

County Commissioners want to move into the Northwest Region for Re-Opening

Kittanning, PA (April 29th, 2020) Last week Governor Wolf unveiled a comprehensive, regional, phased plan for reopening Pennsylvania. The Commonwealth was divided into six regions using a combination of geography, density, numbers of cases, and hospital capacity. Armstrong County was identified in the Southwest Region. This region includes the counties of Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington, and Westmoreland. Of the ten counties in the Southwest Region, seven counties have more positive cases and deaths reported than Armstrong County. "Our concern is that Armstrong County could have a slower re-opening because of the regional approach, rather than responding to the data and resources available," said Commissioner Pat Fabian. "At the present, our community hospital and regional hospitals have excess of hospital capacity for beds, ventilators, and testing to care for citizens should the need arise."

The Armstrong County Board of Commissioners which include Commissioner Chairman Don Myers, Commissioner Vice Chairman Jason Renshaw, and Commissioner Fabian the board's secretary all are advocating for Armstrong County businesses and workers. Commissioner Fabian spoke with officials in Governor Wolf's administration last Friday, about requesting a change in Armstrong County's designation from the southwest to the northwest region. "Our request to Governor Wolf is to have Armstrong County be moved into the northwest region per the Governor's COVID-19 response plan to re-open Pennsylvania on May 9th, meaning Armstrong County would move from Phase Red into Phase Yellow" said Commissioner Fabian. Armstrong County Commissioners sent their official request to Governor Wolf on April 28th 2020.

"We all want to open more businesses as we recognize they are the backbone of our communities and county as a whole, however we want to do it as safely as possible," said Chairman Commissioner Myers. "The request to move into the northwest region and into phase yellow was developed in close consultation with Public Safety Director Bill Hamilton and ACMH President/CEO John Lewis." Armstrong County has followed the CDC and the PA Department of Health guidelines and has slowed the spread of COVID-19. "It's important to protect our residents especially the most vulnerable and senior citizens, while getting people back to work" said Vice Chairman Commissioner Renshaw.

March 19th the Armstrong County Commissioners declared a state of emergency and April 1st they approved a stay-at-home-order. To date, Armstrong County has 50 cases and sadly, two deaths.

Armstrong County total new cases in the last 14 days is 22, with a case rate of 33 per 100,000 population.

"Armstrong County meets the criteria of 50 cases per 100,000 and the county has no demand for testing" said Commissioner Fabian. "We are hopeful are request in granted by the Governor to move into the northwest region and/or into phase yellow."

The Armstrong County Board of Commissioners, in consultation with Public Safety Director, Bill Hamilton and ACMH President/CEO John Lewis encourage all residents to continue to follow daily precautions of frequent hand-washing, social distancing of six feet, wearing a public in public and work with health care professionals to test and treat any COVID-19 like symptoms. Additional information and updates on COVID-19 can be found on the Armstrong County's web page at www.co.armstrong.paus