



MEDIA RELEASE

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Dahlkemper and Lyon issue statements about advancing to green phase

Erie, PA – County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper and Erie County Department of Health Director Melissa Lyon have issued the following statements regarding the readiness for Erie County to advance to the green phase:

“The Erie County Department of Health has done everything in their power to help Erie County to advance to the green phase,” said Lyon.

“The Pennsylvania Department of Health and Governor Wolf have the ultimate decision-making power on when Erie County can move to the green phase. Secretary Dr. Levine called and informed the County Executive and me that Erie County cannot go green.

“My response was that the Erie County Department of Health has demonstrated that they have been building capacity and leveraging resources to prepare for the green phase.

“The decision-making metrics being used by the Pennsylvania Department of Health are traditional disease-measuring metrics. Dr. Levine told County Executive Dahlkemper and me that Erie’s metrics are not favorable for moving into the green phase. While I can’t disagree with data because I don’t have evidence to nullify it, this is distressing. I ask for Erie County to advance to the green phase.

“It may now be time to use metrics outside of traditional disease-measuring tools to make decisions about communities’ readiness to move into the green phase. We should be weighing social science metrics to make good decisions across the commonwealth.

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“In the meantime, we are grateful that the state is going to give us six contact tracers to help out for the next two weeks. This will provide support as we get our local per diem contact tracers trained and ready to do the work our full-time staff has been doing since COVID-19 arrived in Erie County.

“The state is helping us expand testing, and the Walmart testing site is opening.

“At the end of the day, protecting the public health and safety of Erie County residents is and always has been my priority.”

Dahlkemper supports Director Lyon and urges the state to move Erie County into the green phase:

“We need the state to listen to us and take the proper action by advancing us to the green phase immediately.

“It would be irresponsible for us to use our limited staff resources to continue enforcing the yellow phase guidelines. It is inevitable that we will be going to green in the near future.

“Our community leaders, as a whole, have looked at not only the disease metrics, but have looked at the hospital capacity, the economic toll, the mental health toll and the four surrounding counties. We stand in collective agreement that it is time for Erie County to move into the green phase.

“We have also taken into account what is occurring in the four surrounding counties. People in our community are traveling unnecessarily to get the services they need/want. This is not helpful in containing the disease.

“Our employers have done an excellent job with universal masking and social distancing at their businesses. We have worked well with our businesses to achieve this. But it is now time to let our other closed businesses open and to work collectively to continue mitigating the disease spread.”

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