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HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harford County COVID-19 Update: Phase-One Reopening; \$7,500 Small Business Relief Grants

BEL AIR, Md., (May 15, 2020) – *County Executive Barry Glassman issued the following weekly update on COVID-19 in Harford County.*

“This morning the Maryland Department of Health is reporting 671 cases, 28 deaths, and 4 probable deaths among Harford County residents. Nursing home cases at Bel Air Health & Rehabilitation Center and Forest Hill Health & Rehabilitation Center were 36% of our total cases and 64% of deaths, according to recent reports.

COVID-19 continues to have a serious impact, especially on our vulnerable populations. Those who are **most at risk** need to stay home as much as possible and we should all act as though the virus is everywhere.

However, as we noted last week, Harford County has the lowest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths per capita among the Maryland jurisdictions with at least 500 cases, according to the health department. While we must remain vigilant, this has allowed us to move forward with some reopenings later today.

Phase-one reopening

As you have likely heard by now, Gov. Hogan lifted his stay at home order and moved into the first phase of reopening some businesses and other activities, effective today at 5 p.m. Social distancing, face coverings indoors and gatherings limited to 10 or fewer remain in place, but this is a welcome step forward. Harford County will reopen to the extent **permitted by the governor** and we have updated our **COVID-19 website** with this information and guidance for businesses as they begin this phase.

Small business relief grants - applications online Monday

We will be posting applications online Monday for our COVID-19 small business relief grants, paid for from Harford County's share of federal CARES Act funding. Small businesses with 2 to 50 employees can apply for \$7,500 grants toward social distancing expenses, PPE purchases, payroll and other operating costs. Farmers with 10+ acres can apply for grants of \$2,500. Applications, FAQs and other details will be on the [county website](#) at 8 a.m. Monday, May 18 at <https://bit.ly/HarfordCOVID19Relief>. Businesses should work on their applications next week and we will begin accepting them online after Memorial Day on Tuesday, May 26th. Our goal is to help to as many businesses as we can, as quickly as possible. Once applications are approved, we expect most checks will go out within the month of June.

Outdoor sales spaces are likely to be safer and less likely to spread COVID-19 than indoor sales. So, on Thursday I signed an [Executive Order](#) temporarily waiving some parking lot requirements. This will allow businesses to use some of the space in their lots for outdoor sales. They will still have to provide enough parking for visitors and they must comply with all fire, life safety, American Disability Act and social distancing requirements, but we hope this will expand economic opportunities for our local businesses and their customers.

As we move into this next phase of our 'new normal,' I expect we may be dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic into the fall and the following year. We will see ups and downs in the number of cases, especially with increased testing. I will continue to work closely with our health department to monitor outbreaks and make adjustments as necessary. Please continue to take care of yourself and those around you. Be smart, be safe and stay #HarfordStrong."

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