



County of Bucks

Office of the Commissioners

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County Commissioners

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Chief Operating Officer

April 29, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

Thank you for your leadership in this very difficult and challenging time. We do not believe any of us were expecting to govern during such a devastating worldwide pandemic, but you have shown grace and made judicious choices as we have navigated together. Our management team, including our commissioners, chief operating officer, director of emergency management and health director, have carefully read and followed the directives issued by you and Dr. Levine.

An important part of our approach to this crisis has been daily team calls, daily review of data provided by our health department (long term care, hospitals, clinics, public response, contact tracing) and conference calls with the other four counties in the Philadelphia region. Through this information we have been able to watch COVID-19 move through the community from a few easily traceable cases to a more destructive outbreak in our long-term care facilities.

Although we participated in a five-county plan to return our counties to a normative process, we were grateful for your and Dr. Levine's three-phased return to re-opening strategy, as it allowed Bucks more flexibility in managing our restoration. Having said that, we are submitting this letter as one of *appeal* as we endeavor to decrease the specific reliance on the incidence rate of COVID-19, per capita, as a major contributing factor to reopening.

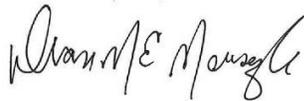
As of today, we are able to report the positive news that the levels of pure community spread, defined as those residents not knowing where they were infected, has consistently dropped over time to approximately 10% or less of our daily cases, along with the more negative news that our businesses and residents are growing increasingly frustrated with the imposed restrictions.

We believe a regional or even county-wide assessment goal of *an average of less than 50 cases per 100,000 individuals over the course of 14 days* will have a detrimental effect on our effort to maintain Bucks County's infrastructure of business, tourism and community support. In our efforts to increase access to testing in the community and long-term care facilities, we will see an

uptick in cases, possibly in those who are mildly symptomatic, asymptomatic, or untested who were sick in the recent past but continue to test positive. That could easily drive up the numbers well beyond the threshold without actually increasing community risk, and permanently keep Bucks County in the “red zone.” As we have maintained a unique and robust contact tracing process throughout this crisis, we believe it is far more important to see and analyze the kinds of positives we are getting, more so than simply the numbers themselves. Additionally, it is important to note a growing decline in cooperation from the public in identifying information integral to this process, as there is now a possible disincentive for infected individuals to provide data, thinking it might prolong the economic shutdown or have other personal and family consequences.

Thank you for considering this appeal, along with a request to further discuss this with you, Dr. Levine, or your governing staff as soon as possible. We are grateful for your continuing guidance and collaboration as we work together to reopen and transition back to work and a more normative state.

Respectfully,



Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia
Commissioners Chair



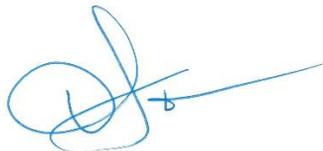
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