![Pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH logo]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Department of Health Applies for $301 Million Federal Grant to Strengthen COVID-19 Response, More Than $100 Million for Local Health Departments

Harrisburg, PA – Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine today announced that the Department of Health has applied for a more than $301 million grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to strengthen state and local public health capacity in Pennsylvania.

"This funding is essential to our future response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Pennsylvania," Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. "In our application, we earmarked about a third of that funding, more than $100 million, to bolster county and municipal public health departments' response. We intend to use the balance of the grant funding to expand our testing efforts, case investigating and contact tracing and our data infrastructure to improve our response."

The Department will also continue its close collaboration with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, who separately received more than $92 million to assist their work from CDC.

Throughout Pennsylvania, there are [six county health departments and four municipal health departments](#), who have primary responsibility for public health efforts inside their jurisdiction.

The funding will support six primary strategies to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. These include continuing work to develop a robust testing and contact tracing strategy, supporting local health departments and investing in public health surveillance and laboratory infrastructure. The grant submission focused on ensuring minority and underserved communities are targeted for testing, outreach and we have improved demographic data collection. Here is a breakdown of these six strategies and the corresponding funding:

1. Strengthen Laboratory Testing: $96,407,366

    · Stand up regional hub and spoke testing network to ensure testing is available and accessible across the commonwealth.

    · Partner with vendors to deliver testing at long term care facilities, community-based testing sites and other locations with a focus on minority communities.

· Purchase necessary supplies and equipment for the PA DOH's state laboratory to increase testing capacity at the state level, prioritized for long term care and other congregate care settings. This includes supplies and equipment for both diagnostic and antibody testing.

2. Advance Electronic Data Exchange at Public Health Labs: $3,133,542

· Implement an IT solution to enhance and expand laboratory results information infrastructure, to enable faster and more complete data exchange and reporting for public health data.

3. Improve Surveillance and Reporting of Electronic Health Data: $5,048,277

· Implement IT solutions to enable comprehensive, automated, daily reporting to the CDC and others in a machine-readable format. This includes hiring a vendor to populate missing demographic information to ensure state has a complete picture of impact of COVID-19 by race and ethnicity.

4. Use Laboratory Data to Enhance Investigation, Response and Prevention: $84,815,746

· Develop a robust investigation and contact tracing infrastructure for in depth case investigation and contact tracing including nurses, contact tracers, outbreak response and IT solutions, including a mobile app for exposure notification. Additionally, this strategy includes funding for six outreach specialists to serve as trusted messengers to reach traditionally underserved communities.

· Target $10 million of funding to research and address health disparities related to COVID-19 and ensure communities and systems are intentionally focused on ensuring a healthy Pennsylvania for all.

5. Coordinate and Engage with Partners: $103,529,626

· Support the state's county and municipal health departments (CMHDs) so they can bolster the infrastructure and workforce needed to address local public health needs now and in the future. Create and provide additional programs to LTCF to support response.

6. Enhance Laboratory, Surveillance, Informatics and other Workforce Capacity: $8,102,129

· Build expertise to support management of the COVID-19 related activities within the commonwealth.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

- Diarrhea
- Chills
- Repeating shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

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.

As of 12:00 a.m., June 18, there were 80,236 positive cases of COVID-19 statewide in 67 counties and 6,361 confirmed deaths. Most of the patients hospitalized are 65 or older, and most of the deaths have occurred in patients 65 and older. More data is available [here](#).

Pennsylvanians are reminded that mask-wearing is required when visiting businesses in both the yellow and green phases of reopening or in any setting outside the home where social distancing is difficult. Remember: My mask protects you; your mask protects me.

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.
- If you must go out for a life-sustaining reason, please wear a mask.

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](#).