

March 31, 2021

Message to Harford County Council from UM Upper Chesapeake Health's COVID Response Leadership:

In the last week, we have seen a dramatic increase in COVID+ patients at our hospitals in Bel Air and Havre de Grace. Harford County is now a hot spot with a positivity rate of 9.31% - the highest in the state. Passover and Easter celebrations this week encourage family gatherings. We ask that our community members exercise caution and avoid large groups of people, non-essential travel and seek vaccination opportunities as soon as possible. Visit <https://www.umms.org/uch/coronavirus/get-vaccine> or visit <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/vaccine>. Vaccines are becoming more readily available and we urge people to seek protection.

We have seen surges after every holiday during this pandemic and we are seeing a dramatic uptick this week following St. Patrick's Day and Spring Break. The pandemic is not over. Although many of the emergency COVID regulations impacting our lives during the pandemic have been eased to allow "things to return to normal," it is important to remember that things have not gotten easier for our health care teams. The number of COVID+ patients in our hospitals remains very high, which brings both a physical and emotional toll to our teams, your neighbors and friends, as they fight to bring your loved ones back to full health. Again, we encourage our community members to follow the best practices of mask wearing, hand washing, social distancing, and obtaining a vaccine.

If you believe you are sick with symptoms of COVID, it is important to get tested <https://www.umms.org/uch/coronavirus/covid-testing> and call your doctor if you are positive.

UM UCH has a Monoclonal Antibody Therapy (mAb) clinic, an outpatient setting for people age 18 years and older who meet specific criteria including positive for COVID, mild to moderate symptoms and a high risk for developing severe symptoms or the need for hospitalization. Current treatments have been very effective in reducing COVID-19 hospitalization or emergency room visits when administered within 10 days of symptom onset. A physician referral is required for mAb treatment from your family physician or an urgent care center.

Harford County may be finished with COVID, but COVID is not finished with us.