



Dear Morgan:

Thank you for contacting Governor Larry 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 5, 2020, Governor Hogan announced the state's first positive cases of COVID-19 and declared a state of emergency to elevate 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.

On March 30, 2020, Governor Hogan issued a "Stay at Home" executive order to protect the health and safety of all residents in Maryland. This order states that no Maryland resident should leave 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.

Over the past two months, Maryland has made considerable progress on the four major building blocks that needed to be firmly in place before the State can consider lifting restrictions. These building blocks are:

- Expanded testing capacity
- Increased hospital surge capacity
- Ramping up supply of PPE
- Robust contact tracing operation

On April 24, 2020, after weeks of consulting with leading scientists, business leaders, and public health experts, Governor Hogan introduced the ['Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery.'](#) which provides a safe, effective, and gradual approach to reopening the state as it continues to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The Roadmap is divided into three stages and will likely take time to implement and watch data results to the effects of each stage.

- STAGE ONE (effective 5/15/2020 at 5 P.M): Lifting the "stay-at-home" order. In order to initiate this stage, Maryland must see a consistent decline or plateau in the number of patients admitted to the ICU, and the rate of hospitalizations due to COVID-19. This stage would

involve businesses, community, religious and overall quality of life improvements. While the state will initiate stage one, local authorities may do so at their own pace. Please review the governors executive orders and guidance for more detail as to what may re-open, <https://governor.maryland.gov/covid-19-pandemic-orders-and-guidance/> . Examples of changes that would be implemented in this stage include:

- Reopening of small shops and certain small businesses
 - Curbside pickup and drop-off for businesses
 - Elective medical and dental procedures at ambulatory, outpatient, and medical offices
 - Limited attendance outdoor religious gatherings
 - Recreational boating, fishing, golf, tennis, hiking, and hunting
 - Reopening of car washes
 - Limited outdoor gym and fitness classes
 - Outdoor work with appropriate distancing measures
 - Some personal services
- STAGE TWO: Reopening businesses to the general public. This stage will likely put a large number of businesses and activities back online. To reopen, businesses would need to comply with strict physical distancing and appropriate safety protocols. Examples of changes that could be implemented in this stage include:
 - Raising the cap on social gatherings
 - Indoor gyms and fitness classes
 - Childcare centers
 - Normal transit schedules
 - Indoor religious gatherings
 - Reopening of restaurants and bars with restrictions
 - Elective and outpatient procedures at hospitals
- STAGE THREE: Reinstating higher-risk activities, but there is no realistic timeline yet for achieving this stage as of yet.. Examples of changes that could be implemented in this stage include:
 - Larger social gatherings
 - Reopening of high-capacity bars and restaurants
 - Lessened restrictions on visits to nursing homes and hospitals
 - Reopening of entertainment venues
 - Larger religious gatherings

In each stage, the state will evaluate which localities meet appropriate gating criteria in the jurisdiction and/or region. In the event a locality has satisfied the gating criteria, county health officers will be permitted to expand the permitted activities and businesses under parameters of the current stage identified by the state.

On May 6, 2020, Governor Hogan announced the resumption of elective medical procedures and the broadening of permitted outdoor activities under the state's Stay at Home order. For more information

about these changes, please visit:

- [Read the governor's amended Stay at Home order.](#)
- [Read guidance for outdoor activities.](#)
- [Read guidance for reopening golf courses.](#)
- [Read guidance for reopening marinas.](#)

To stay most up to date regarding Maryland's Roadmap to Recovery, please visit: <https://governor.maryland.gov/recovery/>.

MDH remains actively engaged in regular communications with clinicians, healthcare providers and hospitals across the state to develop comprehensive surge plans to be activated in phases effective immediately. MDH continues to diligently survey available resources at hospitals, local health departments, federally-qualified healthcare centers, long-term care facilities, dialysis centers, and other healthcare partners.

For a series of major actions led by Governor Hogan to protect the public health and safety and to limit the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Maryland, please visit: <https://governor.maryland.gov/category/executive-orders/>

The public health threat here in Maryland and across the United States requires extraordinary measures. You can take these 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 coronavirus.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
- Practice Social Distancing: Social Distancing can be practiced in many forms, depending on your lifestyle and your family and work situation. Social distancing can include the following habits and steps:
 - o Avoid handshaking, hugging and other intimate types of greeting
 - o Avoid non-essential travel (your health care provider may have specific guidance for your situation)
 - o Avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated spaces
 - o Work from home if possible for your work situation
 - o 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 networking

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

- Visit coronavirus.maryland.gov for up-to-date information and resources, including the latest information on COVID-19.
- Call 2-1-1 or email info@211MD.org
- Contact your local health department. Find your local health department at 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