

LIMITED-TIME STAY AT HOME LIMITED-TIME ADVISORY OF THE SECRETARY OF THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a contagious disease that is spreading rapidly from person to person in the world, the United States, and this Commonwealth. COVID-19 can be transmitted from any person who is infected, even if they have no symptoms. Additionally, exposure is possible by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching one's mouth, nose, or eyes. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. Older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions are at a higher risk for serious illness. Illness in children and young adults has become more common as the face of the pandemic continues to change. After a brief respite in the summer months, case counts and the number of hospitalizations and of deaths have been rising throughout the Commonwealth, surrounding states, and the world. As of November 21, 2020, there have been 302,564 cases and 9,801 deaths in this Commonwealth caused by the still present and ongoing pandemic. In the late spring and summer of this year, the number of cases declined due to the mitigation efforts taken by the people of this Commonwealth, in response to the Orders issued by the Governor and by me requiring mitigation and containment. With the reduced case counts in June and July, the economic health of Pennsylvanians and of the Commonwealth itself, which also impacts the public health of Pennsylvanians, necessitated lifting those more stringent restrictions. The Governor and I then issued targeted mitigation orders intended to prevent a resumption of spread, with its concomitant danger to vulnerable populations within the Commonwealth, while continuing to allow for the necessary resumption of economic and social activity within the Commonwealth.

Despite our best efforts, and the efforts of the well-intentioned residents of the Commonwealth, the pandemic continues to spread, and the number of reported cases in the Commonwealth and the nation are the highest seen during the pandemic. The number of deaths began to increase again in October. The upcoming holiday season, the movement of persons indoors with the colder weather, the return of students to and from schools, and the understandable desire to return to normal living all contribute to the continued rise in cases and deaths. But this is not the time to become lax in our mitigation efforts. The Commonwealth remains responsible to protect the public's health and prevent our hospitals and health systems from being unable to provide care to everyone who needs it.

COVID-19 is a threat to the public's health, for which the Secretary of Health may order general control measures, including, but not limited to, recommendations and orders relating to closure, isolation and quarantine, hygiene and restrictions on activities. This authority is granted to the Secretary of Health pursuant to Pennsylvania law. See section 5 of the Disease Prevention and Control Law, 35 P.S. § 521.5; sections 2102(a) and 2106 of the Administrative Code of 1929, 71 P.S. §§ 532(a), and 536; and the Department of Health's regulations at 28 Pa. Code §§ 27.60-27.68 (relating to disease control measures; isolation; quarantine; movement of persons subject to isolation or quarantine; and release from isolation and quarantine). Particularly, the Department of Health has the authority to take any disease control



measure appropriate to protect the public from the spread of infectious disease. See 35 P.S. § 521.5; 71 P.S. §§ 532(a), and 1403(a); 28 Pa. Code § 27.60.

In response to the continuing and sustained increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the Commonwealth in almost every one of its 67 counties, with 3,162 persons currently hospitalized as of November 21, 2020, over 100 new hospitalizations per day, and deaths increasing steadily, I must strongly advise that the people of the Commonwealth take certain actions to protect themselves, their families and the public.

Accordingly, on this day, November 23, 2020, I hereby strongly advise all Pennsylvanians to:

- Section 1. Only leave home to go to work or school, or for essential needs of themselves or persons they are caring for, such as seeking medical care for themselves, others, or their pets, providing child care or eldercare, going to the grocery store or pharmacy, picking up food or exercising. When not at home, individuals must wear a face covering in accordance with my [Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#), dated November 17, 2020, and practice physical distancing by staying at least six feet away from others and frequent hand hygiene.
- Section 2. Not have individuals in their homes who are not part of their household unless those individuals are needed to provide activities that are essential for the health, education, child care or eldercare of household members, or other activities, such as essential home repair and cleaning, deliveries of food or medicines or providing home health services. Throughout such a visit, all individuals must wear a face covering in accordance with my [Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#) and practice physical distancing.
- Section 3. Limit holiday celebrations to members of their immediate household or limiting the number of people present at celebrations and following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for a safer holiday:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html#considerations-hosting>.
- Section 4. Avoid travel, within and outside of the Commonwealth, inconsistent with this Order. The *Governor's Order Directing Travel Mitigation*, dated November 17, 2020, and my [Order for Mitigation Relating to Travel](#) dated November 17, 2020, remain in effect.

This Advisory shall remain in effect until January 4, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RL Levine MD', written in a cursive style.

Rachel L. Levine, MD
Secretary of Health