Gov. Wolf Puts Statewide COVID-19 Mitigation Efforts in Effect, Stresses Need for Every Pennsylvanian to Take Action to Stop the Spread

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Healthcare, Press Release, Public Health

Governor Tom Wolf today announced that mitigation efforts put into effect over the past few days in Montgomery, Delaware, Bucks, Chester and Allegheny counties will now be in effect statewide, beginning at 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, March 17.

“Earlier today, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut imposed similar restrictions, and I thank the residents of these states for joining Pennsylvania in working together to halt the spread of COVID-19,” Gov. Wolf said. “I know the next few weeks will be challenging. There is no reason to be fearful, or to panic, but we need to take this disease seriously. Please, stay home. Make as few in-person contacts as you can.”

Guidance previously announced for Montgomery, Delaware, Bucks, Chester and Allegheny counties will now expand statewide as of 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, March 17, continuing for 14 days. This guidance applies to all 67 counties in the commonwealth.

Gov. Wolf is permitted under law to enforce closures; however, the governor’s approach is to reinforce that it is incumbent on all of us to help mitigate the spread, knowing that compliance can help to protect customers, employees, and the community. The administration supports local law enforcement, permitting entities, and local officials to enforce if needed. The governor does not want to expend valuable resources from the state police and PA National Guard because irresponsible people choose not to do the right thing.

Statewide Mitigation Efforts beginning at 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, March 17 include:

- All restaurants and bars close their dine-in facilities to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Businesses that offer carry-out, delivery, and drive-through food and beverage service may continue to do so but eating and drinking inside restaurants and bars is temporarily prohibited.
- 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 all Pennsylvanians are asked to refrain from non-essential travel.
- All child care centers licensed by the commonwealth close as of Tuesday, March 17 and will be re-evaluated at the conclusion of the 14-day statewide closures. Philadelphia County families should check with their child care facilities to determine status of business operations.
- Adult day care centers, adult training facilities, Provocations facilities, LIFE centers and Senior Community Centers close beginning Tuesday, March 17 and will be re-evaluated at the conclusion of the 14-day statewide closures.
- 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 administration issued guidance for non-essential businesses, such as gyms, movie theaters and shopping malls during county-specific mitigation periods to protect employees, customers, and suppliers and limit the spread of the virus through personal contact and surfaces. Additional statewide business guidance is forthcoming.
- Governor Tom Wolf announced on March 13 that all K-12 Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced on March 13 that all K-12 Pennsylvania schools will be closed for 10 business days effective Monday, March 16.
- 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.
- The Wolf Administration encourages religious leaders to exercise discretion in order to mitigate the spread of illness.
- Restricted visitors in state centers to ensure health and safety for individuals with an intellectual disability.
- Restricted visitors in assisted living and personal care homes to minimize exposure to our seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Commonwealth Employees

- The Office of Administration will provide a message to all commonwealth employees regarding telework.
- Individuals will be instructed to work from home if feasible.
- The commonwealth is authorizing a 10 workday paid absence for individuals who don't have telework capabilities.
- Commonwealth facilities that provide essential services will remain open.
- County-administered facilities will follow the same procedures as those of the state.

The Department of Health stressed 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.
- If you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

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

For the daily COVID-19 Report, visit here.

For all press releases regarding coronavirus, please visit here.

Find the latest information on the coronavirus here.

Photos of the state's lab in Exton are available for download and use here.

Coronavirus and preparedness graphics are available here near the bottom of the page: On.pa.gov/coronavirus

Community preparedness and procedures materials are available here.