

**For Release Friday 4/3/2020 5:40PM**

## **County of Berks / COVID19 Leadership Team Alert**

*Second COVID19 Death in Berks County & Call to Wear Masks*

**Reading, PA— 4/3/2020** — The Berks County Commissioners offer our prayers and condolences to the family and friends of a 67-year-old Berks County male resident who passed away at the Reading Hospital today. Additionally, we are strongly recommending that all Berks County residents “wear homemade cloth or fabric masks” whenever they leave their home in order to further limit the spread of COVID19. This is in conjunction with Gov. Tom Wolf’s recommendation earlier today.

### **The Spread of COVID19 is here in Berks and the consequences are very real**

The Berks County Coroner’s office received test results today (4/3/2020) confirming that he tested positive for COVID19. The PA Department of Health has been notified. Any questions re: these deaths should be directed to Chief Deputy Coroner John M Hollenbach at 610-587-3369. These death drive home the seriousness of COVID19 and need to heed Gov. Wolf’s recommendation earlier today. “Members of the public are encouraged to wear homemade cloth or fabric masks. Save surgical masks and N95 respirators for our health care workers and first responders. Remember this saying: "My mask protects you; your mask protects me."

Wear a mask when:

- Shopping at essential businesses, like grocery stores or pharmacies
- Visiting your health care provider
- On public transportation
- Interacting with customers/clients at essential businesses
- Feeling sick, coughing or sneezing

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Stop-the-Spread.aspx>.”

You should “wear homemade cloth or fabric masks” and not a N95 mask. The only people that should wear an N95 mask are people that have been properly fitted and received an appropriate health assessment. Some preexisting conditions can make the wearing of a N95 mask dangerous.

**No additional information is available**

As Berks County Commissioners we understand that this announcement will likely heighten concern in Berks County over the spread of COVID19. We continue to recommend that you follow the direction of healthcare professionals to limit the spread of COVID19 and abide by the Governor’s “Stay at Home Order” and “wear homemade cloth or fabric mask.” If you cannot purchase a mask, please Google “How to make a homemade cloth or fabric masks.” There are numerous websites and YouTube videos that will explain how to make a mask. For more information visit [www.BerksDES.com](http://www.BerksDES.com)

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**For more information, press only:**

Commissioner Christian Y. Leinbach (*PIO for COVID19 Leadership Team*)

Office: 610-478-6136 x3

Cell: 484-663-9674

Email: [Cleinbach@CountyofBerks.com](mailto:Cleinbach@CountyofBerks.com)

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