

Hello

I want to tell you a little bit about a serious situation here. You are very important people and we want to keep you healthy and keep those around you healthy too! For you and your family's health and safety, please take this information to heart. Let us know if you have any questions!

### COVID-19 Background

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. COVID-19 is a new virus that hasn't caused illness in humans before. Worldwide, COVID-19 has resulted in thousands of infections, causing illness and in some cases death. Cases have spread to countries throughout the world, with thousands of cases reported daily.

COVID-19 is thought to be able to spread like the cold or flu through:

- Coughing and sneezing, which creates respiratory droplets where the virus stays and travels.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your nose, mouth, eyes, or your face

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- In more severe cases, pneumonia (infection in the lungs)

The vast majority of people recover from this infection. Most people will have mild or moderate symptoms. Older people and those with pre-existing medical conditions (like diabetes, heart disease, and asthma) have a greater risk for more serious illness.

Be smart — Slow the spread

By taking precautions we slow the spread of the disease and the hospitals and doctors have a better chance of keeping up with the patient load.

All Marylanders are advised to take precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19:

. Wash your hands often with soap and water. Rub and create a lather for 20 seconds. Make sure all parts of your hands and fingers are cleaned before rinsing.

- Cover your mouth and nose while sneezing or coughing with a tissue and throw that tissue away in a waste basket. Do not sneeze or cough into your shirt as the virus will remain active for many hours. Make sure to thoroughly wash and dry your clothing at the end of the day.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands as you can bring the virus from a surface to your face!
- Avoid contact with sick people. If you are sick isolate yourself from other people as much as possible. Do not share dishes, food or other items with people in your household
- If you are sick, stay home and call your health care provider
- If you are sick, call your employer and **DO NOT COME IN TO WORK**
- Practice social distancing — keep a 6-foot distance between yourself and others and avoid crowds. This distance is more or less the distance one droplet of saliva can travel from your mouth with a cough sneeze, strong laugh, singing, etc. Remember: the virus travels in the saliva drops

All Marylanders, and people around the entire world are also advised to practice social distancing. Social distancing is a way to keep people from interacting closely or frequently enough to spread an infectious disease. Social distancing can take many forms, depending on your lifestyle and your family and work situation, and can include the following habits and steps:

- Avoid handshaking, hugging, kissing and other intimate types of greeting
- Avoid non-essential travel (your health care provider may have specific guidance for your situation)
- Avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated spaces
- Work from home if possible, for your work situation
- Avoid unnecessary errands — consider ways to have essential items, like food and other household supplies, brought to your house through online delivery services or through family or social network

## Excerpts from the GOVERNOR HOGAN Press Conference March 30, 2020

“We have reached a critical turning point in the fight to stop the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic here in Maryland and in the national capital region, which includes Washington, DC and Virginia.

We now have 1413 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our state, including our youngest case to date, a 1-month old infant.

Just in the past week, the number of positive cases has increased by 397% in the state of Maryland. And, sadly, the number of deaths here in Maryland has tripled from 5 to 15 over the weekend.

We also experienced a tragic coronavirus outbreak at the Pleasant View Nursing Home in Mount Airy, which is in Carroll County, where 67 residents have now tested positive and 27 members of the staff are also experiencing symptoms.

It took nearly 3 weeks for the national capital region to go from 0 to 1,000 cases of COVID-19. It took just 3 days for the region to more than double from 1,000 to more than 2500 cases.

The number of cases across Maryland, Washington, DC, and Virginia have more than quadrupled over the past week, and also 51 people have died.

As of this morning, there are 2,709 confirmed cases in the DMV area, which surrounds the nation's capital. There are currently 142,793 cases across America, and more than 738,000 cases around the globe.

The worldwide death toll has doubled in the past week to over 35,000. The number of US deaths has doubled to nearly 2500 in just 2 days.

For those who still refuse to take this pandemic seriously, and those who are still downplaying the severity of this crisis, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said yesterday that we could expect millions of cases in the United States and 100,000 deaths.

To put that in perspective, that would mean more American deaths than the Vietnam War and the Korean War added together. This virus is spreading rapidly and exponentially. The researchers and medical experts are saying that in two weeks' time, the DC, Maryland, and Virginia areas could look like New York and the tristate area.

At my direction, Maryland has already taken some of the earliest and most aggressive social distancing actions in America in an effort to slow the spread of this aggressive virus. Despite all of those actions and our warnings for more than 3 weeks, and in spite of the rapid escalation of this crisis across the world, the nation, and our state, some people are still choosing to ignore those executive orders and directives. They are

endangering themselves and their fellow citizens. Anyone engaged in this type of reckless behavior is in violation of state law and is putting the lives of their family, their friends, and their fellow Marylanders at risk.

This morning I have signed an executive order which implements a stay at home directive. No Maryland resident should be leaving their home unless it is for an essential job or for an essential reason such as obtaining food or medicine, seeking urgent medical attention, or for other necessary purposes.

In addition, only essential businesses are allowed to remain open in Maryland, and those businesses must also make every effort to scale down their operations in order to reduce the number of required staff, to limit in-person interaction with customers as much as they are able to, and to institute telework for as much of the workforce as is practical.

As we have previously stated, no Marylander should be traveling outside the state unless such travel is absolutely necessary. If you have traveled outside of the region in recent weeks, you should self-quarantine for 14 days.

We encourage not just businesses but families and friends to make every effort to use remote forms of communication, to limit person to person contact. Marylanders should reschedule all nonessential appointments of any kind. As we directed 11 days ago, no one should be using any mode of public transportation unless they are essential personnel or unless that travel is absolutely necessary.

This is a deadly public health crisis. We are no longer asking or suggesting that Marylanders stay home. We are directing them to do so.

This is a rapidly escalating emergency situation, which will soon hit all of Maryland and our nation's capital.”

### **Remember you are an important and essential worker!**

Farm work and any work in support of agriculture is considered essential work by the Department of Homeland Security and is expected to continue as normal in Maryland.

During the mandate to shelter in place, travel to and from farms is considered essential travel. If stopped and questioned by law enforcement, any workers traveling to or from the farm should have with them a letter indicating their place of employment and that their job is considered essential. Farmers will have these letters for you.

Examples can be found here: [psla.umd.edu](https://psla.umd.edu)

But it is vital for all of us to understand that travel away from our homes is to be severely restricted to only essential activities.

Stay safe and protect those around you!