

Adams County Commissioner Update – June 5, 2020

- **Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced this afternoon *that Adams County will be transitioning to the Green Phase next Friday, June 12.* Retail food service businesses, including restaurants, and bars located in counties designated as being in the green phase, are permitted to provide take-out and delivery sales, as well as dine-in and bar service in both indoor and outdoor seating areas, so long as they strictly adhere to the requirements of the guidance, including maximum occupancy limits. For those of you who need a haircut, hair stylists and barbers will be able to resume cutting, coloring and styling hair in Pennsylvania with precautions in place. Personal care services such as hair salons and barbershops will be permitted to open at 50% occupancy and by appointment.**
- **On Tuesday, May 26, 2020 Adams County Government resumed full operations. Center for Disease Control and PA Department of Health Safe Work Practices continue to be instituted including masks, temperature scans, distancing, remote work and controlling congregate gatherings of individuals in offices and courtrooms. The Adams County Adult Correctional Complex and Department of Emergency Services (911) will continue to be closed to the public until further notice.**
- **As Adams County continues to operate in the Yellow Phase of the State's re-opening plan for one more week, and as we continue to progress toward Green next Friday, a noticeable change beginning today will be the permitted outdoor dining in both Yellow and Green phases. In the Yellow phase, although outdoor dining is permitted, outdoor bar service is not permitted. In our community there is no doubt that some parking lots and parking spaces will be converted for outdoor dining. Also, effective today, cashless tolls on the Pennsylvania Turnpike became permanent. All fees will be assessed by EZ Pass or by plate invoice that will be sent by mail. Beginning today, the state has partnered with Quest Diagnostics and Super Walmart parking lots to open five more COVID-19 drive thru testing sites across the state. This is in addition to existing partnerships with Rite Aid, CVS, and Patient First supplementing hospitals, health systems, health clinics**

and other locations to expand testing near home for Pennsylvania residents. The state met their testing goal of 283,000 tests in May and will continue to announce new testing sites and increase testing availability. Trace testing is also increasing. Dentists can now proceed with non-emergency dental procedures under guidelines for practices and personal protective equipment. The Adams County Board of Commissioners will continue our dialogue regarding COVID-19 with the Governor's Office through the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) and our Governor's Office Liaison Catherine Stetler. As a result of a phone conference with Governor Wolf several weeks ago, The CCAP Board and the Governor have now formed a working group to address COVID-19 issues. This collaboration was overdue, and we are hopeful that county input will be heard and considered.

- The 2020 Pennsylvania Primary Election is now in the books, and county elections officials across the Commonwealth are breathing a sigh of relief for the moment. Within the week, they will begin to plan for a more robust November Presidential Election. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted the Pennsylvania legislature to adopt new rules for voting by mail-in ballot. In Adams County 13,000 mail-in ballot applications were received with 13,000 ballots sent out to voters. The elections office reported that 10,474 of those mail-in ballots were returned. The mail-ins represented almost 50% of the 21,356 votes cast. Typical for a Presidential Primary, voter turnout was slightly lower than normal at 37%, when combining the mail-in ballots with those that voted at the polls. We are urging the legislature to amend mail-in counting procedures to improve and expedite the counting of mail-in ballots.

It would be negligent not to recognize the Adams County Elections Staff, other county staff that pitched in and supplemented the elections staff for the past two months, and the many dedicated poll workers that answered the call. Given the volume of mail-in ballots that needed to be processed, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, we owe these folks our deepest gratitude and thanks for going above and beyond to ensure that one of our most coveted and fundamental rights could be exercised!

- Two issues surfaced at the polls that the Board wants to clarify for voters moving forward. If a registered voter applies for a mail-in ballot, and it is sent to the voter, the voter is not permitted to vote at their poll. Individuals who apply for a mail in ballot must mail it back or drop it off in person at the Elections Office. It must be received by 8PM election evening. You cannot return the mail-in ballot to your polling

place. There is some talk at the State level of changing this rule; but that has not yet occurred. Also, currently there are 13 states, including Pennsylvania, that have a Closed Primary. That means you must be a registered Republican or Democrat to vote in the Pennsylvania Primary Election. If you are an Independent, Green Party etc., you cannot vote in the Pennsylvania Primary Election. That is statutorily mandated by the state, and the county has no control over that regulation. Your state legislators would need to amend state legislation to change that voting directive.

- Our local businesses desperately need your support now. With summer here, as we transition from the Yellow to Green Phase, please get out there and support your retailers, small businesses, farmers markets, restaurants and service providers. When providing this much needed support, combine safe practices and common sense, to ensure that you and others remain safe and suppress the curve of this disease.

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