

For Release Monday, April 13, 2020

County of Berks / COVID19 Leadership Team Alert

It's Time to Focus on Health & Safety vs Closing Businesses

"Do Your Part - Stop the Spread"

Reading, PA— 4/13/2020 — It's time to change the focus in Berks County and Pennsylvania from closing businesses to promoting and enforcing meaningful and effective Health and Safety standards to truly mitigate the spread of COVID19 here in our community.

Let's Change the Focus to Health and Safety.

For the past several weeks the Commonwealth of PA has been focused on which businesses should be open and which businesses should be closed. Our local economy has taken a major hit and small businesses and hard-working men and women in Berks are being crushed. At the same time many businesses that are open are not practicing proper COVID19 Health and Safety practices. It's time to change the focus. It's time for Berks County to focus on meaningful and effective Health and Safety standards to truly mitigate the spread of COVID19 here in our community.

Let's Change the Message here in Berks County and in the Commonwealth.

We are calling on our businesses, institutions and residents in Berks County to focus their attention on meaningful and effective Health and Safety standards to truly mitigate the spread of COVID19 here in our community.

Here is what we are asking our businesses, institutions and residents to do.

1. We are asking every business and institution in Berks County to immediately institute COVID19 Health and Safety policies to protect both their staff and "customers."
- <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>
- <https://www.uschamber.com/co/start/strategy/business-owner-tips-coronavirus-pandemic>
- To institute personal COVID19 Health and Safety policies that protect them and the people they may be around and to ask their neighbors, friends and family to do the same.
- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. While public health authorities are working to produce a vaccine, as of today, there is no vaccine to prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019.
- The best way to avoid exposure is to follow good public health hygiene practices that should be done every day regardless of the existence of this new disease. Things like:
 - Stay at home as much as possible.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Wash your hands vigorously with soap and water multiple times a day (use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available).
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Clean surfaces in your home/office.
 - Practice social distancing. Avoid common practices like handshaking.
 - Everyone should wear a cloth mask when they must go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities. The cloth mask is

meant to protect other people in case you are infected. Do NOT use a mask meant for a healthcare worker.

- Continue to keep at least 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

2. **As residents of Berks, let's commit to support the businesses that implement healthy COVID19 standards and let's avoid the businesses that ignore these precautions recognizing that they are putting both their employees and patrons at risk. We are in this together so let's watch out for each other.** Should you see or experience a business that is not following health and safety procedures please call or email them with your concerns.
3. Call on Governor Tom Wolf and our State Legislature to change the Commonwealth focus and pivot from deciding what businesses are opened or closed to turning to the enforcement of meaningful and effective Health and Safety standards to truly mitigate the spread of COVID19 here in our community and the entire Commonwealth.

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