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## **COUNTY LEADERS URGE RESIDENTS TO ACT NOW TO SLOW THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS TO PROTECT RESIDENTS AND INSTITUTIONS AND KEEP BUTLER COUNTY OPEN**

BUTLER, PA --- County leaders in government, health care, business and education urgently call on residents to help slow the spread of COVID-19. With rapidly increasing COVID related hospital admissions and nursing home outbreaks, leaders are calling on the community for help.

According to Steven Bicehouse, Director of Emergency Management for Butler County, the County continues its weekly call with school districts, hospital officials, aging, human services and the Commissioners that have been underway since March. On this week's call, leaders overwhelmingly agreed that an urgent call to action was needed as institutions and businesses begin to see challenges in staffing. They agreed to join forces in an advertising and messaging campaign pleading with residents to wear a mask and avoid large gatherings or activities where masking and social distancing is not possible.

Their collective message is as follows:

**WEAR YOUR MASK! AVOID LARGE GATHERINGS! BUTLER COUNTY FOUGHT HARD TO PROTECT OUR HEALTH SYSTEM, KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE IN SCHOOL, PROTECT OUR VULNERABLE SENIORS, AND KEEP OUR BUSINESSES OPEN AND OUR WORKFORCE HEALTHY! BUT WE ARE SEEING THE VIRUS GET AHEAD OF US. WE CAN'T STOP NOW! AGAIN, WEAR YOUR MASK. WASH YOUR HANDS. CLEAN SURFACES. KEEP 6 FEET APART. AVOID NON-CRITICAL ACTIVITIES WHERE SOCIAL DISTANCING OR MASKING IS NOT POSSIBLE. ONLY YOU CAN KEEP BUTLER COUNTY OPEN NOW!**

The message highlights a growing concern that with the number of people either testing positive or having to quarantine because of exposure, staffing in institutions, schools and businesses is becoming a challenge. Leaders hope to avoid future widespread closures due to lack of staffing. Other challenges are related to league sports that are unaffiliated with schools. As schools limit sports activities while outside organizations continue to practice and play, the message and the goal of limiting quarantining and spread is hindered. The goal is to slow the spread by Thanksgiving so that schools can resume some level of in-person instruction and nursing homes may get outbreaks among vulnerable populations under control. The next several weeks are critical. Municipalities, school boards, health care organizations and businesses have been asked to join in the messaging campaign by adopting resolutions or sharing the message.

Nationwide, the level of transmission is rising. Officials recognize the virus fatigue that has led the community to let down its guard. They call on the community to take proactive measures voluntarily to avoid any mandatory interventions.