

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 21 PRESUMPTIVE POSITIVE cases in Pennsylvania of this coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Counties impacted to date include:
 - Bucks (2)
 - Delaware (1)
 - Monroe (2)
 - Montgomery (13)
 - Northampton (1)
 - Philadelphia (1)
 - Wayne (1)
- On 3/6 Governor Wolf declared an emergency disaster declaration. This frees up funding and resources to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak that is occurring nationwide.
- We understand there is a lot of concern of COVID-19 spread in Pennsylvania. COVID-19 is spread through the air by coughing or sneezing, close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hand and touching an object or surface with the virus on it.
- If you have recent travel history or have been in contact with a known COVID-19 exposure, we encourage Pennsylvanians to call 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) to discuss their symptoms and exposure to determine if a test is needed.
- We need to be prepared for community spread of COVID-19. We are working to make sure our health systems, first responders and county and municipal health departments have the resources they need to respond.
- 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:

Travel Updates

- If you arrived in Pennsylvania from China or Iran anytime during the outbreaks there, you will be notified by the department to stay home and practice social distancing for 14 days after travel.
- If you have returned from travel in Italy or South Korea within the past 14 days, we ask that you call 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) to let the department know about your travel, and then stay home and practice social distancing for 14 days after travel.
- While we caution Pennsylvanians to avoid all unnecessary travel to and from countries with a CDC level 3 travel advisory at this time, we understand that it cannot all be avoided. In that case, we are urging Pennsylvanians to be aware of and follow these guidelines to protect their health and others around them.
 - Contact the Department at 1-877-PA-HEALTH
 - Avoid contact with others.
 - Not travel while sick.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
 - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- If you are sick, stay home. If you are sick and returned from China or been in contact with someone from China who has been ill with suspected novel coronavirus or confirmed positive, contact the PA Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258).

Pennsylvania Actions

- Activated of the Department of Health's Emergency Operations Center to allow for enhanced response coordination;
- Begun testing for COVID-19 at the state laboratory;



- Maintained communication and outreach with federal, state and local partners;
- Provided symptom monitoring for residents returning from areas impacted by coronavirus;
- Provided health care providers, businesses and education providers with information;
- Reviewed and adapted current pandemic flu plans to prepare for spread of COVID-19;
- Increased testing capacity to test 20 to 25 individuals daily;
- Purchased equipment to increase testing capacity to 125 to 150 individuals beginning the weekend of March 6-8.
- Partially activated 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.
- Our team is working to ensure the health and safety of Pennsylvanians returning from areas where coronavirus outbreaks are occurring, and all Pennsylvanians.
- At the same time, we are monitoring the spread of this virus throughout the world.

What do we know?

- As of 3/12, there are 1,323 cases currently confirmed nationwide.
 - This includes 38 deaths which are in Washington State, California, Florida, New Jersey and South Dakota.



- These numbers are rapidly changing, and information is evolving.

What are we doing?

- To date, we have activated the Department of Health's Emergency Operations Center to allow for enhanced response coordination;
- We are maintaining communication and outreach with federal, state and local partners;
- We are monitoring symptoms of residents returning to PA from China;
- We are constantly providing information to health care professionals, businesses and educational settings and we are reviewing and adapting our current pandemic flu plans for COVID-19.
- The PA Department of Health collects information on reportable diseases and conditions as part of our mission to prevent diseases from spreading and ensuring a healthy Pennsylvania for all.
- We have been monitoring the coronavirus outbreak in China with information from our federal and local partners and are preparing our response teams in the event of an outbreak here.
- We have communicated with clinicians through our Health Alert Network about the potential for coronavirus cases to spread into the United States, and into Pennsylvania. We have also provided information to clinicians on how to ship lab specimens of potential coronavirus cases.
- We are testing potential cases in our state lab in Exton.
- The testing of potential cases involves being seen by a clinician and have specimens taken and then sent to the state lab for testing.
- These tests are not the same as rapid tests that are done for health conditions such as strep throat.



- Soon, it is expected that private and commercial laboratories will also have the ability to test, which will increase the ability for testing to be done in Pennsylvania.
- However, at this time, all positive cases will be reported as presumptive positives, and will be sent to the CDC for confirmation.
- The Bureaus of Epidemiology and Emergency Preparedness and Response exercise and prepare frequently for a potential infectious disease outbreak.

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.
- However, a growing number of individuals did not have exposure to animal markets, suggesting 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



- 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.

World Picture

- As of 3/12, nearly 128,000 cases have occurred worldwide, including more than 4,700 deaths.
- Person-to-person spread is happening, including in the United States, and there is also the spread of people who are not showing symptoms.
 - This includes multiple instances in the United States of community spread.