

FROM THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR LARRY HOGAN

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Governor Hogan Announces New Actions to Address COVID-19 Outbreaks in Poultry Processing Plants and Nursing Homes

Announces Expanded Testing Strategy for Maryland, Including Universal Testing for all Nursing Home Residents and Staff

Activates Federal and Regional Operation to Address Outbreaks at Delmarva Poultry Processing Plants

Announces Sweeping Actions to Intensify Containment and Mitigation Efforts at Nursing Homes
Designates Saturday, May 2 as Healthcare Heroes Day in Maryland, Blue Angels and Thunderbirds to Conduct Flyovers

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Governor Larry Hogan today announced an expanded testing strategy and aggressive new actions to address outbreaks of COVID-19 at poultry processing plants and nursing homes in Maryland. As Maryland continues to plan for the recovery phase, the state will target and isolate outbreaks and clusters of cases, redouble attention and resources on hotspot areas, and increase mitigation efforts to stop the spread of the virus in other areas of the state.



[Watch today's press conference.](#)

"We are no longer just playing defense—we are going on offense against this virus, attacking from every angle with everything we've got," said Governor Hogan. "We are exponentially expanding our testing capacity, enabling us to attack the most acute outbreaks, clusters, and hotspots, including nursing homes, and to provide additional testing for our healthcare workers and first responders."

Expanded Testing Strategy. Following the acquisition of 500,000 tests from South Korea and progress with increasing lab capacity and materials, **Maryland is launching an expanded testing strategy focused on high-priority outbreaks and clusters**, including nursing homes, health care workers, and first responders, as well as community-based testing in areas with higher concentrations of cases—including an [expansion of drive-thru sites](#) at Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program stations, and a new testing site at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium in Salisbury.

Poultry Processing Plants. Following a call with the White House, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam, Delaware Governor John Carney, and 15 other governors, **Governor Hogan announced that he has activated a multi-state, multi-agency operation to address outbreaks at Delmarva poultry processing plants.** Currently, Maryland has 262 lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 associated with poultry workers, which is why the case rate per hundred thousand in Wicomico County is among the highest in the state, nearly equal to Baltimore City and higher than Baltimore County.

The state has dispatched epidemiologists to the affected areas to focus on testing support, contact tracing, occupational health, communications and outreach. In order to enhance testing capability, Wicomico County will open a testing site at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium in Salisbury, specifically to test workers at the Perdue plant in Salisbury and the Amick processing plant in Hurlock. The state has deployed a

Maryland Incident Management Team to support this operation, and there will be a FEMA liaison and CDC team on the ground to provide assistance.

New Actions on Nursing Homes. Outbreaks at Maryland nursing homes currently account for 19% of the state's total positive cases and 16% of the state's COVID-19 deaths. Governor Hogan announced the appointment of **Col. Eric Allely**, the State Surgeon of the Maryland National Guard, to serve as an Emergency Safety and Compliance Officer for nursing homes to ensure that these facilities are complying with state law and safety protocols.

Governor Hogan and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) also [issued new directives](#) to protect residents and staff at nursing homes, including:

- **Universal testing of all residents and staff at all Maryland nursing homes**, regardless of whether they are symptomatic. Nursing homes will be prioritized based on an imminent outbreak or a current rising threat risk, and any staff who test positive will be immediately discharged into isolation.#
- **Mandatory compliance and cooperation with state strike teams**.#
- **Daily evaluation of residents by a physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, or registered nurse**.#
- The development of surge staffing plans to ensure continuity of care in the event of an outbreak. **To aid in this effort, the state is supplementing strike teams with new bridge teams, which will provide emergency clinical staffing to nursing homes that are experiencing a staffing crisis**.#
 - Each bridge team is composed of a registered nurse and 5-7 aides, sufficient to care for up to 100 skilled nursing home residents per shift.
 - Maryland bridge teams include 260 registered nurses and aides who are currently under contract with MDH through an arrangement with Allegis and the Maryland Hospital Association.
- **Regular informational updates for residents, resident representatives, and staff regarding COVID-19 infections**.

Update on Unemployment Website. Governor Hogan provided an update on the Maryland Department of Labor's new unemployment website. Since its launch on Friday, more than 245,000 accounts have been activated and over 100,000 new claims have been filed. The website is now successfully activating an average of 33 accounts every minute, and an average of 780 claims are being successfully filed per hour.

Healthcare Heroes Day. To honor doctors, nurses, medical workers, and first responders, Governor Hogan is designating Saturday, May 2 as **Healthcare Heroes Day** in Maryland. This will coincide with a flyover of the Navy's Blue Angels and the Air Force's Thunderbirds, and buildings across the state, including the State House Dome, Camden Yards, and M&T Bank Stadium, will be lit up blue.

All of Governor Hogan's emergency orders and proclamations are [available here](#). Visit governor.maryland.gov/recovery to read the **Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery**.

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