

**For Release Tuesday 1/26/2021**

## **County of Berks / COVID-19 Leadership Team Press Alert**

*Berks Commissioners' Weekly Update highlights COVID spike and vaccine*

**Reading, PA— 1/26/2021** — The Berks County Commissioners will host their Weekly Media and Public Update on **Wednesday, January 27, 2020 at 4 PM** on Microsoft Teams Live Event. Click [here](#) to find the link to this meeting. This week's update will focus on the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, specifically here in Berks County. The Commissioners will be joined by doctors from our primary local healthcare providers to discuss their current capabilities, plans for wider distribution and some of the challenges they are facing as we continue to confront the COVID-19 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 Panel – 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) The approval of vaccines for COVID-19 is certainly some of the most encouraging news we've had regarding the pandemic. Can you give us an overview of what your medical facility is currently offering for vaccine distribution and an estimate of how many people you have vaccinated to date?

- 2) Who is your facility currently vaccinating and how can someone in that category schedule an appointment for a vaccine?
- 3) We know vaccine supplies are limited right now and that has a direct effect on distribution capabilities. In addition to supply, what other types of challenges are you facing with your vaccine distribution efforts? How did the expansion of Phase 1A affect your efforts?
- 4) Is your facility working on plans to expand distribution efforts? If so, are you able to share anything regarding what that may look like at this time?
- 5) In addition to distributing the vaccine, your facilities are still very busy caring for COVID-19 patients. What are you seeing right now in that regard at your facility and how does that affect not only vaccine distribution, but also other types of patient care?
- 6) What are some things that the public can do right now while they wait for an opportunity to get the vaccine?
- 7) Are individuals who have received the vaccine now considered safe, or do they still need to follow the recommended safety precautions in place to help mitigate the spread of the virus?
- 8) **Questions and Answers** – Facilitated by Commissioner Leinbach

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