

Department of Health Shares Weekly Data for COVID-19 Investigations, Contact Tracing, Monitoring Efforts

Harrisburg, PA – The Department of Health today shared an update on Pennsylvania's COVID-19 case investigation and contact tracing data.

"In order to successfully mitigate the spread of COVID-19, we need to use proven public health strategies such as case investigations, contact tracing efforts and ongoing monitoring," Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. "We have a growing team of dedicated professionals equipped to do this work and truly make a difference, but we need our fellow Pennsylvanians to pick up the phone when they call. We are all united in this together, so please make the right choice to answer the call, it will help us mitigate the spread of this virus and further protect a loved one, co-worker or friend."

The [contact tracing process](#) is not possible without a case investigation by a public health professional. Between Sunday, August 9 and Saturday, August 15, there were 5,644 COVID-19 cases statewide and over 80 percent of all cases completed a case investigation within 24 hours of the positive confirmation. Information collected during the case investigation process is not shared publicly unless doing so would further the response.

After the initial case investigation is complete, contact tracing begins. Within that same time period, August 9 to August 15, there were 748 contact tracers across the commonwealth, including the efforts of the local and municipal health departments. These tracers were monitoring 12,220 contacts that were identified during the case investigations.

There are currently 1,068 contact tracing staff working with local and county health entities, partner organizations and the Regional Response Health Collaboration Program within the Department of Human Services in response to COVID-19 cases. The total number of tracers has fluctuated in the last month as the Department shifts to onboarding more staff and capacity, however, should stabilize through [a partnership with Insight Global](#).

Of the first 250 contact tracing staff hired in partnership with Insight Global, those hired were from within the following regional health districts:

- Northcentral: 40 contact tracing staff
- Northeast: 41 contact tracing staff
- Northwest: 41 contact tracing staff
- Southcentral: 40 contact tracing staff
- Southeast: 43 contact tracing staff
- Southwest: 45 contact tracing staff

Pennsylvanians are reminded that mask-wearing is required when visiting businesses or in any setting outside the home where social distancing is difficult. Remember: My mask protects you; your mask protects me.

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.

All Pennsylvania residents are encouraged to sign up for AlertPA, a text notification system for health, weather, and other important alerts like COVID-19 updates from commonwealth agencies. Residents can sign up online at www.ready.pa.gov/BeInformed/Signup-For-Alerts.