

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 2020

Department of Health: More than 4,000 Close Contacts of COVID-19 Cases Identified, Monitored through Contact Tracing Efforts across Pennsylvania

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Health today announced more than 4,000 close contacts of COVID-19 cases have been identified and monitored to date through the contact tracing efforts of 500 trained contact tracers throughout the state, including 130 state health nurses. These efforts include the support from the six county health departments and four municipal health departments who have primary responsibility for all efforts inside their jurisdiction.

“We are now equipped with hundreds of contact tracers that can help us mitigate the spread of this virus, but we still need Pennsylvanians to be alert as COVID-19 remains a threat in our communities,” Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine. “We are proud to partner with dedicated individuals and organizations across the state to protect our neighbors who have come into contact with someone who has COVID-19. We encourage everyone to remain alert as we all continue to fight this ongoing virus.”

Pennsylvania's public health professionals are the backbone of contact tracing and are supported by volunteers to supplement their ongoing work and case management technology tools to track, manage and evaluate efforts.

Over 800 contract tracers have volunteered through the [ServPA platform](#), at least 50 through AmeriCorps and hundreds through other community organizations or academic institutions. The state has focused on building partnerships with organizations like AmeriCorps, who are volunteering 50 individuals to perform contact tracing this summer and exploring an additional 100 individuals in the fall. This month, Temple University has plans to onboard 200 students to help with contact tracing.

Across the commonwealth, regional consortiums will work to assess the number of contact tracers needed in each area, help recruit contact tracers and make sure training and education are available, and coordinate information and data to ensure consistency within the region. The consortiums will create a sustainable infrastructure that will support the growth of coordinated contact tracing efforts in each region, and will hopefully establish partnerships that could assist in other public health priorities moving forward. A regional approach grows existing community infrastructure and incorporates local knowledge, experience and connections.

In the southwest region, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation helped to quickly mobilize the initial membership of the regional consortium and the department will continue to seek partners in this region and as it continues coordination to begin consortium meetings in the remaining regions: Northwest, Northcentral, Northeast, Southcentral, and Southeast.

To ensure a healthy Pennsylvania for all, especially during these unprecedented times, the Wolf Administration will only partner with organizations and entities throughout this contact tracing strategy that have an established commitment to non-discriminatory practices. The Department of Health has created partnerships to connect with bilingual Pennsylvanians and will continue to build an inclusive network to communicate in other languages.

Governor Wolf's [Process to Reopen Pennsylvania](#) uses a careful, measured approach to ensure that Pennsylvanians are safe to resume work and normal routines. Robust case investigations, contact

tracing and monitoring are proven public health strategies that contain the spread of diseases and are necessary to identify any instances of community spread and prevent larger outbreaks.

You can find more information on the state's [contact tracing plan](#) and more about the contact tracing process on our website. Those who would like to become a contact tracer, as either an individual or a group, [can find information to sign up](#).

As of 12:00 a.m., June 19, there were 80,762 positive cases of COVID-19 statewide in 67 counties and 6,399 confirmed deaths. Most of the patients hospitalized are 65 or older, and most of the deaths have occurred in patients 65 and older. More data is available [here](#).

Pennsylvanians are reminded that mask-wearing is required when visiting businesses in both the yellow and green phases of reopening or in any setting outside the home where social distancing is difficult. Remember: My mask protects you; your mask protects me.

For the latest information for individuals, families, businesses and schools, visit "Responding to COVID-19" on pa.gov.

The Wolf Administration stresses 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.
- Stay home to avoid spreading COVID-19, especially if you are unwell.
- If you must go out for a life-sustaining reason, please wear a mask.

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

- [Daily COVID-19 Report](#)
- [Press releases regarding coronavirus](#)
- [Latest information on the coronavirus](#)
- [Photos of the state's lab in Exton](#) (for download and use)
- [Coronavirus and preparedness graphics](#) (located at the bottom of the page)
- [Community preparedness and procedures materials](#)
- [Map with the number of COVID-19 cases](#)

All Pennsylvania residents are encouraged to sign up for AlertPA, a text notification system for health, weather, and other important alerts like COVID-19 updates from commonwealth agencies. Residents can sign up online at www.ready.pa.gov/BeInformed/Signup-For-Alerts