GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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Governor Shapiro Takes Action to Protect Pennsylvanians Using AI and Hold Bad Actors Accountable, Launching New AI Literacy Toolkit and AI Enforcement Task Force

Delivering on promises he made in the budget address earlier this month, Governor Shapiro is launching a multiagency AI Literacy Toolkit with guidance for kids, parents, teachers, and communities on how to safely use artificial intelligence.

The Shapiro Administration created an AI Task Force to crack down on AI companion bots that unlawfully misrepresent themselves as licensed medical providers – and the Governor today announced that his Administration is working with Attorney General Dave Sunday on enforcement actions.

Today's announcement strengthens Pennsylvania's position as a national leader in responsible AI use.

Carnegie, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** joined **Pennsylvania Department of Education Secretary Dr. Carrie Rowe, Pennsylvania Department of Health Dr. Debra Bogen, Pennsylvania Department of State Secretary Al Schmidt**, state legislators, and local leaders at the Carnegie Clubhouse of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania to announce new steps his Administration is taking to protect Pennsylvanians from predatory AI practices. Governor Shapiro announced the new action during a roundtable discussion on artificial intelligence (AI) safety and ways the Commonwealth can ensure kids, parents, teachers, and communities have the tools they need to safely and responsibly use the latest technology.

At the roundtable, Governor Shapiro announced three steps his Administration is taking:

- **Launching an [AI Literacy Toolkit](#)**, a comprehensive, multi-agency resource developed in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Departments of Education, Health, Human Services, State, Aging, and Banking and Securities to help Pennsylvanians safely and responsibly use artificial intelligence tools. The toolkit expands existing digital literacy resources into a holistic guide addressing AI's benefits, risks, and real-world impacts across four key populations: children; seniors; Pennsylvanians with intellectual disabilities; and individuals facing mental health and substance use challenges.

- **Creating an AI Enforcement Task Force at the Department of State and establishing a [formal complaint](#) and reporting process for AI-powered bots that may be engaging in unlicensed professional practice.** Pennsylvanians can now submit concerns through a dedicated [form](#), hotline, and email address, which the Task Force will evaluate to determine whether certain AI companion technologies are engaging in unlicensed practice under existing law.

- **Coordinating closely with Attorney General Dave Sunday to strengthen consumer protections related to AI companion bots**. While the Department of State oversees professional licensure and unlicensed practice, the Attorney General has authority under the Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law to investigate consumer protection violations. Through this collaboration, the Shapiro Administration and the Office of Attorney General will share information about complaints and refer cases to the appropriate authorities when necessary.

"Artificial intelligence is transforming how we live, work, and learn — and Pennsylvania is embracing it responsibly," said **Governor Shapiro**. "But as this technology advances, we will not allow bad actors to exploit our kids, mislead seniors, or impersonate licensed professionals. Today, we're delivering on the promises I made in my budget address by expanding AI literacy, strengthening oversight, and working across agencies to protect Pennsylvanians from fraud, misinformation, and unlicensed activity."

From day one, Governor Shapiro has focused on supporting Pennsylvania kids and ensuring they have the support they need to stay safe and healthy. Today, the Governor spoke with experts, students, and parents to discuss how the Commonwealth can ensure Pennsylvanians — especially young people and vulnerable communities — have the resources to safely navigate emerging AI technologies while holding bad actors accountable.

Today's announcement was made at the Carnegie Clubhouse of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania — one of 18 locations serving more than 12,300 young people across Allegheny, Beaver, Fayette, and Somerset Counties — and a recipient of over $1 million in Violence Intervention and Prevention grants under the Shapiro Administration, with additional state investments to expand services and improve facilities.

In 2019, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania launched its Artificial Intelligence Pathways Institute (AIPI) in 2019 — an intensive summer program where

teens learn machine learning, robotics engineering, and AI ethics. Since its launch, 387 students have completed the program.

"We acknowledge the promise and opportunities that AI presents, having served hundreds of teens through our groundbreaking Artificial Intelligence Pathways Institute over the past 7 years, but we also recognize the harm it can pose if appropriate safeguards are not put in place," said **Chris Watts, President & CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania.** "Thank you, Governor Shapiro, for your leadership on this important topic and for your vision of a Commonwealth where technology is embraced, celebrated, and used in a safe and healthy way."

Launching the AI Literacy Toolkit

During his 2026-27 budget address, Governor Shapiro committed to strengthening protections on the use of AI in Pennsylvania and investigating companion bots claiming to be licensed medical professionals.

The multi-agency AI Literacy Toolkit provides new resources for Pennsylvanians, including information to help parents talk to their kids about AI companion bots, strategies to help kids stay safe online, guidance for using AI in the classroom, warnings about potential financial and banking scams, and a link to the Department of State's new AI companion bot [complaint form.](#)

"Like every major innovation before it, AI calls on us to learn first. Our responsibility is to ensure administrators and staff understand both AI's promise and its limits, so that decisions are grounded in context, guided by values, and always centered on students," said **Secretary of Education Dr. Carrie Rowe**. "That's why the Pennsylvania Department of Education is proud to partner on guidance to school communities around AI best practices, professional development for educators, and support for student mental health. With the right guardrails, AI can help us teach, learn, and lead more effectively."

"As a pediatrician, I partnered with parents to help ensure children reach their fullest potential. I am increasingly concerned about the social and mental health implications of young people trading authentic human connection for a digital simulation that is potentially dangerous," said **Secretary of Health Dr. Debra Bogen.** "Although AI can enhance learning and creativity, it cannot replace human judgment and meaningful relationships with living, breathing people. I am thankful that Governor Shapiro is prioritizing safeguarding Pennsylvania's children against the potential dangers of AI."

The guidance has been reviewed and supported by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Pennsylvania Medical Society.

"The PA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics commends the Shapiro administration on the development of guidance on artificial intelligence companion and

chatbot technology," said **Annette G. Myarick, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics**. "Kids and teens are using this technology more and more frequently, and access to helpful information and guidance on these tools is critical. The website provides great resources to support parents and caregivers, educators and pediatric healthcare providers. Working together is essential to protecting our children and youth."

"As the use of AI grows, we're learning both the promise and the risks it poses to young people, who are especially vulnerable to misuse. Children and adolescents can't always tell helpful chatbots from sources of harmful mental health guidance, so all of us who are involved in their lives must stay vigilant," said **Tami Benton, MD, Psychiatrist-in-Chief at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.** "Thank you, Governor Shapiro, for the Commonwealth's AI guidance, which will help keep Pennsylvania's children safer as they learn to use these tools responsibly."

"While AI technology offers significant potential, it also presents serious risks – including misinformation, inappropriate content exposure, data privacy concerns, and potential mental health impacts, particularly for young users," said **The Academy of Family Physicians.** "Clear, evidence-based guidance is essential to ensure AI supports, rather than replaces, healthy human relationships and overall well-being."

"While artificial intelligence can improve diagnostic capabilities, data analytics, and access to information, it can also fuel misinformation, raise anxiety, foster social isolation, increase susceptibility to manipulation, and expose individuals to risks involving their personal data," said **Martin P. Raniowski, MA, CAE, FCPP, CEO & Executive Vice President of the Pennsylvania Medical Society.** "The Pennsylvania Medical Society supports the Commonwealth's efforts to educate individuals about using artificial intelligence safely as well as being aware of its potential harms."

Department of State's AI Task Force and Reporting Process

Following the Governor's budget address, the Pennsylvania Department of State established a formal complaint and reporting process for AI-powered bots that may be engaging in unlicensed professional practice. Pennsylvanians can now submit concerns through a dedicated form, hotline, and email address.

The Department has also launched a 12-member AI Task Force to evaluate whether certain AI companion technologies are engaging in unlicensed practice under existing law and determine appropriate enforcement actions.

"At Governor Shapiro's direction, the Department of State recently established a task force to hold AI platforms accountable when they break state laws by impersonating health care professionals," said **Secretary of the Commonwealth Al Schmidt**. "As a parent, I know how important it is to guide young people through the online world. The internet can be a helpful place to research general health care information. But AI chatbots are no substitute for the individualized care you receive from trained human

health care professionals. It is illegal for a chatbot to present itself as a licensed health care professional and provide mental or physical health care to any Pennsylvanian."

Coordination with the Office of the Attorney General

The Shapiro Administration is also coordinating closely with the Office of the Attorney General to strengthen consumer protections related to AI companion bots. While the Department of State oversees professional licensure and unlicensed practice, the Attorney General has authority under the Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law to investigate consumer protection violations.

The collaboration follows a recent coalition effort led by the Attorney General urging major AI companies to implement stronger safeguards for users, particularly vulnerable populations.

Building on three years of progress under the leadership of Governor Shapiro, today's announcement also strengthens Pennsylvania's position as a national leader on responsible AI adoption.

- The Governor signed Executive Order 2023-19 in September 2023, establishing clear principles for AI use in state government and creating a Generative AI Governing Board.

- The Commonwealth launched the first-in-the-nation pilot of ChatGPT Enterprise in January 2024 and has since expanded responsible AI training to thousands of state employees.

- Pennsylvania was ranked as one of the top three states for AI readiness by CODE for America in July 2025.

- Governor Shapiro announced a Cooperative Agreement for Artificial Intelligence Advising Services with the University of Pennsylvania to advance the responsible use of AI across government in October 2025.

Governor Shapiro's 2026-27 proposed budget calls on Pennsylvania's General Assembly to pass 4 commonsense reforms into law, further protecting Pennsylvanians from predatory AI:

- Require age verification and parental consent to utilize AI companion bots.

- Require tech companies to detect when children mention self harm or violence against others and immediately direct them to the appropriate authorities.

- Force tech companies to periodically remind users that there is not another human being on the other side of the screen.

- Prohibit AI companion bots from producing sexually explicit or violent content featuring kids.

Watch the Governor's full budget address to a joint session of the House and Senate [here](#) and read the Governor's full remarks as prepared for delivery [here](#).

Read the Governor's 2026-27 proposed budget in brief [here](#).

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