

For Release Monday 12/14/2020

County of Berks / COVID-19 Leadership Team Press Alert

Berks Commissioners' Weekly Update highlights COVID spike and vaccine

Reading, PA— 12/14/2020 — The Berks County Commissioners will host their Weekly Media and Public Update on **Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 3:30 PM** on Microsoft Teams Live Event. Click [here](#) to find the link to this meeting. This week's update will focus on the current surge of COVID-19 cases and the newly-approved vaccine. The Commissioners will be joined by several doctors from the Berks County COVID-19 Health Advisory Panel who have been on the forefront of the local effort to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. This Press Event will also be streamed Live to the Berks County [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) pages.

Welcome – Commissioner Christian Leinbach

Comments – Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt

Comments – Commissioner Michael Rivera

Introduction of the Program – Commissioner Leinbach

- **Dr. Debra Powell** - Section Chief for Infectious Diseases and Medical Director for Infection Prevention at Tower Health/Reading Hospital. *Dr. Powell has been a frequent spokesperson for Tower on issues related to COVID-19 in the media and during town halls and other events.*
- **Dr. Jeffrey Held** - Vice President, Medical Affairs for Penn State Health St. Joseph Medical Center. Dr. Held is PSH St Joseph's clinical liaison with the County Commission and the Berks County community during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Dr. Mary Kelleher** – Chief Medical Officer, Berks Community Health Center

The Panel will address the following questions and topics:

- 1) There has been a significant increase recently in COVID-19 cases and deaths in Berks and throughout the state and country. What have you been seeing at the medical facilities you each work with? Can you give us a picture of where we are at currently?

- 2) There has been a lot of information and opinions circulating about COVID-19 since the pandemic began. Is there anything specific you believe the general public needs to know or wish they understood about this virus?
- 3) There is some promising news when it comes to vaccines. What can you tell us about the vaccines that are in the final stages or have been approved, specifically the Pfizer vaccine that started being administered this week?
- 4) How will the distribution of the vaccine work? Who can disperse it and where? And how soon can we expect it to be available for the general public?
- 5) Can an employer require employees to get the vaccine?
- 6) What about the those in our community who are against vaccines? What portion of the public needs to get the vaccine for it to be effective?
- 7) **Questions and Answers** – Facilitated by Commissioner Leinbach

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