Delaware County’s March 22 Update to Brief Residents on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Today the Pennsylvania Department of Health announced 108 additional cases of COVID-19 in the state, bringing the total to 479. The total number of cases in Delaware County is 45.

On March 19, Delaware County Council and Chester County Commissioners announced the approval by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, for Chester County to take the lead on Delaware County’s COVID-19 public health response. The Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement between Chester and Delaware Counties identifies the responsibilities of the Chester County Health Department during the COVID-19 outbreak, which will continue until federal and state partners determine there is no longer a pandemic outbreak. Those responsibilities include coordination of increased testing, case investigation and surveillance, quarantine designations and public health communication.
The Chester County Health Department has updated their website to include data and maps for Delaware County COVID-19 cases. Residents can visit the website for COVID-19 data and information on how to keep themselves, their family and friends, and the community healthy.
The website is:  www.chesco.org/4376/Coronavirus-COVID-19

It can also be accessed on the Delaware County’s COVID-19 website by clicking on the blue COVID-19 banner: www.delcopa.gov/ich/resources/coronavirus.html

There are two local numbers for residents to call for COVID-19 related resources and questions. Residents can call the Chester County Health Department Hotline at 610-344-6225. They have staff on site from 8:30am-4:30pm, seven days a week answering questions. They have also partnered with the Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline, which is staffed 24/7. Residents can call 1-800-722-7112.

While we are expanding testing options, it is important for residents to contact their doctor for an assessment. Currently, all testing in Delaware County and Chester County requires a referral from your doctor. If you do not have a primary care provider, you should call an urgent care. More testing information can be found here:  www.chesco.org/DocumentCenter/View/54233/Testing-for-Coronavirus

Currently, a total of three inmates and five staff members have tested positive for COVID-19 at the George W. Hill Correctional Facility. The three inmates are isolated and none have needed medical care at a hospital. Inmates with known exposures, but not showing symptoms are grouped together. The staff have been isolated at home with guidance for monitoring their symptoms. Everyone in the prison, including staff and inmates are told to report symptoms of COVID-19 immediately. All staff and inmates are being screened for symptoms before entering the facility.

The George W. Hill Correctional Facility is following recommended cleaning guidelines. The Chester County Health Department has provided guidance on social distancing, isolation and quarantine monitoring, and use of personal protective equipment at the facility. The facility is fully cooperating with CCHD and regular conference calls are assessing implementation of guidelines, of the facility’s plan, unmet needs, and any adjustments to the plan that may be needed in the future.

The Delaware County Government Center will be closed to the public March 23-27. Government Center offices will operate with a reduced and staggered staff to ensure the continuity of government, however, the offices will not be open to the public. A limited number of court offices will remain open. All employees will be screened before entering County buildings.

Governor Wolf ordered all non-life-sustaining businesses in Pennsylvania to close their physical locations as of 8:00 p.m. March 19. The order was issued to slow the spread of COVID-19. Enforcement actions against businesses that do not close physical
locations will begin at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, March 23.

Delaware County is stressing that all businesses deemed “non-life-sustaining businesses” adhere to this order. We have a very narrow window of time to take measures to prevent this virus from rapidly spreading. We have the opportunity to learn from other countries and do things differently and can mitigate the spread of the virus, but that doesn’t work if we’re not all taking measures. We have the ability to flatten the curve if the entire community adheres to the guidance we’re being given.

The Governor’s list of non-life-sustaining businesses can be found here: https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/20200319-Life-Sustaining-Business.pdf

The Governor’s order states:
Failure to comply will result in enforcement action that could include citations, fines, or license suspensions. Businesses that fail or refuse to comply will forfeit their ability to receive disaster relief and/or may include termination of state loan or grant funding, including Redevelopment Assistance Capital Project (RACP) grant funding and/or suspension or revocation of licensure for violation of the law.

Waiver FAQ’s and instructions can be found here: https://www.delcopa.gov/ich/pdfs/03.21.2020%20DCED%20COVID%20Life%20Sustaining%20Business%20FAQs.pdf

Another reminder--
Right now the best way to protect yourself is to take the same precautions you would to prevent the flu or common cold:

⦁ Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze with your elbow to avoid touching your face
⦁ Wash your hands often with soap and warm/hot water for at least 20 seconds
⦁ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
⦁ Clean surfaces frequently, including countertops, light switches, cell phones, remotes, and other frequently touched items
⦁ If you are feeling sick, stay home. Rest, take care of yourself and don’t spread the germs.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you are asked to call the State Health Department at 1-877-PA-HEALTH.

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The County has a website dedicated to information on the Coronavirus, including prevention, resources and a FAQ section with links to the Chester County Health Department, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the CDC. The website is: www.delcopa.gov/ich/resources/coronavirus.html

Residents are encouraged to register for the DelcoAlert notification system which alerts residents of updates and emergencies. You can register here: www.delcopa.gov/delcoalert/delcoalert.html