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AUDITOR GENERAL

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Auditor General DePasquale Provides Update on Audit of COVID-19 Business Shutdown Waivers

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today said his audit of the waiver process for businesses that appealed Gov. Tom Wolf’s COVID-19 shutdown order is moving forward.

“Business owners deserve to know if waivers were granted consistently and without undue outside influence,” DePasquale said. “Because COVID-19 is going to be with us for a while, I want to make sure the waiver process truly reflects the delicate balance of protecting lives and livelihoods.”

DePasquale announced on April 30 that he would audit the waiver process being managed by the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED).

On March 19, Gov. Wolf ordered that businesses that were not categorized as “life-sustaining” must close their physical locations to help slow the spread of COVID-19, which so far has killed nearly 4,000 people in Pennsylvania and claimed more than 83,000 lives across the United States.

More than 40,000 Pennsylvania businesses sought a waiver from the governor’s closure order. Numerous business owners complained that the waiver process lacked transparency, moved too slowly and was inconsistent in granting waivers.

“The Wolf Administration and numerous legislators agreed that this audit is necessary,” DePasquale said. “My audit team looks forward to exploring how waivers were managed and making recommendations for improving the process, should it need to be used again in the future.”

DePasquale’s department continues to operate remotely while state office buildings remain closed.

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