

# Philadelphia Biweekly PHP Outreach Newsletter

## Philadelphia Department of Public Health

### The Latest News

- **Stay connected to utility services!**
  - Uninterrupted utility service is essential for physical and mental health.
  - PECO, PGW, and PWD may send shutoff notices and disconnect residential utility service related to bill nonpayment from now through November 30, but a variety of programs and protections can help your family maintain electricity, gas, and water service.
    - Learn more in the FAQ below.
- **Don't forget about Mental Health Awareness!**
  - This is a friendly reminder to check in with your loved ones during this and every month. It's okay to not be okay. More information at: <https://bit.ly/MentalHealthPHL>
  - Read and share these flyers with your loved ones and community members.
    - Use these flyers as a conversation starter and please refer to the mental health resource guide (included) for more help.
      - Mental Health and Emergencies: <https://bit.ly/MHEm>
      - Mental Health and Older Adults: <https://bit.ly/MHOlderAdults>
    - For more information on mental health following a disaster or emergency, visit <https://bit.ly/DisasterMentalHealthCDC>.
  - Good mental health is vital to our overall health and well-being, but emergencies can make it hard to take care of your mental health.

### FAQ ON STAYING CONNECTED TO UTILITY SERVICES

- **What utility assistance programs exist?**
  - Utility assistance programs can prevent shutoffs, debt, and other hardships. Programs include:
    - PECO (electric) [bit.ly/PECOUtilityAssistance](https://bit.ly/PECOUtilityAssistance)
    - PGW (gas) [bit.ly/PGWCRP](https://bit.ly/PGWCRP)
    - PWD (water) [bit.ly/PWDUtilityAssistance](https://bit.ly/PWDUtilityAssistance)
    - LIHEAP (heating) [bit.ly/LIHEAPdhs](https://bit.ly/LIHEAPdhs)
    - UESF (all) [bit.ly/UESFGrantProgram](https://bit.ly/UESFGrantProgram)
- **What can I do if I have a medical or mental well-being condition and receive a gas or electric shutoff notice?**
  - Talk to your healthcare provider. They can provide a medical certification to PECO or PGW to keep your service connected. PDPH supports using medical certifications in any situation where a patient's physical or mental well-being could be compromised by losing electricity, gas, or water service.
    - Medical certifications protect against shutoff for 30 days and can be renewed a limited number of times for additional 30-day periods.
  - Paired with referrals to longer-lasting assistance (see list above), medical certifications can prevent many adverse consequences for public health, safety, and well-being.
  - Medical certification requires the information in the following forms:

- PECO and PGW, please download the attached Standard Medical Certificate Form.
- Determining whether a patient or member of their household has a medical condition that will be worsened by loss of utility service is entirely up to the physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant – **not the utility company.**
- **What if I receive a water shutoff notice?**
  - The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) will refrain from shutting off or promptly reconnect water to any house that has a child (under 18), an older adult (65+), or a person with a disability/serious illness, as well as to any tenant household where the water bill is in the landlord's name.
    - If you fit any of those categories and still get a shutoff notice or get disconnected for nonpayment, contact PWD at 215-685-6300 or [wrbhelpdesk@phila.gov](mailto:wrbhelpdesk@phila.gov) to prevent a shutoff or restore water service.
    - No paperwork is required.
  - If you would prefer to talk to your healthcare provider about a medical certification, PWD's forms are available in English and Spanish, at [bit.ly/PWDMedCert](http://bit.ly/PWDMedCert).
  - Additional information about existing PWD protections is available at [bit.ly/PreventWaterShutOff](http://bit.ly/PreventWaterShutOff).

#### PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY RESOURCES

- **CDC resources and health promotion materials for people with disabilities**
  - Respiratory virus resources: [bit.ly/RespVirusResources](http://bit.ly/RespVirusResources)
  - Tailored health promotion materials: [bit.ly/CDCHealthPromo](http://bit.ly/CDCHealthPromo)
- **Sign up for Ready Philadelphia:** text "ReadyPhila" to 888-777
  - Receive free text messages on emergencies or severe weather.
  - Be the first to know, then spread the word to family and neighbors.
- **Text-to-911 in Philadelphia:** [bit.ly/PATextTo911](http://bit.ly/PATextTo911)
  - Individuals who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and those who face communication barriers can use this service to send a text message to 911.

#### COVID-19 RESOURCES

- **Free at-home COVID-19 tests**
  - Resource Hubs (six tests per household member): [bit.ly/ResourceHubsPHL](http://bit.ly/ResourceHubsPHL)
    - No insurance or ID are required.
- **Free COVID-19 vaccine for uninsured and underinsured Philadelphians**
  - To find out which vaccines you and your loved ones need, go to <https://bit.ly/COVIDvaxPHL>.
- **Free COVID-19 test kit distribution program**
  - Community-based organizations, event organizers, and venues can apply to receive free at-home test kits and face masks to share with their communities. Visit [bit.ly/TestKitDistrib](http://bit.ly/TestKitDistrib).
- **FREE COVID-19 vaccines to eligible adults at your next community event!**
  - eTrueNorth can help you offer FREE COVID-19 vaccines to eligible adults.
  - [Flyer is attached](#); please share with your networks!

#### PDPH Information

- **PDPH Call Center:** 215-685-5488

- Information on City public health guidance, services, resources, and more.
- Press 3 for interpretation in your language, press 2 for Spanish.
- Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.
- **PDPH COVID-19 website and social media**
  - Information on the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, vaccines, and testing resources: [phila.gov/COVID](https://phila.gov/COVID), [facebook.com/phillyhealth](https://facebook.com/phillyhealth) and [twitter@PHLPublicHealth](https://twitter@PHLPublicHealth).

### How to Stay Connected

- **Join the Community Response Partner Network**
  - This newsletter is sent to the [Community Response Partner Network](#), part of the PDPH Public Health Preparedness Program.
  - Sign up at <https://bit.ly/phlcommunityresponse> to get essential public health information, then pass it on to your family, friends, and community.
- **Questions or suggestions?**
  - Email us at [publichealthpreparedness@phila.gov](mailto:publichealthpreparedness@phila.gov) or call us at 215-429-3016.