

PA COVID-19 date no longer improving week over week

The latest update of the department's [COVID-19 Early Warning Monitoring System Dashboard](#) indicates that Pennsylvania's COVID-19 numbers did not improve week-over-week. Friday's update shows that for the 7 days between Sept. 25 and Oct. 1 (Thursday), confirmed virus cases statewide had increased by 756 more than the prior 7-day period of Sept. 18 through Sept. 24. The most recent 7-day case total was 6,036 compared to 5,280 the prior week. The 7-day rate is now 3.7 percent, up from what the department said was 3.3 percent last week.

Unlike the past several weeks – even when new virus cases had been increasing during the summer - hospitalizations have begun to increase, having been on a continual decline since early September. The 7-day average increased to 507.4 from last week's 427.9; on the Health Department's COVID-19 data website, the 14-day moving average was up to 489.5 as of Sunday, while a week earlier it had been 451.7.

The primary problem area within the state the past few weeks has been Centre County – home to Penn State University, which has been the center of much of the new virus case growth in the county with students coming back to school – but things appear to be improving there as the county reported 255 fewer new cases during the most recent 7-day period compared to the prior 7-day period. Additionally, the county's 7-day positivity rate, while still at a high rate of 9.4 percent, is down from last week, when the department reported it was 13.3 percent.

Also above 5 percent (which health experts have said suggests wider community virus transmission) for their 7-day test positivity during the past week were Northumberland, Snyder, Montour, Perry, Schuylkill, Wayne, Lackawanna, Indiana and Lawrence counties, with all but Indiana County having rates this week that were higher than the reported rates last week.

Philadelphia and Allegheny counties were the top two counties in week-over-week new case growth, with Philadelphia having 133 more cases during the past 7-day period than the prior 7-day period; Allegheny is up by 100. Test positivity in Philadelphia is up to 3.4 percent from 2.8 percent last week, while it's up to 3.8 percent (from 2.9 percent last week) in Allegheny. Delaware, Montgomery and Westmoreland counties round out the top five counties for week-over-week case growth, with all three counties, like Philadelphia and Allegheny counties, experiencing some increase in their test positivity as well.

Each week, the state updates its list gauging the level of coronavirus transmission in each county. The Wolf administration has encouraged schools to use the level of transmission as a benchmark on holding in-person classes or a mix of face-to-face instruction and remote learning. It's also designed to guide their response plans if students or staff are infected. Depending on the risk assessment, school districts are advised to close buildings for longer periods if students or staff test positive.

Four counties are listed as having a substantial level of transmission of the coronavirus: Centre, Montour, Northumberland and Snyder. This week, Montour and Snyder joined the list of counties with a substantial level of transmission.

Most counties - 46 counties - are showing a moderate level of transmission, while 17 counties were in the low level of transmission. For those counties with a moderate level of transmission, the state has recommended schools employ a hybrid approach, mixing in-person classes with remote instruction.

Moderate: Adams, Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Bradford, Bucks, Butler, Cambria, Carbon, Chester, Clearfield, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Erie, Fayette, Franklin, Huntingdon, Indiana, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lawrence, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne,

Lycoming, Mercer, Mifflin, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton, Perry, Philadelphia, Pike, Schuylkill, Somerset, Tioga, Union, Washington, Wayne, Westmoreland and York.

Low: Cameron, Clarion, Clinton, Crawford, Elk, Forest, Fulton, Greene, Jefferson, Juniata, McKean, Potter, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Venango, Warren and Wyoming.

Travel restrictions

The Wolf administration added four states to its list of travel restrictions: Minnesota, Montana, Nevada and Wyoming. Residents visiting those states are asked to quarantine for 14 days after they return to Pennsylvania.

And things do not appear to have improved since the dashboard update below. The 2,251 new positive cases reported continued the string of days with more than 1,000 new cases reported statewide.

DoH Provides Update on COVID-19, 2,251 Two-Day Positives Bring Statewide Total to 163,535

The Pennsylvania Department of Health confirmed that as of 12:00 a.m., October 4, there were 2,251 additional cases of COVID-19 over two days, bringing the statewide total to 163,535. Approximately 10,963 of our total cases are among health care workers.

In nursing and personal care homes, there are 23,232 resident cases of COVID-19, and 5,153 cases among employees, for a total of 28,385 at 991 distinct facilities in 62 counties. A county breakdown can be found [here](#).

The number of persons tested and reported to the Department of Health within the last 7 days (between September 27 and October 3) was 187,883. Of these, 23,979 persons were reported Sunday.

The state experienced its initial peak in early April when it recorded almost 2,000 cases in one day. The rate declined in a bumpy fashion until mid-June. A second increase was driven in part by an “alarming” spike in Allegheny County, increases in counties which had been largely spared the effects of the initial wave, as well as new outbreaks in Delaware and Chester counties. The second peak, which was less than half the size of the first, occurred in the third week of July.

The overall 7-day positivity rate for Pennsylvania had been trending downward very slowly, consistently under 5% each day until the end of August. September has seen a significant rise in the positivity rate.

The number of people being tested statewide has been decreasing, plateauing at about 12,000 people per day. It had been close to 20,000 per day.

There are 8,216 total deaths attributed to COVID-19, an increase of 17 new deaths reported. Out of our total deaths, 5,483 have occurred in residents from nursing or personal care facilities. County-specific information and a statewide map are available on the [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#).

Another 850 cases had a positive viral antigen test and are considered probable cases and 646 patients who have a positive serology test and either COVID-19 symptoms or a high-risk exposure.

There are 1,931,635 patients who have tested negative to date. Of confirmed and probable cases to date, the age breakdown is as follows:

- Approximately 1% are ages 0-4;
- Nearly 2% are ages 5-12;

- Nearly 5% are ages 13-18;
- Nearly 14% are ages 19-24;
- Nearly 36% are ages 25-49;
- Approximately 21% are ages 50-64; and
- Nearly 22% are ages 65 or older.

Most of the patients hospitalized are ages 65 or older, and most of the deaths have occurred in patients 65 or older. More data is available [here](#).

The department is seeing significant increases in the number of COVID-19 cases among younger age groups, particularly 19 to 24-year-olds. The following regions saw significant increases among 19 to 24-year-olds in each month from April to the end September:

- NC – Approximately 7 percent of cases in April to 64 percent of cases in September;
- NE – 6 percent of cases in April to nearly 34 percent of cases in September;
- SE – Nearly 5 percent of cases in April to approximately 28 percent of cases in September;
- SW – Approximately 5 percent of cases in April to approximately 25 percent of cases in September;
- NW – Nearly 7 percent of cases in April to approximately 18 percent of cases in September; and
- SC – Approximately 7 percent of cases in April to approximately 16 percent of cases in September.

For the latest information for individuals, families, businesses and schools, visit “Responding to COVID-19” on pa.gov.

Hospitalizations

As noted above, hospitalizations across the state increased for the first time in months last week. The Pennsylvania Department of Health has [an online dashboard](#) tracking the number of available hospital beds and ventilators on a county-by-county basis. You can view it below by clicking on the “Hospital Preparedness” tab.

The tracker, which can be found on the agency’s [coronavirus page](#), details the number of available adult and pediatric ICU beds, medical/surgical beds, and isolation room beds, as well as how many ventilators are being used by COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients.

In recent weeks, the number of hospitalizations statewide have been near a multi-month low, even as the number of new cases has increased.