

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Human Services Announces State-Run Facility Admission Protocols for COVID-19 Mitigation Efforts

Harrisburg, PA – The Department of Human Services (DHS) today [released](#) adjusted operational admissions procedures due to COVID-19 for Pennsylvania’s state centers, state hospitals, youth development centers, and youth forestry camps operated by DHS.

“DHS is taking every necessary step it can to slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep staff and people served by our state-run facilities safe and healthy,” said DHS Secretary Teresa Miller. “The protocols we are implementing today will help to protect the vulnerable populations in our state facilities and the staff that care for them while ensuring continuity of care and access to these services.”

DHS has implemented the following protocols for admission to state facilities in order to protect the health of residents and staff:

1. Individuals are required to be screened for COVID-19 and provide documentation of screening prior to admission to a state facility. Screenings should include taking the individual’s temperature and discussing possible exposure to COVID-19 or related respiratory symptoms such as a new or worsening cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath.
2. A medical clearance attestation from a physician within 72 hours prior to the requested admission date is acceptable for admission if the individual was screened with a negative result. If the screening raises risk of potential infection but the individual does not have a COVID-19 test result, the individual will not be admitted until at least seven days from symptom onset, three days without a fever, and improvement of other symptoms.
3. If an individual has had close contact with someone suspected to have, or diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual should quarantine for 14 days from the last time they had contact, and admission to a facility should not occur until after the 14-day quarantine is complete and the admission screening outlined in #1 above is completed.

These measures are consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. These procedures will continue until the disaster emergency declared by Governor Tom Wolf is no longer in effect. The level of care needed should be carefully considered before admitting an individual to a state facility to ensure that the services are necessary for the treatment and safety of an individual and that the least restrictive setting is being used.

Pennsylvania’s four state centers, which serve individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism, include Ebensburg Center in Cambria County, Polk Center in Venango County, Selinsgrove Center in Snyder County, and White Haven Center in Luzerne County.

Pennsylvania's six state hospitals, which provide comprehensive psychiatric treatment and substance use disorder services to people with mental illness, include Clarks Summit State Hospital in Lackawanna County, Danville State Hospital in Montour County, Norristown State Hospital in Montgomery County, Torrance State Hospital in Westmoreland County, Warren State Hospital in Warren County, and Wernersville State Hospital in Berks County. This also applies to South Mountain Restoration Center, a state-run long-term care facility operated by DHS' Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Pennsylvania's youth development centers and youth forestry camps provide treatment, care, and residential services to Pennsylvania's most at-risk youth. The three youth development centers are South Mountain Secure Treatment Unit in Franklin County, North Central Secure Treatment Unit in Montour County, and Loysville Youth Development Center in Perry County. The commonwealth's two youth forestry camps are in Hickory Run State Park in Luzerne County and in Trough Creek State Park in Huntingdon County.

DHS has previously [issued guidance](#) on visitation to these facilities during COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

Visit pa.gov for a ["Responding to COVID-19" guide](#) or the Pennsylvania Department of Health's dedicated [Coronavirus webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19.