

Gov. Wolf Outlines Plans to Create Commonwealth Civilian Coronavirus Corps to Support Fall COVID-19 Recovery Efforts

Harrisburg, PA – As Pennsylvania plans to safely reopen the economy and recover from COVID-19, Governor Tom Wolf announced the creation of the Commonwealth Civilian Coronavirus Corps, a public service initiative that will support efforts this fall to increase testing and contact tracing and provide critical new job opportunities in the public health sector.

“Our highest priority remains protecting public health and safety, but we must also look ahead to see how we can address future needs. To reopen our economy to its maximum potential, we will need to boost our ability to contain this highly transmissible virus,” Governor Wolf said. “The Commonwealth Civilian Coronavirus Corps will serve as a public service program that will expand our ability to conduct contact tracing and testing and mobilize Pennsylvanians to contain COVID-19.”

The Wolf Administration’s continued measured and careful efforts to reopen Pennsylvania will depend on our ability to expand the availability of COVID-19 testing and develop a robust infrastructure to conduct surveillance and contact tracing. This work will allow Pennsylvanians to effectively monitor and respond to new cases and quantify mitigation efforts. It will help our phased reopening efforts while ensuring that the health care system does not become overwhelmed and that the transmission of disease continues to slow.

As Pennsylvania plans to ramp up these efforts in the coming months, the Commonwealth Civilian Coronavirus Corps would bring these efforts to fruition by:

- Partnering with local public health agencies, community organizations, and the nonprofit community to expand Pennsylvania’s existing testing and contract tracing initiatives;
- Leveraging additional resources to fund testing and contact tracing initiatives;
- Exploring creative ways to recruit experienced Pennsylvanians with health care and public health experience to support this initiative; and
- Coordinating existing resources deployed by the commonwealth, including community health nurses and county health departments who are currently conducting testing and contact tracing throughout the state.

The Commonwealth Civilian Coronavirus Corps will also provide for a unique opportunity for Pennsylvania to recruit and train COVID-19-impacted dislocated and unemployed workers into public service for contact tracing roles, which would address Pennsylvania’s health and economic needs.

To foster this new workforce, the Commonwealth Civilian Coronavirus Corps would:

- Engage partners in the workforce development system, existing allied health training programs, and AmeriCorps programs to build and strengthen a public health workforce across the commonwealth;
- Leverage existing workforce development resources to recruit, train, and connect the public health workforce with employment opportunities; and
- Engage public health and health care employers to connect trained workers with long-term career opportunities.

“We have all made many sacrifices throughout this crisis and all we share a desire to move forward toward a healthier, safer and more prosperous future,” Governor Wolf said. “Through this public service initiative, Pennsylvanians will have opportunities in the months ahead to join a collective effort to ensure that we emerge from this pandemic a stronger commonwealth.”