:** Highlight the work done by our epidemiologists and our preparedness teams, show that Pa. is prepared for infectious diseases,

**Threats:** Could be some questions we may not have all the answers to

## KEY MESSAGE POINTS

- We have taken a proactive approach to prepare and carefully monitor potential cases of COVID-19 in Pennsylvania. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is prepared to respond if this coronavirus spreads throughout the world.
- To date, we have 80,236 CONFIRMED COVID-19 cases in all 67 counties in Pennsylvania and 6,361 deaths.
- There are 630 patients who have a positive serology test and either COVID-19 symptoms or a high-risk exposure, which are considered probable cases and not confirmed cases.
  - NOTE: Our reporting has shifted to a daily update at approximately noon based on results reported to the department by 12 AM, as the volume of test results continue to increase.
  - We have had 543,832 negative tests.
  - The county case table is available [here](#).
  - In nursing and personal care homes, there are 16,850 resident cases of COVID-19, and 2,986 cases among employees, for a total of 19,836 cases at 649 distinct facilities in 47 counties. Out of our total deaths, 4,332 have occurred in residents from nursing or personal care facilities. A county breakdown can be found [here](#).
  - Approximately 6,092 of our total cases are in health care workers.
- As of June 5, all 67 Pennsylvania counties are either in the yellow or green phase of reopening.
- On June 5, Governor Tom Wolf announced that 12 additional counties will move to green on June 12.
  - Those counties include Adams, Beaver, Carbon, Columbia, Cumberland, Juniata, Mifflin, Northumberland, Union, Wayne, Wyoming and York.
  - The final 10 counties that moved out of red and into yellow on June 5 include Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lehigh, Northampton, Montgomery and Philadelphia.
  - There are 33 counties currently in yellow and 34 in green.
- On May 8, 24 counties began to reopen. These counties were deemed ready to move to reopening- or “yellow phase”- because of low per-capita



case counts, the ability to conduct contact tracing and testing, and appropriate population density to contain community

spread.

- As regions or counties move into the yellow phase, some restrictions on work and social interaction will ease while others, such as closures of schools, gyms, and other indoor recreation centers, hair and nail salons, as well as limitations around large gatherings, remain in place.
- On April 1, Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine revised their “Stay at Home” orders to include all 67 counties.
- All Pennsylvania schools will remain closed until further notice.
- Non-life-sustaining business closures remain in effect.
- On 3/19, Governor Wolf ordered all non-life sustaining businesses in PA to close physical locations as of 8pm on 3/19 to slow spread of COVID-19.
  - Failure to comply with these requirements will result in enforcement action that could include citations, fines, or license suspensions.
- On 3/17, Governor Wolf announced statewide mitigation efforts effective today, Tuesday, March 17 and include:
  - All restaurants and bars close their dine-in facilities to help stop the spread of COVID-19.
  - A no-visitor policy for correctional facilities and nursing homes has been implemented and will be evaluated for other facilities.
  - Freedom of travel will remain, but Pennsylvanians are asked to refrain from non-essential travel.
  - All childcare centers licensed by the commonwealth are closed.
  - Adult day care centers, adult training facilities, provocations facilities, LIFE centers and Senior Community Centers are closed.
  - Essential State, County, and Municipal services will be open: police, fire, emergency medical services, sanitation, and essential services for vulnerable populations.
  - Supermarkets, pharmacies, and gas stations will remain open.
  - The Wolf Administration strongly encourages the suspension of large gatherings, events, conferences of more than 10 people, and per White House guidelines, ask that individuals and groups cancel any gatherings planned over the next eight weeks.
- We are working to make sure our health systems, first responders and county and municipal health departments have the resources they need to respond.



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

- The same family emergency plans and kits that we use to prepare for flu or norovirus, and even snowstorms and floods,

are important now.

- WASH your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, do not use your hands!
- Clean surfaces frequently, including countertops, light switches, cell phones, and other frequently touched items.
- If you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

#### KEY INFORMATION/TALKING POINTS:

##### Pennsylvania Actions

- Activated of the Department of Health's Emergency Operations Center to allow for enhanced response coordination;
- Testing for COVID-19 at the state laboratory;
- Maintained communication and outreach with federal, state and local partners;
- Provided health care providers, businesses and education providers with information;
- Reviewed and adapted current pandemic flu plans to prepare for spread of COVID-19;
- Activation of the Commonwealth Response Coordination Center at PEMA.
- Governor Tom Wolf signed an emergency disaster declaration March 6 to ensure state agencies involved in the response have the expedited resources they need to continue to focus on the virus and its possible spread.
- The Department of Health is providing a daily update via statewide press release.
- We are prepared for potential infectious disease outbreaks, whether its measles, flu or new viruses like coronavirus as part of our commitment to prevent disease and ensure a healthy Pennsylvania for all.
- We are working closely with business partners, schools and other organizations as information is reported to the department to ensure clear, accurate information is shared.



## What do we know?

- As of 6/18, more than 8,384,000 cases have occurred worldwide, including more than 449,000 deaths. Nationwide, there are more than 2,164,000 cases currently confirmed and more than 117,000 deaths.
- These numbers are rapidly changing, and information is evolving.
- As of 6/1, many hospitals have begun to return to normal operations, and bed counts reflect that.
  - The number of COVID-19 patients, and those on ventilators has continued to decrease.
  - Those hospitalized for COVID-19 is close to 850, and COVID-19 patients on a ventilator is around 175.
- Before our COVID-19 response, Pa. had more than 1 million masks available to assist frontline responders and healthcare workers.
- We have pushed out close to 5.2 million N95 masks to assist, and have continued to receive more in.
  - The state has also pushed out the following:
    - More than 490,000 gowns;
    - More than 2.1 million procedure masks;
    - Close to 2.85 million gloves;
    - More than 1.2 million face shields;
    - More than 99,000 coveralls; and
    - More than 885,000 bottles of hand sanitizer.
- We are working to ensure our frontline providers and healthcare workers have access to the appropriate PPE, which includes N95 masks, gowns, face shields, etc.
- We are working with a number of generous Pennsylvania companies to increase our PPE and ventilator capacity.
- We are also working with industries that may have these supplies to see what could be available.

## What is coronavirus?

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others circulating among animals, including camels, cats and bats.
- These viruses are common throughout the world.



- Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people, and then spread as has been seen with MERS and SARS.
- Outbreaks of MERS and SARS have been complex, requiring a thorough public health response.
- Early cases of the virus in Wuhan, China were linked to a large seafood and animal market, suggesting animal to person spread.
- At this point in the outbreak, person to person spread is occurring.

## What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms of human coronaviruses are often like the common cold.
  - Cough
  - Fever
  - Shortness of breath
  - Diarrhea
  - Potential loss of smell and/or taste
- The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying.

## How can the Coronavirus spread?

- Human coronaviruses spread just like the flu or a cold:
  - Through the air by coughing or sneezing;
  - Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands;
  - Touching an object or surface with the virus on it;
  - Occasionally, fecal contamination.
- What can you do?
  - **Cover** any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, do not use your hands!
  - **Clean** surfaces frequently, including countertops, light switches, cell phones, and other frequently touched items.
  - **WASH** your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol- based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
  - **Contain:** if you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.