

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Health Unveils New Digital Case Investigation Tool: Connect & Protect Form

Harrisburg, PA - The Department of Health today unveiled a new digital case investigation tool, called the Connect & Protect Form, for Pennsylvanians 19 through 64 who reside in a county without its own county or municipal health department.

“Launching this tool allows public health professionals to connect with more Pennsylvanians in record time to learn where people went and who they were in close contact with while infectious in order to further protect loved ones and neighbors across the commonwealth,” Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. “We are eager to continue adding tools to our toolbox to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Residents that are diagnosed with COVID-19 will still receive a call from a public health professional, but if they are between 19 and 64, they will be asked to provide their email address to receive the Connect & Protect Form to complete as soon as possible.”

Across the commonwealth, there are 230 case investigators who reach out to incoming cases who are younger than 19 and older than 64 to find out where they went and who they came in contact with in order to prevent outbreaks while infectious. This case investigation typically takes between 30 and 60 minutes to complete.

Now with the addition of the digital case investigation through the Connect & Protect Form, Pennsylvanians who are age 19 through 64 and diagnosed with COVID-19 will now receive a call from a contact tracer to collect their email address in order to provide them the Connect & Protect Form to complete. This tool enables public health professionals to reach out to more Pennsylvanians in record time, cutting down the time it would typically take to complete a case investigation.

Once the digital case investigation is complete through the Connect & Protect Form, contact tracers will also begin to reach out to the close contacts identified and successfully monitor those Pennsylvanians to ensure they have supports in place if they later develop symptoms. All information collected in this form will be protected the same way the information provided to our case investigators is protected.

In addition to the traditional form of contact tracing, the department launched [COVID Alert PA](#), a free mobile app that uses Bluetooth technology to let a person know that they have been exposed to COVID-19 without compromising the identity or location of either the person using the app, or of the person to whom they may have been exposed. There have been more than 707,000 downloads thus far.

Contact tracers and case investigators are be equipped to share the six-digit code or Random ID during the initial call in order to anonymously share an exposure notification with their close contacts through the COVID Alert PA app.

There have been 527 cases that confirmed their positivity and uploaded their random ID's through the app. These uploads generated 253 exposure alerts to persons who have downloaded the app on their phones and who were in close contact (six feet for 15 minutes or more) to the case. Of those who received the alerts, 41 individuals requested a call back for further assistance from a trained contact tracer.

You can find more information on the state's contact tracing efforts at the Department of Health's website [here](#).

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, you are required to wear a mask when in a business or where it is difficult to maintain proper social distancing.
- Download the COVID Alert PA app and make your phone part of the fight. The free app can be found in the [Google Play Store](#) and the [Apple App Store](#) by searching for "covid alert pa".

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](#)