



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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Allegheny County Expands COVID-19 Dashboard with More Race, Ethnicity Information

PITTSBURGH – Allegheny County today announced that an enhanced interactive dashboard is now available on the county's website. The new dashboard displays detailed data about COVID-19 cases in the region and will begin reporting more complete information on race and ethnicity as a result of an agreement allowing for data from the county's Data Warehouse to be integrated with data on COVID-19 available to the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) through the state's PA-NEDSS database.

This new data on race and ethnicity will be reflected in the dashboard on the Health Department's COVID-19 website, <http://alleghenycounty.us/coronavirus>, and on the enhanced dashboard available at <https://bit.ly/COVIDraceandethnicity> and through a link on the COVID-19 website.

"We know the coronavirus is having a disproportionate effect on communities of color in Allegheny County. A first step to addressing this inequity was amassing the needed data and analysis to pinpoint it," said Allegheny County Health Department Director Dr. Debra Bogen. "Armed with this data and analysis, we can begin to take steps to better protect and improve the health of all residents in Allegheny County."

Information on the race and ethnicity of those tested for COVID-19 was often missing from PA-NEDSS. Recognizing that, the department began asking about race and ethnicity during case investigations and working with labs and healthcare providers to record this information for individuals tested.

The county Health Department and Department of Human Services (DHS) also worked together to combine the wide variety of client and service data available in the Data Warehouse with the COVID-19 data. Where information was missing for a person in the state's data, the person was then matched against the county's data. If demographics were available for the person, that information appears now appears in the dashboard.

Combining the two databases has enabled the county to report race and ethnicity for a higher percentage of COVID-19 cases:

- **Race** is now available for about 75% of people tested for COVID-19. Previous data contained information on race for only 47% of people tested.
- **Ethnicity** is now available for about 55% of people tested for COVID-19. Previous data contained information on ethnicity for only 5% of people tested.

In addition to previously available data on testing and cases, the following new information is being shared:

- **An estimation of recoveries from COVID-19:** A person has recovered, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, when: 1) 32 days have passed after a person was hospitalized for COVID-19 and the person did not die, or 2) 14 days have passed since a person tested positive for COVID-19 and was not hospitalized.
- **Rates of testing, cases, hospitalizations, and deaths for demographic groups:** The data allows users to see how a particular demographic group is represented in COVID-19 counts relative to their representation in the county population.
- **Intersection of demographic categories:** Users can view case totals or trends for a race group and filter those results further to see data about a particular age group or gender within that race group.

- **Newly added ethnicity data for all metrics:** The data can be filtered to show results for the Hispanic/Latinx community.

From this deeper analysis, the Health Department see that even though the black population is being tested for COVID-19 at a rate higher than their population in Allegheny County, they are hospitalized and dying at rates higher than their population.

- 13% of Allegheny County's population is black.
- 20% of tests of COVID-19 are among black people.
- 27% of cases of COVID-19 are among black people.
- 31% of hospitalizations for COVID-19 are among black people.
- 20% of deaths due to COVID-19 are among black people.

“The data show that while we’re doing a good job at getting testing to the black community, the pandemic is tragically taking a larger toll on this community,” Dr. Bogen said. “The causes of this significant health disparity are likely many, including higher rates of underlying health conditions linked to poverty, physical environment, and limited access to medical care; higher exposure rates to the virus due to not being able to work from home or from working in close contact with others; a greater likelihood of living in crowded homes, and other factors. These are health equity concerns we must continue to address in earnest.”

ACHD and DHS have participated in several listening sessions since the beginning of the pandemic with leaders from the faith, Latinx, immigrant and refugee, LGBTQIA+ and black communities across Allegheny County. These listening sessions helped highlight the need to place equity at the forefront of the COVID-19 response and to ensure that voices from all communities were heard.

Dr. Bogen and Marc Cherna, DHS Director, convened COVID-19 Equity Task Force to give a group of community leaders a forum in which to provide feedback. Improving race and ethnicity data and making it publicly available is one example of an important community concern the county is working together to address.

Due to data collection procedures and limitations of county data, some information about those affected by COVID-19 remains unknown.

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