



# MARYLAND Department of Health

*Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary*

Dear Hal:

Thank you for contacting Governor Hogan's office regarding the response plan for novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. As Deputy Secretary of Public Health Services, I am honored to respond on behalf of the administration.

On March 6, 2020, Governor Hogan announced the state's first positive cases of COVID-19 and [declared a state of emergency](#) to ramp up Maryland's coordinated response across all levels of government. The Hogan administration introduced emergency legislation ([SB1079](#)) granting the governor the authority to transfer up to \$50 million from the state's rainy day fund for COVID-19 response. SB1079 was signed into law on March 9, 2020.

Based on the latest guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and our federal partners, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is working with all levels of government to take every possible precaution to respond to this public health emergency. Maryland's preparedness builds on decades of planning, experience and expertise gained from previous and ongoing public health events. We will continue to track COVID-19 developments and will provide information as it becomes available.

MDH is actively engaged in regular communications with clinicians and healthcare providers across the state and working with local hospitals to develop comprehensive surge plans to be activated when necessary. MDH is inventorying available resources at hospitals, local health departments, federally-qualified healthcare centers, long-term care facilities, dialysis centers, and other healthcare partners. MDH's infectious disease experts are providing briefings to all local health departments and healthcare facilities across the state.

MDH continues to work with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to provide guidance to school systems across the state, and is coordinating with colleges and universities to address concerns with student and faculty populations. In coordination with the Maryland Department of Transportation, MDH is actively engaged with travelers to ensure they have the information they need and are following CDC guidance to protect the safety of these travelers and the public.

Potential alternative housing, support, and transportation are being developed should some Marylanders impacted by the virus not be able to recover at home.

Additionally, state agencies are participating in briefings and coordination calls with federal partners at the CDC, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Defense. Frequent calls are being held with neighboring states to coordinate case surveillance, investigation and response activities, including senior health officials, epidemiologists, and public health emergency preparedness directors.

The public health threat here in Maryland and across the United States requires extraordinary measures you can take very basic steps to help keep yourself and others healthy:

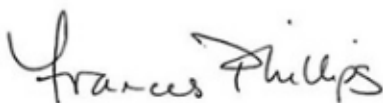
- Stay informed — Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for the most recent general updates and [health.maryland.gov](https://www.health.maryland.gov) for the latest information on COVID-19 in Maryland.
- Practice everyday actions to promote good health and prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19:
  - o Wash your hands frequently with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water (20 seconds or more is recommended)
  - o Cover your mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing
  - o Avoid close contact with people who are sick
  - o If you are sick, stay home from work or school
  - o Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Build a preparedness kit for your home in case you need to stay at home. See [health.maryland.gov](https://www.health.maryland.gov) for details. Examples include:
  - o Pain relievers, fever reducers, decongestants, and cough drops
  - o Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
  - o Thermometer
  - o Facial tissues, paper products
  - o Nonperishable food
  - o Extended supply of prescription medications
  - o Diapers or pet supplies, if needed
- Please prepare for adjustments to your daily life and schedule regarding school closures, mass gatherings, and other disruptions. Please see Governor Larry Hogan's major actions and executive orders to protect public health and limit the spread of COVID-19 pandemic here: <https://governor.maryland.gov/2020/03/12/governor-hogan-announces-major-actions-to-protect-public-health-limit-spread-of-covid-19-pandemic/>

Visit [health.maryland.gov/coronavirus](https://www.health.maryland.gov/coronavirus) for up-to-date information and resources, including the latest information on COVID-19.

Thank you again for your correspondence. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact one of the following resources:

- Call 2-1-1 or email [info@211MD.org](mailto:info@211MD.org)
- Contact your local health department. Find your local health department at [health.maryland.gov/Pages/departments.ASPX](https://www.health.maryland.gov/Pages/departments.ASPX) or 410-767-7600 to be connected with your local health department.
- If you or a loved one has difficulty using a standard telephone, Maryland Relay makes it easy to place and receive calls, by dialing 7-1-1 for assistance.

Sincerely,



Fran Phillips, RN, MHA