



MEMORANDUM

To: Maryland State Employees

From: Secretary of Health Robert R. Neall

Subject: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Update

Date: March 6, 2020

Maryland continues to conduct strong and coordinated planning and response to COVID-19. Governor Larry Hogan and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) are committed to keeping all Maryland state employees updated on the situation.

We urge all employees to refer to the MDH website dedicated to COVID-19; case counts are updated every morning at 10 a.m. This will keep you informed about the number of cases being tested and the results, as well as up-to-date CDC guidance. Marylanders are also advised to dial 2-1-1 to talk to experts about any questions or concerns related to COVID-19.

The MDH COVID-19 website can be found here:

health.maryland.gov/coronavirus

What are the latest COVID-19 developments in Maryland?

On March 5, 2020, it was announced that Maryland has three confirmed cases of COVID-19. The patients, who contracted the virus while traveling overseas, are in good condition and are in quarantine at their homes.

On March 5, Gov. Hogan declared a state of emergency to further mobilize all available state resources. The declaration officially authorized and directed the MDH and the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to ramp up coordination among all state and local agencies. The declaration

also enables MDH and MEMA to fast-track coordination with our state and local health departments and emergency management teams.

Are we able to test for COVID-19 in Maryland?

As of March 3, Maryland's State Public Health Laboratory is approved for testing for COVID-19. This means that rather than waiting for test results from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) labs in Atlanta, Georgia, people who meet the testing criteria for COVID-19 may be diagnosed faster through the MDH labs in Baltimore.

Until recently, the CDC guidelines for testing were limited to patients with clear symptoms of infection who had either traveled to a geographic region of concern or who were in close contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19. Last week, the CDC expanded testing criteria to include severely ill hospitalized patients with unexplained acute lower respiratory symptoms.

Is Maryland prepared for a potential COVID-19 outbreak?

Since January, all Maryland state agencies have taken every precaution to prepare and mobilize resources to address COVID-19. This week, Governor Larry Hogan introduced emergency legislation that allows the governor to transfer up to \$50 million from the Revenue Stabilization Account to fund costs associated with COVID-19. The Governor also submitted a \$10 million emergency appropriation request as part of a supplemental budget.

Here are some other preparedness efforts that are ongoing:

- The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) and MDH, in coordination with the Maryland Hospital Association, are coordinating around surge planning, including planning for possible ambulance re-routing, expansion of hospital capacity and enhanced methods of medical monitoring for home-bound patients with mild to moderate symptoms.
- The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) is coordinating with Maryland's colleges and universities on safely managing international study programs and campus continuity of operations (COOP) plans.
- MDH is coordinating with nursing homes and assisted living facilities to review and reiterate guidance on infection control and medical management.
- MDH is coordinating with the Department of Aging on messaging for homebound seniors and their caregivers, as well as developing innovative approaches to provide volunteer

personal care assistance in the event of significant absenteeism among regular caregivers.

- MDH is coordinating with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to provide guidance to local school systems on protocols for school closures.
- The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is actively engaged with travelers to ensure they have information they need and are following the CDC guidelines. The Port of Baltimore also is engaged in similar screening protocols.
- MDH continues to participate in daily briefing calls with the CDC and federal partners. MDH also continues to coordinate with local health departments, as well as other state agencies, on preparedness and response to the virus.
- MDH has released [public service announcements](#) regarding statewide preparedness efforts.
- All state agencies have reviewed their COOP plans and submitted them to the Maryland Emergency Management Agency.

Can I prepare or prevent COVID-19?

Currently, there is no vaccine for COVID-19. Prevention of COVID-19 centers on frequent handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes and separating people who have respiratory symptoms.

Treatment for COVID-19, as with any coronavirus infection like the common cold, includes the use of over-the-counter fever-relievers, drinking plenty of fluids and resting at home to help relieve symptoms. Those with more severe symptoms may be hospitalized to provide additional support.

While much remains unknown about COVID-19, the CDC reports that people who are elderly and who have chronic health conditions appear to be at higher risk for infection. These chronic conditions may include cancer, diabetes, heart disease or any issue that lowers the body's immunity to germs.

Additional Resources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The following links on the CDC website will help you learn more about specific groups, travel advisories and other important information about COVID-19:

[COVID-19 Website](#)

[Flowchart to Identify and Assess COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#)

[What You Should Know](#)

[Situation in the United States](#)

[Travel Alerts](#)

[Global Map of Virus Spread](#)

[Preventing COVID-19 Community Spread](#)

[Guidance for Healthcare Professionals](#)

[Guidance for Businesses](#)

[Guidance for Pregnant or Breastfeeding Women & Children](#)

[Guidance for Infection Control](#)

[Information for Laboratories](#)

[Resources for Healthcare Facilities](#)

[Resources for Health Departments](#)

To receive a weekly CDC email newsletter about COVID-10, enter your email address, and type COVID-19 in the search box at this URL:

https://tools.cdc.gov/campaignproxyservice/subscriptions.aspx?topic_id=US_CDC_2067

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