

Governor Hogan - Press Conference Summary **Wednesday, July 29, 2020**

A public health advisory was issued for travelling to states with positivity rates of over 10% - Includes Florida, Texas, Georgia, Louisiana, Arizona, Alabama, South Carolina, Nebraska, and Idaho. Marylanders are encouraged to postpone or cancel travel to these areas. If you do travel, immediately get tested and self-quarantine while you wait for the results. Read the travel advisory [here](#).

Effective Friday, July 31st, an expanded masking order will go into effect to require it in all public areas of businesses and buildings and outdoor public areas when it is not possible to maintain physical distancing rather than just retail and public transportation. The Governor pressed that local leaders have discretion to take local actions, but he did emphasize that bars and restaurants do not seem to be a main driver of cases, but local leaders must enforce compliance. Read the order [here](#).

Governor Hogan announced that Fran Phillips, Deputy Secretary of Public Health, is retiring and is being replaced by Dr. Jinlene Chan.

Highlights from the Press Conference

With the advice of the Coronavirus Recovery Task Force, the State is continuing to monitor the rising number of positive cases. This week, the federal government identified 21 states that are in the red zone and encouraged those states to limit activities. While Maryland was not on that list, the Governor stated that Maryland is at a crossroads. Every effort is being made to keep Maryland open for business and to make sure that Marylanders are following public health guidance. The Governor acknowledged that in states that had to roll back shuttering businesses was devastating to them. The Governor stated that Maryland has come too far to lose our progress to public health and economic recovery.

Maryland has increased its testing capacity exponentially over the last month, but it has resulted in an increased in identified positive cases. But, our 7th day positivity rate remains at 4.77%, which is below the recommended 5%. Maryland is working with counties to reduce spikes in counties and aggressively lower positivity rates. Twenty-two of the 24 jurisdictions have met the goal of testing 10% of the population. The Governor continues to urge Marylanders to use Maryland testing sites that have a greater turnaround capacity for results. Private labs are having a turnaround time of 7-10 days which is unacceptable.

Previously, at the start of the pandemic, the infected were older Marylanders and those in nursing homes. Now, the confirmed cases are those under the age of 40. Hospitalizations are closely being monitored. The uptick is younger patients. Luckily, while they are sick enough to go to the hospital, they are not going into the ICU.

Therefore, Maryland needs to hit a PAUSE and not move into Stage 3 opening. Currently, Maryland has an 8% unemployment rate. In addition to robust testing, contact tracing is a tool to stop this virus. Contact tracing has shown that recent events have spread the virus – 44% from a family gathering; 23% from a house party; and 21% from an outdoor event. It has also identified high risk places – 54% working outside of your home; 39% shopped at retail stores; 23% dined outdoors at a restaurant; 23% dined inside a restaurant. Most affected were 25% health care; 23% offices with non-public facing jobs; 13% with public facing jobs; and 12% employees in restaurant/food services. Governor Hogan said that he has always said that he will take actions if necessary, but others should be first employed. First, teleworking is being shown to be a positive step. Second, physical distancing and wearing masks and avoiding travel to other states should continue. Therefore, the Governor issued the orders and announcements discussed above.

During questions, Governor Hogan did state that he is concerned that the current proposal in Washington, DC will not provide funding to the State and local governments, which is disastrous. Governors will continue to push for funding. When asked if these actions today will stem off a second wave, Governor Hogan said that he is hopeful but no guarantee. Public health officials believe that these steps will help stem the upward trend. When asked about testing, the Governor stated that the issue is testing capacity not the availability of tests. Maryland's lab is turning around quickly but the commercial labs like LabCorp and Quest are backed up because of other states. Some tests are taking 14 days. In response to a question, the Governor did speak of the problems that occurred with the primary election. Trying to help them open the polls by giving free PPE and letting State workers off to work the polls.