**BUTLER COUNTY**

PENNSYLVANIA

# COVID-19 MANAGEMENT & RECOVERY PLAN FOR REOPENING BUTLER COUNTY

## DRAFT

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## Butler County COVID-19 Task Force

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## Introduction

The Butler County COVID-19 Response and Recovery plan is built on the foundation of developed relationships and ongoing communication between key entities in the County, namely emergency management, Butler Health System, Butler County Human Services, Area Agency on Aging, municipalities, school districts, and business and industry.  It presumes a 12 to 18-month window for management of COVID-19 until such time as a vaccine is available, but also establishes a platform for local management of future pandemics or localized infectious disease outbreaks.

*The plan is also predicated on the idea that Butler County already manages multiple contracts with PA Dept of Human Services therefore CARES funding to support this plan could follow that structure with the County as the sole State Contractor, subcontracting services and support to necessary providers mentioned throughout the proposal.  In most cases, current contracts already exist and could be modified.  Since the need for outreach based on identified cases is unpredictable, contracts may be designed on a draw down basis to support services as provided by the hour.   The initial total plan cost is $1,064,200 for capital costs and staffing for one year.  Additional costs for individual testing could be up to $5 million dependent upon alternate insurance reimbursements and/or agreements with DOH.*

As a fourth-class County, Butler leads the Southwest PA region in population growth, housing starts, business start-ups, manufacturing, and in many other categories.  We are home to two higher education institutions, Slippery Rock University and Butler County Community College, PA's #1 Community College consistently ranked for the last five years.  Both offer programs in public health, public and occupational safety and social work, along with multiple degrees and paths in health care.

Butler Health System (BHS), located in Butler, Pennsylvania, is the parent of Butler Memorial Hospital, its affiliates, and a number of subsidiaries. Butler Memorial hospital is a 326-bed acute-care facility with a broad range of surgical, medical, emergency, and psychiatric services. Butler Health System employs 200 physicians and advanced providers through Butler Medical Providers. BHS includes 72 outpatient locations across eight counties in Western Pennsylvania, including Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Indiana, Lawrence, Mercer and Venango counties. BHS employees more than 2500 people, making it the largest employer in Butler County. In 2018, Butler Memorial hospital was named one of the 100 top

hospitals in the United States by IBM Watson Health, and one of the best cardiac surgery programs in the country by U.S. News & World Report. Its bonds, rated by Moody's and by Fitch, are rated by both at investment-grade. ***Dr. David Rottinghaus joined Butler Health System in 2010, coming from Allegheny General Hospital as an attending physician in emergency medicine.***

The Butler County Area Agency on Aging is in its 35th year of operation and serves the over 28,000 residents aged 60 and over in Butler County, and their families. The goal is to help county senior be safe and healthy and to age successfully in the community with the supports they need through a network of home and community-based services that allow them to remain as independent as possible. Director ***Beth Herold, RN, BSN, MBA offers a wealth of experience from the nursing field in both hospital and homecare settings. As nurse at BHS, she worked in infectious disease managing a contract tracing project related to HIV in partnership with Department of Health.***

Butler County Emergency Services is a vital link to the public and all emergency service providers. Its mission is to provide County of Butler residents, guests, businesses and industries, non-profit organizations, and municipal governments the education and support necessary to reduce the loss of life and human suffering; to minimize property damage; and to protect environmental vulnerable areas from all types of emergencies through a comprehensive, risk-based, all-hazard emergency management program. ***Director Steven Bicehouse and 911 Director Rob McLafferty bring their nursing, trauma, and risk management skills to the County, both having previously worked for UPMC Health System.***

| **Testing** | **Lead:** Butler Health System |
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**Goal:** To enhance the Butler Health System laboratory capability/capacity along with having it identified as a reference lab for the PA Department of Health.  This will allow Butler County to provide testing County-wide or Region-wide to include Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Lawrence, Mercer and Venango Counties.  It will support community testing along with ongoing and congregate care on-site testing of HCP and residents and school district personnel until such time as a vaccine is available.

**About the BHS Lab:**  The BHS Laboratory has advanced innovative instrumentation complimented by professional expertise in microbiology, pathology, chemistry, hematology and cytology. The lab provides blood work and testing throughout the area, for patients, physician offices, and long-term care facilities and is accredited by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) and licensed by the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA).  Accreditation with the CAP means that the BHS lab receives assistance with adhering to the strictest and most comprehensive scientifically endorsed standards. In addition, all lab results are tested by studious professionals for accuracy. To qualify for accreditation, our lab and staff were put through a rigorous inspection in which any deficiencies were pointed out and required immediate remedy before passing. The lab is reviewed every 2 years to ensure that these standards are maintained.  BHS Laboratory services provides the convenience of having testing done locally and the assurance of high-quality and personal service. From basic blood work to more complex testing and treatment demands, BHS has the clinical laboratory facilities, equipment and professionally trained staff to handle a broad range of needs including surgical pathology, molecular diagnostics, dermatopathology, cytopathology, hematopathology, and transfusion medicine.

Lab services are offered in Butler County including in Butler, Petrolia, Cabot, Zelienople, Chicora, Sarver, Saxonburg, Slippery Rock and Seven Fields.  In Kittanning, Armstrong County; in New Castle, Lawrence County; in Clarion and in East Brady, Clarion County; and in Seneca, Venango County.

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**Strategy based on the DOH Advisory issued on 5/12/2020** -
*Test-based Strategies for Preventing Transmission of the Virus that Causes COVID-19 in Skilled Nursing Facilities and link to CDC Guidelines*

**Capacity Expansion Required to meet need:**  In order to perform baseline testing for all long- term care facilities and to support weekly testing of at least 20% of HCP and residents; 20% of school district employees and contractors; along with 2% of the County population monthly,  BHS lab would need additional capacity of 2500 to 5000 tests per week depending upon the number of Counties served. (See exhibit A).   BHS currently has access to only 280 test kits per week through BD Testing to perform in-house testing.  All community wide referrals for testing are currently performed by a commercial lab with a longer turn-around time from 2 to 8 days.

An equipment up-grade to include:

A. **The Hologic Panther** providing added capacity of 1,000 tests per 24 hours, easily 5,000 tests per week. (Attachment A)
B. **The Cepheid Gene-X-Pert Infinity System (48s**) recognized for a decreased footprint and consolidated testing design to create space-saving efficiency, reducing the need for multiple platforms. It provides rapid, real-time, random access results. (Attachment B)
C. **The Sophia Quidel 2 Point of Care** rapid tests will support on-site testing in congregate care settings and schools. The goal is to increase consumer and parent confidence in the safety of their loved ones in care. Sofia 2 has the power to deliver highly accurate, objective and automated Influenza A+B and RSV results fast. With Sofia 2's proprietary Advance Result Technology (ART), Sofia 2 can produce and store results in as few as 3 minutes. Sofia rapid test kits are easy to use, which means Sofia can be adapted to the needs of any healthcare setting. With the power of Virena wireless connectivity and myvirena.com, all instrument and user history can be easily, securely and remotely accessed from any desktop. This industry first feature provides near real-time infectious disease mapping and reporting. (Attachment C)

**Estimated Capital Costs for Laboratory instrumentation and platforms:**

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| Cepheid Gene-X-Pert: | $227,000 |
| Hologic Panther: | $175,000 |
| Sophia Quidel Point of Care: | $  7,200 (6 at $1200/each) |
| **Total Capital Equipment Needed:** | **$409,200** |

The testing plan includes testing 2% of the general population of Butler County and potentially surrounding counties per month for 12months. It also includes testing 20% of staff and residents in long term care facilities (Medicaid/Medicare eligible) in multiple counties or option only for all congregate care in Butler County including public school staff and contractors**.**

**Actual Testing Costs:** No matter the option, the plan involves testing from 3000-5000 people per week at a cost of approximately $30 per test. It is presumed that some of the testing would be underwritten by insurance providers. ***If there were no insurance, maximum cost would be $7.8 million. More reasonably one might suggest a reimbursement based on tests not reimbursed by another source to be up to $5 million annually.***  (See Attachments D, E, F)

## Community Outreach and Outbreak Prevention          Lead:  Butler County

**Lead:**   Butler County (designated contact Beth Herold, RN, BSN, MBA) with support from Butler Health System, Cranberry Township EMS, and Center for Community Resources

**Goal:**   To assist the PA DOH in following cases of COVID-19; notification of exposure; monitoring voluntary self-quarantines; and to refer and connect individuals to services in the least invasive and most voluntary manner.

The plan places particular focus on congregate care and the need to flex the number of contacts based on outbreaks or need.  A tiered approach would allow for:

Tier 1:  Nurses to assign cases; monitor the health status of patients infected with COVID-19; and provide training to those performing Tier 2 or 3 services.

Tier 2:  Information and Referral provided by Center for Community Resources (Butler County's I&R center that can address auxiliary needs (housing; food; mental health; etc.)

Tier 3:  ***EMS, CNAs, public health and social work students, I&R professionals*** to follow-up with those who may have been exposed.

This approach maintains employment for nurses and CNAs who would otherwise be furloughed and helps EMS providers offset financial losses during COVID-19.

**Critical Success Factors**:   The Task Force has identified trust as the most critical success factor to prevent the spread of the virus in Butler County. If the caller ID or the caller identifies as being employed by Butler Health System or a local EMS agency, there will be a higher likelihood of trust than if they are employed or identified by another entity.  The ability to connect to and involve congregate care facilities in planning and throughout the process will also be key to successful containment outcomes.

Staffing:  1 Nurse lead to train Tier 2 and 3 community outreach staff, connect with referral Tier 2; make daily calls to affected cases; report and connect with DOH.

1 Nurse lead to focus on congregate care and schools.  This position will provide training for outreach staff; make daily calls to affected cases; provide coordination and support for secondary outreach from BHS and EMS along with school nurses.  The position will report to and connect with DOH.

1 Community Resource Referral staff at Center for Community Resources -

**Estimated Cost for One Year at Full Capacity:**
Tier 1:  Maximum Reimbursement Cost of two nursing staff:
$45/hr. salary and benefits
**$185,000 for 12 months.**

Tier 2:  Support for I&R Services based on calls at $15 per call
**$10,000 - $15,000 for 12 months**

Tier 3:  Maximum Reimbursement for Community Outreach Calls:   (See Attachment G)
$15 per call reimbursement rate, max 500 calls per week.
**$390,000 for 12 months.**

## Training for Congregate Care          Lead:  Butler County AAoA supported by BHS

**Goals:**  To connect Congregate Care management and staff with training resources through DOH or BHS and to regularly ensure that new staff are trained appropriately.  Aging staff, nurse lead, and EMS partners may also respond to any facility outbreak as needed to provide additional supports, training, supplies, etc.

**Critical Success Factors:**  Trust and consistency.  Larger care facilities often have their own quality assurance and compliance staff.  But the medium to smaller sized providers need ongoing support for training by a trusted agent.  The need for these providers in the community is great, as placement is challenging, especially for income limited populations.  Trust and consistency in training is important.  Butler County's Area Agency on Aging has trusted relationships with these facilities, providing supports, meals, supplies and addressing other needs related to licensing and closures.

**Capacity/Funding Need from DOH/Commonwealth:**  Funding support for one nurse from BHS or Area Agency on Aging in delivering training and/or connecting providers to approved training resources to support COVID-19 conditions and circumstances along with auxiliary support from AAoA staff.

**Estimated Cost:**  $65,000 for 12 months


## Alternate Care Site          Lead:  Butler County Emergency Management

Butler County has a fully-equipped alternate care site in a school located in the City of Butler.  The site has been adapted to be ready for COVID-19 patients in recovery who may not be able to return to a congregate care setting right away.  ***The building has been outfitted to provide the gymnasium and various classrooms with negative air flow thanks to the support of local businesses; multiple handicapped accessible showers installed; beds, cots, and supplies secured; two large rooms reconfigured for donning and doffing; internet and WiFi connectivity updated and activated; plans for meals, laundry, and waste disposal in place; as well as staffing partnerships with long-term care providers.***  Butler County Emergency Management holds a no-cost lease for the space and the costs for site prep will be or have been submitted to PEMA.  This site will be available for future use for disasters or other emergencies.


## PPE for Congregate Care/Business/Schools

**Lead:**  Butler County Emergency Management and Butler County Growth Collaborative

**Goals:**  Butler County is committed to collaboration in the sourcing of PPE and supplies through a collaboration of business leadership and Emergency Management in assessing need and connecting qualified suppliers to users.  This is critically important for smaller independent congregate care providers, schools, and small business.  While this concept is not fully developed, the structure exists to stand up supports in short order.

| Support for Schools | Lead:  Butler County Emergency Mgt./BHS |
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**Goals:**  Support school nurses in rapid testing and screening program for school employees within an established timeframe;  Information and Referral for schools on tracing and notification process;  Confirmation and counseling on response to identified positive case in a school; assist in establishing an isolation area for students/staff presenting with symptoms during school hours and for testing as needed.  Districts have also identified challenges in obtaining personal protective equipment as outlined above.

Butler County Emergency Management and the Commissioners have weekly standing calls with all of our school district superintendents and nurses along with Butler Health System staff.  Through these calls the Districts have identified their needs as outlined in the above goals in order to successfully return to class in the fall.  The consensus is that the academic success along with mental health, nutrition, safety and welfare of students depends upon their return to traditional schooling in the fall with various adaptations to allow for use of technology; social distancing; alternate scheduling; etc.

If Butler Health System's lab is built out to support the needed testing and doctors can support shared rapid testing equipment on-site at schools and nursing homes, the task force believes it can successfully monitor and manage cases and outbreaks moving forward.

*School nurses will be an integral part of the tracing and training process and will be integrated into and supported by the County-wide program in order to improve communication and response.*

| Support for Business | Lead:  Butler County Growth Collaborative |
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**Goals:**
1. Public and employee safety through training and support for employers and small business in particular.
2. Public and employee safety by sourcing PPE and other equipment and supplies needed for small business to operate safely which may also include creating bulk purchasing opportunities.
3. Economic Development and Sustainability through training on operating in COVID-19 environment and adapting to technology.
4. Providing support for regional supply chain, exploring how to effectively connect suppliers to purchasers in the region.
5. Operating a robust revolving loan program to assist small business with operational needs until business has returned to normal levels.

*(See attachment H)*  The Butler County Growth Collaborative partners, along with the Pittsburgh North Chamber of Commerce and Beaver County Economic Development Partnership have been one trusted source of information being pushed to area businesses in order to control information overload.  They are also conducting webinars for business on various topics related to safety and sustainability of operations.  The loan program will be supported by a grant from the Hillman Foundation; the Industrial Development Authority Loan fund; through a partnership with First Commonwealth Bank; and application to CARES EDA grants.   Finally, the group will explore technology options for connecting to regional supply chain.