EXHIBIT E
The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
508 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Pennsylvania 2020 Primary Election

Dear Governor Wolf,

This letter is being sent on behalf of Montgomery County, but is intended to benefit the residents of the entire Commonwealth. In the interest of protecting the health and wellbeing of our communities, we implore you to take an additional important step beyond moving the 2020 Primary Election to June 2nd. We ask that you order an all-mail election in Pennsylvania. Inviting millions of voters to what would amount to thousands of mass gatherings across the state a mere two months from today is something that should be avoided at all costs.

Based on the evidence indicating that some combination of social distancing and shelter-in-place measures will likely still be needed by the time the June date arrives, and based on feedback we have received from voters, poll workers, and polling locations, we have arrived at the conclusion that an all-mail election is the only responsible option to ensure a safe, fair, and successful Primary in 2020.

We find ourselves in truly unprecedented times. We are in the very early stages of a serious pandemic. In order to properly manage what is sure to become an increasingly dire situation, experts are estimating that “measures – most notably, large scale social distancing – will need to be in place for many months, perhaps until a vaccine becomes available.”¹ Government officials across the United States are anticipating that strict restrictions on their communities and further social distancing measures will continue for at least two to three more months.

All evidence shows we are dealing with a situation that is highly unlikely to improve prior to the newly postponed date of the Primary Election on June 2nd. In addition to many logistical concerns, conducting an in person election would be the antithesis of the action we should be taking to properly address the effects of this virus on our population.

To properly appreciate the dangers of conducting an in person election, it is important to acknowledge the process a typical county undertakes to prepare for and conduct a successful election.

The Process

While the election is not scheduled to occur until June 2\textsuperscript{nd}, we will only be able to properly prepare for that date by bringing in a large number of county employees and contracted workers to engage with members of the general public all over the county while we are currently under an order to shelter in place and conduct only life essential operations. The Montgomery County Office of Voter Services employs a full staff of close to 30 people. The office is currently operating with a fraction of that number, as we are only allowing four to five employees to work on any given day to properly comply with existing orders from the Governor. If we are to administer a “normal” election where we would prepare to conduct in-person voting over our 426 precincts on June 2\textsuperscript{nd}, we would have no choice but to bring in our full complement of employees to work in close quarters preparing for the election almost immediately.

At our warehouse, we would have approximately five staff members working in close proximity to representatives from our voting machine vendor – who will have flown in from various locations around the country – to program and prepare ADA devices, printers, and scanners for all of our precincts. Those staff members will then interact with 10 to 15 delivery truck drivers who will spend four or five days driving around the county delivering this equipment to 352 separate locations including senior centers, schools, houses of worship, libraries, community centers, and municipal buildings, all of which are currently closed as they are not permitted to operate under the order from the Governor’s Office. At each of these locations, it will be necessary for the delivery crew to interact closely with the staff to ensure the equipment is delivered and properly secured.

This brings us to Election Day where a population of approximately 2500 poll workers, most of them elderly, are needed to administer the election to hundreds of thousands of registered voters around the county. As this is being done, our Office of Voters Services brings in additional county staff from a variety of different departments to work from 6:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. answering phone calls from voters and poll workers, and addressing any issues that may come up in regards to the election. This constitutes a group of close to 50 people working in an environment that cannot accommodate proper social distancing over the course of an entire day. In addition to this group of people we have approximately 12 rovers who drive around the county and troubleshoot machine and supply issues at all of our polling locations, interacting closely with poll workers and voters at every place they visit.

At the end of the evening we have teams of employees that staff five satellite locations where Judges of Elections hand-off materials that they are mandated by law to return that evening. These staff members then transport these materials to the voter services warehouse where they are collected by a group of approximately 15 staff members and stored until the official tabulation begins. Tabulation occurs over the next seven to ten days, conducted by a group of close to 30 tabulators, all of whom are over the age of 50. While tabulation is being conducted the trucking company is collecting voting equipment from around the county and returning it to the staff at the warehouse where it is unloaded and stored.
There is great risk of exposure involved in every step of the process we follow in preparing for and conducting our elections. A positive test for any of the people involved in any step of this process could cause a ripple effect that would require quarantines and would effectively cripple our ability to function.

At a time when strict social distancing measures are being employed to help stem the spread of a highly contagious virus, asking all of the people in the above scenario to take part in the process of administering and voting in the June 2\textsuperscript{nd} election as it is currently anticipated would be irresponsible from a policy and planning perspective and potentially catastrophic from a public health perspective.

Efforts to address the problem

The steps you and the General Assembly have taken to address the numerous problems with conducting a “normal” election were well intentioned and are appreciated. However, now that the Commonwealth is four weeks into this pandemic, we know that, even by June, we will not be able to safely conduct an in person election. Now is the time to acknowledge the logistical and operational difficulties we are confronted with, and mitigate the risks we are now facing. Make no mistake, asking counties in Pennsylvania to administer an in person election on any scale, is putting everyone in a position where failure is the most likely outcome.

In addition to postponing the election, Act 12 of 2020 eases restrictions on spaces that may be used as polling locations, consolidation of polling places, and requirements of poll workers. These are helpful steps on their face, but when practically scrutinized they do little to actually solve any of the anticipated problems. Allowing for the use of previously prohibited space assumes that any of these facilities would be cooperative partners. We are already hearing from established polling places that they do not wish to participate in this election. The probability of convincing new locations to volunteer is slim.

Consolidation of polling places would seem to address this issue, but buildings suitable for housing multiple polling places are limited, and again there is the strong likelihood that they would not choose to participate. If we were to find suitable facilities that allowed us to reduce our polling places by anywhere up to 170 locations (the maximum 60% that would be allowed by the amendments to the Code), we would still have to supply them with an adequate amount of poll workers. Consolidation may appear to be a benefit in greatly reducing the amount of poll workers needed. Realistically, the more polling places that are consolidated, the greater the potential for confusion and the greater the logistical challenges of ensuring that people are being directed to the correct precinct to sign in, are given the proper ballot, and are casting that ballot in the correct scanner become. Implementing consolidated polling places will still require the use of a substantial number of our poll workers. Consolidation would put the county in the position of justifying a decision to concentrate larger numbers of poll workers and voters into fewer spaces to a population that we are actively telling to stay home and distance from each other. We cannot credibly justify such a risk.
Many of our poll workers are informing us that they will not work on Election Day in any capacity due to their fear of exposure, which is understandable as the majority of them are elderly and are more vulnerable than most members of the population. Even with the ability to deploy poll workers to any election district in the county, we will most likely find ourselves in a situation where polling places will be inadequately staffed or not staffed at all simply because we will not have enough people who are eligible and willing to do it.

The solution

The safest solution with the best chance for success for the upcoming primary is to move as soon as is possible to an all-mail election, and to allow for the canvassing of ballots to begin well in advance of the newly established time of 7:00 a.m. on Election Day. We are already seeing an increase in the number of applications for mail-in and absentee ballots. As of this date, Montgomery County has received close to 30,000 absentee and mail-in ballot applications.

We realize that there is hesitancy around making this decision, namely in the ability of counties to acquire the necessary paper supplies and to meet the demand of distributing, collecting, and canvassing these ballots. The fact of the matter is that the counties should already be taking the steps to deal with these issues. Mail-in and absentee ballot requests have increased statewide, and as we move closer to the election more people will inevitably opt for voting by mail either for convenience or for concern for their health. Counties are going to find themselves in a position where they need to have adequate supplies and procedures in place to handle large amounts of mail-in ballots. To ensure a timely reporting of results, counties will also need to canvass these ballots well in advance of Election Day.

The earlier this decision is made, and the more organized and involved the Department of State and State Government as a whole can be, the easier it will be to accomplish this goal. Assistance from the State in the costs and processes necessary for acquiring needed supplies and distributing them would be of great benefit. In making sure an all-mail election properly safeguards the rights of voters, the General Assembly should focus on ensuring that envelopes are free to mail or are prepaid, that ballots postmarked by Election Day can be counted, and that signature matching laws properly protect voters.

The longer we wait to institute necessary reforms, the more time and money is wasted on planning for an unworkable system that if followed will result in the needless exposure of large numbers of people and the disenfranchisement of voters who can’t go to their polling place because they are following the advice of their government and public health officials to stay home, the polling location is closed, or the location is inadequately staffed.

We are in the midst of an unprecedented public health emergency. I urge you to take a practical assessment of the situation and seriously consider moving to implement an all-mail election for the 2020 Primary.
Sincerely,

Valerie A. Arkoosh, MD, MPH
Chair

Kenneth E. Lawrence, Jr.
Vice Chair

cc: Kathy Boockvar, Secretary of the Commonwealth
    Hon. Mike Turzai, Speaker of the PA House of Representatives
    Hon. Bryan Cutler, Majority Leader of the PA House of Representatives
    Hon. Frank Dermody, Minority Leader of the PA House of Representatives
    Hon. Joe Scarnati, President Pro Tempore of the PA State Senate
    Hon. Jake Corman, Majority Leader of the PA State Senate
    Hon. Jay Costa, Minority Leader of the PA State Senate
    Members of the Montgomery County State Senate Delegation
    Members of the Montgomery County State House Delegation
    Lisa Schaefer, Executive Director of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania