

# What coronavirus questions do you have? Now's the time

The Bethlehem Gadfly coronavirus April 14,

 Latest in a series of posts on the coronavirus 

## ***Press release*** ***Mayor to Answer Questions from the Public*** ***Monday, April 13***

### ***Now through noon Wednesday:***

*The public can submit questions through email at [askthemayor@bethlehem-pa.gov](mailto:askthemayor@bethlehem-pa.gov) until noon Wednesday, April 15, 2020.*

### ***Thursday:***

*Mayor Bob Donchez and Department Heads will respond to written questions submitted by the public on Thursday, April 16, 2020.*

### ***Friday:***

*The video response will be able to be viewed on the City's website at [www.bethlehem-pa.gov](http://www.bethlehem-pa.gov) and other social media sites at noon on Friday April 17, 2020.*

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## **1) How about nursing homes?**

Last Thursday (April 9) and last Friday (April 10) Rachel Maddow made a compelling case that we should look carefully at our local nursing homes.

Google tells me we have 7: Cedarbrook, Holy Family, Country Meadows, Manorcare, Blough, Good Shepherd, Moravian Village.

The virus, of course, crashed into our consciousness with that senior facility in Washington.

Rachel's point Thursday April 9 was that we have to look for local news coverage to find out where things are at their worst. She bets that you'll

find at least one bad case — desperate case, where the situation is seemingly out of control — in a local senior facility.

*“The crisis of coronavirus ripping through American nursing homes and American long-term nursing care facilities — that is everywhere, that is ubiquitous.”*

*“The crisis in nursing homes and long-time care facilities will account for a huge swath of the American death toll unless something is done to address this systematically.”*

*“The most acute crisis for the most vulnerable people.”*

<https://youtu.be/8BprJvnXmkc>

Our local news tells us [Genesis Healthcare, Lower Macungie](#), is the bad case Rachel said we would find: 7 dead, 53 residents testing positive, 26 staff testing positive, as of two days ago. That number doubled from the number 4 days before that.

And that’s following Dept of Health directives “to the letter.”

So here are some questions:

*What’s the situation with our city nursing homes? Are any of our cases associated with the nursing homes? Is there any special plan, program, or monitoring involving them?*

(Rachel recommended [this web site](#). Tracks all counties in America. Lehigh and Northampton counties are “red” counties on the map — considered high number of cases.)

## **2) More on the ethnic breakdown?**

See [Councilwoman Negron’s powerful post](#) from 5-6 days ago.

Much of the news last week was how disproportionate the number of cases was between white and people of color and lower economic classes.

Director Wenrich gave some statistics, but Gadfly was not clear on them. One listing did not seem to include Hispanics.

So other questions:

*Can you elaborate more on the impact in the Hispanic community? Bethlehem population is about 30% Hispanic — what's the proportion of Hispanics among the reported number of cases? Is information and instructions about treatment and other services available in Spanish? Are we reaching out to a community that may not be familiar with services or that might be worried about cost? Is there anything more we need do?*

### **3) More on reporting procedures?**

Bethlehem had 222 cases as of April 8:

*How is that number arrived at? Only people who went to the hospital? Only ones tested? Do doctors report cases they think are coronavirus but for which people self-treat at home?*

### **4) The status at hospitals?**

*Describe the situations at local hospitals: how are they doing for staff, equipment, gear so far? Beds? Can you give metrics? Is there an adjective that describes their situation?*

What questions are you thinking about?