Basic Facts

- *Coronaviruses* are a family of viruses that cause disease in animals, humans, including the common cold, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)
- COVID-19 is a new or novel coronavirus, also called SARS-CoV-2
Transmission and Symptoms

- Spreads person-to-person, primarily through respiratory droplets (cough, sneeze)
- Can be picked up from surfaces
- Incubation period: 2 – 14 days, 5 days on average
- Symptoms:
  - Fever, cough, shortness of breath; some GI symptoms
COVID-19 Basic Facts

Reported Cases in US as of 3/10/2020

- 647 cases reported to CDC
- Underestimate of actual cases due to testing challenges
- Number of actual cases likely significant higher
CDC Guidelines for Evaluation

- Clinicians should use their judgment to determine if a patient has signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and whether the patient should be tested.

- Decisions on which patients receive testing should be based on the local epidemiology of COVID-19, as well as the clinical course of illness.

- Most patients with confirmed COVID-19 have developed fever and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing).

- Clinicians are strongly encouraged to test for other causes of respiratory illness, including infections such as influenza.

Immediately report to your local health department any patients who meet criteria for a PUI for COVID-19, or any patient for whom clinical presentation or exposure history is equivocal. If you are unable to immediately reach your local health department, notify the Maryland Department of Health at 410-767-6700 during working hours or at 410-795-7365 after working hours.
Epidemiology of COVID-19

- COVID-19 was first identified in Asia, but it is now circulating globally
- First cases in Maryland identified 3/5/2020
- No one ethnic or racial group is at greater risk than others of developing COVID-19
- All age groups can be affected, though some at risk of more serious disease
Risk Factors for Serious Disease

- Age > 60 years
- Heart or lung disease
- Liver or kidney disease
- Diabetes or other metabolic disease
- Immunosuppression
- Current or recent pregnancy (within 2 weeks)
- Neurologic or neurodevelopment disorders
Treatment and Prevention

- No specific medical treatment
- No vaccine at present
- Encourage influenza vaccination to prevent flu
COVID-19 Basic Facts

Goals

- SLOW THE SPREAD
- PROTECT THE VULNERABLE
- MAINTAIN VITAL SERVICES
- ADJUST TO LOCAL CONDITIONS
- BE FLEXIBLE
- MAINTAIN NORMALCY IN ABNORMAL TIMES
Guidance for Communities
COVID-19 Community Guidance

Social Distancing at Home

- Keep at least 3 feet from others generally, 6 feet from people who are sick
- Limit face-to-face contact
- If you have a family member who is sick, stay home as well if told to do so by public health official or health care provider (Voluntary Home Quarantine)
If You Are Sick

- Stay home except for medical care
- Separate yourself from other people and animals
- Call ahead before seeing the doctor
- Wear a facemask *if you are sick*
- Always cover your cough and sneezes
- Don’t share household items
- Clean your hands, “high-touch” surfaces often
- Monitor your temperature and symptoms

*Facemasks are NOT recommended for people who are well or without symptoms*
Housing situations:

- Voluntary home quarantine
- Housing a family member ill with COVID-19
- Group housing
- People experiencing homelessness
- Housing for people vulnerable to COVID-19
  - Older adults
  - People with chronic medical conditions
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INFECTION CONTROL & PREVENTION OF COVID-19 IN FACILITIES SERVING OLDER ADULTS

- Recommendations for skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, adult medical day care providers, hospice facilities, and rehabilitation facilities with older adult patients
- May apply to other special housing situations
Group/Congregant Housing

- Group housing may confer additional risks
- Prevention – consider screening or restricting (especially facilities with vulnerable populations)
  - Signs/symptoms of respiratory infection, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat
  - In the last 14 days, contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, under investigation for COVID-19, or ill with respiratory illness
  - Travel within the last 14 days to areas with sustained community transmission (formerly international travel)
  - Living in a community where community-based spread of COVID-19 is occurring
COVID-19 Community Gathering

Considerations for Housing

- Prevention Planning
- Communications (including signage)
- Visitation Policies
- Infection Prevention
- Staffing – activate COOP plans
- Supplies
- Cleaning
- Managing ill persons
Community and Faith-Based Gatherings

- Discourage attendance for people who are ill
- Cleaning, hand hygiene supplies
- Encourage social distancing
- Special considerations for people at risk
  - People at increased risk of COVID-19
  - People at increased risk for other reasons
- Discourage travel
Guidance for Non-Health Care Businesses
Prevention Strategies at Work

- **Routine environmental cleaning, especially “high-touch” surfaces**
- **Communicate openly with employees about COVID-19 – avoid stigma towards staff, customers**
- **For employees who are traveling:**
  - Check [CDC Traveler’s Health Notices](https://www.cdc.gov/travel) for guidance related to travel
  - Advise employees to take their temperature, not travel if they are feeling sick
  - Employees on travel should notify employers and refrain from travel while feeling sick
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Employees who are not sick do not need to wear masks or respirators – CDC does not recommend these (except in health care settings)
- Other PPE should be based on risks for infectious disease generally (gloves for food handlers, etc.), not specifically for COVID-19
- Employees who are sick should not be at work, whether with a face mask or not – in exceptional circumstances, employees who are symptomatic should wear a face mask to reduce droplet transmission
Social Distancing at Work

- Limit close face-to-face work generally
- Consider alternatives to in-person large meetings
  - Encourage conference calls, telework wherever possible, especially when recommended by public health officials
Strategies for Employers

- Encourage sick employees to stay home:
  - Promote policies that encourage employees to stay home when they or family members are sick
  - Employees who are sick should not return to work unless fever- and symptom-free for at least 24 hours (consult with health care provider or public health officials for additional guidance)
  - Do not require a note from a health care provider for employees who are out sick – health care providers are likely to be very busy, and people with mild symptoms may have been told to avoid medical offices to limit spread
  - Encourage companies that provide contractual employees to adopt these policies
COVID-19 and Businesses

Continuity of Operations Plans and COVID-19

- Review HR policies and practices to ensure consistency with laws, health department guidance
- Adopt policies where possible to promote social distancing, flexible work practices, including telecommuting
- Clearly identify triggers for activating COOP
- Ensure communications in place to rapidly notify personnel of changes in situation
- Be aware of other events that may affect operations/staffing (e.g., child care, school closures)
- Monitor travel status of employees
Guidance for Schools
School Response to COVID-19

Before COVID-19 Cases Occur

- Review, update, and implement emergency operations plans
- Clarify staff and student policies regarding staying home when sick and spreading germs at work
- Review handwashing and cleaning policies and practices with staff, students
- Monitor absenteeism
- Establish procedures to isolate staff or students who become sick at school, and make sure parents understand policies and procedures for picking up a sick child
- Maintain regular cleaning procedures
- Ensure communications plans are updated for staff and parents
When COVID-19 Cases Occur in Schools

- Coordinate with public health agencies in considering or implementing dismissal policy, including communications.

- If dismissals or closures are implemented, additional considerations to discuss:
  - Postponement or cancellation of extracurricular activities or events
  - Communicating advice about social distancing outside of school
  - Continuity of education
  - Continuity of meal programs
  - Continuity of services for children with special needs
COVID-19
State Agency Responses
Pandemic Flu Attendance and Leave

- New policy as of 2/27/2020
- Secretary of DBM, in consultation with Secretary of Health, determines appropriate response level:
  - **Level 1 – Normal Operations (low to moderate severity)**
    - Employees report as normal
  - **Level 2 – Flexible Operations (moderate to high severity)**
    - Goal is to minimize spread while maintaining operations – agencies promote distancing
  - **Level 3 – Emergency Operations (high severity)**
    - Mission-critical operations maintained – employees may be reassigned to meet critical needs. All non-emergency personnel will be placed on administrative leave.
COVID-19 Response

Strategies for Everyone
Strategies for Everyone – I

- Avoid images, policies, or guidance that encourages stereotypes or stigma against any group
- Communication, planning and preparation, and general prevention (good hand hygiene, avoiding spread of virus through cough and sneeze, cleaning of “high-touch” surfaces, and social distancing) are the most effective strategies at this point
Strategies for Everyone – II

- During an outbreak in your community, CDC recommends the everyday preventive measures listed previously — especially staying home when sick — and these additional measures:
  - Keep away from others who are sick.
  - Limit face-to-face contact with others as much as possible
  - Consult with your healthcare provider if you or your household members are at high risk for COVID-19 complications
  - Wear a facemask if advised to do so by your healthcare provider or by a public health official
  - Stay home when a household member is sick with respiratory disease symptoms, if instructed to do so by public health officials or a health care provider (Voluntary Home Quarantine)
Environmental Cleaning

- Cleaning should emphasize “high-touch” areas
- EPA list of disinfectants registered for use against COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) available at: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2
COVID-19 Response

Resources and References

- Maryland Department of Health Coronavirus Website (https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Novel-coronavirus.aspx)
- CDC Travel Website (https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/)
Resources for Specific Groups

- Infection Prevention in the Home Setting

- Community- and Faith-Based Organizations

- Mass Gatherings and Large Community Events

- Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions for Specific Groups