



COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Update April 17, 2020

Friends,

I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy. I'm not sure that our circumstances will ever feel "normal" but they are becoming more familiar as time goes on. We appreciate the steps that so many citizens are taking to practice social distancing and help "flatten the curve." In this email, I'll share some updated information about the current status of COVID-19 in Loudoun as well as the government's response.

County government continues to function, and on Tuesday I was proud to Chair what is believed to be the first "all virtual" meeting in the history of the Board of Supervisors. All 5 members of the Finance Committee plus two additional colleagues participated in the Finance meeting, and the following night 6 Board members participated virtually in our Public Hearing. The Board has made the decision to continue with our normal operations, including land use decisions, during this period. We are able to ensure public participation by allowing for citizens to call into the public hearings and speak to us live during the meetings just as they would in person, and the Board Room is remaining opening for citizens who wish to come in person.

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Later today, I will be hosting a virtual meeting with the leadership of homeowners associations in the Dulles District. We are anticipating over 50 participants including HOA Board members and staff. I have invited the Director of General Services to provide an update on waste removal, and we will also hear from Zoning Enforcement and the Sheriff's Office. My office and the County stands ready to assist HOAs during this unprecedented time.

Finally, I want to thank the many citizens who have donated to area food banks, donated personal protective equipment, provided food for healthcare workers and first responders, and done so many other things to help the community. We are all in this together and every little bit helps!

Status of COVID-19 in Loudoun

According to the official numbers released today, there are 385 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Loudoun County. Eight individuals have died from the virus in Loudoun. As I've said before, I don't believe the number of confirmed cases is a particularly accurate way to measure the virus in the County because such a small percentage of people have actually been tested. I continue to pay closer attention to the status of our two hospitals. The number of coronavirus patients in the hospital has remained steady at about 40. There are plenty of ICU beds and ventilators available at both Inova Loudoun and StoneSprings Hospital. We have not seen a spike in patients, which indicates that efforts to flatten the curve are working. We are certainly not out of the woods yet, but I think there are positive signs.

Healthcare and Testing

Inova Health System is looking for individuals recovered from COVID-19 to donate plasma for a research study. The plasma contains immunoglobulins (immune protection) and this study will use the plasma

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to help patients currently sick with COVID-19 disease. Read more at their [website](#).

Testing availability has improved somewhat. The criteria for getting a test varies by provider and by lab but is still restrictive. I think this remains one of the largest obstacles to "getting back to normal." There are reports of some labs having capacity, but implementation seems to be limited in our area. Many of the Board members have asked questions about why this is the case and we're having trouble figuring out where the connections are being missed, but we keep pressing.

Locally, the Inova Dulles South Urgent Care Center has converted to a full time respiratory clinic. (I found out the hard way that they are no longer seeing patients for other issues this week). They are also conducting COVID testing with a doctor's note. I am concerned about patients being able to receive routine, in person medical care. Many practices have gone to a "virtual only" approach but there are obvious limitations to this. The County is working to make sure that no practice is doing this because of lack of PPE. I do understand that like many other businesses, economic issues are now hitting medical offices - the lack of patient volume makes it difficult for them to pay bills too. But in this time of crisis, we cannot overlook the need for routine medical care, whether that is vaccines for newborns or normal infections, sprains, etc. that people experience in life. I have been in discussions with the Chair of our Health Commission, Dr. Farrell, and Dr. Goodfriend of the Health Department about this issue.

Personal Protective Equipment is an issue for the entire nation. The County's program has been very successful. So far, we have collected and distributed 4,725 gloves, 1,607 N95 respirators, 555 surgical masks and 202 disposable gowns.

If you have access to PPE and can donate it, please visit loudoun.gov/ppe. We need surgical masks, N95 respirators, disposable gloves, face shields, coveralls,

[Sign Up for Alert Loudoun](#)

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[COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)

gloves, hand sanitizer, and monetary donations. The County is not able to accept homemade equipment but will accept equipment that is opened and unused. Loudoun-based healthcare providers and facilities can request PPE at the same link.

I am pleased to also share that you can now donate PPE in South Riding. A drop-off location has been added at the Dulles South Recreation and Community Center, located at 24950 Riding Center Drive in South Riding. It will operate Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. A tent will be placed in the front parking lot of the center with a sign identifying the PPE donation site.

This is in addition to the Leesburg drop-off location at 751 Miller Drive, which operates Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Blue signs on Miller Drive and in the parking lot will guide individuals to the drop-off location.

Finally, another new update is that the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office will be implementing a program to pick up and deliver prescriptions from pharmacies to vulnerable residents at private residencies. Residents will have to prepay for their prescriptions and confirm that their pharmacies will allow for pickup by someone other than the resident. Residents can request the service by calling 703-777-1021, which is a 24/7 LCSO line.

Governor Northam's Executive Orders

Governor Northam has extended the closure of non-essential businesses in the state until May 8. LCSO has local legal authority to enforce this order. Businesses affected include:

- Theaters, performing arts centers, concert venues, museums, and other indoor entertainment centers; fitness centers, gymnasiums, recreation centers, indoor sports facilities, indoor exercise facilities;
- Beauty salons, barber shops, spas, massage parlors, tanning salons, tattoo shops, and any other location

where personal care or personal grooming services are performed that would not allow compliance with social distancing guidelines to remain six feet apart;

- Racetracks and historic horse racing facilities;
- Bowling alleys, skating rinks, arcades, amusement parks, trampoline parks, fairs, arts and craft facilities, aquariums, zoos, escape rooms, indoor shooting ranges, public and private social clubs, and all other places of indoor public amusement.

Furthermore, dining and congregation areas in food service establishments must remain closed. Social gatherings of ten or more people are still banned. Essential businesses may remain open if they are implementing social distancing protocols.

The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office and the Loudoun County Health Department are working together to educate the affected business owners to ensure an understanding of the order to help combat COVID-19. If a resident of Loudoun County observes a potential violation, they are encouraged to call the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office non-emergency number at 703-777-1021.

Violations of the governor's orders are a misdemeanor, which carry a punishment of up to a year in jail and a fine of up to \$2,500.

Community Help

A couple of new updates. First, the Board of Supervisors has reallocated \$200,000 from the Eastern Loudoun County Home Revitalization Program to create a rental assistance program for local households that are strained financially due to the pandemic. Terms of the program include income eligibility based on household size for households earning up to 70 percent of the state median income (\$60,332 for a family of four), direct payments made to landlords or property management companies on behalf of residents who qualify for the program, and assistance provided for up to three months of rent. Residents who were current in their rent payments as of March 30 and

who now need help paying rent may contact the county's Information and Referral program at 703-777-0420. Applicants will need related financial and rent documents.

Second, the Board also appropriated \$150,000 specifically to assist local food pantries with their operations. There is, predictably, a strain on local food pantries due to increased demand as a result of COVID-19. Donations to Loudoun Hunger can be made in person at 750 Miller Drive SE in Leesburg or via loudounhunger.org/donate-now. Donations to the Dulles South Food Pantry can be made in person at 24757 Arcola Mills Drive on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM.

Finally, I want to remind that you Loudoun's other services remain available. During this time of high anxiety, resources are available for those who are suffering. Please contact Loudoun County's [Mental Health Department](#) if you are struggling. Furthermore, our Department of Family Services exists as a resource for those who have been displaced or otherwise need help during this time. They can be reached at 703-777-0353.

Personal Property Tax Payment Delay

I want to remind you that the Board of Supervisors has approved a one month delay in payment of personal property taxes (such as the car tax). The tax deadline will now be June 5 instead of May 5. This is being done to allow residents more flexibility. In addition, Treasurer Zurn indicated that residents facing COVID-19 related economic hardships can contact the Treasurer's Office and his collections divisions will attempt to work out arrangements with those in need. Loudoun County Commissioner of the Revenue Bob Wertz has also extended the deadline for filing 2020 Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled renewal forms to June 1.

Economic Concerns

Over 17,000 of our neighbors in Loudoun have now filed for unemployment since the pandemic began. The Department of Economic Development has hosted virtual job fairs and remains engaged with our business community to try to help during this incredibly difficult time. I know there are frustrations with the SBA process for receiving assistance, and now the program has run out of money, but our team is still talking to businesses and helping them access the various forms of assistance. DED has set up a webpage [here](#) with resources including financial resources for local small businesses affected by COVID-19. There is also a list of helpful webinars and local companies that are providing special opportunities for consumers during the crisis. I also encourage businesses to watch Executive Director Buddy Rizer's [message](#) to the business community.

The Department of Economic Development has reinstated last year's successful "Take Loudoun Home" initiative, this time with an emphasis on supporting local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. One great component of the initiative is the [Loudoun Made, Loudoun Grown Marketplace](#) - a digital e-commerce platform that allows users to support local farms. Furthermore, DED has now compiled a [list](#) of over 200 businesses that residents can consult in order to support local businesses during this time.

Public Safety

We have had two Sheriff's Deputies and three members of Loudoun County Fire & Rescue test positive for COVID-19. Precautions have been taken regarding those individuals and the interactions they may have had. LCFR has increased its protocol for PPE usage to ensure the safety of the public and our providers. Calls for service are down significantly compared to normal, and there are no shortages with our response.

Final Thoughts

It has been heartening to see so many take advantage of local restaurants offering takeout and delivery. I know money is tight for many but I also know these folks appreciate your business; you are helping them stay afloat.

I have received fewer reports of individuals congregating at parks and schools, so I think the message has finally gotten across on that front. Schools have now started "new" material, and I know that is challenging for parents. Keeping track of assignments for four children in my household alone is not easy! It gives us a new appreciation for all of our teachers. At the same time, I'm glad that the kids are now getting some of that interaction with teachers and classmates.

I have been asked the question of when we can get back to normal. As I said above, I think that really comes down to testing availability and PPE. When we can be fully confident that a broader spectrum of the population has access to tests and that all healthcare works have more than enough PPE, I think we can begin the conversation about how to get back to workplaces and a more normal environment. We also must ensure that we will not ever hit the "peak" that some have feared regarding hospital usage. It's hard to say exactly when that will be, but the extension of the Governor's order gives us some additional time to work through everything. There is no doubt that when this threat does subside, it will be a different world, but the County government is ready to adapt as needed.

Other Announcements

Braddock / Route 28 Traffic Changes

The Transform 66 Outside the Beltway project construction has required some traffic changes at the intersection of Braddock Road and Route 28. The left turn lanes from Route 28 North to Braddock Road and the spur ramp from I-66 West to Braddock Road will permanently close. Drivers will follow signed detours

until the new bridge connecting Braddock and Walney
Roads and providing access to Route 28 and I-66
opens in late 2020.

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