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## **Department of Health and County of Berks Selected to be First Pilot Site for National COVID-19 Home Test to Treat Program**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Pennsylvania Department of Health and County of Berks will be the nation's first to test a [new COVID-19 Home Test to Treat Program run by the National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#) and the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) through the U.S. Department of Human Services (HHS).

The study is designed to learn more about home test-to-treat programs and how they can be utilized as a defense against COVID-19. The pilot program will provide testing, telehealth consultations, and the delivery of anti-viral medication at zero cost to eligible community members. The criteria to participate in the program includes being at least 18 years of age, having an email address, speaking English or Spanish and consenting to participate in the pilot program.

Enrollment for residents in Berks County will begin on January 17; details on how to enroll will be available soon. Once enrolled, participants will be eligible to receive at-home rapid tests by mail. If they test positive for COVID-19, they will be invited to participate in a telehealth consultation with a medical provider and can receive, at no cost to the participant, anti-viral medication delivered directly to their home or for pick-up at a local pharmacy.

“The Department of Health is committed to creating health equity across Pennsylvania,” Acting Secretary of Health and Physician General Dr. Denise Johnson said. “The Home Test to Treat pilot program is a step toward that goal and we are excited that Berks County was chosen as the first in the nation to pilot this important program.”

As the first to pilot the program, state and local officials in Berks County are seeking to enroll 8,000 individuals in the study. The study organizers will gather information from participants and identify how the program can be improved before being implemented on a national level.

“The County of Berks is honored to be selected as the first community to pilot this nationwide program,” said Stephanie Weaver, the county's public relations officer. “Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the County has further developed partnerships within our community that allow us to implement exciting new programs like this. We

hope our residents will take advantage of these new, free resources and in turn be better prepared to detect and treat COVID-19 when it strikes.”

According to HHS, additional communities across the country will be selected to participate in the pilot based on the level of community need, access to healthcare treatment, expected COVID-19 infection rates, socio-economic factors, and local capability to support the program. Nationwide, the pilot program aims to enroll approximately 100,000 people across the United States.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Mark O’Neill, DOH, [ra-dhpressoffice@pa.gov](mailto:ra-dhpressoffice@pa.gov)  
Stephanie Weaver, County of Berks, 610-478-6136 x6112,  
[sweaver@countyofberks.com](mailto:sweaver@countyofberks.com)

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