**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
**April 13, 2020**

## Department of Health Releases Interim Crisis Standards of Care Guidance for Hospitals

**Harrisburg, PA-** Pennsylvania Department of Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine today announced the department has finalized interim guidance for hospitals should they become overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients who have critical medical needs.

"Our team began to develop a document that helped hospitals make decisions in extreme circumstances after it saw what happened in the aftermath of major hurricanes and earthquakes throughout the world," Dr. Levine said. "Initially, this was intended to be a year-and-a-half process, but four months into its development COVID-19 became a global pandemic, so it was fast tracked. While a committee worked with key stakeholders to ensure it is a balanced approached to a difficult topic, this document is a work in progress and may change in future versions."

The Interim Pennsylvania Crisis Standards of Care for Pandemic Guidelines, developed with The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania, is a guide to help hospitals determine how patient resources are allocated during an overwhelming public health emergency when the needs of the community dramatically exceed the supply of resources available. The guidelines specifically prohibit discrimination in regard to patient age, race, gender, creed, religion or exercise of conscience, color, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, ethnicity, national origin (including limited English proficiency), or socioeconomic status.

"As we have seen in Italy and New York, the rapid spread of COVID-19 can quickly overwhelm the health care system," Dr. Levine said. "We hope that our hospitals never have to use crisis standards of care to make treatment decisions. The only way we can prevent a worst-case scenario from happening is to stay home and practice social distancing."

As of 12 am, April 13, there were 24,199 positive cases of COVID-19 statewide in all 67 counties and 524 deaths.

There are 2,187 patients hospitalized with COVID-19; 658 of those are on ventilators. Most of the patients hospitalized are aged 65 or older, and most of the deaths have occurred in patients 65 or older. There have been no pediatric deaths to date. More data is available here.

Currently, approximately 60 percent of intensive care unit beds, 55 percent of hospital beds and 70 percent of ventilators are available statewide.

All non-life-sustaining businesses are ordered to be closed and schools are closed statewide through the remainder of the academic year. Currently the entire state is under a stay-at-home order.

**Statewide – The Wolf Administration has since noon, April 10:**

- Began implementing new federal unemployment benefits.
- Announced $450 million loan program for hospitals.
- Established temporary program to reprieve incarceration sentences.

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.

**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.