



April 14, 2020

WE WANT TO KNOW!

**ALLEGANY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND ALLEGANY COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES
ANSWER YOUR COVID-19 QUESTIONS**

Are COVID-19 cases available by zip code?

Yes, the Maryland Department of Health now reports COVID-19 cases by zip code on its coronavirus website (www.coronavirus.maryland.gov). Zip codes must have at least 8 cases to be included on the map.

Sometimes the number of COVID-19 cases that the county reports doesn't match the number that the state reports. Why is that?

The Maryland Department of Health updates its COVID-19 cases once daily, so when Allegheny County reports a COVID-19 case, it may not show up on the State report until the next day.

Why don't we know which nursing home has COVID-19 cases?

The Allegheny County Health Department is not allowed to publicly release a patient's employer, the name of the nursing home where a patient lives, or the name of the facility where a patient resides, such as a prison. The Health Department contacts the employer/facility when there is a positive test result, and the employer/facility is responsible for letting staff, residents, and residents' families know that there is a COVID-19 case.

The Governor said that Maryland will begin reporting the race and ethnicity of COVID-19 patients. Why don't we know this information for Allegheny County COVID-19 cases?

COVID-19 race and ethnicity data will be reported in aggregate for the state of Maryland. Because we are a small county, providing the race/ethnicity of an Allegheny County resident who tests positive for COVID-19 could potentially allow the patient to be identified.

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Why are some businesses continuing to operate despite complaints?

The local health department does not determine if businesses are essential or non-essential, that determination is made at the state level. The local health department does guide businesses in implementing health and safety measures, such as disinfecting high-touch surfaces, marking check-out lanes to keep customers at least six feet apart, and offering curbside service and delivery options.

What is a “strike team”? Is there a strike team in Allegany County?

Governor Hogan announced the formation of statewide “strike teams” to provide support to nursing homes. These teams are comprised of members of the National Guard, health department staff, EMS clinicians, and health care providers from local hospitals. There are three types of strike teams (testing teams, assistance teams, clinical teams) that can be called in when needed to assist nursing homes. There are no statewide strike teams in Allegany County currently.

Should I wear a face covering when I go to the grocery store or pharmacy?

Yes, the CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing is difficult to maintain. You can make a cloth face covering at home, even without sewing skills. See: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/DIY-cloth-face-covering-instructions.pdf>

Are COVID-19 test results coming back more quickly now?

Yes, local health care providers report that COVID-19 lab results are coming back more quickly than before. Because of the large number of tests being processed nationwide, laboratories were sometimes taking more than 7 days to process tests. Now many health care providers are seeing test results come back within two days.

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