



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 31, 2020**

[View Online](#)

## **Pennsylvania Shares Update on COVID-19 Early Warning Monitoring Dashboard, County Transmission Levels, Cases Traced to Businesses**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine today released a weekly status update detailing the state’s mitigation efforts based on the COVID-19 Early Warning Monitoring System [Dashboard](#). Updates are released each Monday.

The update includes the following:

- Level of **community transmission** as a basis for the recommendations for Pre-K to 12 schools to determine instructional [models](#).
- Cases that reported **visiting a business** among potential locations where exposures may have occurred.
- Updated **travel recommendations**.

The dashboard is designed to provide early warning signs of factors that affect the state’s mitigation efforts. The data available on the early warning monitoring dashboard includes week-over-week case differences, incidence rates, test percent-positivity, and rates of hospitalizations, ventilations and emergency room visits tied to COVID-19. This week’s update compares the period of August 21 – August 27 to the previous seven days, August 14 – August 20.

“Our percent positivity decreased again this week, representing the fifth straight week that the percent positivity has decreased,” Gov. Wolf said. “This is a testament that our actions are working, but we still have more work to do. The virus is still circulating, and we must continue to wear masks, practice social distancing and avoid large gatherings to keep our numbers low, stop the spread and allow more freedom.”

As of Thursday, August 27, the state has seen a seven-day case increase of 4,165; the previous seven-day increase was 4,518, indicating a 353-case decrease across the state over the past week.

The statewide percent-positivity went down to 3.2% from 3.4% last week. Counties with concerning percent-positivity include Columbia (13.5%), Armstrong (8.3%), Perry (6.9%), Northumberland (6.7%), Potter (5.9%), Beaver (5.7%), Dauphin (5.3%), Fulton (5.3%), and York (5.0%). Each of these counties bears watching as the state continues to monitor all available data.

### **Community Transmission**

As of Friday's data, Columbia County was the one county in the substantial level with a known source of an outbreak fueling community transmission. The departments of Education and Health will speak with school district representatives in Columbia County to discuss the implications of this level of transmission.

For the week ending August 27, 22 counties were in the low level of transmission, 44 counties in the moderate level, with one with substantial transmission:

- Low – Bedford, Bradford, Cameron, Carbon, Clarion, Clinton, Elk, Forest, Fulton, Greene, Juniata, McKean, Montour, Pike, Potter, Somerset, Sullivan, Tioga, Venango, Warren, Wayne, Wyoming
- Moderate – Adams, Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Berks, Blair, Bucks, Butler, Cambria, Centre, Chester, Clearfield, Crawford, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Erie, Fayette, Franklin, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lawrence, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Lycoming, Mercer, Mifflin, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, Snyder, Susquehanna, Union, Washington, Westmoreland, York
- Substantial – Columbia

### **Business Visits**

The Department of Health is providing weekly data on the number of individuals who responded to case investigators that they spent time at business establishments (restaurants, bars, gym/fitness centers, salon/barbershops) and at mass gatherings 14 days prior to the onset of COVID-19 symptoms.

Of the 4,536 confirmed cases reported between August 16 and August 22, 46 percent (2,093) provided an answer to the question as to whether they spent time at a business establishment.

Of those who did provide an answer, 13 percent, or 268, answered yes, they visited a business establishment 14 days prior to onset of symptoms:

- 50 percent (134) of those who said yes reported going to a restaurant;
- 25 percent (66) of those who said yes reported going to some other business establishment;
- 12 percent (33) of those who said yes reported going to a bar;
- 12 percent (33) of those who said yes reported going to a gym/fitness center; and
- 9 percent (24) of those who said yes reported going to a salon/barbershop.

Of the 4,536 confirmed cases, 47 percent (2,114) answered the question as to whether they attended a mass gathering or other large event. Of the 47 percent, nearly 13 percent (272) answered yes to whether they attended a mass gathering or other large event 14 days prior to onset of symptoms.

Compared to data [reported on August 24](#), this week's data saw an increase in people who reported going to some other business (25 percent vs. 23 percent), and going to a gym/fitness center (12 percent vs. 8 percent). Numbers went down for this week's data for people going to a salon/barbershop (9 percent vs. 12 percent) and going to a bar (12 percent vs. 17 percent). Numbers remained the same for those who reported visiting a restaurant (50 percent). The number of those who attended a mass gathering or other large event went up from nearly 12 percent to nearly 13 percent.

Case investigator notes included frequent mentions of visits to bars and restaurants among positive cases. To better understand this emerging trend, on July 13 contact tracers began asking more specific questions on the types of businesses visited and if individuals attended a mass gathering, defined as more than 250 people in attendance outdoors or more than 25 indoors.

The numbers above highlight business settings and mass gatherings as possible sites for transmission. With less than half of those asked about what types of businesses they visited or if they attended a mass gathering responding to the question, the department is reminding Pennsylvanians that it is essential that people answer the phone when case investigators call and to provide full and complete information to these clinical professionals.

### **Travel Recommendations**

Also today, the Department of Health [updated its travel recommendations](#), originally announced on July 2, to add Hawaii, Illinois and South Dakota to the list of states recommended for domestic travelers returning from to quarantine for 14 days upon return to Pennsylvania. No states were removed from the list.

It is important that people understand that this recommendation is in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Pennsylvania. A concerning number of recent cases have been linked to travel, and if people are going to travel, we need them to take steps to protect themselves, their loved ones and their community, and that involves quarantining.

Gov. Wolf continues to prioritize the health and safety of all Pennsylvanians through the COVID-19 pandemic. Pennsylvanians should continue to take actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, regardless of in what county they live. This includes wearing a mask or face covering anytime they are in public. COVID-19 has been shown to spread easily in the air and contagious carriers can be asymptomatic.