



# HEALTH CARE RECAP

## September 24-30, 2021

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### SESSION STATUS

At 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 29, 2021, the House stands adjourned until Monday, October 4, 2021, at 12:00 p.m., unless sooner recalled by the Speaker.

At 2:33 p.m. on Wednesday, September 29, 2021, the Senate stands in recess until Monday, October 18, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore.

### UPCOMING SESSION DAYS

#### House

Oct. 4-6, 25-27  
 Nov. 8-10, 15-17  
 Dec. 13-15

#### Senate

Oct. 18-20, 25-27  
 Nov. 15-17  
 Dec. 13-15

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## Around the Rotunda

*PLS coverage of Capitol events including press conferences, bill signings and media availabilities*

### PRO-LIFE CAUCUS LEADERS REITERATE BELIEFS AT MARCH FOR LIFE

By Derek Danneker, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | September 27, 2021

House Speaker Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster) and Senate Majority Leader Kim Ward (R-Westmoreland) stood with the Pro-Life Caucus and spoke to thousands who gathered for the March for Life rally today.

Rep. Cutler noted that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been more energy and drive for pro-life legislation. “Witnessing the world adapt and respond to the challenges of a worldwide pandemic and taking the steps necessary to protect our own loved ones has given a generation of Americans a new perspective on what the right to life is truly about,” he said. Rep. Cutler thanked the Pro-Life Caucus for their work. He also thanked attendees for their work in encouraging legislators to work on pro-life legislation despite a “hostile” executive and Supreme Court. He reported that the House has been able to pass [HB 1500](#) and [HB 118](#) due to constituent support. Rep. Cutler explained that Gov. Tom Wolf has previously vetoed similar legislation, but “the landscape is continually changing.” He noted that those bills were not passed through party-line votes. “Those bills prove that every life is sacred, it is loved and it deserves our respect,” he said.

Sen. Ward expressed hope that the March for Life will continue to gather for future rallies. She thanked those who came to attest to their belief that “life begins at conception.” She stated that her colleagues and their pro-life constituents act as a “voice for the voiceless and a voice for the unborn.” She explained that all human life deserves protection. Sen. Ward detailed how medical advances, such as 3D ultrasounds and heartbeat monitoring systems, have continued to show that life begins at conception. She explained that there is currently a Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision that would allow for taxpayer-funded abortions. “We need you to stay involved and keep this energy up,” she said.

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## Committee News

*Comprehensive coverage of the House & Senate public hearings and voting meetings*

### House State Government Committee

9/27/21, 8:00 a.m., Room 205, Ryan Office Building  
 By Claire Ergood, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider legislation.

[HB 1893 Staats, Craig](#) - (PN 2151) Amends the Disease Prevention and Control Law providing reports of diseases and any records maintained in consequence of this act are subject to the Right-to-Know Law. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was **reported as committed** on a party-line vote with all Democrats voting in the negative.

Rep. Craig Staats (R-Bucks), prime sponsor of the bill, explained that this legislation would repeal Section 15 and replace it with a provision that all disease information under the act is under the Right-to-Know Law.

Chairman Seth Grove (R-York) highlighted that individual health information is protected within this legislation.

Chairman Conklin explained that he believes this will hurt day-to-day health care operations and put Pennsylvanians at risk of having their information hacked.

Rep. Brett Miller (R-Lancaster) stated that individuals' private information will be kept out of public purview and only aggregate data will be released.

Chairman Grove noted that they were concerned about cybersecurity so they moved comprehensive legislation to codify cybersecurity best practices.

[HB 1218 Davanzo, Eric](#) - (PN 1278) The Sports Mask Freedom Act grants authority to sports organizations relating to mask wearing during sporting events. Effective immediately. - The bill was **reported as committed** on a party-line vote with all Democrats voting in the negative.

Rep. Eric Davanzo (R-Westmoreland), prime sponsor of the bill, explained that this bill is not targeted at any particular individual but gives local authorities jurisdiction over mask mandates during sports.

Chairman Grove asked if sports would be exempted under Gov. Tom Wolf's current health order for schools. Rep. Davanzo responded yes.

Chairman Conklin explained that because they do not know what the future will bring in terms of the pandemic, he believes it is still important they allow that authority to be used in such cases.

Rep. Maureen Madden (D-Monroe) explained that she will be a no vote, noting they had 76 new cases in Monroe County and are down to one intensive care unit (ICU) bed. She stated that this pandemic is not over and they should be aware that one in five cases is in children. She noted that they should not leave something as important as this up to 500 different school districts.

Rep. Jeff Wheeland (R-Lycoming) stated, "The problem is painting Pennsylvania with the same broad paintbrush." He asserted that in counties with such few cases they should allow local control.

Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta (D-Philadelphia) asked if there is any provision for amendments on the floor that would limit this to localities that have public health experts engaged in this decision-making. He explained that part of why the state is involved in these conversations is that they have an entire Department of Health and that there are many school boards that do not have this same access to expertise. Rep. Davanzo responded that he is open to that discussion. Rep. Kenyatta referenced issues in overlap of sports in different districts and questioned how they are going to deal with one district wearing masks and the other not. Rep. Davanzo responded that something like that would be decided by the home school.

Rep. Eric Nelson (R-Westmoreland) stated that one of the greatest challenges youths have experienced in the past year has been the chaos put on them by inconsistent change.

Chairman Grove added that school districts have been working with local health officials to develop their health and safety plans all summer long.

Rep. Diamond stated that statewide, one-size-fits-all policies have been used to penalize local officials who choose to move forward despite statewide decisions.

## Senate Health and Human Services Committee

9/27/21, 12:00 p.m., Room 8E-A, East Wing

By Jeff Cox, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

Video: ([click here](#))

The committee met to consider five bills.

[SB 782 Pittman, Joe](#) - (PN 927) Amends the Human Services Code, in public assistance, providing for compensable services and items; and abrogating a related regulation. The bill establishes that an anti-obesity drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration of the United States Department of Health and Human Services shall be considered a compensable item under the medical assistance program. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was unanimously **reported as amended**.

[A02258](#) by Brooks, specifies the coverage of the anti-obesity medications. The amendment was unanimously **adopted**. Sen. Joe Pittman (R-Indiana), the prime sponsor of the legislation, explained that he and the other sponsors of the bill are looking to add the federal Food and Drug Administration's approved anti-obesity drugs to the statewide preferred drug list for the purposes of Medicaid.

Chairman Michele Brooks (R-Mercer) noted the amendment is agreed-to and is requested by the Department of Human Services (DHS). She also pointed out the amendment makes the bill identical to [House Bill 293](#). Chairman Brooks reported that the committee has been working with stakeholders on this issue for over one year. She commented that she is pleased the governor's Office of the Budget and the department's Office of Medical Assistance Programs have aligned in their financial estimates.

[SB 815 Muth, Katie \(F\)](#) - (PN 1016) Amends the Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error (Mcare) Act, in medical professional liability, by adding a section providing for informed consent in pelvic, rectal, and prostate examinations. The legislation establishes that a health care provider may not knowingly perform a pelvic, rectal, or prostate exam on a patient who is unconscious or anesthetized in a facility providing health care services unless the patient or the patient's authorized representative obtains specific informed consent. The legislation provides for exceptions if the examination is within the scope of care ordered for the patient, sexual assault is suspected, or the examination is necessary in a medical emergency where the patient is incapable of providing informed consent. The legislation also establishes liability provisions related to a civil cause of action and statutory damages of \$5,000 per violation. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

Sen. Katie Muth (D-Montgomery), the bill's prime sponsor, provided a brief overview of the legislation. She explained it would prohibit pelvic, rectal and prostate exams without explicit consent of the patient.

Chairman Brooks said the committee received a letter in support of the legislation from the Consent Awareness Network and that she received a call from a constituent who was personally violated while under anesthesia for an unrelated procedure.

[SB 818 Ward, Judy \(F\)](#) - (PN 1004) Amends the Health Care Facilities Act, in licensing of health care facilities, providing that ambulatory surgical facilities may seek an exception or waiver from the department for surgical procedures not specified on a covered procedures list by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This legislation aligns the procedures permitted in ambulatory surgery centers with that of CMS. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

Sen. Judy Ward (R-Blair), the prime sponsor of the legislation, explained the bill will align procedures permitted in licensed ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) with that of other states and the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

[HB 1774 Flood, Ann \(F\)](#) - (PN 2011) Amends the Achieving Better Care by Monitoring All Prescriptions Program (ABC-MAP) Act, further providing that the act shall expire on December 31, 2028, and making an editorial change. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

Rep. Ann Flood (R-Northampton), the bill's prime sponsor, said the legislation makes important changes to the statute to provide for data sharing and to extend the expiration of the prescription drug monitoring program from June 30, 2022, to December 31, 2028.

[HB 1861 Lewis, Andrew](#) - (PN 2107) Amends the Administrative Code, in temporary regulatory flexibility authority, further providing for definitions and for temporary regulatory flexibility authority. This legislation provides that a regulatory suspension that was extended related to the COVID-19 declaration of disaster emergency and was in effect until September 30, 2021, shall be retroactive to the last day that the COVID-19 declaration of disaster emergency was in effect. The legislation further provides for a final report to be issued by November 1, 2021, by each authority that authorized a suspension. Effective immediately. - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

## House Appropriations Committee

9/27/21, 12:15 p.m., Room 140, Main Capitol

By Claire Ergood, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider legislation.

[SB 397 Pittman, Joe](#) - (PN 870) Amends the Osteopathic Medical Practice Act by increasing the membership of the State Board of Osteopathic Medicine by two members, including one doctor and one physician assistant. Provides a permanent seat on the board for a physician assistant. Allows a physician assistant to provide medical services in accordance with the written agreement. Also allows the board to develop audit procedures to ensure supervision and scope of practice protections are maintained in a written agreement in accordance with the act. Limits the audit to 10 percent of all written agreements on an annual basis. Allows the primary supervising physician to determine countersignature requirements for the review of a physician assistant's patient records in a written agreement, except in the case of a new physician assistant, where the primary supervising physician shall countersign 100 percent of patient records within 10 days for the first 12 months of a physician assistant's practice post-graduation and after licensure criteria has been met. Increases the ratio of the number of physician assistants a physician can supervise from four to six and, in a health care facility setting, increases the ratio from four to seven. A waiver, subject to board approval, may be utilized in a health care facility to employ or supervise more physician assistants for good cause. Requires the board to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out this act within 180 days and requires the abrogation of specific inconsistent board regulations. Effective in 60 days. (Prior Printer's Number: 385) - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[SB 398 Pittman, Joe](#) - (PN 871) Amends the Medical Practice Act by increasing the membership of the State Board of Medicine by two members, including one doctor and one physician assistant. Provides a permanent seat on the board for a physician assistant. Requires the primary supervising physician to be responsible for the medical services a physician assistant renders. Allows a physician assistant to perform a medical service without the onsite presence or personal direction of the primary supervising physician and in accordance with the written agreement. Allows the primary supervising physician to determine countersignature requirements for the review of a physician assistant's patient records in a written agreement, except in the case of a new physician assistant, where the primary supervising physician shall countersign 100 percent of patient records within 10 days for the first 12 months of a physician assistant's practice post-graduation and after licensure criteria has been met. Also allows the board to develop audit procedures to ensure supervision and scope of practice protections are maintained in a written agreement in accordance with the act. Limits the audit to 10 percent of all written agreements on an annual basis. Increases the ratio of the number of physician assistants a physician can supervise from four to six and, in a health care facility setting, increases the ratio from four to seven. A waiver, subject to board approval, may be utilized in a health care facility to employ or supervise more physician assistants for good cause. Requires the board to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out this act within 180 days and requires the abrogation of specific inconsistent board regulations. Effective in 60 days. (Prior Printer's Number: 386) - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

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## Senate Appropriations Committee

9/27/21, 2:23 p.m., Senate Chamber

By Jeff Cox, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

Video: [\(click here\)](#)

The committee met to consider seven bills.

[SB 729 Ward, Judy \(F\)](#) - (PN 831) Amends the Nurse Aide Resident Abuse Prevention Training Act, providing that curriculum content for an approved nurse aide training program may be delivered in class, in person, online or via asynchronous, virtual reality or other digital delivery mechanism, or in a blended format. Establishes that clinical requirements must be completed in an approved clinical setting. Provide for reporting requirements for the department. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

Sen. Judy Ward (R-Blair), the bill's prime sponsor, reported she introduced the bill at the request of the long-term care sector. She commented that the legislation will help long-term care facilities "grow and expand their workforce." Sen. Ward explained that the bill authorizes the online delivery of theory and lab components of the state-approved nurse aide training program.

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## **Performance-Based Budget Board**

9/28/21, 10:00 a.m., Room 140, Main Capitol

By Tom Flynn, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The board held a public hearing on addenda to the performance-based budget plans for multiple departments and the Keystone Special Development Zone (KSDZ) tax credit.

Brenda Warburton, deputy director, Independent Fiscal Office (IFO), outlined the data requested from each department at the previous meeting on April 28 and whether the departments were able to fulfill the requests.

Warburton reported the Department of Human Services (DHS) provided data related to turnover for contracted direct care workers in their intellectual disability and autism programs, which was collected based on a survey of service providers. She said DHS was unable to acquire data for the child welfare and mental health service program. Warburton said DHS did not have data on the average wages of contracted direct care workers, but IFO was able to compile data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the median wages of these areas for select occupations.

Warburton said DHS was asked to provide information for the average costs for residents in private nursing facilities and average costs for individuals served in home- and community-based settings for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA). She said DHS was able to provide information on nursing facilities, but it is not directly comparable to DMVA facilities. She elaborated that the DHS data represents average Medical Assistance payments to nursing facilities and thus does not represent the total cost of providing service at a nursing facility. Warburton said DHS was able to provide information on the annual DHS supplemental payments to private nursing facilities, but it cannot be allocated on a per-resident basis. DHS also provided the average costs for providing home- and community-based services. She stated this figure represents all DHS program areas that provide services.

The DHS addendum was unanimously **accepted** by the board.

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## **House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee**

9/28/21, 10:00 a.m., Room 523, Irvis Office Building

By Aaron Rider, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider four bills.

[HB 1260 Thomas, Wendi](#) - (PN 1334) Amends the State Lottery Law, in Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Elderly (PACE), further providing for the pharmaceutical assistance contract for the elderly needs enhancement tier (PACENET) with income limitations of \$33,500 for a single person and \$41,500 for combined income for married persons and establishing that the board shall advise on the development and modernization of the program. Provides for powers of the department and that the program shall pay a premium assessed by a PACE or PACENET enrollee's prescription drug plan. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was unanimously **reported as amended**.

[A02371](#) by Day, removes the phrase "without excessively hampering the pharmaceutical industry" from the bill. The amendment was unanimously **adopted**.

Rep. Wendi Thomas (R-Bucks) said the bipartisan legislation's goal is to simplify a complicated system and make the federal government pay for it.

Minority Chairman Steve Samuelson (D-Northampton) said modernizing the Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Elderly (PACE) program will better support the state's seniors.

Rep. Frank Ryan (R-Lebanon) said Pennsylvania has "squirrely" definitions of income and asked how the bill defines income. Committee staff said the bill increases the definition by \$6,000. Rep. Ryan said the bill is "very good."

[SB 668 Ward, Judy \(F\)](#) - (PN 756) Amends the State Lottery Law, raising the PACENET annual income eligibility to \$33,500 for a single person and \$41,500 for combined income of persons married to each other for pharmaceutical assistance, removing the premium associated with a PACENET claimant not enrolled in Part D. Provides that the department shall have the discretion to require that the claimant enroll in the Part D plan or program that meets their needs and provides that the PACENET program shall pay the premium assessed by a PACE or PACENET enrollee's prescription drug plan. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**

[HB 291 Labs, Shelby \(F\)](#) - (PN 257) Amends the State Lottery Law extending the current Social Security cost-of-living adjustment moratorium until December 31, 2021. Effective immediately. - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

Rep. Shelby Labs (R-Bucks) said her bill extends the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) moratorium so older adults will not be removed from rolls due to small increases in income.

[SB 323 Ward, Judy \(F\)](#) - (PN 301) Amends the State Lottery Law extending the Social Security cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) moratorium for individuals enrolled in the PACE and PACENET programs until December 31, 2023. Effective immediately. - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

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### **Senate Labor and Industry Committee**

*9/28/21, 10:00 a.m., Room 461 Main Capitol Building*

By Jeff Cox, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

**Video:** ([click here](#))

The committee met to consider four bills.

[SB 775 Bartolotta, Camera](#) - (PN 913) Amends the Workers' Compensation Act, in interpretation and definitions, providing definitions for first responder and post-traumatic stress injury; and, in liability and compensation, providing a post-traumatic stress injury suffered by a first responder shall be established by a preponderance of the evidence that the injury resulted from a normal or abnormal working condition and was sustained in the course and scope of the individual's employment as a first responder. Requires diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and that when PTSD is diagnosed after the last date of employment, provisions shall not be construed to prohibit a claim against the employer of the claimant at the time of the direct exposure to the traumatic event which caused the injury. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was **reported as committed** with Senators Cris Dush (R-Jefferson) and Mensch voting in the negative.

Chairman Bartolotta stated that the bill clarifies the requirements under the Workers' Compensation Act for a first responder to establish a post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) claim. According to Chairman Bartolotta, under current law, as held by the Pennsylvania courts, a first responder must prove there were "objective abnormal working conditions" in order to establish a PTSI claim. She commented, "This standard sets a high bar that can be difficult to meet." Chairman Bartolotta said the legislation will establish clearer criteria for establishing a PTSI claim based on a normal or abnormal working condition sustained in the course or scope of the first responder's employment. She pointed out the bill requires a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist to diagnose the PTSI in accordance with the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5). Chairman Bartolotta stated, "The harms caused by PTSI are significant, effecting not only the individual, but often family, friends and communities." She added, "Far too many first responders are lost each year to suicide."

Sen. DiSanto said he is voting yes today because "I empathize with first responders suffering from mental trauma in connection with protecting our communities." He noted that work-related PTSI has long been compensated under workers' compensation. He said he is open to making improvements to make this benefit more accessible to those who need it. Sen. DiSanto expressed reservations about the bill as drafted. He pointed out municipal organizations have warned of immense fiscal uncertainty and far-reaching consequences for the public budget supporting all first responders and the taxpayers who fund these benefits.

Sen. Dush said he shares a lot of the same concerns put forth by the municipal organizations. He commented, "At this point, I can't be a yes on this bill."

Sen. Lindsay Williams (D-Allegheny) reported she has heard from a number of first responders in her district and she sees the bill "as a way to allow them to get the treatment and care they need to keep them on the job, and keep them safe."

Sen. Devlin Robinson (R-Allegheny) thanked Chairman Bartolotta for running the bill and commented that "for far too long I think post-traumatic stress injuries have gone untreated because of the stigma in the workforce and in society today." He said, "I think a bill like this will help to get people the help that they need so they can get back to work."

Sen. Baker said she supports the bill. She wanted to know, moving forward, if it is Chairman Bartolotta's intent to convene a stakeholder roundtable to look at some the specific issues and questions raised by the municipal government associations and come up with some compromise language. Chairman Bartolotta said her goal is to move the legislation out of the committee so some of the issues raised can be addressed. She added, "I think it is past time that we get some momentum on this issue."

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## Senate Education Committee

9/28/21, 10:30 a.m., Room 8E-A, East Wing

By Matt Hess, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider bills.

[SB 603 Brooks, Michele](#) - (PN 677) Amends the Public School Code, in school health services, providing for the removal of a tick from a student. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was **reported as amended** with Sen. John DiSanto (R-Dauphin) voting in the negative.

[A02165](#) by Brooks, requires the school district to notify parents that they have preserved the tick and gives the option to send the tick to East Stroudsburg University for testing. The amendment was **adopted** with Sen. DiSanto voting in the negative.

Sen. Michele Brooks (R-Mercer), prime sponsor of the bill, provided an overview of the legislation and explained that Pennsylvania leads the nation in Lyme disease, with one-third of cases involving children.

Sen. DiSanto thanked Sen. Brooks for raising awareness about tick-borne diseases but called the bill another mandate on school districts. "I'm confident school nurses can remove ticks from students and notify parents without over-prescriptive mandates from Harrisburg," he stated. Sen. Brooks noted that the amendment was crafted because parents were not notified by the district that a tick was removed from their child.

[SB 846 Mastriano, Doug](#) - (PN 1040) Amends the Public School Code adding a new section allowing a parent or legal guardian of a child of school age to opt out the child from wearing a face covering or mask, which the child's school imposes as a result of a recommendation or mandate from the secretary of health or a local board or department of health, that is primarily responsible for the prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable disease, including disease control in public and private schools under the Disease Prevention and Control Law of 1955. Further provides for definitions. Effective immediately. - The bill was **reported as amended** with Democratic members voting in the negative.

[A02252](#) by Mastriano, clarifies that a parent or legal guardian can exercise an opt-out from a recommendation or mandate from a school board. The amendment was **adopted** with Democratic members voting in the negative.

Sen. Doug Mastriano (R-Franklin), co-prime sponsor of the bill, explained that the bill would allow parents and legal guardians to "opt-out" their child from having to comply with a school's mask mandate. He said he has heard from hundreds of parents who want Gov. Tom Wolf's mask mandate overturned and cited a German study that found negative side effects from prolonged mask-wearing in children. "This legislation is designed to empower parents to make the best decision and considers the personalized needs of their individual child. A heavy-handed, one-size-fits-all approach is not working, it's not scientific, and it is putting our children at risk," he stated.

Sen. Judy Ward (R-Blair), co-prime sponsor of the legislation, emphasized that parents have expressed their concern about the mask mandate. "Parents know what their children are going through and parents can assess these risks and decide whether a mask is necessary for their child's health and success in school," she stated.

Minority Chairman Lindsey Williams (D-Allegheny) said the German study that Sen. Mastriano referenced was severely flawed and retracted. She asked if he reviewed any of the numerous scientific studies that have shown the efficacy of mask-wearing and have not been retracted. Sen. Mastriano indicated that the German study was not retracted and said he reviewed a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study that involved 90,000 students. "It showed that schools that required face coverings and other restrictions had no significant difference in transmission from those schools without," he stated. Chairman Williams said the National Academy of Sciences of the United States has shown that mask-wearing is the most effective way to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Sen. Mastriano said Dr. Anthony Fauci and other health experts changed their opinion on masks throughout the pandemic. "Things aren't settled on these issues and it's un-removable that masks have an ill effect, especially on young children who can't keep their hands off their faces," he stated.

Chairman Williams remarked she has heard from many parents, superintendents, and health care workers who are in support of the mask mandate. "We have 20,000 new cases of COVID-19 in children 5-19 between September 2nd and September 21st. That is a lot of children suffering and there is a lot of risk that I'm not willing to take with our kids," she stated.

Chairman Williams asked about children who have legitimate reasons for not wearing masks and have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and other students that are immunocompromised. Sen. Mastriano said he had a rally at the Capitol with family members of special education students. "Their assertion was that their kids are suffering from these mask mandates because they rely on facial recognition and interaction with their educators," he stated. Sen. Mastriano added that 14 school-aged children have died since the start of the pandemic out of 1.7 million, which is the same rate as the bird flu several years ago. "Each death is tragic and

we never belittle any death here, but that is 0.0008 percent of the school-aged population," he stated. Chairman Williams said Sen. Mastriano did not answer her question and asked, "Fourteen deaths is tragic; how many does it take to change your mind regarding mask mandates?" Sen. Mastriano said the legislation does not prevent children from wearing a mask in schools. "Out of a statistic of 0.0008 we are going to have a heavy-handed, draconian edict, controlling the lives of kids across the state. Where do you stop? This is overreach by the government. It's time to let the parents decide," he asserted.

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### **House Judiciary Committee**

*9/28/21, 11:25 a.m., Room 515, Irvis Office Building*

By Jeff Cox, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

**Video:** [\(click here\)](#)

The committee met to consider five bills.

[HB 1836 Ryan, Frank](#) - (PN 2080) Amends Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses), in offenses against the family, providing for the offense of child torture; in firearms, including persons convicted of child torture to persons not to possess firearms; and, in child custody, providing for consideration of child torture convictions. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was **reported as committed** with the committee Democrats and Rep. Paul Schemel (R-Franklin) voting in the negative.

Rep. Frank Ryan (R-Lebanon) provided some background on the reasons he decided to introduce this legislation. He said he has been working with his local district attorney and child and youth services programs. Rep. Ryan reported there is about 13 or 14 bills are currently in the process relating to some of the shortcomings under the current system.

Carr outlined the provisions in the legislation.

Rep. Jared Solomon (D-Philadelphia) commented there is currently a law regarding endangering the welfare of a child and a person can be convicted up to a felony of the third degree. He wanted to know what this proposed legislation does that a district attorney would not be able to do with the current endangering the welfare of a child statute. Carr explained that, depending on the age of the child, the grading of the charge can be changed pretty significantly. Rep. Solomon and Carr then discussed conscious disregard under the proposed bill.

Rep. Natalie Mihalek (R-Allegheny) commented that she is not sure creating an entire new statute for prosecutors is necessarily the right decision. She noted some of the other statutes available to prosecutors. Rep. Mihalek said she will support reporting the bill and she looks forward to continuing the conversation with Rep. Ryan about it.

Rep. Joseph Hohenstein (D-Philadelphia) thanked Rep. Ryan for introducing the bill. He said it is an issue that needs to be addressed. Rep. Hohenstein expressed concern with the use of the term torture in the proposed legislation. He noted the committee members received a letter from a group representing both legal services and advocacy service providers asking the committee to hold action on this bill in advance. Chairman Rob Kauffman (R-Franklin) noted he did not receive a copy of the letter. Rep. Hohenstein said he would provide him with a copy when finished with his remarks.

Rep. Ryan said he would like to also see increased training and education for those who may come into contact with maltreated children, financial resources for public education on the science of the maltreatment of children, and more equitable funding for those programs already in place.

Rep. Zabel said he respectfully disagrees that a loophole exists in regard to this proposed statute. He spoke of the difference in what prosecutors want and what they need.

Chairman Briggs pointed out that the letter to the members of the committee Rep. Hohenstein mentioned that was signed by the various groups does not ask the committee to oppose it but asks that the committee pause to work on it. He said he finds the legislation "excessive and duplicative" and it needs work.

Rep. Todd Stephens (R-Montgomery) said he shares some of the concerns previously mentioned. He said he is going to vote to move the bill along today and looks forward to working with Rep. Ryan on it.

Rep. Kinkead expressed concern that the bill risks criminalizing poverty, mental illness and disability in a way not necessarily intended.



Rep. David Millard (R-Columbia) commented that he believes the committee is "running far afield" from what the intent of the legislation is.

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### **Senate Appropriations Committee**

*9/28/21, 1:45 p.m., Senate Chamber*

By Derek Danneker, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider two bills.

[HB 1774 Flood, Ann \(F\)](#) - (PN 2011) Amends the Achieving Better Care by Monitoring All Prescriptions Program (ABC-MAP) Act, further providing that the act shall expire on December 31, 2028, and making an editorial change. Effective in 60 days. - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

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### **Senate Health and Human Services Committee**

*9/28/21, 2:00 p.m., Senate Rules Committee Conference Room*

By Matt Hess, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider one bill.

[HB 1861 Lewis, Andrew](#) - (PN 2107) Amends the Administrative Code, in temporary regulatory flexibility authority, further providing for definitions and for temporary regulatory flexibility authority. This legislation provides that a regulatory suspension that was extended related to the COVID-19 declaration of disaster emergency and was in effect until September 30, 2021, shall be retroactive to the last day that the COVID-19 declaration of disaster emergency was in effect. The legislation further provides for a final report to be issued by November 1, 2021, by each authority that authorized a suspension. Effective immediately. - The bill was unanimously **reported as amended**.

[A02409](#) by Brooks, provides for additional temporary extensions for regulatory statutes, rules, and regulations which are in effect on September 30, 2021, to be extended until March 21, 2022, unless they are sooner terminated by the authority which initially authorized the suspension. The amendment was unanimously **adopted**.

Chairman Michelle Brooks (R-Mercer) explained that the bill as amended would temporarily extend waivers for programs within Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), Department of Health (DOH), and the Department of Human Services (DHS). "This amendment addresses the flexibility needed for our health care professionals, workforce, and state to continue to respond to the daily increase of COVID-19 cases...the months ahead will be used to focus on which waivers we can consider for permanent through targeted legislation but for now I would ask support from all of our members," she stated.

Minority Chairman Arthur Haywood (D-Philadelphia) spoke in support of the bill as amended. "These extensions are critical for the safety of all in the commonwealth to make sure that our health care and other operations can function in the pandemic," he stated.

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## Senate Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

9/29/21, 11:50 a.m., Senate Chamber

By Derek Danneker, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider two bills.

[SB 397 Pittman, Joe](#) - (PN 870) Amends the Osteopathic Medical Practice Act by increasing the membership of the State Board of Osteopathic Medicine by two members, including one doctor and one physician assistant. Provides a permanent seat on the board for a physician assistant. Allows a physician assistant to provide medical services in accordance with the written agreement. Also allows the board to develop audit procedures to ensure supervision and scope of practice protections are maintained in a written agreement in accordance with the act. Limits the audit to 10 percent of all written agreements on an annual basis. Allows the primary supervising physician to determine countersignature requirements for the review of a physician assistant's patient records in a written agreement, except in the case of a new physician assistant, where the primary supervising physician shall countersign 100 percent of patient records within 10 days for the first 12 months of a physician assistant's practice post-graduation and after licensure criteria has been met. Increases the ratio of the number of physician assistants a physician can supervise from four to six and, in a health care facility setting, increases the ratio from four to seven. A waiver, subject to board approval, may be utilized in a health care facility to employ or supervise more physician assistants for good cause. Requires the board to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out this act within 180 days and requires the abrogation of specific inconsistent board regulations. Effective in 60 days. (Prior Printer's Number: 385) - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[SB 398 Pittman, Joe](#) - (PN 871) Amends the Medical Practice Act by increasing the membership of the State Board of Medicine by two members, including one doctor and one physician assistant. Provides a permanent seat on the board for a physician assistant. Requires the primary supervising physician to be responsible for the medical services a physician assistant renders. Allows a physician assistant to perform a medical service without the onsite presence or personal direction of the primary supervising physician and in accordance with the written agreement. Allows the primary supervising physician to determine countersignature requirements for the review of a physician assistant's patient records in a written agreement, except in the case of a new physician assistant, where the primary supervising physician shall countersign 100 percent of patient records within 10 days for the first 12 months of a physician assistant's practice post-graduation and after licensure criteria has been met. Also allows the board to develop audit procedures to ensure supervision and scope of practice protections are maintained in a written agreement in accordance with the act. Limits the audit to 10 percent of all written agreements on an annual basis. Increases the ratio of the number of physician assistants a physician can supervise from four to six and, in a health care facility setting, increases the ratio from four to seven. A waiver, subject to board approval, may be utilized in a health care facility to employ or supervise more physician assistants for good cause. Requires the board to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out this act within 180 days and requires the abrogation of specific inconsistent board regulations. Effective in 60 days. (Prior Printer's Number: 386) - The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

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## Senate Democratic Policy Committee

9/30/21, 10:00 a.m., Room 8E-B, East Wing

By Matt Hess, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee held a hearing on closing the hazard waste loophole.

Chairman Muth explained that a "short-sighted exemption was made 30 years ago" and remarked Pennsylvanians are exposed daily to potential toxic and radioactive waste produced by the oil and gas industry. "This hazardous waste loophole forces residents, communities and taxpayers of our commonwealth to deal with frightening and potentially deadly (issues) from this waste cycle," she stated. Chairman Muth said she has sponsored three bills to close the hazard waste loophole, including [Senate Bill 644](#), [Senate Bill 645](#), and [Senate Bill 646](#). She affirmed the bills will protect Pennsylvania's waterways, public health, and the environment; ensure waste is properly disposed of; and defend worker safety.

Chairman Muth welcomed Rep. Innamorato to the committee and said she is sponsoring companion legislation in the House, including [House Bill 1353](#), [House Bill 1354](#), and [House Bill 1355](#).

Rep. Innamorato said she was made aware of the issue when she read an article in the *Public Herald* about a whistleblower at a municipal treatment facility who noticed a local landfill was sending fracking waste to his facility. "It's been about two years since that article came out and what I have learned from scientists, residents, investigative reporters, and even from organizations like the American Petroleum Institute about radioactivity in oil and gas waste has been nothing short of alarming," she stated.

[Dr. John Stolz](#), professor, Duquesne University, explained that over the past eight years, he and his students have interviewed hundreds of people who have been negatively impacted by unconventional oil and gas development and have analyzed over 1,800 samples for their chemistry which have published the results in peer-reviewed journals. He discussed the findings regarding the improper disposal of oil and gas wastes, both solid and liquid, and the threat to public drinking water sources it poses. He explained that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) allows drilling wastes to be taken to sanitary landfills, up to 80 percent volume per day. The solids, such as drill cuttings are buried along with municipal waste and are often used to cover the landfill at night. The liquids, which may contain drilling fluids, flowback, and produced water, are "immobilized" with wood chips or other absorbents and buried along with the municipal waste, and currently there are no requirements to test for radioactivity or toxic chemical constituents as it is defined as "residual waste" or "brine".

Dr. Stolz emphasized that the fluids may contain thousands of picocuries of radium 226 and radium 228 and said there are at least 16 sanitary landfills in Pennsylvania that are reported to be taking oil and gas wastes and over the past year and his researchers have tried to find out just how much, but the DEP records don't match with company records. He said more than 11,000 unconventional wells already drilled will continue to generate toxic and radioactive brine and laws are needed to address the proper disposal of this waste to make sure it doesn't wind up in drinking water.

[Amy Mall](#), senior advocate, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), explained that since at least the 1980s that oil and gas extraction activities generate waste that can be highly toxic and endanger workers, communities, and the environment and said this waste, including radioactive material, has been exempt from important provisions of federal law that govern the handling and disposal of hazardous waste. She highlighted an NRDC report, entitled, *A Hot Fracking Mess: How weak regulation of oil and gas production leads to radioactive waste in our water, air and communities*, which focused specifically on radioactive waste and concluded that gaps in the regulatory structure allow radioactive oil and gas materials to go virtually unregulated.

Mall said radium-226 and radium-228, both present in oil and gas waste, can cause bone and connective tissue cancer and radium decays into radioisotopes that can attach themselves to dust and, if inhaled, cause lung cancer. Radon decay products, including lead-210 and polonium-210, are also present in high levels in some equipment and can further contribute to cancer risk. Mall explained that radiation can be present in materials that are spilled or leaked from pits, tanks, or landfills. It is found in drill cuttings, produced water, and tank sludge. And it can be intentionally reintroduced into the environment through methods such as road spreading, where wastewater is sprayed directly onto roads for dust suppression or de-icing. She added that landfill leachate can eventually reach groundwater or surface water if not safely contained, and in Pennsylvania it has also been intentionally discharged into the Monongahela River, even after wastewater treatment facilities were not able to filter out all the radioactive material.

[Rebecca Franz](#), chief deputy attorney general, Environmental Crimes Section, Office of Attorney General, gave an overview of the 43rd statewide investigating grand jury on unconventional oil and gas activity in Pennsylvania. She explained that the grand jury report included a historical look at this industry and the two main state agencies charged with oversight of it: DEP and the Department of Health (DOH). She highlighted stories of Pennsylvanians who suddenly found themselves living in an industrial zone and discussed the need to transport toxic waste more safely which was one of eight recommendations for legislative or executive branch changes found in the report.

Rep. Innamorato asked why the current loophole exists specifically for oil and gas operations. Mall explained that there are many loopholes specifically for the oil and gas industry and it was a politically made decision to provide the loophole in the 1980s and most recently through the "Halliburton loophole" in the Safe Drinking Water Act. "The oil and gas industry spends a lot of resources to create these loopholes and to protect these loopholes," she stated. Dr. Stolz added that the loopholes were created through definitions. "You define these wastes certain ways and that opens up a whole new avenue of disposal," he stated. Franz noted that the oil and gas industry has taken steps to produce science that downplays the dangers of the waste. "It becomes a battle of what the science actually says and what the industry wants people to believe what the science says," she stated.

Chairman Muth questioned if oil and gas industry profits are the primary reason why the current situation exists. Franz said there is a "bottom line component" and explained that it does save the industry money to send the waste to a landfill rather than to a special treatment facility where it can be more thoroughly cleaned.

Rep. Innamorato asked if Pennsylvanians are aware of the hazardous waste issue. Franz said communities that are directly impacted by the oil and gas industry receive very little information from the industry because the companies are not required to report information. "The lack of information has ripple effects on the citizens of Pennsylvania, and when this waste is being disposed of at landfills it broadens the number of individuals impacted by this," she stated.

Chairman Muth noted that oil and gas workers do not know what they are exposed to compared to workers in other industries such as nuclear. Dr. Stolz agreed and noted that some of his former students have informed him that they are not being protected from potentially radioactive material. Chairman Muth indicated that there is an information disconnect between DOH and DEP which makes it harder to determine the full scope of the issue in Pennsylvania. Dr. Stolz noted that his comments on a permit for an

evaporation system drew the attention of DEP's Bureau of Radiation. "They had no clue; they were not informed at all and now they're involved...These silos have to come down and there has to be better communication," he stated.

Rep. Innamorato questioned if DEP is adequately monitoring for radioactivity at landfills. Dr. Stolz said the current methodology is not "fully robust." Rep. Innamorato referred to the grand jury report and questioned if the testimony from individuals with health issues was related to exposure to radioactivity. Franz said the difficulty is tracking back an individuals' health impacts to a particular exposure. "That's difficult, especially when we don't have a lot of data about the things they have been exposed to when they live in and order this activity...Can I say their is cancer from some source on that well pad? No, because the science isn't there to make those connections at this point," she stated. Rep. Innamorato asked if any state is connecting oil and gas drilling to health risks. Mall said she is not aware of any state currently does that and the science has been primarily coming from academia. Rep. Innamorato said Pennsylvania has an opportunity to be a national leader on the issue.

[Dave Allard](#), director, Bureau of Radiation Protection, DEP, provided a high-level overview of radiation, radiation protection, naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM), technologically enhanced naturally occurring radioactive material (TENORM), and the disposal of oil and gas waste as it relates to TENORM.

Allard cited a DEP study on TENORM from 2016 which concluded that TENORM is a low risk to the public and workers. Conclusions also noted a potential for environmental impact from liquid oil and gas wastewater spills, and some wastewater treatment sludge exceeded Department of Transportation criteria. He said DEP takes many measures to prevent radiation exposure risks to the public from TENORM related to oil and gas operations and said the department leads the country in the evaluation of oil and gas industry generated TENORM waste handling, storage, and disposal. He emphasized that through extensive evaluation, there have been no data to support the public or workers exceeding public radiation dose limit of 100 mrem/year. He noted the potential for environmental impact from spills or leaks of TENORM contaminated material is real and DEP will continue to closely monitor and evaluate landfill leachate for radium content above natural background levels to ensure public health and safety.

Rep. Innamorato asked why the loophole exists for the oil and gas industry. [Scott Perry](#), deputy secretary, Office of Oil and Gas Management, DEP, said the exemption from the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act was the primary driver. Allard said the federal Environmental Protection Agency needs to "step up on a lot of this." Rep. Innamorato said Pennsylvania has the power to add additional regulations to the federal baseline and asked why the state has not taken steps to address the issue. Perry said the department has a "world-class" program related to radiation protections at waste management facilities. "I don't believe the majority of the oil and gas wastes would qualify as being characteristically hazardous under federal rules, but the states have determined that they were capable of appropriately managing at and we at DEP have done a lot of work to evaluate a lot of risks associated with this. There are policy choices that can be made and then there are data-driven decisions and it's not clear we have had historically the kind of data to drive certain decisions, but that doesn't preclude the legislature in this place," he stated.

Chairman Muth asked if the department supports the legislation to close the loopholes. Perry said the department has not developed a position on any of the bills. Chairman Muth questioned how many landfills take radioactive waste from the oil and gas industry. Perry said he could provide the exact number to the committee. Chairman Muth asked how much daily waste is taken to landfills. Perry said he could provide that information to the committee. Allard noted that landfills are limited to no more than two percent of their total waste can come from oil and gas industry waste. Chairman Muth asked what percentage of Pennsylvania's groundwater is regularly monitored. Allard said every community water supply has to be tested for radioactivity every few years. Chairman Muth questioned if private wells are monitored. Allard indicated that they are not monitored. Perry said the department does not conduct pre-drill surveys but rather the operator is responsible for pollution to the water supply. "Operators test up to 4,000 feet around water supplies and we've been working with Penn State to provide that data and they are publishing it on websites. We have a pretty comprehensive look at Pennsylvania's groundwater and as Penn State has reported, some of the heavily drilled areas have not seen changes in their groundwater," he stated.

Rep. Innamorato asked how DEP protects workers and communities from radioactivity. Perry said operators need to chemically characterize waste before it leaves a drilling site which includes testing for radioactivity and there are alarms set up at all waste processing facilities. "I don't think any other state has done more to monitor and address this issue. There might be other states that put limits on what their facilities take, but they don't test materials coming into the landfill, but we do. I have a lot of confidence in ensuring that we are not exposing the public and workers to unnecessary risks...Our primary goal is to implement the laws that are passed and implement rules and policies into statutory framework," he stated.

Chairman Muth asked if DEP tracks worker exposure to radioactive material. Allard noted that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has ionized radiation regulations. Chairman Muth asked if DEP works with OSHA to track that data. Allard indicated that DEP does not track that data. Chairman Muth inquired about the use of radioactive tracers. Allard said tracers are used for diagnostics on wells and indicated that DEP inspects well loggers and tracers. Perry said the department knows where and when radioactive tracers are used in Pennsylvania because the tracers are required to be licensed.

Chairman Muth cited an article stating per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) was being used in eight Pennsylvania wells. Perry indicated that Teflon was being used at the wells and noted that operators list the chemicals that are used in their operation to the public but said the department is aware of the "trade secret" chemicals used by the industry. "It's obviously has created a lot of transparency issues for the oil and gas industry. Chairman Muth asked if PFAS in fracking operations is something that the DEP is monitoring. Perry said DEP examines the maximum allowable amount of a contaminant in drinking water. "My team is actively evaluating our records. There is something like 4,000 different chemicals that fall into the PFAS range. We're evaluating it is and it is something we are actively discussing as to how we can factor that information into any investigation we conduct in the future," he stated. Chairman Muth asked if DEP has enough resources to monitor the issue. Perry said his program is financially challenged but DEP has the resources to test for PFAS when it is necessary and appropriate.

Chairman Muth asked if DEP cross-references what the industry is reporting versus what the landfill is reporting in terms of what is actually going into the landfill. Perry said the department has done routine cross-references, but DEP has done it in the past. "On some occasions we found is that the landfills have more waste than what the operators were reporting. Some of that was scrivener error and some was reporting tons as pounds. We have worked with the operators to alert them to discrepancies," he stated. Chairman Muth questioned what the department does to inform residents of the risks involved in drilling operations. Perry said DEP is primarily paper-based but the department is working "vigorously" to input records electronically so the public can easily search information related to drilling operations on their website. He added that residents can also sign up for e-notices from DEP related to drilling operations in their area.

Rep. Innamorato questioned why DEP sued a Grant Township in Indiana County for banning injection wells. Perry said the charter Indiana County passed made it a criminal activity for the department to issue a permit for a disposal well. "To make work we have to do a criminal act was in our opinion not appropriate and subjected our people to a liability that we didn't think it was appropriate but ultimately we revoked the permit for that disposal well and the litigation continues," he stated. Allard noted that Pennsylvania has six injection wells and Ohio has over 200. "They are used all throughout the south and it's a very common disposal technique," he stated.

Chairman Muth emphasized that the public is frustrated with the lack of current environmental protections and encouraged to support the legislation. "I can't stress enough that there are people with cancer, there are kids with cancer. I know the industry has known about these impacts and I just encourage you to work with legislators who are actually trying to serve the public. I know there is a for-profit component to this that unfortunately infected state government long before any of us got here but that doesn't mean we can't try to fix it. We need to restore people's faith in government again," she stated.

The committee also heard testimony from the following panelists:

- [Melissa Troutman](#), systems analyst and co-founder, *Public Herald*;
- [Joshua Pribanic](#), editor, *Public Herald*;
- [Justin Nobel](#), investigative reporter, *Rolling Stone*;
- [Guy Kruppa](#), superintendent, Belle Vernon Municipal Authority; and
- [Veronica Coptis](#), executive director, Center for Coalfield Justice.

The committee also received the following materials:

- [America's Radioactive Secret](#),
- [Mandatory Air Monitoring of TENORM Worker Inhalation Exposure from Gas TENORM](#),
- [NORM Contamination in the Petroleum Industry](#),
- [An Analysis of the Impact of the Regulation of "Radionuclides" as a Hazardous Air Pollutant on the Petroleum Industry](#), and
- [Science of the Total Environment](#).

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## MAAC

No MAAC this week.

## Bullet.in.Points

### [INSURANCE DEPARTMENT: 1332 WAIVER REINSURANCE PROGRAM—PROGRAM PARAMETERS; NOTICE 2021-11](#)

The Insurance Department announced that the federal Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the federal Department of the Treasury approved the Pennsylvania Insurance Department's 1332 waiver application, effective January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2025, with a provision for possible extension.

The reinsurance program is a claims-based, attachment point reinsurance program that will reimburse health insurers for claims costs of qualifying Affordable Care Act-compliant individual enrollees, where a percentage of the claim's costs exceeding a specified threshold will be reimbursed. Additional information is available on the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. Questions regarding this notice may be addressed to the Bureau of Life, Accident and Health, Insurance Department, 1311 Strawberry Square, Harrisburg, PA 17120, [RA-RATEFORM@pa.gov](mailto:RA-RATEFORM@pa.gov).

## Cosponsor Memos

<a href="#">HCO2331</a>	<a href="#">Ryan, Frank(R)</a>	Establishes the Statewide Veteran's Home Board within the Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs.
<a href="#">HCO2336</a>	<a href="#">Howard, Kristine(D)</a>	Prohibits the sale, distribution, and manufacturing of any food packaging containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
<a href="#">HCO2338</a>	<a href="#">Borowicz, Stephanie(R)</a>	Allows parents and legal guardians to "opt-out" their child from having to comply with a school's mask mandate.
<a href="#">HCO2339</a>	<a href="#">Ciresi, Joseph(D)</a>	Creates grants for the 2021-2022 school year for public and non-public schools.

## Bill Actions

<a href="#">HB 118</a>	<a href="#">Ryan, Frank(R)</a>	(PN 1724) The Final Disposition of Fetal Remains Act provides that upon the fetal death of an unborn child, if a parent of the unborn child selects a location for the final disposition of the fetal remains other than a location that is usual and customary for a health care facility, the parent shall be responsible for the costs relating to the final disposition of the fetal remains. Provides for the duties of health care facilities, identification requirements, simultaneous cremation, and certificate of birth. Further provides a person who violates the act shall be subject to the penalties imposed under Article IX of the Vital Statistics Law of 1953. Nothing in this act shall be construed to amend the definition of "fetal death" or to require the issuance of a death certificate for an unborn child unless affirmatively requested by the parent or next of kin of the unborn child. Effective in 60 days. (Prior Printer's Number: 86)
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**Bill History:** 06-09-21 Laid out for discussion 2:31pm  
06-09-21 Third consideration 2:31pm  
06-09-21 H Final Passage (Vote: Y:118/N: 83)  
06-11-21 S Received in the Senate and referred to Senate Health and Human Services  
09-27-21 S Press Conference Held

<a href="#">HB 162</a>	<a href="#">Davidson, Margo(D)</a>	(PN 130) Lloyd's Law prohibits discrimination in certain insurance policies based on certain drugs. Establishes a prohibition of discrimination by insurers against applicants or enrollees based upon the applicant's current claim or obtainment of a prescription for an opioid overdose reversal agent. Effective in 60 days.
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**Bill History:** 04-06-21 H Removed from the table  
04-06-21 H Laid on the table  
09-27-21 H Set on the Tabled Calendar  
08-11-21 H Corrective reprint  
10-04-21 H Set on the Tabled Calendar

<a href="#">HB 291</a>	<a href="#">Labs, Shelby (F)(R)</a>	<p>(PN 257) Amends the State Lottery Law extending the current Social Security cost-of-living adjustment moratorium until December 31, 2021. Effective immediately.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-28-21 H First consideration  09-28-21 H Laid on the table  09-29-21 H Set on the Tabled Calendar  09-29-21 H Removed from the table  10-04-21 H Set on the House Calendar</p>
<a href="#">HB 922</a>	<a href="#">Davanzo, Eric(R)</a>	<p>(PN 911) Amends the Workers' Compensation Act, in liability and compensation, removing the word installments from the statute. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 06-14-21 H Reported as committed from House Appropriations  09-29-21 H Set on the House Calendar  09-29-21 H Laid on the table  09-29-21 H Removed from the table  10-04-21 H Set on the House Calendar</p>
<a href="#">HB 1082</a>	<a href="#">DelRosso, Carrie (F)(R)</a>	<p>(PN 1830) The Early Detection and Diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease or a Related Disorder Act establishes an education program to assist in the early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder. The bill establishes an early detection toolkit which shall provide best practices, primary care workforce education resources, and public awareness information by the Department of Health on its website. Effective in 60 days. (Prior Printer Number: 1279, 1743)</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-22-21 S Reported as committed from Senate Aging and Youth  09-22-21 S First consideration  09-28-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar  09-28-21 Second consideration 3:33pm  09-28-21 S Rereferred to Senate Appropriations</p>
<a href="#">HB 1218</a>	<a href="#">Davanzo, Eric(R)</a>	<p>(PN 1278) The Sports Mask Freedom Act grants authority to sports organizations relating to mask wearing during sporting events. Effective immediately.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-27-21 H First consideration  09-27-21 H Laid on the table  09-28-21 H Set on the Tabled Calendar  09-28-21 H Removed from the table  10-04-21 H Set on the House Calendar</p>
<a href="#">HB 1254</a>	<a href="#">DelRosso, Carrie (F)(R)</a>	<p>(PN 1328) Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, providing for in-person instruction or tuition grant program required and establishing that within 30 days of the effective date of the relevant section, a school district that does not provide or denies full-time in-person instruction must establish a tuition grant program. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-22-21 H Laid on the table  09-22-21 H Removed from the table  09-28-21 H Set on the House Calendar  09-28-21 Laid out for discussion 2:35pm  10-04-21 H Set on the House Calendar</p>

<a href="#">HB 1260</a>	<a href="#">Thomas, Wendi(R)</a>	<p>(PN 1334) Amends the State Lottery Law, in Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Elderly (PACE), further providing for the pharmaceutical assistance contract for the elderly needs enhancement tier (PACENET) with income limitations of \$33,500 for a single person and \$41,500 for combined income for married persons and establishing that the board shall advise on the development and modernization of the program. Provides for powers of the department and that the program shall pay a premium assessed by a PACE or PACENET enrollee's prescription drug plan. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-28-21 H First consideration  09-28-21 H Laid on the table  09-29-21 H Set on the Tabled Calendar  09-29-21 H Removed from the table  10-04-21 H Set on the House Calendar</p>
<a href="#">HB 1353</a>	<a href="#">Innamorato, Sara(D)</a>	<p>(PN 1479) Amends Title 58 (Oil and Gas), in development, providing that drilling fluids, produced waters and other wastes associated with the exploration, development or production of crude oil, natural gas or geothermal energy are considered as "hazardous waste." Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 05-07-21 H Filed  05-10-21 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Environmental Resources and Energy  09-30-21 H Discussed during public hearing, Senate Democratic Policy Committee -- Senate Democratic Policy Committee</p>
<a href="#">HB 1354</a>	<a href="#">Innamorato, Sara(D)</a>	<p>(PN 1480) Amends Title 58 (Oil and Gas) repealing language that exempts the oil and gas industry from complying with the provisions of the Solid Waste Management Act. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 05-07-21 H Filed  05-10-21 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Environmental Resources and Energy  09-30-21 H Discussed during public hearing, Senate Democratic Policy Committee -- Senate Democratic Policy Committee</p>
<a href="#">HB 1355</a>	<a href="#">Innamorato, Sara(D)</a>	<p>(PN 1481) Amends the Solid Waste Management Act, in general provisions, further providing for definitions; in residual waste, further providing for disposal, processing and storage of residual waste and providing for exempt special wastes; and making an editorial change. Requires any person or municipality who stores, processes, or disposes of residual waste to test leachate prior to discharge in accordance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System requirements and standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Provides that it shall be unlawful for a person or municipality storing or processing waste to receive special waste from a facility unless it is nonhazardous and nonradioactive. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 05-07-21 H Filed  05-10-21 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Environmental Resources and Energy  09-30-21 H Discussed during public hearing, Senate Democratic Policy Committee -- Senate Democratic Policy Committee</p>



[HB 1500](#)      [Klunk, Kate\(R\)](#)      (PN 1563) Amends Title 18 (Crimes & Offenses), in abortion, further providing for definitions, for medical consultation and judgment and for reporting. This legislation provides that an abortion may not be deemed a necessary abortion if the abortion is sought because of the sex of the child or if the unborn child receives a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome. The legislation establishes that a woman upon whom an abortion is performed or attempted to be performed shall not be guilty of violating the provisions of the related section. The legislation also provides a reporting requirement where the physician performing the abortion receives written acknowledgement that the abortion is not being provided because of the sex of the child, a test result indicating Down syndrome in the unborn child, a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome in the unborn child, or an indication that the unborn child has Down syndrome. Effective in 60 days.

**Bill History:** 06-21-21 S Reported as committed from Senate Health and Human Services  
06-21-21 S First consideration  
09-27-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar  
09-27-21 S Press Conference held  
10-18-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar

[HB 1774](#)      [Flood, Ann \(F\)\(R\)](#)      (PN 2149) Amends the Achieving Better Care by Monitoring All Prescriptions Program (ABC-MAP) Act further providing that the act shall expire on December 31, 2028, and making an editorial change. Provides that authorized users for access to prescription information include designated commonwealth personnel and contracted staff responsible for Medical Assistance, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly (PACE) or Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly Needs Enhancement Tier (PACENET), the Catastrophic Loss Benefits Continuation Fund, and the Workers' Compensation Security Fund. Provides personnel from the Department of Labor and Industry engaged in the administration of medical fee review disputes and utilization review of medical treatment under the Workers' Compensation Act as authorized users for access to prescription information. Effective immediately. (Prior Printer's Number: 2011)

**Bill History:** 09-29-21 S Signed in the Senate  
09-29-21 H Signed in the House  
09-29-21 G In the hands of the Governor  
09-30-21 G Approved by the Governor (Act: 72)  
09-30-21 G Earliest effective date

[HB 1836](#)      [Ryan, Frank\(R\)](#)      (PN 2080) Amends Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses), in offenses against the family, providing for the offense of child torture; in firearms, including persons convicted of child torture to persons not to possess firearms; and, in child custody, providing for consideration of child torture convictions. Effective in 60 days.

**Bill History:** 09-28-21 H Voted favorably from committee on House Judiciary  
09-28-21 H Reported as committed from House Judiciary  
09-28-21 H First consideration  
09-28-21 H Laid on the table  
10-04-21 H Set on the Tabled Calendar

[HB 1893](#)      [Staats, Craig\(R\)](#)      (PN 2151) Amends the Disease Prevention and Control Law providing reports of diseases and any records maintained in consequence of this act are subject to the Right-to-Know Law. Effective in 60 days.

**Bill History:** 09-29-21 H Set on the House Calendar  
09-29-21 Second consideration 12:44pm  
09-29-21 Laid out for discussion 1:15pm  
09-29-21 H Over in House  
09-29-21 H Rereferred to House Appropriations

<a href="#">HB 1905</a>	<a href="#">Bonner, Tim(R)</a>	<p>(PN 2164) Amends the Human Services Code, in departmental powers and duties as to licensing, providing for notice of legal representation for medical assistance. This legislation adds a section providing that an assisted living residence administrator shall provide a resident of an assisted living residence or a designated representative with a notice stating that they have the option to hire an attorney to assist with applying for medical assistance long-term care benefits. Effective immediately.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-23-21 H Filed 09-27-21 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Health</p>
<a href="#">HB 1927</a>	<a href="#">Benham, Jessica (F)(D)</a>	<p>(PN 2195) Amends Title 35 (Health), in public safety, providing for Chapter 59 regarding crisis standards of care during a disaster emergency or catastrophic event. Provides that the Department of Health (DOH) shall follow enumerated guidance if demand for scarce health care services or resources exceeds the supply. Establishes the Crisis Standards of Care Review Committee within DOH to review all critical care decisions or other decision tools made or used by the crisis triage officer, health care practitioner or triage team making decisions during a disaster emergency or catastrophic event when life-sustaining resources become scarce, including decisions to withdraw care, when crisis standards of care guidelines are in effect. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-28-21 H Filed 09-28-21 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Health</p>
<a href="#">HB 1932</a>	<a href="#">Freeman, Robert(D)</a>	<p>(PN 2207) Amends the Public School Code, in school health services to provide for school access to emergency epinephrine. This bill changes the language of the Public School Code from "may" to "shall" in terms of a school's requirement to authorize a trained employee to provide the appropriate epinephrine auto-injector, assist students in self-administration, and help in good faith they believe a student is experiencing an anaphylactic reaction. A school entity shall also assign one or more individuals to be responsible for the storage of epinephrine auto-injectors. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-29-21 H Filed 09-29-21 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Education</p>
<a href="#">HB 1937</a>	<a href="#">Rabb, Christopher(D)</a>	<p>Amends the Human Services Code, in departmental powers and duties as to licensing, further providing for definitions and providing for inspection for continuing conformity to license.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-29-21 H Filed 09-30-21 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Health</p>
<a href="#">HB 1945</a>	<a href="#">Pisciottano, Nickolas (F)(D)</a>	<p>Amends the Breach of Personal Information Notification Act, further providing for definitions.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-29-21 H Filed 09-30-21 H Introduced and referred to committee on House Commerce</p>
<a href="#">SB 25</a>	<a href="#">Bartolotta, Camera(R)</a>	<p>(PN 219) Amends the Professional Nursing Law further providing for definitions; and providing for licensure as a certified nurse practitioner. The bill outlines the scope of practice for certified nurse practitioners. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 06-16-21 S Voted favorably from committee on Senate Consumer Protection &amp; Prof. Licensure 06-16-21 S Reported as committed from Senate Consumer Protection &amp; Prof. Licensure 06-16-21 S First consideration 09-29-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar 09-29-21 S Laid on the table</p>

[SB 137](#)      [Hutchinson, Scott\(R\)](#)      (PN 110) Amends Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure), in budget and finance, establishing the Drug Recognition Expert Training Fund for training law enforcement officers to detect if an individual is impaired by or under the influence of alcohol, drug, narcotics or controlled substances. The legislation imposes a \$5 assessment for violations relating to driving under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances for the Drug Recognition Expert Training Fund. Effective in 60 days.

**Bill History:** 06-14-21 S Removed from the table  
09-27-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar  
09-27-21 S Laid on the table  
09-27-21 S Removed from the table  
10-18-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar

[SB 323](#)      [Ward, Judy \(F\)\(R\)](#)      (PN 301) Amends the State Lottery Law extending the Social Security cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) moratorium for individuals enrolled in the PACE and PACENET programs until December 31, 2023. Effective immediately.

**Bill History:** 09-28-21 H Voted favorably from committee on House Aging and Older Adult Services  
09-28-21 H Reported as committed from House Aging and Older Adult Services  
09-28-21 H First consideration  
09-28-21 H Laid on the table  
10-04-21 H Set on the Tabled Calendar

[SB 397](#)      [Pittman, Joe\(R\)](#)      (PN 870) Amends the Osteopathic Medical Practice Act by increasing the membership of the State Board of Osteopathic Medicine by two members, including one doctor and one physician assistant. Provides a permanent seat on the board for a physician assistant. Allows a physician assistant to provide medical services in accordance with the written agreement. Also allows the board to develop audit procedures to ensure supervision and scope of practice protections are maintained in a written agreement in accordance with the act. Limits the audit to 10 percent of all written agreements on an annual basis. Allows the primary supervising physician to determine countersignature requirements for the review of a physician assistant's patient records in a written agreement, except in the case of a new physician assistant, where the primary supervising physician shall countersign 100 percent of patient records within 10 days for the first 12 months of a physician assistant's practice post-graduation and after licensure criteria has been met. Increases the ratio of the number of physician assistants a physician can supervise from four to six and, in a health care facility setting, increases the ratio from four to seven. A waiver, subject to board approval, may be utilized in a health care facility to employ or supervise more physician assistants for good cause. Requires the board to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out this act within 180 days and requires the abrogation of specific inconsistent board regulations. Effective in 60 days. (Prior Printer's Number: 385)

**Bill History:** 09-29-21 S Senate concurred in House amendments (Vote: Y: 48/N: 0)  
09-29-21 S Signed in the Senate  
09-29-21 H Signed in the House  
09-29-21 G In the hands of the Governor  
10-09-21 G Last day for Governor's action

<a href="#">SB 398</a>	<a href="#">Pittman, Joe(R)</a>	<p>(PN 871) Amends the Medical Practice Act by increasing the membership of the State Board of Medicine by two members, including one doctor and one physician assistant. Provides a permanent seat on the board for a physician assistant. Requires the primary supervising physician to be responsible for the medical services a physician assistant renders. Allows a physician assistant to perform a medical service without the onsite presence or personal direction of the primary supervising physician and in accordance with the written agreement. Allows the primary supervising physician to determine countersignature requirements for the review of a physician assistant's patient records in a written agreement, except in the case of a new physician assistant, where the primary supervising physician shall countersign 100 percent of patient records within 10 days for the first 12 months of a physician assistant's practice post-graduation and after licensure criteria has been met. Also allows the board to develop audit procedures to ensure supervision and scope of practice protections are maintained in a written agreement in accordance with the act. Limits the audit to 10 percent of all written agreements on an annual basis. Increases the ratio of the number of physician assistants a physician can supervise from four to six and, in a health care facility setting, increases the ratio from four to seven. A waiver, subject to board approval, may be utilized in a health care facility to employ or supervise more physician assistants for good cause. Requires the board to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out this act within 180 days and requires the abrogation of specific inconsistent board regulations. Effective in 60 days. (Prior Printer's Number: 386)</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-29-21 S Senate concurred in House amendments (Vote: Y: 48/N: 0)  09-29-21 S Signed in the Senate  09-29-21 H Signed in the House  09-29-21 G In the hands of the Governor  10-09-21 G Last day for Governor's action</p>
<a href="#">SB 603</a>	<a href="#">Brooks, Michele(R)</a>	<p>(PN 677) Amends the Public School Code, in school health services, providing for the removal of a tick from a student. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-28-21 S Reported as amended Senate Education  09-28-21 S First consideration  09-29-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar  09-29-21 Second consideration 12:12pm  09-29-21 S Rereferred to Senate Appropriations</p>
<a href="#">SB 646</a>	<a href="#">Muth, Katie (F)(D)</a>	<p>(PN 725) Amends the Solid Waste Management Act, in general provisions, further providing for definitions; in residual waste, further providing for disposal, processing and storage of residual waste and providing for exempt special wastes; and making an editorial change. Requires any person or municipality who stores, processes, or disposes of residual waste to test leachate prior to discharge in accordance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System requirements and standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Provides that it shall be unlawful for a person or municipality storing or processing waste to receive special waste from a facility unless it is nonhazardous and nonradioactive. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 05-07-21 S Filed  05-07-21 S Introduced and referred to committee on Senate Environmental Resources and Energy  09-30-21 S Discussed during public hearing, Senate Democratic Policy Committee -- Senate Democratic Policy Committee</p>

<a href="#">SB 668</a>	<a href="#">Ward, Judy (F)(R)</a>	<p>(PN 756) Amends the State Lottery Law, raising the PACENET annual income eligibility to \$33,500 for a single person and \$41,500 for combined income of persons married to each other for pharmaceutical assistance, removing the premium associated with a PACENET claimant not enrolled in Part D. Provides that the department shall have the discretion to require that the claimant enroll in the Part D plan or program that meets their needs and provides that the PACENET program shall pay the premium assessed by a PACE or PACENET enrollee's prescription drug plan. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-28-21 H Voted favorably from committee on House Aging and Older Adult Services  09-28-21 H Reported as committed from House Aging and Older Adult Services  09-28-21 H First consideration  09-28-21 H Laid on the table  10-04-21 H Set on the Tabled Calendar</p>
<a href="#">SB 705</a>	<a href="#">Vogel, Jr., Elder(R)</a>	<p>Act relating to telemedicine; authorizing the regulation of telemedicine by professional licensing boards; and providing for insurance coverage of telemedicine.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 06-23-21 S Reported as amended Senate Banking and Insurance  06-23-21 S First consideration  09-29-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar  09-29-21 Second consideration 12:13pm  09-29-21 S Rereferred to Senate Appropriations</p>
<a href="#">SB 729</a>	<a href="#">Ward, Judy (F)(R)</a>	<p>(PN 831) Amends the Nurse Aide Resident Abuse Prevention Training Act, providing that curriculum content for an approved nurse aide training program may be delivered in class, in person, online or via asynchronous, virtual reality or other digital delivery mechanism, or in a blended format. Establishes that clinical requirements must be completed in an approved clinical setting. Provide for reporting requirements for the department. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-28-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar  09-28-21 Laid out for discussion 3:23pm  09-28-21 Third consideration 3:23pm  09-28-21 S Final Passage (Vote: Y: 49/N: 0)  09-29-21 H Received in the House and referred to House Aging and Older Adult Services</p>
<a href="#">SB 775</a>	<a href="#">Bartolotta, Camera(R)</a>	<p>(PN 913) Amends the Workers' Compensation Act, in interpretation and definitions, providing definitions for first responder and post-traumatic stress injury; and, in liability and compensation, providing a post-traumatic stress injury suffered by a first responder shall be established by a preponderance of the evidence that the injury resulted from a normal or abnormal working condition and was sustained in the course and scope of the individual's employment as a first responder. Requires diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and that when PTSD is diagnosed after the last date of employment, provisions shall not be construed to prohibit a claim against the employer of the claimant at the time of the direct exposure to the traumatic event which caused the injury. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-28-21 S Reported as committed from Senate Labor and Industry  09-28-21 S First consideration  09-29-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar  09-29-21 Second consideration 12:14pm  10-18-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar</p>

<a href="#"><u>SB 782</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Pittman, Joe(R)</u></a>	<p>(PN 927) Amends the Human Services Code, in public assistance, providing for compensable services and items; and abrogating a related regulation. The bill establishes that an anti-obesity drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration of the United States Department of Health and Human Services shall be considered a compensable item under the medical assistance program. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-27-21 S Meeting set for 12:00 p.m., Room 8E-A, East Wing, Senate Health and Human Services -- Senate Health and Human Services  09-27-21 S Voted favorably from committee as amended Senate Health and Human Services  09-27-21 S Reported as amended Senate Health and Human Services  09-27-21 S First consideration  10-18-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar</p>
<a href="#"><u>SB 815</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Muth, Katie (F)(D)</u></a>	<p>(PN 1016) Amends the Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error (Mcare) Act, in medical professional liability, by adding a section providing for informed consent in pelvic, rectal, and prostate examinations. The legislation establishes that a health care provider may not knowingly perform a pelvic, rectal, or prostate exam on a patient who is unconscious or anesthetized in a facility providing health care services unless the patient or the patient's authorized representative obtains specific informed consent. The legislation provides for exceptions if the examination is within the scope of care ordered for the patient, sexual assault is suspected, or the examination is necessary in a medical emergency where the patient is incapable of providing informed consent. The legislation also establishes liability provisions related to a civil cause of action and statutory damages of \$5,000 per violation. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-27-21 S Meeting set for 12:00 p.m., Room 8E-A, East Wing, Senate Health and Human Services -- Senate Health and Human Services  09-27-21 S Voted favorably from committee on Senate Health and Human Services  09-27-21 S Reported as committed from Senate Health and Human Services  09-27-21 S First consideration  10-18-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar</p>
<a href="#"><u>SB 818</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Ward, Judy (F)(R)</u></a>	<p>(PN 1004) Amends the Health Care Facilities Act, in licensing of health care facilities, providing that ambulatory surgical facilities may seek an exception or waiver from the department for surgical procedures not specified on a covered procedures list by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This legislation aligns the procedures permitted in ambulatory surgery centers with that of CMS. Effective in 60 days.</p> <p><b>Bill History:</b> 09-27-21 S Reported as committed from Senate Health and Human Services  09-27-21 S First consideration  09-28-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar  09-28-21 Second consideration 3:32pm  09-28-21 S Rereferred to Senate Appropriations</p>

[SB 846](#)      [Mastriano, Doug\(R\)](#)

(PN 1040) Amends the Public School Code adding a new section allowing a parent or legal guardian of a child of school age to opt out the child from wearing a face covering or mask, which the child's school imposes as a result of a recommendation or mandate from the secretary of health or a local board or department of health, that is primarily responsible for the prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable disease, including disease control in public and private schools under the Disease Prevention and Control Law of 1955. Further provides for definitions. Effective immediately.

**Bill History:** 09-28-21 S Reported as amended Senate Education  
09-28-21 S First consideration  
09-29-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar  
09-29-21 Second consideration 12:15pm  
10-18-21 S Set on the Senate Calendar

## Upcoming Events

### Press Conference

October 2, 2021 - 11:00 a.m., Main Capitol Steps, Harrisburg  
Bans Off Our Bodies Rally

### House Professional Licensure

October 4, 2021 - 10:00 a.m., Room 515, Irvis Office Building

To consider: [HB 889](#) Miller, Brett Amends Nursing Law re licensing requirements [HB 1464](#) Malagari, Steven Act re Crematory Temperature Regulation [HR 142](#) Heffley, Doyle Resolution re Study of State Board of Nursing

### House Insurance

October 4, 2021 - 11:00 a.m., Room B31, Main Capitol

To consider: [SB 772](#) DiSanto, John Amends Insurance Law re deferred annuity rates; and to consider for re-referral: [HB 599](#) Oberlander, Donn Amends Insurance Law re coverage changes

### Senate Democratic Policy Committee

October 5, 2021 - 10:00 a.m., UFCW headquarters, 3031-A Walton Rd., Plymouth Meeting  
Public hearing on workplace accommodations for pregnant Pennsylvanians

### Press Conference

October 5, 2021 - 11:00 a.m., Capitol Fountain, Commonwealth Avenue, Harrisburg  
Breast Cancer Awareness Month Kick-Off

### House Professional Licensure

October 6, 2021 - 9:00 a.m., Room G-50, Irvis Office Building

Informational meeting on [HB 1440](#) Millard, David Amends Medical Practice Act re imaging

### House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Prepared.

October 6, 2021 - 10:00 a.m., Room 523, Irvis Office Building

To consider: [HB 397](#) Owlett, Clint Amends Safety Statute re Fire/EMS tax credit [HB 1451](#) Wheeland, Jeff Amends Emergency & Law Enforcement Act

### Department of Human Services

October 6, 2021 - 10:00 a.m., Via Conference Call

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Advisory Council Meeting. For additional information: (717) 346-1363

### House Democratic Policy Committee

October 12, 2021 - 11:00 a.m., East Brandywine Township Bldg., 1214 Horseshoe Pike, Downingtown  
Public hearing on Saving Community Hospitals: Keeping Care Close

### Press Conference

October 13, 2021 - 10:00 a.m., Front Capitol Steps, Harrisburg  
Press Conference on [SB 225](#) and [HB 225](#) (unconfirmed)

### **State Board of Osteopathic Medicine**

October 13, 2021 - 10:30 a.m., One Penn Center, 2601 N. 3rd St., Hbg.  
Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 214-1891

### **Department of Aging**

October 14, 2021 - 10:00 a.m., Farm Show Complex, Keystone Conference Center, 2300 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg  
Long-term Care Council Meeting. For additional information: (717) 772-1624

### **Press Conference**

October 18, 2021 - 9:30 a.m., Capitol Fountain, Commonwealth Avenue, Harrisburg  
Sen. Kim Ward and PA Breast Cancer Coalition Event (unconfirmed)

### **State Board of Psychology**

October 18, 2021 - 10:30 a.m., One Penn Center, 2601 N. 3rd St., Hbg.  
Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 214-1891

### **State Bd of Social Wkrs, Marriage & Fam. Therapists & Prof. Coun.**

October 19, 2021 - 11:00 a.m., One Penn Center, 2601 N. 3rd St., Hbg.  
Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 214-1891

### **State Board of Podiatry**

October 20, 2021 - 10:30 a.m., One Penn Center, 2601 N. 3rd St., Hbg.  
Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 214-1891

### **State Board of Nursing**

October 21, 2021 - 9:00 a.m., One Penn Center, 2601 N. 3rd St., Hbg.  
Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 214-1891

### **Department of Human Services**

October 21, 2021 - 10:00 a.m., Via Conference Call  
Children's Trust Fund Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 772-2098

## **In the News**

09-30-2021

### **[Covid cases, deaths rising among younger Allegheny County residents](#)**

As covid-19 cases have continued to rise, particularly among younger people, so too have deaths, said Allegheny Health Director Dr. Debra Bogen. Five people in the 25- to 49-year-old age group have died so far in September, Bogen said. "If you're young and health and you get covid, there's a very... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

09-30-2021

### **[Pittsburgh Public Schools names longtime administrator as interim superintendent](#)**

Pittsburgh Public Schools has named one of its longtime administrators to serve as interim superintendent to replace Anthony Hamlet, whose resignation is effective Friday. Wayne Walters, who serves as assistant superintendent of professional development and special programming, was named interim superintendent... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

09-30-2021

### **[Judge denies Tredyffrin/Easttown parents' request to halt school mask mandate](#)**

A federal judge has ruled against parents challenging the Tredyffrin/ Easttown School District's masking requirements, saying he didn't see evidence that wearing masks violated their religious beliefs. The opinion issued this week by Judge Mitchell S. Goldberg didn't... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

09-30-2021

### **[At last minute, Pa. lawmakers vote to extend dozens of COVID-19 waivers](#)**

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania legislature unanimously voted Wednesday to extend dozens of regulatory waivers put into place last year to help health-care providers fight COVID-19. Without action, the waivers would have expired Thursday, potentially exacerbating ongoing staffing crises in hospitals and long-term care... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)



- 09-30-2021 **White-out to help family of Mike Gurdineer, Northampton coach who died of COVID**  
Friday night's East Stroudsburg South football game at Northampton is in all likelihood the game that will decide the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference's North Division championship. It's also what you might call the Adversity Bowl because both programs have had to deal with their share of hardship related to COVID-19 in recent... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Kutztown faculty award research grant and more company news**  
Kutztown University professors Georgeos Sirrakos, Lisa Frye, and Joleen Greenwood recently received a three-year National Science Foundation grant to better understand the barriers and challenges for success faced by underrepresented high school students in computer science, namely females,... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Cocalico school board decides to keep disciplinary action regarding mask-wearing**  
When: Cocalico school board meeting, Sept. 27. What happened: During a meeting attended by over 100 people in the high school auditorium, the board voted 5-3 against a last-minute item added to the agenda to pause all disciplinary action against any student not... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Scheid funeral homes sold to creditor at sheriff's sale; guilty plea scheduled Friday**  
The bank holding the mortgages for Andrew Scheid's two funeral homes bought the properties Wednesday at a sheriff's sale for \$1.9 million after no other bids were submitted. Attorney Carol Verish Houck, representing United Midwest Savings Bank, set the minimum price for the funeral home at 121-131 S. Prince St. in... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Rapid COVID-19 tests flying off pharmacy shelves in Lancaster County**  
Rapid COVID-19 tests are considered a critical tool for bringing the pandemic under control by identifying active infections and minimizing outbreaks. Over-the-counter home tests were supposed to help with what has been a heavy lift in the United States, especially as hospitals face rising... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Avid Erie bowler Philip Harris Jr, 24, gets support from family, friends in leukemia battle**  
Life changed in an instant for Erie native Philip Harris Jr. in April. After a visit to the family doctor, he was rushed to West Penn Hospital in Pittsburgh where he found out he had cancer. The diagnosis was acute myeloid leukemia, a rare cancer of the blood and... - [Erie Times-News](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Transit Agencies Lease Real Estate to Generate Much-Needed Cash**  
The pandemic has sent ridership plummeting at transit agencies across the United States. Riders are slowly returning, but not in pre-COVID-19 numbers—and they may not for a long time, if at all. Transit agencies must generate cash to replace the lost revenue from fares.... - [Stateline.org](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Justice urges COVID-19 vaccinations, but denounces mandates as being un-American**  
Gov. Jim Justice continued to send mixed messages during the state COVID-19 briefing Wednesday, urging West Virginians to get vaccinated but also suggesting it is un-American to mandate vaccines. Justice opened the briefing by spending more than seven minutes listing the... - [Charleston Gazette-Mail](#)
- 09-30-2021 **There are twice as many Ohio school board candidates than four years ago. Is COVID-19 responsible?**  
Beth Murdoch remembers what it felt like the first time she spoke during a Hilliard City School Board meeting. She'd done her research, prepared her notes and stood at the podium to share her concerns about how the district was handling the COVID-19 pandemic.... - [Columbus Dispatch](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Ohio GOP leaders wanted a fast vote granting exemptions for COVID-19 vaccine mandates. They got pushback**  
Only a day after details were revealed, Republican leaders in the Ohio House of Representatives attempted Wednesday to vote out a bill that would establish exemptions for COVID-19 vaccine mandates imposed by employers and schools. Instead, it was never brought up for a vote in the first place.... - [Columbus Dispatch](#)

- 09-30-2021 **[L.A. puts off vote on COVID-19 vaccine proof indoor mandate](#)**  
 Many members of the Los Angeles City Council voiced support Wednesday for a sweeping proposal that would require people to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19 to go inside restaurants, shopping centers, movie theaters, hair and nail salons, and a range of other indoor venues in Los... - [Los Angeles Times](#)
- 09-30-2021 **[Health care workers unite for impromptu prayer vigil](#)**  
 More than a year-and-a-half of treating patients with COVID-19 has the staff of the Butler Health System exhausted. On Tuesday, that exhaustion reached a breaking point for Ally Moran, a nurse at Butler Memorial Hospital, and she organized a prayer vigil outside... - [Butler Eagle](#)
- 09-30-2021 **[Survey on Trail Fest early element of Marketing Initiative](#)**  
 The first in a series of surveys designed to gather feedback about possible development at Jakes Rocks has hit the street. Jakes Rocks Trail Fest was last weekend and that kicks off what will be an intensive effort to gather feedback for the future of that area.... - [Warren Times Observer](#)
- 09-30-2021 **[Our opinion: Get moving with Sheffield expansion](#)**  
 The expansion of the Warren County YMCA into Sheffield's Ruth Smith Center is a win-win proposition for everyone involved. It's easier for Sheffield area residents to get physical activity, particularly in the winter months, while the Ruth Smith Center's gym... - [Warren Times Observer](#)
- 09-30-2021 **[Last commercial flight to depart airport today](#)**  
 Although the last commercial flight leaves the Williamsport Regional Airport this afternoon, Richard Howell, executive director, is hopeful that after the beginning of the year, another commercial carrier can be found as air travel heads into its normal cyclical increase in the spring.... - [Williamsport Sun-Gazette](#)
- 09-30-2021 **[Anger, loss and a tentative peace: Veterans describe life after the military](#)**  
 Editor's note: This story contains depictions of a suicide attempt. Reader discretion is advised. Aida Montanez had a week to prepare her will. She'd be 27 in a month but didn't expect to live that long — the Twin Towers had fallen, and she was about to be deployed.... - [Pocono Record](#)
- 09-30-2021 **[Blood inventory dips nationally; Valley facilities have adequate supplies](#)**  
 The national Red Cross blood inventory is the lowest it's been at this time of year in six years. Valley hospital officials say they have adequate levels, but are still encouraging donations heading into the fall and winter. According to the American Red Cross, the organization is experiencing an... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)
- 09-30-2021 **[AT&T to Require Vaccines for Most Unionized Workers](#)**  
 AT&T announced on Wednesday that it was extending its coronavirus vaccination requirement to tens of thousands of employees who are members of the Communications Workers of America union. Unionized workers who enter work locations and client or customer sites, or... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-30-2021 **[United Airlines Is Firing Workers Over Vaccine Noncompliance](#)**  
 United Airlines said it would terminate about 600 employees for refusing to comply with its vaccination requirement, putting the company at the forefront of the battle over vaccine mandates as the economy moves through a bumpy pandemic recovery. The airline also said that 99 percent of its U.S. work force of 67,000 had... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-30-2021 **[Most U.S. Health Workers Are Complying With Vaccine Mandates](#)**  
 Hundreds of sought-after nurses are leaving some U.S. hospitals that have established vaccine requirements for all employees, involving some protests and legal opposition. But most workers, especially at large hospital chains, appear to be complying with the policies.... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-30-2021 **[C.D.C. Pleas for Pregnant or Breastfeeding People to Get Vaccinated](#)**  
 In an urgent plea, federal health officials are asking that any American who is pregnant, planning to become

pregnant or currently breastfeeding get vaccinated against the coronavirus as soon as possible. Covid-19 poses a severe risk during pregnancy, when a personâ€™s... - [New York Times](#)

09-30-2021

### **[YouTube Bans Anti-Vaccine Misinformation](#)**

YouTube said on Wednesday that it was banning the accounts of several prominent anti-vaccine activists from its platform, including those of Joseph Mercola and Robert F. Kennedy Jr., as part of an effort to remove all content that falsely claims that approved vaccines are dangerous.... - [New York Times](#)

09-30-2021

### **[Naloxone saving lives in Chester County](#)**

WEST CHESTER—The miracle drug Naloxone, or Narcan, is saving the lives of accidental opioid overdose victims, according to Ethan Healy, Project Naloxone Manager and member of Good Fellowship Ambulance and Training Institute. “We are experiencing an opioid epidemic nationwide and statewide,”... - [Pottstown Mercury](#)

09-30-2021

### **[Gov. Tom Wolf praises Montgomery County vaccination campaign during Norristown visit](#)**

NORRISTOWN — Gov. Tom Wolf returned to the state’s third most populous county Wednesday afternoon to get a look at vaccination outreach efforts to combat the novel coronavirus. He visited the Norristown Transportation Center, located on Lafayette Street, in downtown Norristown and learned more about the mobile... - [Pottstown Mercury](#)

09-30-2021

### **[Myonex opens new global headquarters in Horsham](#)**

HORSHAM — Myonex, a global clinical trial supply company, has opened its new global headquarters and U.S. warehouse in Horsham. The 65,000-square-foot facility sits on a 14-acre campus, and has been under construction since July 2020. Myonex had previously been headquartered in... - [Pottstown Mercury](#)

09-30-2021

### **[Chester County officials vow to fill void created by closing of Jennersville Hospital](#)**

PENN—With the decision to close Jennersville Hospital in Penn Township by the end of the year, many in southern Chester County will have to travel further to get medical care. And many are upset at Tower Health’s decision to close the hospital, even though it was struggling financially.... - [Pottstown Mercury](#)

09-30-2021

### **[Tower Health to unload Chestnut Hill, Jennersville hospitals](#)**

Financially struggling Tower Health announced plans to cut two of the smallest facilities in its six-hospital system. Tower will seek to close Jennersville Hospital in Chester County and to transfer Chestnut Hill Hospital in Philadelphia, the West Reading-based... - [Reading Eagle](#)

09-30-2021

### **[Berks Coalition to End Homelessness to pay \\$121,655 in settlement with U.S. government](#)**

The Berks Coalition to End Homelessness has reached a settlement over claims it double-billed the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for home renovation costs in 2017. The settlement will see the coalition pay \$121,655. According to a statement from the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the... - [Reading Eagle](#)

09-30-2021

### **[Incentive program at Berks County Prison boosts COVID vaccinations](#)**

To boost the COVID-19 vaccination rate at the Berks County Prison, officials at the facility are offering incentives to incarcerated individuals willing to get the jab. Chief Deputy Warden Stephanie Smith told the Berks County Prison Board on Wednesday morning at its monthly meeting that the prison has begun offering... - [Reading Eagle](#)

09-30-2021

### **[Missouri hospital workers are being assaulted on the job. New panic buttons allow them to summon security.](#)**

In the past year, nurse Ashley Blevins says she has witnessed unparalleled violence at her hospital in Branson, Mo., where Cox Medical Center staff have been cursed at, spit on and even beaten by patients. “In the emergency department our patients are becoming... - [Washington Post](#)

09-30-2021

### **[Covid-19 live updates: CDC says it's 'urgent' pregnant women get vaccinated](#)**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued a call for “urgent action” to increase

coronavirus vaccinations among people who are pregnant. The health body said immunization rates among that population have lagged, as covid-linked deaths among pregnant... - [Washington Post](#)

09-30-2021

**[Vaccine mandates are working. Let's make them the norm.](#)**

There are positive signs that business and government vaccine mandates are succeeding. While the total number of unvaccinated people in the United States is still way too large — only 64.9 percent of eligible Americans are fully vaccinated — the idea of mandates is taking... - [Washington Post](#)

09-30-2021

**[Pittsburgh Public Schools Names Dr. Wayne Walters As Interim Superintendent](#)**

PITTSBURGH (KDKA) — Pittsburgh Public Schools has named an interim superintendent. During a special meeting on Wednesday, the district named Dr. Wayne Walters as the interim superintendent. The vote was unanimous. (Photo Credit: PPS) READ MORE: Police: Man Shot Multiple Times In The Leg Overnight In Mount... - [KDKA](#)

09-30-2021

**[Allegheny Co. Executive Rich Fitzgerald Sets Dec. 1 Deadline For Employee COVID-19 Vaccinations](#)**

PITTSBURGH (KDKA) — Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald says all county employees under the executive branch will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by the beginning of December. Employees will have until Dec. 1 to provide proof of vaccination to... - [KDKA](#)

09-30-2021

**[New Allegheny Health Network hospital opens](#)**

PINE TWP. — A new Allegheny Health Network (AHN) hospital officially opened Thursday to patients. AHN Wexford Hospital, which is an all-private 160-bed hospital, will open at 9 a.m. The 345,000-square-foot hospital is located along Route 19. It includes a 24-bed emergency department including pediatric capable rooms with... - [Beaver County Times](#)

09-30-2021

**[Northwest Area School Board member leads off lengthy mask mandate debate](#)**

UNION TWP. — Northwest Area School Board's monthly meeting Wednesday lasted only a few minutes as far a voting goes, but the public comments afterward ran for well over an hour as a crowd of about 25 criticized the state school mask mandate — and the first critic was a... - [Wilkes-Barre Times Leader](#)

09-30-2021

**[Anti-maskers want Northwest Area to approve exemptions, ease up on mask enforcement](#)**

People attending Wednesday's Northwest Area School Board meeting asked officials to be more willing to approve mask exemptions, and they want teachers and staff to ease up on compliance enforcement of the state mask mandate. - [Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice](#)

09-30-2021

**[Scranton doctor who agreed to plead guilty to running pill mill said he wants a trial](#)**

Scranton doctor who agreed to plead guilty to running pill mill said he wants a trial - [Scranton Times](#)

09-30-2021

**[Covid cases, deaths rising among younger Allegheny County residents](#)**

As covid-19 cases have continued to rise, particularly among younger people, so too have deaths, said Allegheny Health Director Dr. Debra Bogen. Five people in the 25- to 49-year-old age group have died so far in September, Bogen said. "If you're young and healthy and you get covid, there's a very... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

09-30-2021

**[Pair of Pa. winery owners crying in their beer over zoning flap that could put a cork in their business](#)**

It's enough to drive someone to drink. A pair of Pa. winery owners are caught up in a zoning snafu that could close their business opened two years ago. As the Citizens Voice reports, owners of the Pisano Family Wines in Luzerne County have been notified by Lehman Township zoning officials that their... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)

09-30-2021

**[Advocacy group, elected Democrats call on UPMC to raise wages, allow workers to organize](#)**

This story will be updated. Joined by a who's who of Pittsburgh's elected Democrats, a leading advocacy group took to the U.S. Steel Tower on Thursday to call on UPMC to raise wages, allow its workers to unionize and relieve medical debt for its caregivers. Pittsburgh United, an advocacy group that's worked for years to... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

- 09-30-2021 **Abortion, privacy and voting rights seem on the line; place your bets on which might be diminished | John Baer**  
Perhaps youâ€™ve noticed the extreme politics of our state and nation tend to get folks amped up; in some cases, totally torqued. Understandable, really. Extremes produce overreactions. But lately, so many things are running so hot that there are concerns constitutional rights might be endangered. Are such concerns justified?... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Pa. reports nearly 5,000 new COVID-19 infections, 77 new deaths**  
Pa. reports nearly 5,000 new COVID-19 infections, 77 new deaths - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Pa. plan to keep kids in schools: More bus drivers, vaccine clinics and COVID-19 tests**  
With a shortage of school bus drivers, Gov. Tom Wolfâ€™s administration is putting out an urgent call to find drivers. In addition, Pennsylvania Acting Health Secretary Alison Beam is encouraging school districts to make preparations for vaccine clinics in November in anticipation of federal approval of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Pa.'s in-school COVID-19 testing program slow to take hold**  
One of Pennsylvaniaâ€™s mitigation strategies for keeping students in schools is providing free COVID-19 testing to school districts, but the program has drawn a lackluster response. According to state Acting Health Secretary Alison Beam, nearly 400 schools of the stateâ€™s more than 3,000 public and private schools have... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Pa. Gov. Tom Wolf signs law imposing tougher penalties on those who aid or encourage suicide**  
Gov. Tom Wolf has signed Shawnâ€™s Law. On Thursday, the governorâ€™s office announced Wolf has signed legislation that would strengthen the penalties against those convicted of aiding or encouraging a suicide. The parents of a Newberry Township woman who died by suicide pushed for the bill.... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Pennsylvania coronavirus update: 4,892 cases put state on par with Mississippi; 77 deaths reported**  
The Pennsylvania Department of Health reported 4,892 additional coronavirus cases on Thursday. The seven-day moving average of newly reported cases was 4,598 cases per day, down 1.6% from a week ago, and up 15% over the last 30 days. To date, there have been 1.43 million infections statewide.... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Report: School-age children almost twice as likely as adults to get coronavirus**  
The Pennsylvania Department of Health recently released a weekly report on coronavirus infections in children for each county. The report shows that, for the week ending Sep. 28, the population-adjusted rate of infections in children and 18-year-olds exceeded the adult rate of... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Pa. plan to keep kids in school: Hiring bus drivers, more COVID-19 testing**  
Plans to keep kids in Pennsylvania schools include hiring more bus drivers, expanding testing for students and preparing for vaccination clinics for younger children, state officials said Thursday, as effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to complicate in-person education.... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Pa. officials calling thousands in effort to address bus driver shortage**  
Pennsylvania officials are searching statewide for drivers to put behind the wheel of school buses as the driver shortage plaguing the nation continues to hit close to home. PennDOT is reaching out to around 375,000 people across the state who have commercial driverâ€™s licenses to highlight the need for bus... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 09-30-2021 **Blood lead levels among Pennsylvania children higher than average, study finds**  
The percentage of children in Pennsylvania with elevated blood lead levels is more than twice the national rate, according to new data published in JAMA Pediatrics. Nationally, the number of children with elevated blood lead levels â€” at least five micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

- 09-30-2021 **[Pennsylvania is seeking to recruit more school bus drivers amid ongoing shortage](#)**  
As school districts continue to struggle with a lack of bus drivers, Pennsylvania officials said Thursday they will be alerting hundreds of thousands of commercial driverâ€™s license holders across the state of the need to fill the positions. The Department of Transportation will mail information on the shortage and... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-30-2021 **[CHOP's beds are overflowing, but not because of COVID-19](#)**  
Childrenâ€™s Hospital of Philadelphia currently has fewer than a dozen COVID-19 inpatients, but the preeminent 585-bed pediatric facility is nonetheless filled to overflowing because of the pandemic. â€œWhat we are seeing is definitely unprecedented,â€• said... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[New records reveal the cost of Pa.'s failure to clarify rules around addiction treatment and marijuana](#)**  
HARRISBURG — The failure by Gov. Tom Wolf's administration to clarify federal rules around addiction treatment funding and medical marijuana caused even greater confusion and serious consequences than previously disclosed, a follow-up Spotlight PA investigation has found.... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Health care, education industries help suburbs grow, but outlying counties are left behind](#)**  
For Mike Belding, the most visible reminder of Greene County's loss of residents is the empty storefronts in the county seat of Waynesburg. In recent years, the town has lost a grocery store, a cafe, an art gallery and more. Enticing new businesses to move in has been difficult.... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[The search for a new Philadelphia superintendent begins almost immediately as Hite announces end-of-year exit](#)**  
The search for Superintendent William R. Hite Jr.'s successor begins almost immediately, will pull from both a local and a national pool, and hinges on the input of parents, teachers, students and community members. "We do need to hear from you, Philadelphia," said Leticia... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Tower is selling Chestnut Hill Hospital, closing Jennersville, as it digs out from massive losses](#)**  
Tower Health announced Tuesday that it will close Jennersville Hospital in West Grove while preparing to sell Chestnut Hill Hospital and more than a dozen urgent care centers to Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic. The price for Chestnut Hill and the urgent care centers has not been set,... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Person taken to hospital after ammonia leak at Strip District produce warehouse](#)**  
One person was taken to the hospital after ammonia began leaking from a pipe at a produce wholesaler in the Strip District on Monday afternoon. The city's Hazardous Materials Team responded to Consumer Produce on 21st Street around 1:30 p.m. and determined that the leak occurred while... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Mask opt-out legislation clears state Senate committee](#)**  
A bill that would allow parents in Pennsylvania to exempt their children from wearing a mask at school cleared a state Senate committee on Tuesday as Republican lawmakers started making good on their pledge to counter the governor's statewide mask mandate... - [AP](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Lancaster County judge removes juror who refused to wear mask in courtroom](#)**  
A Lancaster County juror was threatened with jail time last week for refusing to wear a mask inside the county courthouse, the first such incident here since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic 18 months ago. During the jury selection process for a criminal trial last Monday, Judge... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[As St. Luke's becomes first health network to reach vaccine mandate deadline, 17,000 employees complied; 155 resigned instead](#)**  
St. Luke's University Health Network's 17,000 employees have complied with its previously announced COVID-19 vaccine mandate, network officials said Tuesday. According to St. Luke's, one of the largest employers in the Lehigh Valley, 46 employees received a medical exemption, 406 were granted a... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)

- 09-29-2021 **[Uniontown man files federal lawsuit over medical treatment in prison](#)**  
A Fayette County man filed a lawsuit against a contracted prison medical provider for allegedly denying him surgery for a hernia while he was incarcerated. Thank you for reading! Please log in, or sign up for a new account and purchase a subscription to continue reading.... - [Uniontown Herald-Standard](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[BEA will now discipline students violating COVID-19 mandate after hundreds go unmasked](#)**  
After telling a crowded auditorium of parents last week that their children wouldn't be punished for not wearing a face mask, a local school district is reversing its decision. In a letter to parents Tuesday, Bald Eagle Area School District Superintendent Scott Graham wrote that though the board and administration... - [State College Centre Daily Times](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Despite objections from public, Line Mountain to follow state mandate on masking](#)**  
MANDATA — The eight members of the Line Mountain School Board have diverse opinions about the Department of Health's masking mandate, but the common ground, President Troy Laudenslager said, is to comply as several lawsuits play out in court. District solicitor Antonio Michetti informed the public at Tuesday's... - [Shamokin News-Item](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Delaware Valley School District approves mask exemptions for students without doctor input](#)**  
Delaware Valley School District has opted to allow parents and guardians to get around the commonwealth's masking mandate following a contentious emergency meeting Tuesday evening. DVSD's school board came together with the community at the high school auditorium for the single-subject meeting addressing the state Department... - [Pocono Record](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Renovo man files court action, seeking compensation for First Quality medical marijuana-related firing](#)**  
WILLIAMSPORT, PA — A Renovo man claims he was unjustly fired by First Quality Tissue in 2020 over his use of medical marijuana. A suit was filed on Monday in federal Middle District Court in Williamsport by Kevin Dennis. He claims his firing violated the American with... - [Lock Haven Record](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[City won't be making emergency declaration](#)**  
Despite a surge in coronavirus cases in Westmoreland County and even an outbreak at city hall, Latrobe City Council decided an emergency declaration for the city isn't necessary at this point. The matter was discussed briefly at council's agenda session Monday,... - [Latrobe Bulletin](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Bethlehem lays out how it wants to spend \\$34 million in COVID relief](#)**  
Mayor Bob Donchez's administration views Bethlehem's \$34 million in federal coronavirus relief funding as a chance to get the city on firmer financial footing, tackle deferred projects and create an \$8.5 million community investment fund. City officials on Tuesday evening laid out their vision for the city's... - [Easton Express-Times](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Pandemic slows opening of Pottsville medical marijuana dispensary](#)**  
Pandemic slows opening of Pottsville medical marijuana dispensary - [Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Youth COVID-19 vaccinations lag rest of state population](#)**  
Months after they could be vaccinated against COVID-19, most eligible Pennsylvania adolescents still haven't received even one shot. - [Scranton Times](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[UPMC interim president values family, community ties](#)**  
Dr. Elizabeth A. Piccione already was achieving straight A's as a New Castle High School student when her mother reminded her that she was supposed to excel in school, and it would be a waste of her talent if she didn't. Those guiding words have stuck with the longtime cardiologist throughout... - [New Castle News](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Evangelical Hospital second in state recognized as StormReady](#)**  
LEWISBURG — Evangelical Community Hospital became the second hospital in the state to be recognized

as StormReady by the National Weather Service. "People take for granted that emergencies happen and you're ready to handle it," said Kendra Aucker, president and CEO of Evangelical,... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)

09-29-2021

### **Logistics lag behind consumer demand ahead of holiday shopping**

Shortages in supplies and labor combined with congested delivery lines and swelling shipping costs make for an uncertain retail market ahead of the winter holiday shopping period. Bucknell University's Jimmy Chen, associate professor of analytics and operations management, said shoppers placing orders this week for products... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)

09-29-2021

### **Biden bets on rapid COVID tests but they can be hard to find in Cumberland County and elsewhere**

President Joe Biden is betting on millions more rapid, at-home tests to help curb the latest deadly wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is overloading hospitals and threatening to shutter classrooms around the country... - [AP](#)

09-29-2021

### **Facebook Groups Promoting Ivermectin as a Covid-19 Treatment Flourish**

Facebook has become more aggressive at enforcing its coronavirus misinformation policies in the past year. But the platform remains a popular destination for people discussing how to acquire and use ivermectin, a drug typically used to treat parasitic worms, even though the... - [New York Times](#)

09-29-2021

### **Pfizer and BioNTech Submit Data on Vaccine for Kids 5 to 11**

Pfizer and BioNTech announced on Tuesday that they had submitted data to the Food and Drug Administration that the companies said showed their coronavirus vaccine is safe and effective in children ages 5 to 11. The companies said they would submit a formal request to regulators to... - [New York Times](#)

09-29-2021

### **How Covid Misinformation Created a Run on Ivermectin**

For months, the veterinary center in West Point, Miss., had watched its supplies of the drug dwindle. Dr. Karen Emerson, the veterinarian who owns the hospital, started the year with one 500-milliliter bottle of ivermectin, which she uses to kill parasites in dogs, chickens and other... - [New York Times](#)

09-29-2021

### **Covid-19 live updates: Third coronavirus vaccine shot's side effects echo those from second dose, CDC says**

The side effects Americans experienced from a third dose of a coronavirus vaccine are similar to those from a second dose, according to a study released Tuesday from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The research provides insight into the safety of additional vaccine shots as... - [Washington Post](#)

09-29-2021

### **New York governor declares emergency amid staffing shortage crisis prompted by vaccine resisters**

Tens of thousands of health-care workers in New York are likely to have refused a coronavirus vaccine before a state requirement went into effect on Monday, serving as a preview of resistance that the Biden administration's vaccine requirements will face on a bigger scale... - [Washington Post](#)

09-29-2021

### **YouTube is banning prominent anti-vaccine activists and blocking all anti-vaccine content**

YouTube is taking down several video channels associated with high-profile anti-vaccine activists including Joseph Mercola and Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who experts say are partially responsible for helping seed the skepticism that's contributed to slowing vaccination rates across the... - [Washington Post](#)

09-29-2021

### **Lawyer expects no conviction following Boyle treatment**

The attorney for state Rep. Kevin Boyle (D-172nd dist.) predicted a positive resolution to the charges he is facing following last Friday afternoon's arrest. Boyle was arrested by 7th Police District officers outside the Bustleton home he had shared with his wife of 10 years and two young daughters.... - [Philadelphia Northeast Times](#)

09-29-2021

### **Mask rules reinstated at county buildings**

BROOKVILLE — Jefferson County-owned buildings are back to wearing masks, which was announced at the commissioners conference on Tuesday at Jefferson Place in Brookville. Herb Bullers, commission chair, said for now, they are asking anyone who is going to a county building to wear a mask.... - [Punxsutawney Spirit](#)



- 09-29-2021 **Jefferson Co. Commissioners requiring masks in county buildings**  
 BROOKVILLE — The Jefferson County Commissioners discussed their decision to begin requiring masks in all county government buildings again during a meeting Tuesday morning. Signs are now in place on the doors of Jefferson Place, and leading up to the office on the second floor, alerting the public that masks are once... - [DuBois Courier-Express](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Guthrie vaccination mandate takes effect**  
 SAYRE – Guthrie’s vaccination requirement established on Monday as the deadline for all employees to get their first vaccination for COVID-19 unless qualifying for an exemption per applicable federal law. Effective Monday, 97% of all employees were compliant with this requirement and are... - [Towanda Daily Review](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Berks County to study local health care needs of its residents**  
 Sometimes, things fall through the cracks. Berks County is trying to make sure that’s not the case with health care. At an operations meeting Tuesday, the commissioners laid the groundwork for a study of health care in the county. The goal of the study is to gather... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Tower Health to unload Chestnut Hill, Jennersville hospitals**  
 Financially struggling Tower Health announced plans to cut two of the smallest facilities in its six-hospital system. Tower will seek to close Jennersville Hospital in Chester County and to transfer Chestnut Hill Hospital in Philadelphia, the West Reading-based... - [Pottstown Mercury](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Penridge School Board amends immunization policy, adding ‘moral’ as reason for exemption**  
 EAST ROCKHILL – Penridge School Board “will consider,” rather than be required to, follow guidance and orders from state and local health officials under revisions to the board’s Policy 203 for Immunizations and Communicable Diseases. The revised policy, approved at the board’s Sept. 27 meeting, also adds... - [Lansdale Reporter](#)
- 09-29-2021 **LAUSD struggles to meet COVID vaccine mandate deadlines**  
 High-stakes COVID-19 vaccine mandate deadlines are fast approaching in the Los Angeles Unified School District and employees who refuse the inoculations face losing their jobs while unvaccinated students would ultimately be forced off campus into an online program.... - [Los Angeles Times](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Ohio farmers, hospitals, universities would gain from new state treasury program**  
 Ohio farmers, hospitals and public universities will benefit from lower borrowing costs under "Ohio Gains," a new program unveiled Wednesday by state Treasurer Robert Sprague. The program is threefold: modernize the long-standing Ag-LINK program to make agricultural... - [Columbus Dispatch](#)
- 09-29-2021 **More than 4,000 Maryland public school students have tested positive for COVID and 16,500 have had to quarantine since start of school year**  
 More than 4,000 Maryland public school students have tested positive for COVID in the first several weeks of school and another 16,500 have been quarantined because they came in close contact with someone who had COVID-19, according to data released by the Maryland State Department of... - [Baltimore Sun](#)
- 09-29-2021 **5 things to know about covid-19 vaccine booster shots**  
 Some people who are at risk for severe complications from covid-19 are now eligible for a booster dose of the Pfizer vaccine. First of all, the booster — a third dose of the mRNA covid-19 vaccine — is identical to the original doses. Here’s what people should know if they want a booster shot:... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Telemedicine is here to stay, but how much you pay for a visit could change**  
 Telemedicine has become immensely popular during the COVID-19 pandemic as a safe and convenient way to see a medical provider without leaving home. Doctors and analysts say telemedicine is here to stay, but the price patients pay for the convenience of seeing a health care provider from... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

- 09-29-2021 **Atlantic City's syringe exchange is suing the city over efforts to close it**  
Operators of Atlantic City's only needle exchange are suing the city to allow them to keep distributing clean syringes -- just weeks before a city council ordinance is set to end the program. The lawsuit, filed in New Jersey Superior Court Wednesday morning, says... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-29-2021 **In 2021, it's nearly impossible to prioritize which bad thing to protect your kid from first | Opinion**  
From the time your kid is born, you fall in love with them so hard and care so deeply that all you want to do is spend every waking second trying to protect them and keep them safe. However, the complexity of this has gotten harder over the years in our current environmental, social, and political... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Nervous about getting the COVID-19 vaccine? Don't believe these myths.**  
Are you anxious about "dangerous" COVID-19 vaccine side effects? Wondering if it will affect your fertility? Did you hear it will change your DNA? There's plenty of misinformation circulating about the COVID-19 vaccines, much of which can make it feel scary to sign... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Philly vaccine pioneer: Was the human cost of doing fewer COVID-19 trials on kids worth it? | Expert Opinion**  
After Pfizer's vaccine had been approved for 12- to 15-year-olds, I got a lot of emails. As a member of the FDA's Vaccine Advisory Committee, people wanted to tell me what they thought of the decision. Most argued that the vaccine hadn't been tested long enough or in... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Fighting wave of misinfo, YouTube bans false vaccine claims**  
YouTube is wiping vaccine misinformation and conspiracy theories from its popular video-sharing platform... - [AP](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Allegheny County executive mandates vaccines for his employees, unvaccinated will 'face termination'**  
Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald announced Wednesday that COVID-19 vaccinations will be required for all county employees in the executive branch by Dec. 1. Executive branch employees who do not show proof of their vaccination to management by that date will face termination, according to a statement... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Highmark subsidiary to pay \$410,000 to settle discrimination claim**  
A Highmark Health subsidiary has been ordered to pay \$410,000 in back pay and interest to resolve an allegation of pay discrimination involving its employees, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. HM Health Solutions Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Highmark Health that... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Some fear boosters will hurt drive to reach the unvaccinated**  
The spread of COVID-19 vaccination requirements across the U.S. hasn't had the desired effect so far, with the number of Americans getting their first shots plunging in recent weeks. And some experts worry that the move to dispense boosters could just make matters... - [AP](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Pennsylvania vaccination rate by House and Senate districts: Maps**  
The Pennsylvania Department of Health has released vaccination data for state legislative districts. The data excludes districts that overlay Philadelphia in whole or part. Philadelphia is administered separately for vaccination programs. The data are the same as are reported daily, but dividing the state into... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-29-2021 **Pennsylvania coronavirus update: Weekly rate steady as 4,570 cases added; ICU use highest since January**  
The Pennsylvania Department of Health reported 4,570 additional coronavirus cases on Wednesday. The seven-day moving average of newly reported cases was 4,683 cases per day, virtually unchanged from a week ago, and up 19% over the last 30 days. To date, there have been 1.43 million infections statewide.... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)

- 09-29-2021 **[MAP: Where coronavirus is in Pennsylvania](#)**  
The maps show the breakdown of coronavirus in Pennsylvania by county, with the latest numbers released by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Prevalence These maps look at which counties, when adjusted for population, have had the highest number of coronavirus cases, and compares them to the statewide... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[We have one enemy -- COVID-19 | PennLive letters](#)**  
When the Twin Towers came down, we had one enemy. When Communism was proliferating via the USSR, we had one enemy. When the Great Depression of the 1930s hit there was one enemy. In each case we used every weapon at our disposal to attack that enemy. Today we have COVID – one enemy. The situation today as it... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[A fifth-grader tells Gov. Wolf parents are lying to get their kids out of wearing masks | PennLive letters](#)**  
ke getting the flu shot; it is uncomfortable for a moment, but it is for the greater good. If you change the mandate to require a note from a medical professional, you will be saving lives. People will be thankful later, even if they are mad for a few days, or even a couple months. They... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Pa. reports nearly 100 new COVID-19 deaths as toll accelerates](#)**  
Pennsylvania registered 97 new COVID-19 deaths on Wednesday, as its pace of deaths continues to accelerate. That state’s seven-day average of new deaths stood at 38 as of the beginning of the week, after having been as low as three in late July, according to tracking by Johns Hopkins University. The new deaths bring the... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-29-2021 **[Saturday service set for Pittsburgh police officer who was killed by covid](#)**  
Officials on Wednesday confirmed that covid-19 was the cause of death for a Pittsburgh police officer who died earlier this week. Brian Rowland, 47, died Sunday at St. Clair Hospital. Officials did not immediately release Rowland’s cause of death in their Monday announcement, saying only that it came after a brief... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 09-28-2021 **[At Pennsylvania’s first March for Life, thousands rally to oppose abortion: ‘We know that’s life’](#)**  
Anti-abortion activists and supporters – some carrying signs “I am the Pro-Life Generation” and “Take my hand not my life” – converged on the Pennsylvania Capitol on Monday to urge state lawmakers to pass laws to further restrict abortion. Thousands from across the state filled the Capitol steps and spilled out on... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-28-2021 **[New superintendents take over suburban Philly districts in challenging time for school leaders](#)**  
After 18 months of turmoil upending the education system, a new crop of superintendents is being charged with steering Philadelphia-area schools through the pandemic. At least eight school districts in the collar counties have or are poised to receive new leaders this fall, from Cheltenham to Chester Upland.... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-28-2021 **[Expanding COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to younger kids could combat rising cases — if enough parents say yes](#)**  
More than 23,000 children in Pennsylvania contracted the coronavirus in the first three weeks of September, part of a national increase over the last month that has closed schools, worried parents, and heightened urgency for the authorization of vaccination for younger children.... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-28-2021 **[Philly Superintendent William R. Hite Jr. says he’s leaving at the end of the school year](#)**  
William R. Hite Jr., for nearly a decade the superintendent of city schools, has set an end to his tenure. Hite will remain leader of the Philadelphia School District through the end of the school year, but he and the school board have agreed there will be no contract renewal. Hite’s current pact, which pays him \$334,644... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-28-2021 **[Jefferson Health and Novartis mount \\$3 million effort to address health disparities in Philly](#)**  
Jefferson Health and Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp. on Monday announced a three-year, \$3 million effort

to improve cardiovascular health in poor neighborhoods in North and South Philadelphia. The “Closing the Gap” program will work to alleviate socio-economic... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

09-28-2021

**[Covid cases reported at juvenile detention center; Westmoreland jail free of virus](#)**

Two children in the shelter program at Westmoreland County’s juvenile detention center tested positive for the coronavirus. Nicole Kamer, director of the Regional Youth Services Center in Hempfield, said Monday that two teens were in quarantine. Officials suspected they... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

09-28-2021

**[PPS teachers, staff urge fair contract for paraprofessionals and technical-clerical employees](#)**

In a monthly public hearing held by the Pittsburgh Public Schools board on Monday, teachers and staff from various schools across the district advocated for a fair contract for paraprofessionals and technical-clerical workers. The Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers — the union that represents... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

09-28-2021

**[Penn Manor board hears of any potential legal consequences for mask exemptions](#)**

When: Penn Manor school board meeting, Sept. 20. What happened: At a board meeting in Penn Manor High School auditorium, Kimberly Colonna, the special education attorney for the district, presented the potential legal consequences of parents requesting mask exemptions for students on a medical basis.... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

09-28-2021

**[Guidance counselors and mental health professionals available for students, staff, in wake of foiled plot at Dunmore](#)**

Dunmore School District administrators will meet with students in all grade levels in the wake of a plot to cause destruction at the high school, Superintendent John Marichak said Monday. - [Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice](#)

09-28-2021

**[Delta Medix agrees to sell practice to Lehigh Valley Physicians Group, but Scranton hospitals object](#)**

Delta Medix agrees to sell practice to Lehigh Valley Physicians Group, but Scranton hospitals object - [Scranton Times](#)

09-28-2021

**[Guidance counselors and mental health professionals available for students, staff, in wake of foiled plot at Dunmore](#)**

Guidance counselors and mental health professionals available for students, staff, in wake of foiled plot at Dunmore - [Scranton Times](#)

09-28-2021

**[Scranton School District leaders defend hiring teachers with emergency permits](#)**

Scranton School District leaders defend hiring teachers with emergency permits - [Scranton Times](#)

09-28-2021

**[Measure on masking in youth sports clears Pa. House committee](#)**

Legislation that cleared a House committee on Monday would give Pennsylvania school districts the authority to decide whether student-athletes must wear masks while playing, as GOP lawmakers continue looking at a more aggressive move against the governor's universal mask... - [AP](#)

09-28-2021

**[Anti-abortion rally at state Capitol in Pennsylvania draws thousands. What they said](#)**

HARRISBURG —Caroline Machiraju walked slowly toward a crowd of thousands that had gathered on the State Capitol Building steps and spilled onto North 3rd Street. Her 15-minute commute from Camp Hill was much shorter than hours-long drives others in the crowd began before dawn to be there at 11 a.m. Monday.... - [Levittown Bucks County Courier Times](#)

09-28-2021

**[Pa. lawmaker to have mental health evaluation following his arrest. Here's what happened](#)**

A southeast Pennsylvania state legislator will be receiving mental health treatment after being arrested on Friday in Philadelphia and charged with violating a protection-from-abuse order. State Rep. Kevin Boyle, D-Philadelphia, who represents the 172nd district... - [Levittown Bucks County Courier Times](#)

- 09-28-2021 **Part of Washington County jail under quarantine after small COVID-19 outbreak**  
A section of the Washington County jail housing female inmates is under quarantine after multiple women tested positive for COVID-19 during a small outbreak earlier this month. Three female inmates in the 1-Southeast section of the jail tested positive Sept. 17, prompting its lockdown due to its dormitory-style living... - [Washington Observer-Reporter](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Local man earns national, state awards for safety**  
A Beaver County native and health and safety specialist for Shell Polymers is the recipient of two notable business and safety awards this year. Rocco Martini, 25, of Center Township, is one of Pennsylvania Business Central's "Signature Leaders Under 30" and a National Safety... - [Beaver County Times](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Spring-Ford School District eyes adding new administrator at cost of \$230K**  
ROYERSFORD — The new Spring-Ford Area School District Superintendent has a new structure planned for his administration, one that involves hiring another administrator and has a total cost of \$230,000. Robert Rizzo was moved from Assistant Superintendent to Acting... - [Norristown Times Herald](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Police looking for man linked to online threat against the Oley Valley School District over its mask policy**  
Police have yet to locate a Montgomery County man linked to a social media post this month that threatened the Oley Valley School District over its enforcement of a statewide school mask mandate. Berks County District Attorney John T. Adams said Monday that investigators... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Pediatricians in Berks hopeful about COVID vaccine for younger children**  
With the recent announcement of positive results from a trial by vaccine maker Pfizer and partner BioNTech, the COVID vaccine may soon be available for younger children in the coming months. Pediatricians in and near Berks County are hopeful about the early data... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Driver shortage causes busing crisis in Boyertown School District**  
The Boyertown School District has joined a growing number of school districts with a difficult busing problem. Students are missing buses. Buses are picking up and dropping off students at varying times. Routes are being changed without warning. Some students are spending more than 90 minutes on a bus. And some students... - [Pottstown Mercury](#)
- 09-28-2021 **National group's secretary-treasurer talks concerns with Johnstown educators**  
JOHNSTOWN, Pa. – Noel Candelaria, secretary-treasurer of the National Education Association, reassured members of the Greater Johnstown Education Association on Monday that their concerns are being heard. "I know you are working hard – doing your absolute best to educate... - [Johnstown Tribune-Democrat](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Richland superintendent warns of penalties for violating mask order**  
JOHNSTOWN, Pa. – Superintendent Arnold Nadonley provided an update at the Richland school board meeting on Monday about the consequences if a district or board disobeys the Pennsylvania Department of Health's mask mandate. "I'm being direct because I want you to know the seriousness of the... - [Johnstown Tribune-Democrat](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Sharon Regional to close maternity department Wednesday**  
SHARON — Sharon Regional Medical Center announced Monday that it will discontinue its maternity and obstetrics services Wednesday, weeks before hospital officials had originally scheduled the department's closure. In a press release issued about 5:20 p.m. Monday, hospital leadership said... - [Sharon Herald](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Piccione named interim president of UPMC Jameson, Horizon**  
Dr. Beth Piccione, New Castle's own, has been named as interim president of UPMC Jameson and UPMC Horizon hospitals. A native of New Castle, Piccione, a respected cardiologist, recently had served as vice president of medical affairs for both hospitals. Piccione, a resident of New Castle, has been with UPMC for 10 years. She... - [New Castle News](#)

- 09-28-2021 **Geisinger researchers awarded \$5M grant**  
 DANVILLE — A team of Geisinger researchers has been awarded a \$5 million grant from the National Institute of Health's National Human Genome Research Institute to develop a tool that will allow health care providers to diagnose a genetic basis for select medical conditions in... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Mask or no mask? Crawford Central hears from parents, students**  
 VERNON TOWNSHIP — Opponents of the state's mask mandate for schools did not achieve the victory they had hoped for at Crawford Central School Board's meeting on Monday evening, but they made a statement simply with their presence — their unmasked presence. A week after a crowd of about 15 mask mandate opponents asked the board to... - [Meadville Tribune](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Sunbury council considering bonus for employees with COVID funds**  
 SUNBURY — Sunbury City Councilman Josh Brosious continues to push on giving full-time city employees a \$2,000 bonus and \$1,000 bonus to part-timers out of the American Rescue Funds for working through COVID-19. "I am seeing this done all over the place," Brosious told council... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Hundreds March for Life in Harrisburg**  
 HARRISBURG — Hundreds of pro-life supporters rallied on the steps of the state Capitol in Harrisburg on Monday during the state's first March for Life, a march a year in the making. Monday's event was originally scheduled for last May, but like many things in 2020 was a casualty of COVID-19. The march coincided with the... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Local legislative districts have low vaccine rates, data shows**  
 The legislative districts of local lawmakers have some of the lowest COVID-19 vaccination rates in Pennsylvania, according to data released Monday by Gov. Tom Wolf. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's OpenData PA website has a dashboard which categorizes vaccinated residents by legislative district. There are... - [Bradford Era](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Guthrie announces 97% of staff received COVID-19 vaccine, avoided suspension**  
 SAYRE BOROUGH – Guthrie Robert Packer Hospital announced that nearly 97% of its staff and 100% of Guthrie physicians complied with receiving the first doses of a COVID-19 vaccine as of Monday. Guthrie made an announcement on Aug. 18 that all employees were required to... - [Towanda Daily Review](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Covid-19 live updates: Pfizer, BioNTech tell FDA vaccine trial had favorable results in young children**  
 Pfizer and BioNTech said Tuesday that they have submitted initial data to the Food and Drug Administration from their vaccine trial on children between 5 and 11 years old. The drugmakers said their trial, which included 2,268 participants from that age group, yielded "positive topline results." The... - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-28-2021 **New York governor declares 'disaster emergency' amid staffing shortage crisis prompted by vaccine resisters**  
 Tens of thousands of health-care workers in New York are likely to have refused a coronavirus vaccine before a state requirement went into effect on Monday, serving as a preview of resistance that the Biden administration's vaccine requirements will face on a bigger scale... - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-28-2021 **How badly unvaccinated Republicans are misinformed, in one stat**  
 For months now, it has been evident that the problem with coronavirus vaccine hesitancy is twofold: Not only do the unvaccinated question the safety of the vaccines, but about as importantly, they often doubt the vaccines' effectiveness in very inaccurate ways. It's... - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-28-2021 **The grim reality of a partisan pandemic**  
 About two-thirds of the deaths caused by covid-19 in the United States have occurred since last year's presidential election. More than 4 in 10 have occurred since Joe Biden was inaugurated as president. This isn't how many people think of the pandemic. That it emerged... - [Washington Post](#)

- 09-28-2021 **President Biden gets a coronavirus vaccine booster shot**  
Sitting before a bank of cameras in an auditorium at the White House complex, President Biden received a booster shot of Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine Monday, a step that the U.S. government has authorized for many Americans. The president was adhering to new recommendations issued last week from the... - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-28-2021 **How abortion laws in the U.S. compare to those in other countries**  
In the last three decades, countries around the world have made it easier to legally get an abortion. In some parts of the United States, however, it's gotten harder. Just this month, Mexico's supreme court ruled to decriminalize the practice. Argentina's Senate... - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-28-2021 **New York governor declares 'disaster emergency' amid staffing shortage crisis prompted by vaccine resisters**  
10-12 minutes Tens of thousands of health-care workers in New York are likely to have refused a coronavirus vaccine before a state requirement went into effect on Monday, serving as a preview of resistance that the Biden administration's vaccine requirements will face on a bigger scale... - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-28-2021 **N.Y.C. Vaccine Mandate for School Workers Can Proceed, Judges Rule**  
New York City's vaccine mandate for nearly all adults working in its public schools can proceed as scheduled, a federal appeals panel ruled on Monday, reversing a decision made over the weekend that paused enforcement of the mandate until later this week at the earliest.... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-28-2021 **The Pandemic Has Made Social Anxiety Worse for the Young**  
One student had several panic attacks a week, alone in his room. One felt her hands shake when walking on busy streets. Another hid in a bathroom while at a restaurant with friends, wondering why she was hyperventilating at her own birthday party. They are all living with some degree of social anxiety, a growing problem... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Cancer-causing wastes still exist along the Texas Eastern pipeline 30 years after settlement**  
It's been more than 30 years since the public first learned that the former Texas Eastern Transmission Corp. buried industrial fluids containing the carcinogen polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, in pits along the natural gas line, including in Shermans Dale.... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Campaign raising over \$69k for local fire companies**  
Martin Oil Company and Martin General Stores concluded their Helping Hometown Heroes campaign and raised \$69,427 for 23 local fire companies in a seven-county area. The company began this fundraiser after learning that fire stations were unable to continue their normal fundraisers through the COVID-19 shutdown.... - [Tyrone Daily Herald](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Here are all the Ohio bills to ban or limit COVID-19 vaccine, mask mandates**  
With state lawmakers back from hiatus, Republicans are going full steam against measures implemented to combat COVID-19. Lawmakers have rolled out a string of bills combating COVID-19 mandates of all types and for different groups. More could come. "We're just responding to the Ohioans we hear speaking to us," said Ohio... - [Columbus Dispatch](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Baltimore 4-year-old accidentally given COVID vaccine**  
Before heading out the door on the morning of Sept. 18, Victoria and Martin Olivier and their 4-year-old daughter struck a deal. In exchange for good behavior during the family's pharmacy visit for seasonal flu shots, Colette could expect a sugary treat in her future. So... - [Baltimore Sun](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Lehigh Valley's major employers are waiting for more details on Biden's vaccine mandate**  
After President Joe Biden announced new vaccine rules for large employers, some of the Lehigh Valley's top employers said there are still too many unanswered questions about the new regulations to comment how it will affect their operations. On Sept. 9, President Biden issued executive orders, that among other... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)

- 09-28-2021 **Where are the nation's 'super commuters?' Many are right here in the Lehigh Valley, report says**  
Those workers, many who travel on Interstate 78 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Northeast Extension, are called "super commuters," spending three hours or more each day going back and forth to their jobs. There will be more of them in the future, the report suggests.... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Burrell middle school students help draft legislation calling for mandatory recess statewide**  
Students at Burrell's Huston Middle School have co-authored proposed state legislation that would make recess a protected right for young students like them. What started as a persuasive writing exercise turned into the students crafting the would-be legislation with state Rep. Bob Brooks,... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Tower is selling Chestnut Hill Hospital, closing Jennersville, as it digs out from massive losses**  
Tower Health announced Tuesday that it will close Jennersville Hospital in Chester County. Tower also disclosed a tentative deal to sell Chestnut Hill Hospital and more than a dozen urgent care centers to Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic. The price for Chestnut Hill Hospital and the urgent care centers has not... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-28-2021 **He, she or they? Pa. university equity officer says students could be punished for misusing a person's pronouns**  
A Pa. university is having a debate over gender pronouns and free speech. This after a memo from the university's Office of Equity and Inclusion said there could be consequences for students using a person's wrong pronouns, as KDKA-TV in Pittsburgh reports. The pronoun flap is happening at Point Park University, where the pointed... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Pennsylvania coronavirus update: 98,000 third doses given; Lehigh records 900th death**  
The Pennsylvania Department of Health reported 5,429 additional coronavirus cases on Tuesday. The seven-day moving average of newly reported cases was 4,658 cases per day, down 2% from a week ago, up 21% over the last 30 days, and over 26 times higher than the 179 average daily cases recorded 90 days... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Pennsylvania bill: Parents could opt-out students from masks in schools**  
A bill that would allow parents in Pennsylvania to exempt their children from wearing a mask at school cleared a state Senate committee on Tuesday as Republican lawmakers started making good on their pledge to counter the governor's statewide mask mandate... - [AP](#)
- 09-28-2021 **New records reveal the cost of Pennsylvania's failure to clarify rules around addiction treatment and marijuana**  
The failure by Gov. Tom Wolf's administration to clarify federal rules around addiction treatment funding and medical marijuana caused even greater confusion and serious consequences than previously disclosed, a follow-up Spotlight PA investigation has found.... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-28-2021 **The Pa. LIFE programs help seniors remain in their homes | Opinion**  
By Mark Irwin September is National PACE Month, celebrating the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) known in Pennsylvania as Living Independence for the Elderly (LIFE). This innovative model of care allows seniors with long-term care needs to remain living in their community for... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Pennsylvanians want better public health protections from pollution | PennLive letters**  
A recent opinion poll released by the Ohio River Valley Institute shows that voters in our state are overwhelmingly concerned about the harmful effects of pollution created by the shale gas industry (or fracked gas), which has inundated large swaths of Pennsylvania over the past decade.... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-28-2021 **Is Pa's COVID-19 surge showing signs of a peak?: daily update**  
Is Pa's COVID-19 surge showing signs of a peak?: daily update - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)



- 09-28-2021 **[Pa. man claims his firing for using prescribed medical marijuana violated ADA](#)**  
 A Renovo man claims First Quality Tissue in Lock Haven violated the Americans with Disabilities and Pennsylvania Human Relations acts when they fired him for using medical marijuana. Kevin Dennis says in a suit filed Monday in U.S. Middle District Court he was told Sept. 14, 2020, after flunking a drug test to turn in his badge... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-28-2021 **[Should parents decide if kids wear masks at school in Pa.? That's what some lawmakers are seeking.](#)**  
 Parents would be empowered to decide whether their child wears a face covering in school under legislation that moved out of the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday. The bill, sponsored by Republican Sens. Doug Mastriano of Franklin County and Judy Ward of Blair County, would allow for parents to opt their... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-28-2021 **[Anti-masking platforms will backfire for Republican candidates | Opinion](#)**  
 The stark division over whether or not to wear masks has been a staple of the pandemic in the Philadelphia region with support divided along political lines. Democrats typically favor masks, Republicans frequently oppose them. As such, many Republicans are planning to oppose mask... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-28-2021 **[Expanding COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to younger kids could combat rising cases - if enough parents say yes](#)**  
 More than 23,000 children in Pennsylvania contracted the coronavirus in the first three weeks of September, part of a national increase over the last month that has closed schools, worried parents, and heightened urgency for the authorization of vaccination for younger children.... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-28-2021 **[Gov. Wolf pushes state lawmakers to boost vaccination rates in their districts](#)**  
 Americans have seen vaccination rates by state, county and ZIP code. Now, as Gov. Tom Wolf's administration tackles vaccine hesitancy, there's yet another metric in Pennsylvania. A new report that breaks down vaccination rates by Pennsylvania legislative... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 09-28-2021 **[Gateway School Board member resigns; separate maskless section created for meeting](#)**  
 Gateway school board member the Rev. Scott Gallagher has resigned from his elected post to spend more time on his congregation. Gallagher, 49, has served as the pastor of Garden City United Methodist Church for more than 20 years. He was in the second year of his first four-year term on school board.... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[Medical marijuana patients in Pa. risk arrest for DUI when they get behind the wheel](#)**  
 Medical marijuana patients face a risk of arrest in Pennsylvania if they get behind the wheel of a vehicle. Jesse Roedts found that out first hand. The music instructor and fire inspector from Montoursville was stopped in 2019 at a state police DUI checkpoint where he told the troopers he was a... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[Webinar tackles diabetic dining](#)**  
 UNIVERSITY PARK — Individuals who want to learn how to better manage diabetes can now register for a series of webinars offered by Penn State Extension. The "Dining with Diabetes" is taught by extension educators across Pennsylvania. It is geared toward anyone who has type 2 diabetes, has... - [Altoona Mirror](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[Pa. school boards bearing brunt of anti-mask parents' anger. Hear what the sides say](#)**  
 Even though a statewide mandate for K-12 students has been in effect for more than two weeks, masks in schools continue to roil districts across Pennsylvania as parents confront local school boards over the COVID-19 policy. School boards across the country have ended their meetings because... - [Erie Times-News](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[As vaccination efforts continue, COVID-19 isn't the most serious threat facing some Philadelphians. Consider gun violence.](#)**  
 In the neighborhood around Jerome Brown Playground, most people know at least one person who died of

COVID-19 — a friend, relative, neighbor, or coworker. The virus, though, isn't the only mortal danger infecting this North Philadelphia neighborhood, and for some it's not even the most... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

09-27-2021

**[A leading addiction recovery reformer in Philly was on the payroll of a rehab center now charged with crimes](#)**

For more than a decade, Fred Way Jr. has been at the forefront of Pennsylvania's fight against the opioid epidemic — leading the charge to define standards for the state's hundreds of unlicensed and unregulated sober living homes. He has advised lawmakers on state policy. Colleagues describe him as a... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

09-27-2021

**[Five Lackawanna County nursing homes rated "much-below average" overall](#)**

Five Lackawanna County nursing homes rated "much-below average" overall - [Scranton Times](#)

09-27-2021

**[DOH registers 4,200 new COVID cases; 61 reported in Valley](#)**

State Health officials registered another 4,247 COVID cases on Sunday, marking the sixth consecutive day with at least 4,000 new cases. There were 61 new cases in the Valley, including 32 in Northumberland County, 13 in Union and eight each in Montour and Snyder counties.... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)

09-27-2021

**[Small Business Administration opens Ida recovery center in York County](#)**

Assistance is available for those who suffered damages from Hurricane Ida. The U.S. Small Business Administration has opened a Business Recovery Center at the York County Economic Alliance, 144 Roosevelt Ave. in York City. Its hours of operation are 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through... - [York Dispatch](#)

09-27-2021

**[This York County school district seeks to join a lawsuit challenging Pa.'s K-12 mask mandate](#)**

The West York Area School District is asking to join a lawsuit challenging the validity of a state order mandating masks in K-12 schools in Pennsylvania. In a 6-3 vote, the West York Area School Board on Tuesday signed off on the school district becoming a petitioner in a case that's pending in... - [York Daily](#)

09-27-2021

**[Doctors recommend flu shots as soon as possible](#)**

With the flu season approaching amid the COVID-19 pandemic, doctors are urging people to get a flu shot as early as possible this year. Thank you for reading! Please log in, or sign up for a new account and purchase a subscription to continue reading. Usually, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends... - [Uniontown Herald-Standard](#)

09-27-2021

**[Company plans to expand in Beaver County, creating nearly 700 new jobs](#)**

CENTER TWP. — A locally based pharmacy services company plans to expand its Beaver County operation and create roughly 700 new jobs in the process. Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf on Friday said Express Med Pharmaceuticals in Center Township will invest \$8 million to retain 34 existing employees and... - [Beaver County Times](#)

09-27-2021

**[Tougher DUI penalties urged in Deana Eckman's name](#)**

Delaware County District Attorney Jack Stollsteimer joined the parents of a woman killed by an impaired driver in 2019 during testimony before the state Senate Transportation Committee last week on proposed legislation to increase penalties for repeat DUI offenders.... - [Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times](#)

09-27-2021

**[\\$149000 grant will combat opioid crisis among Montco inmate parolee population](#)**

HARRISBURG — State Rep. Joe Ciresi, D-146th Dist., announced that the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency approved Montgomery County's request for \$149,875 in federal State Opioid Response Grant funds to provide Medication Assisted Treatment for the inmate population to... - [Norristown Times Herald](#)

09-27-2021

**[How Happy Valley FitLink creates a wellness community for adults with intellectual disabilities](#)**

Two years ago, as Jonna Belanger was teaching her disability sport class at Penn State, she gave her students a message and a challenge. Her goal, she said, is to give her students the confidence to go out and open doors for people. "To be the people that say 'yes.' "... - [State College Centre Daily Times](#)

- 09-27-2021 **[Judge to decide on Montoursville mask restraining order this week](#)**  
 The Montoursville Area School District mask lawsuit by parents will continue for at least another week. U.S. Middle District Judge Matthew W. Brann said he would decide Friday whether to issue a temporary restraining order to stop the district from enforcing a mask policy mirroring what the state health department... - [Williamsport Sun-Gazette](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[What other newspapers are saying: Wildlife corridors help all species](#)**  
 The Williamsport Parking Authority shared recently that it's seeing more people parking downtown as the nation takes to the streets again amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Signs of hope are seen as the weather turns crisp and the holiday shopping season begins in force, according to Dr. Anthony Cipolla, authority... - [Williamsport Sun-Gazette](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[Juniata professors collaborate to grow massive pumpkin](#)**  
 It may not be "the" Great Pumpkin of Charlie Brown lore, but there is certainly "a" great pumpkin that may soon be on display for all to enjoy as fall celebrations start popping up around the region. A 335-pound pumpkin was grown by Juniata College professors Neil Pelkey and... - [Huntingdon Daily News](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[Borowicz addresses BEA board about mask mandate](#)**  
 WINGATE — Pennsylvania state Rep. Stephanie Borowicz was one of 28 people to address the Bald Eagle Area school board during its meeting on Wednesday night. Those in attendance were upset with the Department of Health's mask mandate, which applies to every school in the... - [Lock Haven Express](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[Turnout is strong for Lock Haven's Out of the Darkness Walk](#)**  
 LOCK HAVEN — On a beautiful sun-splashed Sunday afternoon, around 200 people came together for the annual Out of the Darkness Walk at Lock Haven's Riverview Park. Some walked alone. Some walked in groups. Some walked their dogs. Some roller skated through the park.... - [Lock Haven Express](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[Those of us living in rural areas deserve – nay, need – reliable broadband internet](#)**  
 Rather than reinvesting in locations that already have (internet) broadband to make it better, the pandemic relief money should go to places that don't have any broadband at all. That's a quote-paraphrase that ran in an Associated Press story this past Monday from a top internet industry executive.... - [Lewistown Sentinel](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[Advocates gather in Central Park to celebrate recovery from addiction](#)**  
 JOHNSTOWN, Pa. – Using the vernacular, one might say that Joshua Horner has been around the block. Like many people who struggle through each day, Horner turned to alcohol. "I didn't want to look at my father's suicide," said Horner, 33, of Johnstown. "My best friend took his life right in front... - [Johnstown Tribune-Democrat](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[Pipe company pleads guilty in worker's 2018 electrocution death in Johnstown](#)**  
 PITTSBURGH, Pa. – Butler County-based Insight Pipe Contracting pleaded guilty in federal court Friday to willfully violating a federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulation, leading to a worker's death by electrocution, Acting U.S. Attorney Stephen R.... - [Johnstown Tribune-Democrat](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[Attorneys in mask lawsuit file to allow PENNCREST, other school districts to join](#)**  
 Attorneys representing the plaintiffs in a lawsuit against school mask mandates issued by state government filed Friday to allow PENNCREST School District, as well as two other school districts, to join the suit. The firm Dillon, McCandless, King, Coulter, & Graham LLP filed a motion in... - [Meadville Tribune](#)
- 09-27-2021 **[Covid-19 live updates: CDC director admits coronavirus booster messaging led to confusion](#)**  
 The director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention acknowledged that seemingly contradictory messaging between her agency and the Biden administration has led to confusion among doctors and patients about who should get booster shots for coronavirus vaccines and when.... - [Washington Post](#)

- 09-27-2021 **With overdose deaths soaring, DEA issues warning about fentanyl-laced pills**  
The Drug Enforcement Administration issued a public warning Monday that a growing number of pain medications bought on the black market are laced with the synthetic opioid fentanyl or the stimulant methamphetamine, driving overdose deaths to record levels. “We decided to do this because the amounts are... - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-27-2021 **These Health Care Workers Would Rather Get Fired Than Get Vaccinated**  
Deborah Conrad, a physician assistant in western New York, and Simone Leslie, a hospital switchboard operator in Queens, have both worked long, risky hours during the pandemic. But now, both are prepared to lose their jobs rather than meet Monday’s state deadline for health care... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-27-2021 **Covid Rapid Test Prices: How a Law Allows Labs to Charge Any Price**  
At the drugstore, a rapid Covid test usually costs less than \$20. Across the country, over a dozen testing sites owned by the start-up company GS Labs regularly bill \$380. There’s a reason they can. When Congress tried to ensure that Americans wouldn’t have to pay for coronavirus testing, it... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-27-2021 **With Abortion Largely Banned in Texas, an Oklahoma Clinic Is Inundated**  
On a windy Tuesday morning, the parking lot outside a small brick building on the Southside of Oklahoma City was filling up fast. The first to arrive, a red truck shortly before 8 a.m., was from Texas. So was the second and the third. The building houses one of Oklahoma’s four abortion clinics, and... - [New York Times](#)
- 09-27-2021 **Take the Shot? Schools Explore Vaccine Mandates for Student-Athletes**  
When COVID-19 cases proliferated during the first few weeks of this school year, Scott Brabrand, superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, had to send numerous high school students home while school officials verified their vaccination status and traced their contacts.... - [Stateline.org](#)
- 09-27-2021 **More training could help child welfare workers recognize human trafficking in WV**  
More training is needed to help West Virginia child welfare workers identify human trafficking and more support is needed for survivors. The lack of understanding, education and training can lead to misidentification of trafficking offenses, which can result in lesser... - [Charleston Gazette-Mail](#)
- 09-27-2021 **Salmonella outbreak more than doubles; CDC identifies potential source**  
Salmonella outbreak more than doubles; CDC identifies potential source - [Columbus Dispatch](#)
- 09-27-2021 **Surge in remote learning overwhelms L.A. public schools**  
A surge of parents seeking remote learning for their children has overwhelmed public school programs in Los Angeles, causing teacher shortages, administrative snafus and enrollment delays that in some cases have kept students out of school for weeks. The L.A. Unified School District program, called City of Angels, was an... - [Los Angeles Times](#)
- 09-27-2021 **Pro-life rallies planned for Oct. 3**  
On Sunday, Oct. 3, the Bradford County Pennsylvanians for Human Life will hold eight pro-life rallies throughout Bradford County and Tioga County, N.Y. These local events will be a part of Life Chain Sunday, which sees thousands of pro-life rallies take place across the United States and... - [Sayre Morning](#)
- 09-27-2021 **Mask mandate opposition continues at DuBois school board meeting**  
DuBOIS — For the second week in a row, DuBois Area School District residents filled the boardroom at last Thursday’s regular meeting to voice their concerns about the state mandate requiring masks be worn in Pennsylvania schools. “I firmly believe that not a single person in this group really wants... - [DuBois Courier-Express](#)
- 09-27-2021 **DASD superintendent: Mask compliance is not about funding**  
DuBOIS — A DuBois Area School District parent, at last Thursday’s board meeting, said she believes extra

funding may be a key reason that the district is complying with the Pennsylvania mask mandate. However, Superintendent Wendy Benton said that is not true.... - [DuBois Courier-Express](#)

09-27-2021

### **[A leading addiction recovery reformer in Philly was on the payroll of a rehab center now charged with crimes](#)**

For more than a decade, Fred Way Jr. has been at the forefront of Pennsylvania's fight against the opioid epidemic — leading the charge to define standards for the state's hundreds of unlicensed and unregulated sober living homes. He has advised lawmakers on state policy. Colleagues describe him as a... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

09-27-2021

### **[Thousands gather for March for Life at Pa. Capitol](#)**

The first March for Life rally drew thousands of people to Pennsylvania's Capitol Monday. The rally on the Capitol steps had been scheduled to begin at 11 a.m., and to be followed by a march around the Capitol complex. Speakers expected to take part in the event organized by Pennsylvania Family Institute, included... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)

09-27-2021

### **[Pa.'s upward trend of COVID-19 hospitalizations continues over weekend](#)**

Pa.'s upward trend of COVID-19 hospitalizations continues over weekend - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)

09-27-2021

### **[Soaring overdose deaths linked to fake prescription pills: DEA](#)**

With overdose deaths reaching record levels, the Drug Enforcement Agency issued a public safety alert on Monday about the increasing lethality of fake prescription pills containing fentanyl and methamphetamine. And what is perhaps just as alarming to DEA officials is that these pills... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)

09-27-2021

### **[At Pennsylvania's first March for Life, thousands rally to oppose abortion: 'We know that's life'](#)**

Anti-abortion activists and supporters — some carrying signs — "I am the Pro-Life Generation" and "Take my hand not my life" — converged on the Pennsylvania Capitol on Monday to urge state lawmakers to pass laws to further restrict abortion. Thousands from across the state filled the Capitol steps and spilled out on... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)

09-27-2021

### **[Wegmans stores have COVID-19 booster shot available at pharmacy](#)**

Wegmans has announced that its pharmacy locations are now offering Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine booster doses to eligible individuals. These are by appointment only, the multistate grocery chain that includes Pennsylvania said Monday. The following groups are eligible to receive a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)

09-27-2021

### **[Measure on masking in youth sports clears Pa. House committee](#)**

Legislation that cleared a House committee on Monday would give Pennsylvania school districts the authority to decide whether student athletes must wear masks while playing... - [AP](#)

09-27-2021

### **[Facebook puts Instagram for kids on hold after pushback](#)**

Facebook is putting a hold on the development of a kids' version of Instagram, geared toward children under 13, to address concerns that have been raised about the vulnerability of younger users... - [AP](#)

09-27-2021

### **[Biden gets covid-19 booster shot after authorization](#)**

President Joe Biden received his covid-19 booster shot on Monday, days after federal regulators recommended a third dose of the Pfizer vaccine for Americans age 65 or older and approved them for others with preexisting medical conditions and high-risk work environments... - [AP](#)

09-27-2021

### **[Hospitals fear staffing shortages as vaccine deadlines loom](#)**

Hospitals and nursing homes around the country are bracing for worsening staff shortages as state deadlines arrive for health care workers to get vaccinated against covid-19... - [AP](#)

- 09-27-2021 **DEA warns of flood of fake, potentially lethal prescription pills**  
The Drug Enforcement Administration on Monday warned of an increase in fake prescription pills containing fentanyl and methamphetamine in an effort to raise public awareness of the tablets' lethality and availability. Westmoreland County Detective Tony Marcocci said law enforcement locally... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 09-27-2021 **These are the Philadelphia restaurants that require proof of vaccination**  
As cases go back up in Philadelphia because of the delta variant, some restaurants are taking steps to keep everyone safe by requiring proof of vaccination. These are the restaurants in the Philly area that require proof of vaccination or request that unvaccinated guests dine outdoors. This list... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-27-2021 **Full list of places in the Philly region where you need to show proof of vaccination (so far)**  
After a few months of relative normalcy and fewer restrictions, the city of Philadelphia announced new indoor masking and proof-of-vaccination requirements for all indoor spaces within city limits. Since the new policy went into effect on Aug. 12, more and more... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-27-2021 **As vaccination efforts continue, COVID-19 isn't the most serious threat facing some Philadelphians. Consider gun violence**  
In the neighborhood around Jerome Brown Playground, most people know at least one person who died of COVID-19 - a friend, relative, neighbor, or coworker. The virus, though, isn't the only mortal danger infecting this North Philadelphia neighborhood, and for some it's not even the... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-27-2021 **Pennsylvania coronavirus update: 12,223 weekend cases with 2,713 hospitalized; ICUs near 8-month high**  
The Pennsylvania Department of Health reported 12,223 additional coronavirus cases over the weekend: 4,966 Saturday, 4,247 Sunday and 3,010 Monday. The seven-day moving average of newly reported cases was 4,588 cases per day, unchanged from a week ago. Although the 30-day moving average is still up 19%, the state's... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-27-2021 **COVID-19 booster shots will be available through the Allentown Health Bureau**  
Way, Bethlehem on Sept. 30, Oct. 6, Oct. 11 and Oct. 18. To qualify, those seeking the Pfizer booster shot must have completed their two-shot vaccine schedule at least six months prior. The FDA has only approved use of boosters on people 65 and older, those ages 50 to 64 with... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-26-2021 **COVID-19 vaccine boosters could mean billions for drugmakers**  
Billions more in profits are at stake for some vaccine makers as the U.S. moves toward dispensing COVID-19 booster shots to shore up Americans' protection against the virus... - [AP](#)
- 09-26-2021 **Giant Eagle to require appointment for vaccine, effective immediately**  
Anticipating an increase in demand due to the announcement of COVID-19 vaccine boosters, Giant Eagle pharmacies are reinstating their appointment requirements for a vaccine. In an effort to ensure timely access to those who have previously received a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and qualify for a Pfizer booster dose... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 09-26-2021 **Yelp reviews could help hospitals target racism, Penn study finds**  
Hospitals have acknowledged they have a problem with racial bias and said they want to improve patients' experience. But to make meaningful change, hospitals must first find a way to self-evaluate and measure episodes of racism, discrimination, and microaggressions.... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-26-2021 **Parents who push for medical exemptions to school mask rules get pushback from doctors**  
After the mother missed the deadline to sign up for remote schooling, she begged her son's pediatrician to sign a letter exempting the 5-year-old from the Philadelphia School District's mask mandate. The child had mild asthma, and she thought a mask would make it worse. She... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-26-2021 **Unfriendly skies: Why more airline passengers are flying into a rage**  
Every time flight attendant Latifah Fields reaches her destination, she phones her mom and dad to say

sheâ€™s safe. Fields, 41, has worked in airplane cabins for the last 11 years, first with a regional airline and now with a major one. Based at Philadelphia... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

09-26-2021

**Editorial: Booster shots are as common as vaccines themselves**

Booster shots are not a new idea. Kids get them periodically for measles and mumps, for diphtheria and for chickenpox. Adults are cautioned to get a tetanus or meningitis booster. Travelers may get an update for things like hepatitis or yellow fever. A booster is just what it sounds like â€” a little something extra... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

09-26-2021

**Covid-19 vaccine boosters could mean billions for drugmakers**

Billions more in profits are at stake for some vaccine makers as the U.S. moves toward dispensing covid-19 booster shots to shore up Americansâ€™ protection against the virus... - [AP](#)

09-26-2021

**Giant Eagle will again require appointment for covid vaccinations**

Giant Eagle pharmacies once again will require an appointment for anyone seeking a covid-19 vaccine, a spokesman for the company said Saturday. The grocery store/pharmacy chain had been taking walk-ins for the vaccine, but the appointment requirement is being reinstated because of an... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

09-26-2021

**Pennsylvania school boards, including Hempfield, consider joining mask mandate lawsuits**

Another year of traversing a landscape impacted by covid-19 has some school administrators seemingly gearing up to push back against pandemic-related mandates. A state issued mask mandate for K-12 schools that went into effect early this month spurred several lawsuits that were filed across Pennsylvania by... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

09-26-2021

**What you need to know about Pfizer booster shots and eligibility for them**

Millions of Americans are now eligible to receive a Pfizer booster shot to help increase their protection against the worst effects of the coronavirus... - [AP](#)

09-26-2021

**Lackawanna County hits 500 COVID-19 deaths**

A seven-county Northeast Pennsylvania region had 347 new cases of COVID-19 and four new deaths recorded Saturday, according to state Department of Health figures. - [Scranton Times](#)

09-26-2021

**Geisinger Life Flight marks 40th anniversary of life-saving service**

Pittston resident Peyton Rusyn was on her way to dance class when her life changed in a split second. - [Scranton Times](#)

09-26-2021

**Schools should stand firm on mask mandates**

It was inevitable that anti-mask mania, fueled by disinformation and demagoguery on social media and right-wing outlets, would eventually surface here in Luzerne County, where Trump-era resistance to reasonable anti-COVID measures remains strong. - [Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice](#)

09-26-2021

**Area seniors and high-risk people await booster shots**

At Sheehanâ€™s Pharmacy in Plains Twp., pharmacist Lynn McCarthy has begun administering COVID-19 vaccine booster shots for severely immunocompromised people and people undergoing chemotherapy. - [Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice](#)

09-26-2021

**Medical school announces new president, dean**

A North Carolina doctor and administrator will take the lead at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine with plans to continue to enhance the healthcare workforce in the region and the schoolâ€™s mission to serve the community. - [Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice](#)

09-26-2021

**Luzerne County COVID-19 hospitalizations increase again in weekly report**

Luzerne Countyâ€™s coronavirus hospitalizations rose again this week, according to the latest state early

warning dashboard update Friday. An average daily 58.4 county residents were hospitalized for COVID-19 this week ending Thursday, which is eight more than last week's 50.4,... - [Wilkes-Barre Times Leader](#)

- 09-26-2021 **[Wilkes-Barre remains COVID-19 hot spot amid county's surge](#)**  
Amid the ongoing surge of COVID-19 in Luzerne County " daily increases are as high as they were in April " The Wilkes-Barre ZIP code of 18702 continues to be the hot spot, by a substantial margin. Among the 41 codes all or partly in Luzerne County tracked by the Times... - [Wilkes-Barre Times Leader](#)
- 09-26-2021 **[2021 Indicators Report: Understanding PA's public health infrastructure](#)**  
As part of the 2021 Indicators Report, compiled by The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development at Wilkes University, The Institute's Health & Health Care Task Force examined public health. Executive Director Terri Ooms said, "Given the circumstances of... - [Wilkes-Barre Times Leader](#)
- 09-26-2021 **[130 new cases of COVID-19 confirmed in Luzerne County Saturday; 4,966 statewide](#)**  
The latest Department of Health report on Saturday showed Luzerne County with 130 new cases of COVID-19 and no new deaths. The county's death count is at 864. The county's total cases are now at 36,566 since the pandemic began last year. Neighboring Lackawanna County has 20,857 cases and 500 deaths; Monroe... - [Wilkes-Barre Times Leader](#)
- 09-26-2021 **[DOH: Hospitalizations in Cumberland County top 80 for first time since Jan. 31](#)**  
The state Department of Health reported 116 new cases of COVID-19 for Cumberland County Friday. The number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 increased to 83 in Friday's report, up seven from Thursday, and the highest total number of hospitalizations in a single day for the county since Jan. 31. There are 18... - [Carlisle Sentinel](#)
- 09-26-2021 **[CDC endorses Pfizer boosters for some](#)**  
The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Thursday endorsed Pfizer booster shots for people aged 65 and older, nursing home residents, and otherwise vulnerable Americans. The CDC's decision opens the door for millions of Americans to get a booster shot.... - [Uniontown Herald-Standard](#)
- 09-26-2021 **[Weekly Pa. COVID update: State nears 30K deaths; almost 600 new cases in Lehigh Valley kids](#)**  
The U.S. COVID-19 death toll this week surpassed the estimated deaths from the 1918 influenza pandemic, with more than 675,000 lives lost nationally. The current rate of COVID-19 deaths continues to climb in Pennsylvania, as the state approaches 30,000 deaths since the pandemic's start.... - [Easton Express-Times](#)
- 09-26-2021 **[Lehigh Valley Health Network to begin vaccine booster shots Monday](#)**  
Lehigh Valley Health Network will begin administering booster shots of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine on Monday, Sept. 27, to those eligible. The announcement comes after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday granted Emergency Use Authorization for the Pfizer booster and... - [Easton Express-Times](#)
- 09-26-2021 **[Delta variant forces school districts to find new ways to assess learning](#)**  
At this point last year, we hoped we'd be on the other side of COVID-19. Instead, the combination of the Delta variant and back-to-school means educators and administrators are finding themselves in a state of flux. Cases in school districts are on the rise. Large numbers of students are... - [Beaver County Times](#)
- 09-26-2021 **[Beaver County Jail to receive new cameras, holds vaccine clinic](#)**  
The Beaver County Jail will be receiving a new, upgraded camera system. The county prison board made the final approval on the new system Thursday. Board chairman and county Commissioner Jack Manning said cameras will be upgraded from analog to digital, which will allow for better clarity and 90... - [Beaver County Times](#)
- 09-26-2021 **[Berks adds 142 COVID cases as hospitalizations decline](#)**  
The number of new COVID-19 cases stayed high Saturday for Berks County in the delta variant surge, but hospitalizations fell sharply after several days of increases. Berks added 142 COVID cases for the second



day in a row, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health's dashboard update, pushing the... - [Reading Eagle](#)

09-26-2021

### **[A Reading Hospital nurse died from COVID. Her dying wish? Get the vaccine](#)**

A Reading Hospital nurse died from COVID. Her dying wish? Get the vaccine - [Reading Eagle](#)

09-26-2021

### **[Forceful vaccine messages backfire with holdouts – how can it be done better?](#)**

With the FDA approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and the continued surge of the delta variant, governments across the world have renewed their push to increase the number of vaccinated individuals by persuading the holdouts. On Sept. 9, President Joe Biden announced sweeping vaccine... - [Erie Times-News](#)

09-26-2021

### **[Erie County's weekly COVID-19 cases rise again, despite statewide decline](#)**

Pennsylvania's number of newly confirmed COVID-19 cases declined slightly last week. Unfortunately, that was not the case in Erie County. The county's number of cases rose for the 11th straight week, from 601 between Sept. 10-16 to 633 between Sept. 17-23, according to the... - [Erie Times-News](#)

09-26-2021

### **[A message to the unvaccinated \[letter\]](#)**

A letter to the anti-maskers and unvaccinated: COVID-19 has clearly evolved into a pandemic of the unvaccinated. I believe that some anti-vaxxers have chosen right-wing extremism and misinformation over sound medical science. You have shouted down the voices of reason and... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

09-26-2021

### **[Why mask madness is consuming school boards \[column\]](#)**

The newest battlefields in the American culture war are school board meetings. Charged by the Pennsylvania Department of Health with implementing anti-COVID-19 masking requirements, school boards are engulfed in fights between pro-mask and anti-mask forces. Some meetings have gotten downright nasty. Both in and out of the... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

09-26-2021

### **[Examining resistance to COVID-19 measures through a political science lens \[opinion\]](#)**

Perhaps the most perplexing aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic is the rabid opposition to virtually all measures intended to control the disease. Even relatively innocuous actions like wearing a mask have sparked unhinged responses from a sizable portion of the public.... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

09-26-2021

### **[Elanco students ask school board to heed mask order \[opinion\]](#)**

To the members of the Eastern Lancaster County school board: As students at Garden Spot High School, we offer our concerns about the new mask exemption policy put in place here in Elanco. As a district, we should be following what the Pennsylvania Department of Health and medical... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

09-26-2021

### **[Amid mask furor, the wrong lessons are being taught at Lancaster County school board meetings \[editorial\]](#)**

The debate over the Pennsylvania Department of Health's mask mandate for K-12 schools, early learning programs and day care centers continued last week, as Ephrata Area School District's board met Thursday night to consider whether it would join a lawsuit aimed at... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

09-26-2021

### **[Here's how many COVID-19 cases Lancaster County schools reported this week](#)**

The number of reported COVID-19 cases this week increased in at least eight Lancaster County school districts. Infection counts are rising in Cocalico, Columbia Borough, Eastern Lancaster County, Ephrata Area, Lancaster, Octorara Area, Pequea Valley and Warwick school districts. The largest week-to-week increases are happening... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

09-26-2021

### **[Elanco warns of possible shutdown, urges parents not to send sick kids to school amid COVID-19 surge](#)**

A Lancaster County school district is sounding the alarm on employee shortages fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic that, if not remedied soon, may force the entire district to periodically shut down in-person

learning. In a letter to families this week, Eastern Lancaster County Superintendent... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

- 09-26-2021 **Wolf announces vaccine milestone: 85 percent of Pa. residents over 18 have received first dose of COVID-19 vaccine**  
Gov. Tom Wolf today announced significant news with regards to the COVID-19 vaccine: 85 percent of Pennsylvanians aged 18 and older have received their first shot. "Today, the commonwealth has reached another milestone against COVID-19 and protecting ourselves and our loved ones against this deadly..." - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-26-2021 **Many Hershey Elementary School students shifted to remote learning due to COVID-19 cases**  
Many students in the Hershey Elementary School will be taking classes virtually due to the number of COVID-19 cases, the Derry Township School District said on its website. Students in grades 2-5 will move to remote instruction the week of Sept. 27, Dr. Stacy Winslow said in a note on the district's website... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-26-2021 **Nearly 28,000 school-age kids in Pa. have tested positive for COVID-19 since mid-August**  
Early in the school year, thousands of children across Pennsylvania are testing positive for COVID-19. The Pennsylvania Department of Health reports 27,782 children between the ages of 5-18 have tested positive for COVID-19 since Aug. 16. The state tallied 7,924 new cases among kids 5-18 in the most recent week data is... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 09-26-2021 **Judge won't order hospital to give ivermectin to seriously ill COVID-19 patient**  
A Delaware judge has refused to order a hospital to administer the anti-parasitic drug ivermectin to a man who is seriously ill with COVID-19... - [AP](#)
- 09-26-2021 **Lehigh Valley colleges seeing spike in COVID cases**  
College students across the Lehigh Valley have been back on campuses about one month. And while most students and faculty hope it will mark a full return to the academic and social life denied them for over a year and a half, some say they worry about being in classrooms and social events amid... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-26-2021 **LVH Cancer Institute gets a new name, thanks to gift from local businessman and his wife**  
Thanks to a "generous gift," the Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute has been renamed Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute. Local businessman Joe Topper, CrossAmerica Partners chairman, and his wife, Maureen, made the donation, which was announced Friday during a ceremony at... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-26-2021 **COVID booster shots now available for eligible people, N.J. says**  
New Jerseyans who are eligible for a Pfizer COVID booster vaccine can immediately sign up to get their shots, the Department of Health said late Friday. The announcement comes after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) made the recommendation.... - [Trenton Times](#)
- 09-26-2021 **N.J. reports 1,830 COVID cases, 20 deaths as new positive tests start to level off**  
New Jersey on Friday reported another 1,830 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 20 more confirmed deaths as new positive tests start to level off after climbing steadily for more than two months. The seven-day average for confirmed positive tests is also 1,830, down 4%... - [Trenton Times](#)
- 09-26-2021 **COVID outbreaks plague LAPD and fire agencies, data show**  
Los Angeles County health officials have identified hundreds of coronavirus outbreaks at police and fire agencies since the start of the pandemic, according to data obtained by The Times through a public records request. The outbreaks, accounting for more than 2,500 coronavirus cases, have... - [Los Angeles Times](#)
- 09-26-2021 **As COVID infections continue to decline, L.A. County approaches 26,000 deaths**  
Infections, hospitalizations and deaths related to COVID-19 have continued to decline in Los Angeles County. It's a far cry from last fall, when residents faced a new wave of coronavirus cases that led to a

huge winter surge. Despite the improvements, which officials have largely pegged to vaccination rates, an... - [Los Angeles Times](#)

09-26-2021

### **Ohio reports 5,379 new COVID-19 cases Saturday**

Here is the latest on the coronavirus pandemic in Ohio. This list will be updated after 2 p.m. each day. - [Columbus Dispatch](#)

09-26-2021

### **Just weeks into the academic year, school nurses are already stressed by COVID-19 pandemic, shortages**

On a recent day at West Towson Elementary School, there was one student with COVID symptoms waiting to be tested. Two more students were coming from the gym with shortness of breath and needed their asthma inhalers. A diabetic child had dropping blood sugar.... - [Baltimore Sun](#)

09-26-2021

### **2021 Lasker Awards Honor Work in mRNA Vaccines, Neuroscience and More**

The Lasker awards for 2021, announced Friday, were given to scientists whose work was crucial for Covid-19 vaccines, scientists who discovered how to control the firing of neurons with beams of light, and to a researcher whose influential work and leadership changed medical science.... - [New York Times](#)

09-26-2021

### **House Approves Measure to Protect Abortion Rights**

The House narrowly approved a measure on Friday intended to enact abortion rights into federal law, as Democrats sought to counter efforts at the state level to restrict abortions and growing hostility to abortion rights from the conservative-leaning Supreme Court.... - [New York Times](#)

09-26-2021

### **States Begin a Complex Booster Shot Rollout for Pfizer Recipients**

State health officials rushed on Friday to roll out campaigns to provide coronavirus booster shots for millions of vulnerable people who got the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and to help a confused public understand who qualifies for the extra shots. Among their challenges: making sure that recipients of the Moderna and... - [New York Times](#)

09-26-2021

### **Flood Insurance Costs Are Set to Skyrocket for Some**

Florida's version of the American dream, which holds that even people of relatively modest means can aspire to live near the water, depends on a few crucial components: sugar white beaches, soft ocean breezes and federal flood insurance that is heavily subsidized.... - [New York Times](#)

09-26-2021

### **How Across America, Schools Cram for Their Covid-19 Tests**

One recent Thursday, Ciara Brown, a junior at Fox Tech High School in San Antonio, stepped up to a small white table, pulled down her face mask and took a test that is still far from standard in American schools: a cotton swab up the nose. "Testing is super-easy," she said.... - [New York Times](#)

09-26-2021

### **CDC director defends decision to endorse booster shots for adults in high-risk jobs**

health ministry said it will tighten curbs to limit social gatherings to two people and make working from home a default, in a bid to contain the spike in infections and reduce pressure on the health-care system. Russia reported 828 deaths from covid-19 on Friday, above the previous... - [Washington Post](#)

09-26-2021

### **Grocery workers have borne the brunt of the pandemic. Now supermarket shootings are on the rise.**

These days, when Eddie Chavez supervises the self-checkout area at the Safeway supermarket where he works in Colorado, he swivels his head back and forth like a pendulum, keeping a constant watch on everyone who comes through the door. Chavez has worked in grocery stores for four decades, and he never used to... - [Washington Post](#)

09-26-2021

### **A vaccine mandate fractures a state fair, leaving children as 'pawns'**

About 200 miles southeast, hundreds of children instead gathered at a fairground with no rides and few spectators to show more than a thousand cows, pigs, sheep and goats in open-sided barns. It was an alternative livestock show quickly thrown together after families decided to boycott... - [Washington Post](#)

- 09-26-2021 **White House gets most of what it wants on boosters. But it also gets confusion.**  
After a month of dramatic twists and turns more suited to a soap opera than a staid federal health bureaucracy, the White House this week got much of what it hoped for: access to Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus booster shots for most adults at least six months after completing the standard two-dose... - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Food supply shortages hit school districts across Allegheny County**  
Multiple Allegheny County school districts are reporting food shortages in cafeterias due to issues in the supply chain. "Basically, the food manufacturing and distribution industry is experiencing staffing and labor shortages, and rising costs of materials and transportation," said Curtistine Walker, director of food services... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Pa. infant suffers broken bones due to father's abuse: police**  
State police arrested a Carbon County man for abusing a 5-month-old baby who arrived at the hospital with multiple broken bones. Brandon John Gombert, 25, from Beaver Meadows, is charged with aggravated assault of a victim younger than 13, endangering the welfare of a child,... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Pa. school choice advocates use desire for in-person instruction to press their agenda**  
School choice advocates are using pandemic-related school closures and quarantines to make a full-court press for Pennsylvania to launch a taxpayer-funded tuition grant program. Legislation in the state House of Representatives would provide financial help to parents of public school students to enroll their child elsewhere... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Gov. Tom Wolf's opioid disaster declaration is over, but Pennsylvania's overdose crisis is not | Editorial**  
When the Republican-controlled General Assembly refused to extend Gov. Tom Wolf's opioid disaster declaration back in August, GOP leaders promised that addressing drug overdose deaths would be a "top legislative priority" in the fall. The overdose crisis could have been a top legislative priority for a long... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-24-2021 **A professor got a heart transplant, so he wanted to teach online. His university said no.**  
Kutztown University professor Stephen Oross III got a heart transplant earlier this year. With cases of COVID-19 surging, he didn't feel safe returning to in-person teaching, and his doctors warned against it. Kutztown, a state university, requires masks but doesn't require the vaccine, so he faced... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-24-2021 **CDC Director Walensky endorses covid booster shots for adults 18 and older with chronic health issues**  
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Thursday endorsed booster shots for millions of older or otherwise vulnerable Americans, opening a major new phase in the U.S vaccination drive against covid-19... - [AP](#)
- 09-24-2021 **More funds needed for dam**  
The Altoona Water Authority on Thursday declared its intention to award a \$20.6 million low-bid contract to renovate the Bellwood dam, contingent on Pennvest lending an additional \$3.5 million. That amount would make up the difference between the estimated project cost... - [Altoona Mirror](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Erie Mayor Joe Schember reflects on successes, critics as he cruises toward 2nd term**  
Joe Schember couldn't shake the shroud of frustration that came with a nationwide, COVID-19-fueled lockdown. Erie's first-term mayor felt isolated and angry as the coronavirus pandemic began gripping the world during the spring of 2020. As stay-at-home orders and other restrictions became inevitable across the... - [Erie Times-News](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Ephrata Area votes not to join Corman's school mask lawsuit during tense, 4-hour meeting**  
"They are all coming after us." That was Ephrata Area school board member David Wissler's plea to fellow

board members during a tense, four and a half hour meeting Thursday night to discuss whether the school board should sign the school district onto a high-profile lawsuit attempting to overturn the Pennsylvania... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)

09-24-2021

### **Pennsylvania abortion access could face challenges after Texas' 6-week ban**

In the wake of a recent state law restricting abortion access in Texas, advocates and healthcare providers in Pennsylvania are warning residents about similar bills working their way through the commonwealth's legislature. "It is a terrible sign of what's to come," Sue Frietsche,... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)

09-24-2021

### **After 3 years of flat state funding, Penn State will formally request an increase this year**

After three straight years of flat funding from the state, Penn State is poised to request nearly a 6% increase in its annual state appropriation for the next fiscal year. The commonwealth's largest university received a total of \$338.9 million in each of the last three years. For the 2022-2023 fiscal year,... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)

09-24-2021

### **More Central American Children Could Rejoin Parents in the States**

An unprecedented number of unaccompanied migrant children have been placed with sponsors in states across the country this year, despite some Republican governors' attempts to block them. Now, thousands more could arrive under a new federal program aimed at providing a path for children... - [Stateline.org](#)

09-24-2021

### **State Lottery revenues hold steady in face of COVID-19 surge**

Revenue from state casinos and Limited Video Lottery parlors has remained steady during the current record surge in COVID-19 cases statewide, Lottery Commission members were advised Thursday. Lottery Director John Myers said gross revenue from the state's casinos... - [Charleston Gazette-Mail](#)

09-24-2021

### **Maryland parents dread quarantine notifications as first weeks of classes see school shut down, dances canceled**

With more than two weeks of school under their belts, Baltimore-area school districts are beginning to see COVID-19 cases emerge in larger numbers — forcing hundreds of students into quarantine and prompting systems to alter plans and cancel events. Parents have been forced to rearrange their schedules to care for kids at... - [Baltimore Sun](#)

09-24-2021

### **Just weeks into the academic year, school nurses are already stressed by COVID-19 pandemic, shortages**

On a recent day at West Towson Elementary School, there was one student with COVID symptoms waiting to be tested. Two more students were coming from the gym with shortness of breath and needed their asthma inhalers. A diabetic child had dropping blood sugar.... - [Baltimore Sun](#)

09-24-2021

### **Five things to know about the billions coming to Maryland from the American Rescue Plan**

Maryland's state and local governments have been awash in federal money to help with the response to the coronavirus pandemic. The latest is the American Rescue Plan Act, which has sent billions of dollars to Maryland over the last several months. State lawmakers were briefed Wednesday on how the process has been going on... - [Baltimore Sun](#)

09-24-2021

### **Capitol Insider: Can legislators really stop Gov. Mike DeWine from enacting mask mandate?**

Between political opponents and media analysts, the confusion is thick over just what power Gov. Mike DeWine has to issue a health order requiring Ohioans to wear masks due to the persistent COVID-19 pandemic. Bottom line: Ohio law gives him the authority to issue a mask order via the... - [Columbus Dispatch](#)

09-24-2021

### **'Ope!': Gov. Mike DeWine knocks over Ohio flag as he enters press conference**

WASHINGTON — The House on Friday is expected to vote to legalize abortion nationwide until fetal viability, and even though the legislation is almost certain to fail in the Senate, it would mark a historic victory for abortion rights supporters following a decades-long fight.... - [Columbus Dispatch](#)

- 09-24-2021 **CDC panel recommends Pfizer booster shots for seniors**  
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Thursday endorsed booster shots for millions of older or otherwise vulnerable Americans, opening a major new phase in the U.S vaccination drive against COVID-19... - [AP](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Central York's ban brings community the 'silver lining' of thousands of books**  
Hannah Shipley has had strangers in her house for hours every night this week. Others will be there all day Saturday and Sunday. They answered her plea for volunteers to help open boxes, then sort and stack the thousands of books she has received this week. People were responding to a video she put on TikTok about Central... - [York Daily](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Humane societies facing changes in operations throughout the pandemic**  
As communities have been required to adapt to COVID-19, western Pennsylvania's furry friends are also finding a new way to meet their new families. Amidst changes such as social distancing and masking, the Lawrence County and Beaver County humane societies are adapting to a new style of adoption... - [Beaver County Times](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Lackawanna County schools report more than 260 COVID-19 cases since start of school year**  
Lackawanna County schools report more than 260 COVID-19 cases since start of school year - [Scranton Times](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Area seniors and high-risk people await booster shots**  
At Sheehan's Pharmacy in Plains Twp., pharmacist Lynn McCarthy has begun administering COVID-19 vaccine booster shots for severely immunocompromised people and people undergoing chemotherapy. - [Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Minersville Area school board affirms support for mask mandate**  
Minersville Area school board affirms support for mask mandate - [Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Administrators in Hazleton unveil \$17 million spending plan for federal funds**  
The city of Hazleton will use more than \$17 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds to pay for large-scale utility and storm water upgrades, parks and playground renovations and replenishing revenue that the city lost during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a working budget that... - [Hazleton Standard-Speaker](#)
- 09-24-2021 **District hires Spanish interpreters**  
A growing number of Spanish-speaking students in the New Castle Area School District has prompted the school board to hire more translators. The board at its public work session last week discussed the hirings without names. At Monday's regular board meeting, they voted 9-0 to... - [New Castle News](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Controller: Cambria County remains in strong financial position**  
EBENSBURG, Pa. – Cambria County Controller Ed Cernic said the county continues to be in a strong financial position in presenting his financial report for 2020 to the Cambria County commissioners at their meeting Thursday. Cernic said Cambria's auditors say the county is doing "an... - [Johnstown Tribune-Democrat](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Boosters for Moderna and J.&J. Recipients Not Up for Debate at C.D.C. Panel**  
Boosters for Moderna and J.&J. Recipients Not Up for Debate at C.D.C. Panel - [New York Times](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Driver shortage causes busing crisis in Boyertown School District**  
The Boyertown School District has joined a growing number of school districts with a difficult busing problem. Students are missing buses. Buses are picking up and dropping off students at varying times. Routes are being changed without warning. Some students are spending more than 90 minutes on a bus. And some students... - [Reading Eagle](#)

- 09-24-2021 **Tempers flare at Montgomery County commissioners meeting**  
 NORRISTOWN — The trio of Montgomery County commissioners engaged in a war of words Thursday as tempers flared during their board meeting. Commissioner Joe Gale sparred with commissioners' Chairwoman Val Arkoosh and Vice Chairman Ken Lawrence Jr. on several topics.... - [Lansdale Reporter](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Parents confront MC school board over mask mandate**  
 LEWISTOWN — Mifflin County School District's Board of Directors fielded criticism from parents who said they refused to require their child to wear a mask in school, with some parents even saying they encourage their child not to wear one. During the board's meeting — held via Zoom on Thursday because at... - [Lewistown Sentinel](#)
- 09-24-2021 **House poised to pass legislation creating statutory right to abortion as battle over Texas law heats up**  
 The House is poised to pass legislation that would create a statutory right for health-care professionals to provide abortions, amid an intensifying legal battle over a Texas law that is the most restrictive in the nation. HR3755, the Women's Health Protection Act, is expected to pass the... - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Education Secretary Cardona backs mandatory coronavirus vaccinations for students**  
 Education Secretary Cardona backs mandatory coronavirus vaccinations for students - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Doctor who has lost over 100 patients to covid says some deny virus from their death beds: 'I don't believe you'**  
 Matthew Trunsky is used to people being angry at him. As a pulmonologist and director of the palliative care unit at a Beaumont Health hospital in southeastern Michigan, Trunsky sees some of the facility's sickest patients and is often the bearer of bad news.... - [Washington Post](#)
- 09-24-2021 **House to vote on bill creating statutory right to abortion as Roe v. Wade is challenged**  
 WASHINGTON — The House is voting Friday on legislation aimed at guaranteeing a woman's right to an abortion, an effort by House Democrats to circumvent a new Texas law that has placed that access under threat.... - [AP](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Kids went hungry at one Philly school this week because of staff shortages: 'It's inhumane'**  
 Children at one city school went hungry Thursday because of staff shortages hitting the Philadelphia School District and an apparent central office operational failure. No breakfast or lunch ever arrived to feed children at Mitchell Elementary in Southwest Philadelphia — and it wasn't the first time this term... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Pennsylvania coronavirus update: Case rates steady at high level as 5,071 infections recorded; vaccinations decreasing**  
 The Pennsylvania Department of Health reported 5,071 additional coronavirus cases on Friday, for a total of 32,579 cases over the past week. The weekly total translates into a seven-day moving average of 4,654 cases per day, up 2% from a week ago, and up 31% over the last 30 days.... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Delta Air Lines will charge unvaccinated workers more for health care**  
 While companies with 100 or more employees across the country are reviewing the latest order from President Joe Biden to mandate COVID-19 vaccinations or weekly testing of employees, others are taking an approach that may prove equally effective — a health insurance surcharge for the... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 09-24-2021 **BioNTech founders: Revolutionary cancer treatments are in the pipeline**  
 The doctors behind the first approved vaccine for COVID-19 are testing cancer medicines that could revolutionize treatment of a disease that has been a scourge for centuries, they said in remarks at a Downtown conference Thursday and Friday. Ozlem Tureci, who with husband Ugur Sahin co-founded German pharmaceutical... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

- 09-24-2021 **Once the one who provided comfort to mourning loved ones, a father faces burying his own 15-year-old daughter | Helen Ubiñas**  
The father rocked back and forth in the first row of Foster Memorial Baptist Church one warm July afternoon. At funerals, the front row is reserved for the family of the deceased. Over the years, Lance Gaymon, who has owned his own mortuary transport business... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Pa. congresswoman: After my partner died of suicide, mental health issues became my focus | Opinion**  
In May 2019, on what felt like an otherwise normal Saturday, the unthinkable happened when my life partner, Kerry Acker, died by suicide. When I was elected to Congress just six months earlier, I never expected that mental health issues would be a top focus of my work.... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Penn RNA pioneers snag another big prize for research that enabled COVID-19 vaccines**  
Two University of Pennsylvania scientists have scored another big award for their research on messenger RNA (mRNA), the basis for two COVID-19 vaccines that are credited with saving many thousands of lives. Katalin Karikó<sup>3</sup> and Drew Weissman are sharing one of 2021's three... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-24-2021 **COVID vaccines for young children are expected soon. Will your pediatrician have them?**  
In a matter of weeks, more than a million children ages 5 to 11 in Pennsylvania and New Jersey are expected to become eligible for vaccination, yet many pediatric offices in both states are not yet eligible to carry the COVID-19 doses. I would say we have a little over a month to make sure as many of... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Lawmakers must increase funding to support those who care for people with disabilities | Opinion**  
By Gary Blumenthal "Equal Pay for Equal Work" is one of the great social justice and worker victories of the last century and has been enshrined in PA law for 62 years and in federal law for 58 years. Sadly, it is not practiced by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania when it comes to front line... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Refuse Refusers | PennLive letters**  
Unvaccinated COVID patients are filling hospital beds and ICUs, requiring the full attention of doctors and nurses, while using valuable, specialized medical equipment and expensive medications. Meanwhile, people with other serious medical conditions are being turned away or face lengthy delays and... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Clinical trials underway on pill to treat COVID-19**  
Clinical trials that are part of an international effort to test an antiviral treatment aimed at halting COVID-19 early in its course, are currently underway. According to a report by NBC News, researchers are testing a "short-term regimen of daily pills" that when begun... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Walgreens offering the COVID-19 booster to people who are eligible**  
Walgreens said today it is offering the Pfizer COVID-19 booster shot nationwide to people who are eligible to receive it. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday authorized booster doses for people who are 65 years old and older, younger adults with underlying... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Walmart and Sam's Club offering COVID-19 booster shots to people who are eligible**  
Walmart said today it is offering the Pfizer COVID-19 booster shot to eligible patients at its stores as well as Sam's Club as supply allows. Walgreens announced this morning that it also is providing the booster vaccine. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday authorized booster doses... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 09-24-2021 **Pa. COVID-19 hospitalizations rise above 2,600 as spike continues**  
More than 2,600 COVID-19 patients are being treated in hospitals across the state, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health. On Friday, the health department's online dashboard indicated there are 2,641 COVID-19 patients in hospitals, an increase of 88 over the... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)



- 09-24-2021 **[N.Y. hospitals fear staff shortage as vaccine deadline looms](#)**  
Hospitals and nursing homes in New York are bracing for the possibility that a statewide covid-19 vaccine mandate for health care workers could lead to staff shortages when it takes effect Monday... - [AP](#)
- 09-24-2021 **[Hempfield senator set to speak at Pennsylvania March for Life](#)**  
State Sen. Kim Ward, a Hempfield Republican, is set to speak during the 2021 Pennsylvania March for Life Monday in Harrisburg. The event will be the state's first official March for Life during which participants plan to rally at the state Capitol building to... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 09-24-2021 **[CDC: Studies show masks lessen school outbreaks](#)**  
The Center for Disease Control and Prevention data from the new K-12 school year bolster the agency's recommendation for masks in schools and in-person classes... - [AP](#)
- 09-24-2021 **[UPMC: Get covid booster shot if you're eligible](#)**  
Older Americans and adults with high-risk medical conditions should get a covid booster shot if they are eligible, UPMC doctors said Friday. "We want you to have the best possible immune response," said Dr. Donald Yealy, UPMC's chief medical officer and chair of... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

Health Care Recap is a comprehensive daily report on legislative and executive actions in the Pennsylvania capitol and is compiled and edited by PLS.

For subscription information, questions or more information contact PLS at [mypls@mypls.com](mailto:mypls@mypls.com) or 717-236-6984. Thank you, Jeff, Matt Hess, Matt Hykes, Deborah, Cheryl, Aaron, Amyra, Nick, Robert, Emily, Sheri, Derek, Julie, Hattie, Sam and Aamir.

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