In line with its mission as a public health safety net, and with no start-up funding, but with a spirit of serving the community, the Poison Control Center at CHOP (PCC) expanded its existing infrastructure to build a free, 24/7 Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline (GPCH) to respond to questions about COVID-19.

The PCC's previous emergency preparedness planning allowed them to act swiftly and open a fully operating hotline within a week of receiving the green light form the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. On March 13th, 2020, the Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline officially began fielding calls from people who were feeling sick, were seeking medical care or testing, or just needed a problem solver.

While the PCC phone system could handle the surge of calls, they needed staffing assistance. CHOP Residents, nurses and ancillary clinical staff, along with dedicated local medical students, came to help. After a few weeks, over 300 CHOP employees were trained by PCC staff to triage callers to appropriate care. CHOP Social Workers jumped in to handle social services questions, like child or elder abuse reporting, access to food, behavioral health care needs, or filing for unemployment.

Drs. Kevin Osterhoudt and Jeanette Trella lead their clinical and operational team by keeping clinical and social resources up-to-date, advocating for the Helpline within and beyond the walls at CHOP, monitoring data trends, and updating our telephonic infrastructures.

In its first two months of operation, the Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline served nearly 20,000 individuals and their expansive variety of needs. This report aims to tell the story of the experience of the Helpline and the needs that were shared by the city of Philadelphia.

"The best tool we have to fight back against COVID-19 is information. The Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline has been a critical component of Philadelphia's efforts to flatten the curve, and we couldn't be more appreciative."

DR. THOMAS FARLEY
HEALTH COMMISSIONER, PHILADELPHIA

GREATER PHILADELPHIA CORONAVIRUS HELPLINE
Call Activity Report, March 1st - April 30th, 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The arrival of the coronavirus pandemic led to a public need for a never-ending stream of health and safety advice.

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Call Volume

18,488*

In the first month, daily call volume for the Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline far exceeded the volume of the Poison Control Center hotline. The GPCH operates under a second phone number to ensure uninterrupted service at both lines.

Peak call volume was reached on March 16th, 2020, when the GPCH received nearly 2,000 calls.

It is interesting to note the weekend variance experienced by the Coronavirus Helpline is not as appreciable with the Poison Center Helpline.

*First 49 days

Poison Control Center and Coronavirus Helpline* Call Activity

*Created on 3/10

 Calls by county

69% of call volume came from Philadelphia county, followed by Delaware county, Chester county, non-PA "other" counties, Montgomery county, and Bucks county.

A breakdown by Philadelphia county zip code is featured on page 4 of this report.
**Call scenario**

- Caller reassured, provided health information, and counseled on prevention strategies: 10,510
- Caller was asking about a business closure/regulation: 1,954
- The caller met criteria to be tested, referred to the Health Department for testing: 1,569
- The caller met criteria to be tested, so referred to their primary care physician: 1,486
- Caller was provided information about testing sites (e.g., Citizen’s Bank Park, Urgent Care, Rite Aid, Health Center, etc): 1,122
- New Jersey callers requested testing information. (Also applies to other out-of-state callers): 483
- Caller was provided information for social services or community benefit related-needs: 474
- Caller was referred to hospital/911 for concerning symptoms: 380
- The caller had additional emotional or mental health needs: 29

**CALL MANAGEMENT SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>14,022</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relative</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCP</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same address</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Philadelphia calls by zip code

Top zip codes by call volume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zip Code</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Call Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19104</td>
<td>&quot;CHOP&quot;*</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19111</td>
<td>Fox Chase</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19124</td>
<td>Frankford</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19140</td>
<td>Tioga</td>
<td>431</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Richmond</td>
<td>420</td>
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<tr>
<td>19143</td>
<td>Kingsessing</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19120</td>
<td>Olney</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19146</td>
<td>&quot;CHOP&quot;*</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19149</td>
<td>Oxford Circle</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19148</td>
<td>Pennsport</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19145</td>
<td>Girard Estates</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19144</td>
<td>Germantown</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The 19104 and 19146 zip codes are over-estimated in this data.

Early electronic database constructs led these "CHOP"-related zip codes being entered rather than the callers’ Philadelphia zip codes.
In summary

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic brought confusion and fear to the greater Philadelphia region.

The Poison Control Center at CHOP mobilized an incredible response to be a trusted public health safety net for COVID-19 concerns.

The Poison Control Center, already victim of a more than 40% reduction in public funding since 2007, has contributed more than $1.2 million in currently unfunded COVID-19 response services through May, 2020.

Some Highlights of the Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline:

- Provided the right care, at the right place, at the right time
- Only 2% of callers were referred to hospitals, saving precious resources and limiting spread of infection
- Through evidence-based public health messaging, callers were triaged to appropriate levels of testing, quarantine and isolation
- Proudly provided access to professional health care information regardless of income, race, religion; and showed penetrance into some of Philadelphia’s most medically under-served communities
- Listened to nearly 20,000 concerned callers and offered a caring ear
- Demonstrated the benevolence of human spirit with over 300 healthcare professionals coming to community aid at the Helpline

Additional reading:

Jeanette Trella selected as a U.S, News and World Report Hospital Hero for standing up the Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline: https://health.usnews.com/hospital-heroes/articles/pharmacist-and-coronavirus-hotline-creator-jeanette-trella?utm_source=usn_fb&fbclid=IwAR1sABm82sAd3jOibEHY5dHOFH_gtosdoKT1XF_v-lIdH7Mcqrm8L5r6H9A

Interactive map of calls to the GPCH by Philadelphia zip code: https://public.tableau.com/profile/lauren.longo#!/vizhome/GreaterPhiladelphiaCoronavirusHelplineMarchandApril/S?publish=yes

January 24
First call to the PCC about COVID-19

March 9
CHOP sends six residents and four nurses for staffing support

March 13
Dr. Farley’s public unveiling of the Helpline

March 16
Highest call volume to date

March 20
CHOP’s Talent Marketplace opens

March 23
Gov. Wolf announces Stay at Home Order for greater Philadelphia counties

March-April
PCC trains over 300 staff to serve at the Helpline

April 8
Social Work “Warm Transfer” line opens

April 9
Continuous resource and telephonic updates, staffing partnerships, a “New Normal.”