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**EDITORS:** The following is for immediate release. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Brain, Public Information Officer at 484-798-8710, or Rich Wisniewski, Communications Coordinator at 856-981-9622.

## **Restore Chester County survey reveals community confidence level in returning to summer and fall events and activities**

*COVID-19 vaccine, safety measures and social distancing significantly contribute to comfort level for dining, activities and events.*

**WEST CHESTER, PA\_** With the lifting of many PA COVID-19 restrictions taking place next week, the results of the Restore Chester County survey reveal that vaccination status, safety measures and social distancing will continue to play a major role in individuals' confidence to take part in community events and activities, and to return to restaurant dining.

### **Outdoor v. indoor preference**

The preference for outdoor events, activities and dining far outweigh indoor settings, according to the survey. Findings of the Restore Chester County Survey indicate that seven out of 10 respondents (72%) are very likely to eat outdoors at a restaurant, while less than half (44%) indicated they were very likely to eat indoors at a restaurant. Over half (54%) of survey respondents noted that they were very likely to attend an outdoor community event, compared with just one quarter (25%) who said they were very likely to attend an indoor community event.

### **Vaccination status**

Nearly six out of 10 (59%) respondents strongly agree that their personal or their household's vaccine status impacts their comfort level, and in survey comments, those with small children indicated a continued level of caution until their children can be vaccinated.

When asked what vaccine percentage rate for the whole of Chester County would improve comfort level for participation in summer and fall activities, the average answer of all respondents was 70% fully vaccinated.

Chester County leads the state in COVID-19 vaccination rates with 80% of all eligible people (age 12 and above) currently either partially or fully vaccinated. County Health Officials estimate that a minimum of 70% of all residents in Chester County age 18 and over will be fully vaccinated by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

“While restaurants and bars, retail and other small businesses, community organizations and municipalities are being given the ‘go-ahead’ to open at full capacity and to hold in-person events, the success of these endeavors are totally reliant on whether or not the public is prepared to ‘go back to normal’,” said Ernie Holling, Executive Director of the Chester County Association of Township Officials and member of the Restore Chester County committee.

The Restore Chester County survey was created by members of the Chester County Commissioners' COVID-19 Business Task Force, a group that represents Chester County's business, economic, education and government leadership. Full results of the survey are being analyzed, to provide specific guidance to the 21 industry sectors that are identified in the [Restore Chester County](#) program, and that guidance will be added to the Restore Chester County website in the coming days.

Restore Chester County has served as an online toolkit for businesses, organizations and county residents since the County began gradually re-opening last year. Its purpose is to focus on best practices for reopening and restoring Chester County's quality of place.

Beth Harper Briglia, Chester County Community Foundation Vice-President of Philanthropy Services said, "Alongside the lifting of social distancing and masking measures, and allowances for greater capacity that the state is introducing, the findings of this survey help us to understand the hesitations that people have right now as a result of the pandemic.

"Feedback on things such as preference for outdoor v. indoor locations, and desire for more people to be vaccinated, helps to determine when and where to hold events, how easy or difficult it might be to get volunteers to help with events, what the comfort level is in wearing masks, and participating in sporting activities or summer camps."

Chester County's travel and tourism industry can take heart that 73% of survey respondents noted they are likely to go on a "day trip" within Chester County, and 16% are likely to take an overnight trip in Chester County.

"With this information, our many attractions, hotels and restaurants can promote the wealth of 'staycation' opportunities that there are all around the county, even as they begin to market themselves to visitors from other areas of the region and beyond," said Susan Hamley, Executive Director of the Chester County Conference & Visitor's Bureau.

The Restore Chester County survey was open from April 23 to May 14, and attracted 5,286 responses. Ten percent of respondents were up to age 34, and the remaining 90% were equally represented from age 35 onwards. For more information about Restore Chester County, go to [www.restorechestercounty.org](http://www.restorechestercounty.org).

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