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Delaware County Council Passes Resolution to Request Additional COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies
Council also implements immediate actions to further address the increasing positivity rate

During its Nov. 18 public meeting, Delaware County Council voted 4 to 1 to pass a resolution requesting that Governor Wolf and the Pennsylvania Department of Health enact additional COVID-19 mitigation strategies. The resolution is in response to an alarming spike in COVID-19 cases throughout the county. The county has now exceeded the highest number of COVID-19 outbreaks since the height of the pandemic.

The resolution outlined the following mitigation efforts:

- Masks are required at food establishments except when a patron is eating or drinking
- Limiting the number of individuals at a food establishment dining table to four (this pertains to inside and outside dining)
- Limiting inside gatherings to ten people or less

Delaware County Council worked with the Chester County Health Department to review current public health guidance and COVID-19 data to determine the additional mitigation efforts. Council has also worked with the Chester County Health Department, Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Delaware Commerce Center, the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce, the Delaware County Intermediate Unit, and various community partners on additional mitigation strategies to address the increasing positivity rates.

Recently, Council took several immediate actions to further address the increasing positivity rates in the county:

- Council approved an agreement with Visit Delco to promote the safe support of businesses during the holiday season
- The County will launch communications campaigns to stress and encourage the behaviors that help contain the transmission of the COVID-19 virus throughout the community
- The County will promote additional holiday guidance as provided by the Chester County Health Department
- Many County departments have or will return to primarily hybrid and reduced in-person staffing models. Some services will only be provided virtually or on an appointment-only basis. The number of in-person meetings will be minimized.

Actions Taken to Date by the County:

- Council has provided financial assistance to the public-school districts through the Delaware County Intermediate Unit (DCIU) to support remote instruction and return to in-person instruction
- Council has provided financial assistance to non-profit agencies and local businesses to support continued operation through the Delco Strong programs
- Council has provided personal protective equipment (PPE) to childcare facilities throughout the County
- Council entered into an agreement with the Child Care Professionals Network to provide financial assistance to economically qualifying families for childcare services
- The County is providing flu vaccination and COVID-19 testing services through Intercommunity Community Health in cooperation with community health care providers and the Chester County Department of Health
- The County is procuring assets, including a mobile trailer and other units, to support mobile testing and vaccination sites in the future
- The County is developing a Community Wellness Center in Yeadon to provide a base of operations for wellness services, testing, and vaccinations – including cold storage of COVID-19 vaccinations once they become available

“The additional mitigation efforts are not as strict as some put into place in neighboring counties,” said Delaware County Council Chairman Brian Zidek. “The efforts call on residents to display personal responsibility and further reduce the spread of the virus by limiting close contact with people outside of your immediate family. The common goal is to protect the community and not put our schools and businesses in danger of being shut down again.”

Delaware County does not have an Act 315 Health Department and must rely on PA Department of Health to enact mitigation strategies in the county. The resolution will be presented to Governor Wolf and the Pennsylvania Department of Health for consideration.

COVID-19 cases in Delaware County have been rising and the county has now exceeded the highest number of outbreaks since the height of the pandemic. At the height of the pandemic, there were 232 cases a day in Delaware County. On Nov. 18, Delaware County reported 287 cases, bringing the total of positive cases in Delaware County to 17,184. There have been 836 COVID-19 related deaths in the county. Delaware County is nearing a 7-day percent positivity of 10%.

Since Nov. 9, Delaware County hospitals have had to divert patients because they had reached capacity and/or did not have enough essential healthcare workers to treat patients. Hospitals continue to see an increase in COVID-19 admissions. Essential emergency service and healthcare workers are being strained, and that directly affects the entire community. There are fewer 911 operators to take the calls, there are fewer police, fire and EMS to respond, when a patient arrives at the ER they may be diverted to another hospital in another county, and if the ER is open- the patient will likely experience a much longer wait time.

On Nov.17, the PA Department of Health announced four new mitigation efforts: Protecting the Health Care System, New Traveler Testing Order, Strengthened Masking Order, and Recommendations for Colleges and Universities. Details can be found here:

www.delcopa.gov/publicrelations/releases/2020/pdf/GovWolf_FourNewMitigationEfforts.pdf

The resolution detailing the mitigation efforts in Delaware County can be found here:

<https://www.delcopa.gov/pdf/COVID19Resolution.pdf>

The State, including Pennsylvania State Police, will enforce any new or existing State or County guidance.