

For Release Monday 8/16/2021

County of Berks / COVID-19 Leadership Team Press Alert

*Commissioners' live program will feature a discussion with local health experts
about the latest on COVID-19 and the delta variant*

Reading, PA— 8/16/2021 — The Berks County Commissioners are transitioning their previous Weekly Media and Public Update programs to a new monthly series called “County Connection LIVE.” The Commissioners will be hosting the first program of the new series on Wednesday, August 18, 2021 at 12 PM, with a discussion with local health experts about the recent COVID-19 surge and the delta variant. The live program will be broadcast through Microsoft Teams: Click [here](#) to find the link to the meeting. The program will also be streamed live to the Berks County [Facebook](#) page, [YouTube](#) channel and BCTV.

The program will focus on the latest information about COVID-19 and how the current surge of cases is affecting Berks County. The panel will also discuss the delta variant, explaining what it is and its role in the spread of COVID-19, and provide an update on the overall impact on children as we approach the start of a new school year.

Welcome – Commissioner Christian Leinbach

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. Olubunmi Ojikutu** – Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Tower Health/Reading Hospital

The Panel will address the following topics:

1. **What is the current COVID-19 outlook in Berks?** What factors have contributed to the recent increase in cases? There are reports of hospital systems in the south being overwhelmed by COVID cases: What is the status for our local hospitals?

2. **Delta variant:** What is it and why is it concerning? What impact does the variant have on recommendations for wearing masks, etc.?
3. **Can you still get COVID-19 if you are vaccinated?** What are 'breakthrough' cases? Is it still important to get vaccinated?
4. **Is there any new information about the COVID-19 vaccines?** Can we expect any of the vaccines to receive full FDA approval in the near future? How soon can we expect a vaccine for children younger than 12? If someone is interested, how do they get vaccinated?
5. **What advice do you have for parents?** What can parents do to protect children who under 12 and cannot yet receive a vaccine? How does the recent development with COVID-19 and the variant affect the return to schools this fall?
6. **As we've seen throughout the pandemic, there are many different claims about COVID-19 and the vaccine, especially on social media. What facts do you believe are important for our community to understand?**
7. **Questions and Answers** – Facilitated by Commissioner Leinbach

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