



COVID-19 (Coronavirus)- Loudoun County Update

Friends,

First of all, I want to wish everyone well. I know that this is a time of high anxiety for all of us. The coronavirus has already had a significant impact on our way of life, and is causing great economic and physical uncertainty for many people.

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Loudoun County Health Department, Office of Emergency Management, and other departments have been working hard to monitor and manage the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19). Loudoun County has activated our Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which improves communication between agencies both inside and outside government and with the public.

Our efforts have been led by our Health Department Director, Dr. David Goodfriend, and assisted by County Administrator Tim Hemstreet and our team. I have been in regular contact with Dr. Goodfriend and Mr. Hemstreet all week. The Board of Supervisors held a [public briefing](#) last night with County officials, representatives from our hospitals and Dulles International Airport. In my capacity as a member of the Board of Directors of the Washington

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Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), I just completed a nearly 7-hour Board meeting this afternoon. It included a great deal of time with WMATA's Chief Safety Officer and Chief Medical Officer on the regional response to COVID-19.

Status of COVID-19 in Loudoun

The good news is that there is currently no evidence of what experts deem "community transmission" in Loudoun County. Community transmission is when individuals become infected but the infection can't be traced back to a single source or event. There are currently two individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in Loudoun. Both can be traced back to the Christ Church Georgetown exposure in which the Rector is known to have tested positive and been in contact with several hundred parishioners. Both individuals are doing well at this time.

While I know there was a great deal of speculation when LCPS decided to close school until March 20, that decision was not based on any known cases in the school system. At this time, there has not been a significant increase in sick individuals, COVID-19 tests, or individuals requesting tests in Loudoun. In fact, there are only two known pending tests at the State Laboratory in Richmond from Loudoun residents. Obviously, we are very closely monitoring all of those metrics, and the County is making preparations should that change.

Testing for COVID-19

In last night's briefing, we did uncover significant gaps in the execution of the plans put forth by the Virginia Department of Health and the County Health Department. I asked Dr. John Farrell of South Riding Pediatrics, Chairman of the Loudoun County Health Commission, to participate in the discussion because I wanted a frontline medical provider who could provide insight on what was happening in the "real world." The County's guidance has been for individuals who are sick or feel that they are at risk to

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contact their normal physician - primary care, urgent care, etc. - for testing. LabCorp has created a test kit. However, we learned from Dr. Farrell that providers in Loudoun do not have access to that kit, and lack the necessary protective equipment to administer the test without putting their own staff at risk. As a result of that discussion, the Board has asked the County Administrator and Dr. Goodfriend to take immediate steps to provide that equipment to providers, have a dialogue with the lab providers, and ensure the availability of tests. I have also suggested a designated test site that could be segregated, and I am working with one of our healthcare providers on that idea. If you or someone you know is in need of a test, my current advice is that you contact the Loudoun County Health Department at 703-737-8300. The County does have access to tests and can arrange for specimens to be sent to the State Medical Laboratory in Richmond. Do not arrive unannounced at a doctor's office if you believe you need to be tested.

[Loudoun Express Request \(LEx\) Citizen Request System](#)
[Loudoun Online Land Applications System \(LOLA\)](#)
[COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)

Ensuring the Safety of First Responders

One of the County's first priorities was the establishment of operational protocol for our Fire-Rescue and Sheriff's Office personnel. Developed in concert with our LCFR Medical Director, Dr. Morgan, our protocol will ensure that first responders can safely treat patients who may have exposure to the virus without needing to quarantine themselves. This is essential if the virus becomes widespread, because without this protocol we could be at risk of losing the ability to respond to fire and EMS calls on a timely basis due to personnel shortages.

As noted above, we have the same concern regarding front line doctors and nurses, and we are doing our best to obtain supplies for those personnel that we could distribute to offices. I know that many of these practices are also working hard to obtain such supplies and establish their own protocols.

Loudoun County Facilities

At this time, the County has not announced closures to our facilities such as libraries or community and recreation centers. We are concerned about vulnerable populations such as seniors so you will likely see some guidance regarding the use of our senior centers in the near future. County/PRCS activities at LCPS facilities are cancelled through the announced LCPS closure of March 20. The County is evaluating our situation in real time and it is possible that we may announce facility closures or service changes, so stay tuned to our communications channels for information about that.

Dulles Airport

Air travel has obviously been significantly impacted by COVID-19. At this time, flights are still operating, but airlines are adjusting schedules, and the President announced restrictions on travel from Europe for certain individuals. Dulles Airport officials reported to the Board that medical professionals from the CDC are onsite at Dulles Airport and are observing and screening patients in real time. Protocols also exist for airlines and flight crews regarding notification of ill patients.

Metro/Transit

At this time, Metro is operating on a normal schedule. Ridership is down significantly over the past two days, and adjustments could be made to the schedule. Under the current protocol status, all rail and bus vehicles and stations are being disinfected daily, with more frequent "wipe downs" of commonly touched surfaces throughout the day. Metro is carefully monitoring its employee group and ridership. I am receiving daily (and sometimes more frequent) updates from Metro staff about the status of our system.

Economic Concerns

Loudoun County's social service agencies are mobilizing to help address needs in the event of loss of income or other disruptions due to the virus. We are

particularly focused on vulnerable populations who rely on our services (and the schools) for things like meals. There is the potential for various federal government programs to help those in need, and our staff is working with the federal government on those opportunities. We also have many wonderful community organizations that can help those in need. Should you need immediate assistance, call 703-777-0420.

General Advice

By now, I'm sure everyone is very familiar with the advice that has been given - wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your face, cover yourself when sneezing, and don't wear a face mask unless you are sick (and don't reuse them!).

My advice is a little more simple:

- 1) Don't panic. Right now, there's no evidence of widespread community transmission, and all of us in government are making preparations should that occur. The vast majority of individuals who get the virus do not become particularly sick, and our nation's best and brightest are working on medicine and vaccines as we speak. Have patience at grocery stores, and there's no need to "panic buy" a lot of items based on our situation in the County right now.

- 2) Take care of each other. One of the things I love the most about our community is the way we pick each other up when we are in need. Southern Loudoun is full of great families and generous people, and in times of need let's help each other out. Whether it is sharing supplies like toilet paper and soap or watching someone's child for a few hours, this is the time for us to step up as neighbors.

Finally, there are a lot of resources out there. The CDC's [website](#) is considered the official source of information regarding the virus' spread, symptoms of infection, prevention and treatment, the global outbreak, frequently asked questions, and more.

Loudoun has also set up a dedicated webpage [here](#).
The LCPS coronavirus webpage can be accessed [here](#).
From now until the outbreak is contained, we will have an information item at each Board of Supervisors Business Meeting to update us on the effects on the County and what measures are being taken to combat the virus. As always, meeting materials can be accessed [here](#).

I will remain actively engaged in the County's response. We are committed to being transparent and forward with information to the best of our ability. If you need something, please don't hesitate to contact my office by [email](#) and we'll do our best to help.

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