

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**October 16, 2020**

## **Department of Health Expands COVID-19 Testing Sites Through Faith-Based Partnerships**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine today announced beginning Saturday, October 17, COVID-19 testing sites will be launched in communities in Allegheny and Dauphin counties in faith-based settings.

“Research shows that geographically, low-income areas, including Pennsylvanian communities of Black or African American, Hispanic and/or Spanish-speaking minorities, have been disproportionately affected with higher rates of COVID-19,” Dr. Levine said. “We know that appropriate testing, along with other public health interventions such as social distancing, wearing face masks, avoiding group gatherings and practicing hand washing can help communities mitigate transmission of COVID-19. In seeking to address the racial disparities of COVID-19 transmission, the department is looking to partner with important community-based organizations, such as faith-based organizations, to support and provide testing. We encourage health providers to follow our lead in partnering with faith-based organizations to create testing sites at faith-based settings in impacted communities.”

To ensure a healthier Pennsylvania for all, especially during these unprecedented times, the Wolf administration will only partner with organizations and entities throughout our response to COVID-19 that have established a commitment to non-discriminatory practices.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19 to communities with an increased likelihood of contracting the virus, faith-based communities, hospitals/health systems and community health centers are partnering together in Allegheny and Dauphin counties to increase testing availability in these more vulnerable communities.

In Allegheny County, the Allegheny Health Network, Cornerstone Care Community Health Center, Metro Community Health Center, Northside Christian Health Center, Primary Care Health Services, Inc., Sto-Rox Family Health Center and 21 congregations representing both the Faith Based Health Collaborative of Pittsburgh, PA, and the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Churches of God in Christ have joined together with the department for this endeavor. In Dauphin County, the department is partnering with the Hamilton Health Center, the Salvation Army and five church congregations.

“While these relationships were built with the intention of closing the gap for COVID-19 testing disparities, we are taking this opportunity to disseminate COVID-19 messaging and foster long-term relationships with these churches,” Dr. Levine said.

In addition to the aforementioned church organizations, the department has established relationships with other faith-based organizations that are ready to collaborate with providers, received education on an existing evidence-based model utilized by a neighboring state and provider, and is working to identify locations where there may be a need for accessible testing.

Already, the commonwealth has partnered with entities including Rite Aid, CVS, Patient First, Walgreens, Latino Connection to provide testing. Pennsylvanians can also be tested at health clinics, through health systems, hospitals and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and [other](#)

[locations](#). The department continues to conduct robust testing at the state public health laboratory as well.

The department began reaching out to certain hospitals, health systems and FQHCs to determine if they would consider partnering with local faith-based organizations to establish a temporary testing site that may include:

- Education;
- Diagnostic testing; and
- Referrals and connection to health care providers.

Interested entities may reach out to the [Department of Health Office of Health Equity](#) for a list of the participating faith-based organizations in their county who have shown an interest in this initiative.

At present, the dates and times for **Allegheny** testing events are as follows:

- Saturday, October 17, Braddock Family Health Center with Unity Baptist Church, 420 Fifth St., Braddock, PA, 15104 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM;
- Monday, October 19, Triumph Baptist Church, 1293 Mt. Nebo Road, Pittsburgh, PA, 15237 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM;
- Wednesday, October 21, Petra International Ministries, 235 Eastgate Drive, Pittsburgh, PA, 15235 from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM;
- Thursday, October 22,
  - Mount Ararat Church, 271 Paulson Ave, Pittsburgh, PA, 15206 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM;
  - The Hill House Family Health Center with Calvary Baptist Church, 2629 Wylie Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM;
- Monday, October 26,
  - St. Paul AME Church, 400 Orchard Place, Pittsburgh, PA, 15210 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM;
  - Jerusalem Baptist Church, 12 S. 5<sup>th</sup> St, Duquesne, PA, 15110 from 12:00 PM to 2:30 PM;
- Wednesday, October 28 Mt. Olive First Baptist Church, 451 Park Ave., Clairton, PA, 15025 from 12:00 PM to 3:30 PM; and
- Thursday, October 29, Pentecostal Temple Church of God In Christ, 6300 E Liberty Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA, 15207 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

At present, the dates and times for **Dauphin** testing events are as follows:

- Friday, October 21, Kingdom Embassy Church, 2111 N. 4th Street, Harrisburg, PA, 17110 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM;
- Monday, October 26, St. Paul's Episcopal Church with Goodwin Baptist Church, 248 Seneca St., Harrisburg, PA, 17110 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM;
- Tuesday, October 27, Shiloh Church of God in Christ, 5950 Derry Street, Harrisburg, PA, 17111 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM; and
- Friday, October 30, LCBC Church, 4510 Chambers Hill Rd, Harrisburg, PA, 17111 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

As additional dates and times are finalized, these will be advertised on the Department of Health's [website](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) social media accounts.

Testing events will occur outdoors where participants may drive through or walk up to receive free testing. Registration will be encouraged but an appointment is not necessary to be tested. Participants should bring a photo-ID. On average, the turnaround time to receive results will be two to three days after testing.

Individuals who are tested should self-isolate while they await test results. For those individuals who live with other people, they should self-isolate in a private room and use a private bathroom if possible. Whoever else lives in the home with the individual awaiting test results should also stay at home. The department has [additional instructions for individuals waiting for a COVID-19 test result](#).

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, you are required to wear a mask when in a business or where it is difficult to maintain proper social distancing.

**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](#)

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