



Washington County Health Department

1302 Pennsylvania Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21742

washcohealth.org

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For Immediate Release:

March 16, 2020

Re: Washington County Declares Local State of Emergency

At a press conference today, Washington County Government announced a Local State of Emergency.

Effective immediately, a Local State of Emergency has been declared for Washington County, running parallel with the State. The Washington County Government's declaration will remain in effect for the duration of the State's State of Emergency. To read more on the actions the Washington County Government will be taking pertaining to building restrictions please go to <https://www.washco-md.net/news/washington-county-declares-local-state-of-emergency/>

Washington County Health Department declared on March 6, 2020 partial activation of the its Incident Command Structure (ICS) Tiers I, II, and Tier III to better respond to the rapidly evolving situation. This allowed the health department to continue taking the appropriate and necessary steps to keep Washington County residents safe and healthy. The health department alongside county agencies have taken numerous steps to plan and prepare for the coronavirus.

The County is enacting enhanced measures to mitigate the risk of contact with the COVID-19 virus. The health department will also be taking measures within our building to help facilitate social distancing, such as teleworking, limited clinics, and temporary suspension of non-essential services. To learn more about what actions the health department will be taking visit our website at washcohealth.org.

We strongly encourage the community to continue preventive measures such as covering your coughs and sneezes, washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, avoiding touching your face, cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects daily, and staying at home if you are sick.

We encourage everyone to stay at home when possible. When you must go out please practice social distancing measures such as staying six feet away from others and avoiding groups of people. We strongly recommend these measures especially to vulnerable populations such as adults over sixty and those with pre-existing medical conditions. If you feel you are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus like fever, cough and shortness of breath, contact a healthcare provider to discuss symptoms before going to urgent care or the emergency room.

As Earl Stoner said "This is not a time to panic, but to prepare. We need to take social distancing and the measures that the governor and federal government are enacting very seriously." By

following these directives and recommendations we aim to flatten the curve and delay the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This is critical so that our health care system can better manage the flow of people seeking care.

This is a rapidly changing situation, and information is being shared as it becomes available. Accurate COVID-19 information is critical to the community. For the most current and accurate information about the situation, please refer to the following:

- [Washington County Health Department](#)
- [Meritus Health](#)
- [Maryland Department of Health \(MDH\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)

For general information or if you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19 or have COVID-19 symptoms please call Meritus at **301-790-9170** to be assessed by a nurse.

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