PA UNITES AGAINST COVID

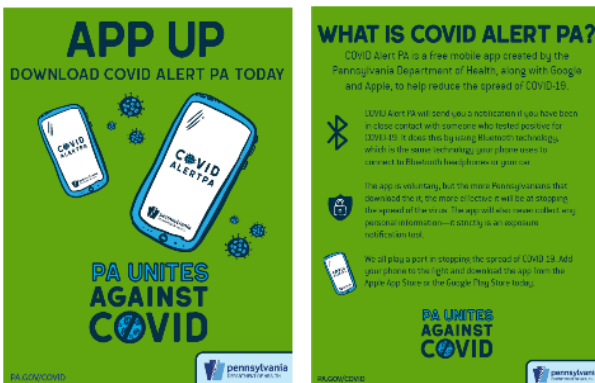# COVID ALERT PA TOOLKIT

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

TOOLKIT CONTENTS

In this document, you will find COVID Alert PA communications materials and detailed information about the app, including:

Additional marketing materials are available for download on the Community Resources page on pa.gov/COVID. These items include:

Poster & Infographic

Postcards & Stickers

COVID Alert PA videos by Dr. Levine

Social Media Toolkit
(with sample posts & graphics)

What is COVID Alert PA? Fact Sheet

Background

As COVID-19 continues to impact Pennsylvanians across the state, the Pennsylvania Department of Health is adding another tool to help slow the spread of the virus and protect residents. COVID Alert PA is a free mobile app that uses Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology and the Exposure Notification System developed by Apple and Google to help notify and give public health guidance to anyone who may have been in close contact with another person with the app who later tested positive for COVID-19. We all play a part in fighting this virus. The more people who download COVID Alert PA, the better the results will be. Let's unite together to stop the spread of COVID-19 and download COVID Alert PA today.

How does COVID Alert PA app work?

COVID Alert PA app uses Exposure Notification System technology developed by Apple and Google. When someone receives a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, they will receive a call from the Department of Health or their county or municipal health department within 24-72 hours. If the individual has the app on their phone, the public health representative will ask if they are willing to accept a six-digit validation code from the department during that call.

If the individual agrees and enters the six-digit code in the app, they are given the option to upload the last 14 days of the random Bluetooth interactions with other app users who have been in close contact with them (for example, those who have been within six feet for more than 15 minutes). If there is a match, then the app will notify the individuals to let them know they came in close contact with someone who was diagnosed with COVID-19. This is called an exposure alert.

Who should download COVID Alert PA?

The app is voluntary, but the more Pennsylvanians that adopt the app, the more effective it will be at stopping the spread of COVID-19. Local communities, groups and organizations can utilize the app to help ensure people are notified when they have been in close contact with someone who later tested positive, so they can take steps to protect themselves and others. We encourage Pennsylvanians who are 18 and older with a smartphone to unite against COVID-19 by downloading the app.

Will the app track my location or collect personal information?

The app does not collect or use any identity, use GPS or location information. The app was designed to be completely anonymous to protect user privacy and security. The Exposure Notification System works by using Bluetooth Low Energy, which allows phones with the app to recognize when they are close to another phone with the app. Proximity distance and time are the only thing detected between phones, not location.

The department does not have any access to any user's personal information, nor will they know the identity of the app users who receive alerts.

What data will the department collect through the app?

The department only has access to summary statistics from the symptom check-in feature on the app, such as the age range of users who have chosen to use the symptom check-in. The department also collects in-app performance metrics, such as the number of mobile app downloads and deletions, app crashes, and the number of exposure alerts that have been sent.

If users choose to use the symptom check-in feature, they have the option of anonymously sharing symptom and demographic information, such as race and county of residence. Additionally, if an app user chooses to use the "call back" feature when they receive an alert, then they can send their phone number to the department to receive a phone call from a public health representative. You can view the full Data and Privacy Policy on pa.gov/covid.

Resources for more information

For more information on COVID Alert PA, Frequently Asked Questions, and the full Data & Privacy Statement, visit pa.gov/covid.

**If you have any questions about the COVID Alert PA app,
contact us at ra-dh-covidapp@pa.gov.**

Draft Emails to Stakeholders

Long Request Email

Dear [organization or stakeholder name],

The Pennsylvania Department of Health, along with Apple and Google, just launched **COVID Alert PA**. (You may have seen some news coverage about it over the last month.) It's a new exposure notification mobile app. It is now available to download for free at the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

The app is an effective new tool, but we need your help getting it in the hands of Pennsylvanians. The first 72 hours after launch are the most important. We need help getting the word out – and downloads up – between today and Friday (Sept. 25).

Can you (and your Communications team) help us? We have an extensive catalog of marketing materials, including posters, social media posts, press releases, and other customizable content and we would love to discuss ways we can work together to get the word out.

COVID Alert PA is a free mobile app using Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology and the Exposure Notification System developed by Apple and Google. Features include:

- Interactive COVID-19 symptom checker
- Opt-in for alerts for potential exposures to the virus
- Updates on the latest public health data about COVID-19 in PA
- Advice for what to do if you have a potential exposure to COVID-19

COVID Alert PA protects both privacy and personal information. The app does not use GPS, location services, or any movement or geographical information. It will never collect, transmit, or store personal information. It is completely anonymous.

Someone from our team will be reaching out this week to answer any questions and provide more information.

Thank you in advance for helping to get the word out to your employees, customers, family, friends, and neighbors. With your encouragement, I'm sure we'll see strong download results. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,
[Name of Sender]

Short Request Email

Dear [organization or stakeholder name],

The Pennsylvania Department of Health, along with Apple and Google, just launched **COVID Alert PA**. (You may have seen some news coverage about it over the last month.) It's a new exposure notification mobile app. It is now available to download for free at the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

The app is an effective new tool, but we need your help getting it in the hands of Pennsylvanians. The first 72 hours after launch are the most important. We need help getting the word out – and downloads up – between today and next Friday (Sept. 25).

Can you (and your Communications team) help us? We have an extensive catalog of marketing materials, including posters, social media posts, press releases, and other customizable content and we would love to discuss ways we can work together to get the word out.

Someone from our team will be reaching out this week to answer any questions and provide more information.

With your encouragement, I'm sure we'll see strong download results. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

[Name of Sender]

Draft Media Advisory

(Your Logo Goes Here)

FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY
Month Date, 2020

(Insert Your Company Here) to Outline COVID-19 Mitigation Initiatives, Encourage (Your Audience) to Download COVID Alert PA App

City, PA – Tomorrow, (Your Organization) will outline their commitment to stopping the spread of COVID-19 and will encourage (your audience *i.e. students, faculty, residents, staff, etc.)* to download Pennsylvania's exposure notification mobile app, COVID Alert PA, in order to unite against COVID-19 in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health launched COVID Alert PA that uses Exposure Notification System technology developed by Apple and Google. The app can detect if a user has been in close contact with another user who later tested positive for COVID-19 and will send a push notification to your phone called a "COVID-19 Exposure Alert."

WHAT: (Your Organization) unites against COVID-19 by encouraging (your audience) to download COVID Alert PA by (insert your event, efforts to encourage downloads).

WHEN: (Insert Day of the Week, Month and Date; Time)
WHERE: (Insert location here)
DETAILS FOR PRESS: Please RSVP to Name *(if applicable)* at insert contact information here to ensure all social distancing measures are in place during the event.

(To ensure safe social distancing measures can be implemented, we recommend encouraging reporters to RSVP to attend your event(s).

MEDIA CONTACT: Your Media Contact, Your Organization – An email/phone number to contact said person

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Draft Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Month Date, 2020

(Insert Your Company Here) Unites Against COVID-19, Encourages (Your Audience) to Download the COVID Alert PA App

City, PA – (Your Organization) today announced their commitment to unite against the spread of COVID-19 in Pennsylvania by encouraging (your audience *i.e. students, faculty, residents, staff, etc.)* to download the exposure notification mobile app, COVID Alert PA. This app is available to smartphone users to download for free from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store so they can use their phone as a tool to fight the spread of this virus. COVID Alert PA is available in English and Spanish.

(Insert a quote from your leadership here)

The Pennsylvania Department of Health launched COVID Alert PA, which uses Exposure Notification System technology developed by Apple and Google. The app can detect if you have been in close contact with another user who later tested positive for COVID-19 and will send a push notification to your phone called a "COVID-19 Exposure Alert." If you tap on the notification, you will be given public health guidance on what to do next.

In addition, the app will provide users with the latest information on COVID-19 in Pennsylvania from the department's data dashboard.

The app does not enable any location services and is designed to be completely anonymous. The Exposure Notification System uses Bluetooth Low Energy, which allows phones with the app to recognize when it is close to another phone. Proximity and time is the only thing detected between phones, not location. This technology is the same technology that connects your phone to your wireless Bluetooth headphones, or your car.

"We are proud to offer another tool in our toolbelt to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in your community and across Pennsylvania," said Dr. Rachel Levine, Secretary of Health for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. "COVID Alert PA will not track your location or collect any personal information from you – it is simply an exposure notification tool and resource to get information right at your fingertips. The app uses Bluetooth technology to send a notification if someone has been in close contact with an individual who has

COVID-19, so as more people within our community download the app, the more successful it will be to stop COVID-19 in its tracks."

(Include any efforts you are doing to support the app encouraging your public to download)

COVID Alert PA helps support traditional contact tracing processes the Department of Health is already using. When a person tests positive for COVID-19, a public health representative from the Department of Health or local county or municipal health department contacts that individual to discuss their diagnosis, learn how they are feeling and understand who may have been exposed to them.

During that conversation, the public health representative will ask if the person has the COVID Alert PA app. If they do, the public health representative will offer to provide the individual with a unique six-digit validation code to enter into the app. Once this step is completed, the individual has the option to upload the last 14 days of random Bluetooth interactions with other app users who have been in close contact with them. If there is a match, then the app will notify the other individuals to let them know they came in close contact with someone who was diagnosed with COVID-19. This Exposure Alert does not reveal the identity of the COVID-19 positive individual or their whereabouts.

It is important to remember that the Pennsylvania Department of Health nor (your organization) will not know the identity of app users who receive alerts. The Department of Health is only informed of the total number of exposure notifications generated on any given date.

You can find the COVID Alert PA app in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store for free. COVID Alert PA is available in English and Spanish. This app is voluntary, but the more Pennsylvanians age 18 and older who adopt the app, the more successful it will be at stopping COVID-19.

COVID Alert PA is a partnership with Delaware along with NearForm, University of Pennsylvania's Center for Health Incentives and Behavioral Economics and Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Lincoln Laboratory, Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and Internet Privacy Research Institute. Pennsylvania and other states have collaborated with Association of Public Health Laboratories which allows for residents from other states to receive exposure notifications if they come in contact with a resident from one of those four states who has their respective state's mobile app without having to download another app when traveling between states.

Pennsylvanians play an important role in helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.

- Clean surfaces frequently.
- Stay home to avoid spreading COVID-19, especially if you are unwell.
- Wear a mask when in a business or where it is difficult to maintain proper social distancing whenever you leave the house.
- Download the COVID Alert PA app today.

All Pennsylvania residents are encouraged to sign up for AlertPA, a text notification system for health, weather, and other important alerts like COVID-19 updates from commonwealth agencies. Residents can sign up online at www.ready.pa.gov/BeInformed/Signup-For-Alerts.

MEDIA CONTACT: Your Media Contact, Your Organization – An email/phone number to contact said person

For media inquiries specifically relating to COVID Alert PA, please contact Nate Wardle, Department of Health – ra-dhpressoffice@pa.gov

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COVID Alert PA Frequently Asked Questions

What is COVID Alert PA app?

COVID Alert PA is a free mobile app offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Health that is designed to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. The App uses Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology and the Exposure Notification System developed by the Apple and Google to help notify and give public health guidance to anyone who may have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

How does the app work?

The app uses Exposure Notification System technology developed by Apple and Google. If an App user is too close for too long to someone (who also uses the app on their phone) who later receives a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, they will receive a call from the Department of Health or County and Municipal Health Department within 24-72 hours. The public health representatives will ask if the positive COVID-19 individual is willing to accept a 6-digit validation code from the DOH. If the individual agrees and enters the 6 digit code in the app, they are given the option to upload the last 14 days of the random Bluetooth interactions with other app users who have been in close contact with them (for example, within six feet for more than fifteen minutes). If there is a match, then the app will notify the individuals to let them know they came in close contact with someone who was diagnosed with COVID-19. This is called an Exposure Alert or a Close Contact Alert. The app never collects or reveals the identity of any person using the app, and never reveals who has been diagnosed as positive for COVID-19. For more information, we recommend watching this video.

How can Exposure Notifications help reduce the spread of COVID-19?

Existing traditional contact tracing processes rely on a positive individual to remember and name who they have been in contact with recently, and for how long. In many cases, positive COVID-19 individuals may not even know the people they were in close contact with (for example, if the contact happened on a bus or train, at a check-out line in a grocery store, a restaurant or some other public venue). This technology can help support traditional contact tracing efforts by notifying more people who have been in close contact with a positive COVID-19 individual at a faster rate. The app supplements traditional contact tracing processes and help stop the rapid spread of COVID-19.

What is traditional contact tracing?

All positive COVID-19 test results are required to be reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Within 24-72 hours of receiving the positive result, trained public health staff conduct an interview with the positive individual to obtain a list of close contacts they had while infectious. Cases are considered to be infectious beginning two days before onset of symptoms or two days before the date of the positive result if the person did not have symptoms. The cases are encouraged to utilize calendars, social media, etc. to remember where and who they were around during their infectious

period. During the interview, the public health staff attempt to obtain as much information as possible on the contacts (address, phone, email, etc.) and then share the contact information with the designated contact tracers. Contact tracers reach out to educate, inform and support those who had a known close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual through phone calls, texts, emails and mailings. To protect patient privacy, close contacts are only informed that they may have been exposed to an individual with COVID-19. The identity of the individual who tested positive for COVID-19 is never shared.

Do I have to use the app?

No. Download and use of the app is voluntary and you may choose to install or uninstall the app at any time.

Will the COVID Alert PA app be available for free?

Yes, the app is available for free.

Who should download the COVID Alert PA app?

This app is voluntary, but the more Pennsylvanians that adopt the app, the more effective it will be at stopping the spread of COVID. Local communities, groups, and organizations can utilize the app to help ensure people are notified when they have been in close contact with someone who tested positive, so they can take steps to protect themselves and others. We encourage Pennsylvanians who are 18 and older with a smartphone to unite against COVID by downloading the app when it is made available in September.

How can I download the app?

You can download it from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

Does the app use or collect any information that can identify me or my location?

No. The app does not collect, use, or store any identity or location information. The app was designed to protect user privacy and security by ensuring users remain completely anonymous.

How does the app ensure my location is not disclosed to other app users or to the Department of Health?

No location data is used or collected in the app. The Exposure Notification Systems works through using Bluetooth Low Energy, which allows phones with the app to recognize when it is close to another phone with the app. Proximity (closeness) is the only thing detected between phones, not location.

Could someone falsely tell the app that they have tested positive for COVID-19?

No. The only way for someone with a positive COVID test result to upload their Bluetooth keys is by entering a unique 6-digit code provided by a Public Health Representative.

How do I get notified if I have been in close contact with another user who has tested positive for COVID-19?

If the app detects that you have been in close contact with another user who has tested positive for COVID-19, you will receive a push notification on your phone named as a COVID-19 Exposure Alert. If one taps on the notification along with guidance on what to do next.

Do I need to be connected to Wi-Fi or a cellular data connection to receive exposure alert notifications?

The app does not rely on WiFi or cellular data to anonymously determine how close you were to other users and for how long. However, in order to receive exposure alerts, the app does need WiFi or cellular data for at least part of the day. Additionally, if you test positive for COVID-19 and receive a 6-digit code, you will need WiFi or cellular data to submit your code to upload your Random IDs.

What languages are supported in the app?

The app currently supports English and Spanish.

Does the app work outside the state of Pennsylvania?

Yes, the app will continue to exchange anonymous Bluetooth keys with other app users wherever you are, including outside of Pennsylvania. The Exposure Notification System will only work if the state that you are traveling to also has an exposure notification mobile app interoperable through Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL).

Do I always need to leave COVID Alert open for the app to work?

No. The app will run in the background when it is not open. You will need to make sure the app is installed, and exposure notification service has been enabled in order for the app to work.

Do I always need to keep Bluetooth turned on for the app to work?

Yes. Bluetooth must always be turned on for the Exposure Notification System to detect how close you are to other app users.

Will the app drain my battery?

No. The app uses Bluetooth Low Energy which is designed to have minimal impact on battery life. You should not see a significant change in phone battery consumption.

Will the app use a lot of my data storage space?

No. The app itself occupies around 14 MB space. Your phone only records the random Bluetooth IDs of other phones when they are within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer. The volume of data need for this is very small and should not make a noticeable difference in your data usage given the data storage capacities of most phones.

Will the app work on iPads or Tablets?

No, the app does not work on iPads or Tablets.

What phones can support this app?

iPhone users can use the app if they have iOS version 13.5 or above. The following iPhones can support iOS 13.5: 11, 11 Pro Max, XR, XS, XS Max, X, SE (2nd generation), 8, 8 Plus, 7, 7 Plus, 6s, 6s Plus, SE (1st generation).

Android users can use the app if your phone supports Bluetooth Low Energy and Android Version 6 (API 23) or above.

Does the app know when a user is close to another user, but they are separated by a wall?

A wall between app users would lessen the strength of the signal between the two phones, but it still may be possible to have enough signal strength for a notification to occur. This depends on the material and structure of the wall.

How does the app determine who is a COVID-19 positive case?

When a person tests positive for COVID-19, a public health representative from the PA Department of Health or local county or municipal health department contacts that individual to discuss their diagnosis, learn how they are feeling and understand who may have been exposed to the them. During that conversation, the public health representative will ask if the person has the COVID Alert PA app. If they do, they will offer to provide them with a unique 6-digit validation code to upload their random Bluetooth IDs after which exposure alerts will go out to all the other app users that they may have been in close contact.

The app will send an exposure notification to anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. What counts as a close contact?

Close contact is defined as within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes, per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. COVID Alert PA app has used this close contact to define thresholds of time and distance. To approximate distance, the system compares the Bluetooth signal strength between the two devices in contact. The closer the devices are, the higher the signal strength recorded. This signal strength can vary

significantly based on factors like how the device is being held and as such this only provides an estimate of distance.

What should I do if I receive an alert telling me I have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

If you receive a notification from the app saying that you have been in contact with a COVID-19 positive individual, we won't know if you will develop COVID-19, so the app will provide public health guidance for how to help yourself and protect others. You can also view this guidance on the "Exposure Alert" page. Additionally, the app also provides an option to request a call back from a public health representative if the individual wants to discuss further.

Can I still go to work or school if have received a message saying I have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

Individuals who came in close contact with someone who tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19 should stay at home and self-quarantine for 14 days since their last close contact exposure. Please also let your employer, school or university know you received a notification from the app and consult a health care provider for additional guidance.

If someone gets an alert through the app saying that they had a close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, does the PA Department of Health know the identity of the person who received the alert?

No. The Department of Health does not know the identity of app users who receive alerts. The Department of Health will only see the number of exposure notifications generated on any given date. If an app user chooses to the use the "call back" feature when they receive an alert, then they can enter their phone number to receive a phone call from the Department of Health. At that point, they can choose to voluntarily disclose that they have received an alert because they wish to discuss next steps further. This is an optional feature given to app users who receive an exposure notification alert and want to talk to a public health representative. This is only activated if you enter your phone number and ask for a call back.

What data does the PA Department of Health collect from the app?

The Department of Health has access to summary statistics from the symptom check-in, such as the age range of users who have chosen to use the symptom check-in, and as well as access to in-app performance metrics, such as number of mobile app downloads and deletions, and the number of exposure alerts that have been sent. The app does not collect, use, or store any personal identifiable information, and therefore the PA Department of Health does not have any access to users' personal data. If an app user chooses to the use the "call back" feature when they receive an alert, then

they can send their phone number to PA Department of Health to receive a phone call from a public health representative. Please see Data and Privacy Policy.

Why am I asked to activate geo-location to use the app on an Android smartphone? Does it mean that the app has access to my location?

No, COVID Alert has absolutely no access to any location data. In fact, Google prevents apps using their Exposure Notification System from being published to the play store if they attempt to use location data. On phones running Android 6.0 to 10, the Exposure Notifications System uses Bluetooth scanning. For Bluetooth scanning to work, the device location setting needs to be turned on for all apps, not just apps using the Exposure Notifications System. There are several ways you can manage your privacy with this system. You can read more here. On Android version 11, the Exposure Notifications System does not require the phone's Location setting to be on. Learn how to check and update your Android version. The app isn't authorized to access any geo location data (including GPS data). Therefore, it does not and cannot know where you are.

What scams should Pennsylvanians be aware of?

Public health representatives from DOH or your county or municipal health department will never:

- Ask for bank account number, credit card number or SSN information,

- Send text messages with website links to click on, or

- Ask you to pay for COVID-19 testing over the phone or via text.

Will location data be used in the contact tracing case investigation process? For example, will the app be able to say someone was at a restaurant within 14 days of symptoms?

No. The app does not enable any location services and does not collect any location information, and it cannot identify anyone. Therefore, it cannot say if anyone was at a particular location with or without symptoms.

The app is giving me an error message. What should I do?

Send us an email to RA-DH-COVIDAPP@pa.gov.

Who is making the COVID Alert PA app?

The department partnered with NearForm to develop an App. University of Pennsylvania's Center for Health Incentives and Behavioral Economics and MIT's Lincoln Laboratory, Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) and Internet Privacy Research Institute (PRI) have partnered to evaluate and assess the development and deployment of the mobile app.

Do Pennsylvanians need to download the app of other states if they travel to another state?

Pennsylvania is working with Delaware, New Jersey and New York as we launch state specific mobile apps. This is to ensure the apps will work across state lines. This means that someone from Pennsylvania who visits New York, would not need to download New York's app.

How do we know this app will be successful?

The Department of Health carefully evaluated app concepts while collaborating with academic institutions and engaging in conversations with industry professionals and other states and countries to ensure a robust, comprehensive app was chosen. Furthermore, the app underwent testing and piloting to find and solve any potential problems before making the app available statewide. As with other public health tools (such as masks), the degree of success the app will have is dependent on people making the choice to use it and unite against COVID.

Would this technology work if one has downloaded the app and the other person has not?

No, the technology only works if others have downloaded the app. We ask Pennsylvanians to unite against COVID and download the app this September.

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