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MGM National Harbor Donates 45,000+ Meals To Nourish Now

By PRESS OFFICER
MGM National Harbor

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (March 19, 2020)—Days after MGM National Harbor temporarily closed its doors to the general public, the company opened its doors to donate food to the local community. This week, MGM National Harbor contributed 22 pallets of food to community partners such as Nourish Now. The food will provide more than 45,000 meals to Maryland residents.



PHOTO COURTESY MGM NATIONAL HARBOR

MGM National Harbor donated food to the local community.

"This unprecedented climate has paralyzed communities locally and nationally and there is no greater time than now to exercise the meaning of community," says Melonie Johnson, President and COO of MGM National Harbor. "Partners like Nourish Now extend deep into the community and providing local families with access to healthy meals is more significant than ever."

To assist in this effort, Brett Meyers, Nourish Now founder and executive director, contacted local catering and food donor partner Simply Fresh Trucks, along with Nourish Now vehicles, arrived at MGM National Harbor acquiring and transporting approximately 55,000 pounds of food to Nourish Now warehouses where the meals will be put together.

"We at Nourish Now are thankful for partners who are always there to give back and support our mission to end food waste and hunger," says Meyers. "Because of our existing relationship with MGM National Harbor, it proved to be a quick and seamless process that now allows us to get meals to families in need much quicker, which is our only goal right now."

Children and families throughout Montgomery County and Prince George's County will be the beneficiaries of this fast-acting partnership and true spirit of everyone working together for the greater good. Meals will be available for pick up Thursday, March 19 from 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Nourish Now, 1111 Taft St, Rockville, MD 20850.

Horacio Sierra Receives Faculty Award For Excellence in Teaching

By DAMITA CHAMBERS
Bowie State University

BOWIE, Md. (March 9, 2020)—A Bowie State University literature and cultural studies professor who uses experiential learning to promote student success is being honored with a Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching by the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents. The Faculty Awards are the highest honor granted to exemplary USM faculty.

Associate Professor Horacio Sierra uses out-of-the-box teaching methods to encourage his students to apply their knowledge and critical thinking skills. As part of the curriculum, he leads field trips to live performances of William Shakespeare plays and exhibitions at art museums in the region. He regularly invites guest lecturers to speak to his classes, including state legislators, pop culture icons and civil rights activists. In 2018, he led students on a cultural immersion trip to Mexico City during spring break.

Each Faculty Award carries a \$2,000 prize provided by the institutions and the USM Foundation. USM Chancellor Jay A. Perman and Board of Regents Chair Linda Gooden will present the awards at the next scheduled meeting of the full board on Friday, May 1 at Bowie State University.

"Dr. Horacio Sierra is passionate about teaching and loves seeing his students apply the knowledge and critical thinking skills that they have acquired to real-life situations and for human improvement," said Bowie State University President Aminta H. Breaux. "He is unique with his pedagogy, because his teaching involves experiential learning, creative or innovative curricular, and dynamic learning designs. Dr. Sierra has a guiding belief in the importance of immersing students in extracurricular activities to enable them to gain rich cultural experiences that widen their mental horizon."

Dr. Sierra has designed innovative courses that challenge traditional approaches to teaching literature and language analysis, including the first queer cultural studies course at a historically black college or university (HBCU). He also started a course on graphic novels and another one on popular songs and artists. He established



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Dr. Horacio Sierra in the classroom.

an English internship program, so that students can earn academic credit for work related to their degree.

With his class assignments, he promotes the use of technology and creative expression to assess student learning, instead of traditional research papers. With this flexibility, some students have performed Shakespeare scenes in acting troupes, produced podcasts and mini-documentaries, created a research-based Playbill and worked with a campus librarian to develop an artifact-rich public exhibit.

He also secured grants to fund innovations to improve student learning performance. In 2017, he helped students in an introductory English course save money on textbooks by providing access to free open source educational materials, using a \$1,500 Maryland Open Source Textbook grant from USM's William E. Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation.

In addition to the USM Board of Regents Faculty Award, Dr. Sierra has received recent teaching honors, including the 2019 Bowie State University Presidential Excellence in Teaching Award.

Maryland Lawmakers Pass Legislation to Strengthen the Hate Crime Statute and Make Strangulation a First-Degree Felony

By DENISE SMITH
Office of the State's Attorney,
Prince George's County

UPPER MARLBORO, MD (March 17, 2020)—Prince George's County State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy announces the successful passage of her two priority pieces of legislation to strengthen Maryland's hate crime statute and to make strangulation

a first-degree felony by the Maryland General Assembly. The passage of these bills, during a compressed legislative session, demonstrates the State's Attorney's leadership and strong relationships in Annapolis.

Yesterday, lawmakers passed Senate Bill 606 (SB606) and House Bill 917 (HB917), "Criminal Law—Hate Crimes Basis – 2nd Lieutenant Richard

Collins, III's Law." The legislation strengthens the current statute, clarifying that hate does not have to be the sole motivation for a hate crime.

"I want to thank our legislative partners for sponsoring this bill. I am especially grateful for the strength and commitment of the Collins family to not only seek justice for their son, but justice for all," Braveboy said.

"In 2019, there were zero convictions in all of Maryland's Circuit Courts under the current hate crime statute. The 2nd Lt. Richard Collins III Law will ensure that individuals who commit a hate crime are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

In addition, lawmakers

See FELONY Page A8

PGCPS Adds More Student Meal Sites

Student enrichment packets available at meal sites and online

By OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Prince George's County Public Schools

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (March 18, 2020)—Starting Thursday, March 19, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) students can get "grab and go" meals at 10 new sites, bringing the total number to 36.

In addition, student enrichment packets for use during the statewide school closings are now available at all meal sites and online for prekindergarten through 12th grade students. Packets are also available for students attending Community-Referenced Instruction programs, a special education program for high school students with special needs, or regional programs. The packets provide additional review in grade-level content areas.

"This week we have served thousands of students at our meal sites," said Dr. Monica Goldson, Chief Executive Officer. "I am committed to meeting the community demand by doing our best to help children with daily

meals and making it easier for them to obtain learning enrichment packets. As a community, we are at our best when we come together."

The new student meal sites are Calverton, Clinton Grove, Gladys Noon Spellman, Laurel, Lewisdale, Springhill Lake, Thomas S. Stone and Waldon Woods elementary schools, and Benjamin Stoddert, Kettering and Oxon Hill middle schools.

Breakfast, lunch and a snack will be available weekdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. School system staff will be on hand to distribute meals in the cafeteria or parking lot depending on the weather. Students may pick up all three meals, which may include cold cereal, a sack lunch, fruit and milk, in one visit. Parents and guardians are not required to accompany students, but adults

See MEAL SITES Page A3

Statement: County Council Chair Todd M. Turner Updates Council Response to Coronavirus in Prince George's County; Council Adopts Emergency Measure

By KAREN D. CAMPBELL
Prince George's County
Council Media

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (March 17, 2020)—The Council is deeply concerned about the catastrophic impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the health and safety of Prince Georgians, and we are working together with County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks and the County Health Department to address this public health crisis.

COVID-19 has changed life as we know it, and at least for now, it is also changing the way the County Council operates, and how we engage our residents in important Council processes. In the current Federal, State and County states of emergency, the Council must continue to balance its responsibility to serve the community to the fullest extent possible, as a legislative body, the County's Board of Health, and under its land-use and fiscal authority, with an equal duty to protect the health, welfare and safety of all Prince Georgians and our staff.

During Council Session on Tuesday, March 17, the Council adopted Emergency Resolution, CR-10-2020, which as a result of the coronavirus public health emergency, significantly adjusts Council operations, sessions and committee meeting schedules, and presents alternative public participation pathways for our residents to remain engaged in

required Council meetings and operations.

Under this emergency measure, which has the force and effect of law, all public meetings, sessions and hearings of the Prince George's County Council, sitting as the District Council on land-use matters, the Office of the Zoning Hearing Examiner, and Board of Appeals are stayed for a period of 60 days or until the statewide emergency is lifted.

The time within which any individual, agency or official must submit a recommendation and/or response to the District Council, Zoning Hearing Examiner or Board of Appeals for consideration during these proceedings, is also stayed, for the same 60-day period.

The Council will continue to monitor the rapidly evolving coronavirus crisis and assess any need for additional adjustments. As we begin the FY 2021 Budget Review and Adoption process, and further the ongoing Zoning Ordinance Rewrite/Countywide Map Amendment processes (The Council and the Prince George's County Planning Board of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission have jointly agreed to postpone the March 23rd Joint Public Hearing—further information to be provided), we remain committed to the continuity of government

See COUNCIL Page A6

INSIDE

Best Friends During Our Worst Times:

Consider Fostering a Shelter Pet

"Shelters are swamped in the best of times, and with more and more staff in every sector of American life self-quarantining and falling ill, animals already abandoned and without homes are going to be increasingly vulnerable," says Dr. Robin Ganzert.

Community, Page A3

To Be Equal:

Coronavirus Crisis Highlights Racial Disparity in Healthcare and Economy, Federal Response Must Include Targeted Relief To Hardest-Hit Communities

We must insist that testing and treatment are available in underserved low-income neighborhoods and communities of color

Commentary, Page A4

Governor Hogan Announces Closure of All Non-Essential Businesses, \$175 Million Relief Package for Workers and Small Businesses Affected By COVID-19

A list of the comprehensive actions Governor Hogan announced on Monday, March 23.

Business and Finance, Page A5

Take Charge of Your Healthcare Decisions

Help your family and your care team by taking charge of your healthcare decisions. You can start by setting time aside on April 16, National Healthcare Decisions Day, to talk about your healthcare plan.

Health and Wellness, Page A6

Maryland Department of Human Services Continues to Provide All Programs and Services to Marylanders

For health resources regarding COVID-19, including case counts and clinician guidance, Marylanders should visit health.maryland.gov/coronavirus.

Features, Page A7

TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451 will return next week

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

AN AFTERNOON OF MUSIC

Sunday, May 31, 2020 at 4 p.m., Family Ministry at Providence-Fort Washington United Methodist Church is sponsoring "An Afternoon of Music". The program will feature members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated from the Metropolitan area of Washington, DC, MD, and VA. Karleen Powell, Choir Director, Charlotte Douglass, Accompanist. Guest Artist Reverend Rosemarie Jones, Pianist. The program will be held at Providence-Fort Washington United Methodist Church, 10610 Old Fort Road, Fort Washington, Maryland 20744. Rev. Kermit C.C. Moore, Pastor. Free Will Offering.

Music performed will include African American Heritage songs, praise songs, and contemporary religious music you have heard throughout the years. The Family Ministry want to raise the awareness of our church and its programs, as well as to generate support to enrich the activities of the Family Ministry for the overall welfare of the community. Join us as one body and praise God for all He has done and continues to do for us.

As a donor a portion of the donation will also support the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority scholarship organizations, Educational Advancement Foundation. Because of your generosity, your name or business name will appear in our church program. Levels of support are Patron (\$2.00-\$9.00), Bronze (\$10.00-\$24.00) Silver (\$25.00-\$49.00) Gold (\$50.00-\$74.00) Platinum (\$75.00-\$100).

Deadline to be listed in the program is Sunday, May 3, 2020. Please make check or money order payable to Providence-Fort Washington, UMC. In the memo section of your check: write "Family Ministry Concert". Mail your payment to: Attn: Jocelyn Moore, Providence-Fort Washington UMC, 10610 Old Fort Road, Fort Washington, Maryland 20744. For additional information, please contact Jocelyn Moore, Coordinator of Family Ministry at 240-755-9008.

PRESIDENT BREAUX

Daily Record names Bowie State University President Dr. Aminta H. Breaux to top 100 Women List. Dr. Breaux was honored for outstanding professional achievement, leadership and mentoring.

"I am honored to be recognized with such dynamic and

influential women leaders in the Daily Records 2020 class of Maryland's Top 100 Women, said President Breaux. "As the first woman president of Maryland's first historically black college or university (HBCU), I am grateful to have been afforded an opportunity to build my career on providing thousands of young people with access to quality education that transforms lives. My passion for public education is what inspires me every day, advancing public education."

"Dr. Breaux has served as the visionary 10th president of Bowie State University since 2017, bringing more than 30 years of diverse higher education leadership experience. She is committed to ensuring that every Bowie State University student develops an entrepreneurial mindset to achieve success in rapidly changing workplaces and communities. She initiated a university-wide focus to infuse entrepreneurship education across the disciplines and has led the effort to build an Entrepreneurship Living-Learning Community, slated to open in fall 2021. She also brought the Saxbys Experiential Learning Program to the campus, which recently celebrated the opening of the coffee and social impact company's first exclusively student-run café at an HBCU."

"Dr. Breaux is a leading voice in 21st century education, and because of her extensive knowledge and expertise, she has been tapped to serve in multiple leadership roles. She was appointed to the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the Governor's P-20 Leadership Council of Maryland. She is Vice Chair for the Board of Directors for the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), Bowie State's athletic conference. She was one of the key leaders involved in bringing the popular CIAA Basketball Tournament to Baltimore from 2021-2023."

"Dr. Breaux is also deeply committed to serving her community, particularly with programs and support activities that enrich the lives of children and youth. She is a member of the board of directors for the Greater Prince George's Business Roundtable, Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce and the University of Maryland Capital Region Health. The Daily Record has presented more than 1,500 women with this honor." Media Contact: Damita Chambers, dchambers@bowiestate.edu.

Around the County

**Take 10 minutes and BE COUNTED!
Have You Completed Your
Census Questionnaire?
Complete it by
Census Day April 1, 2020!**

Prince George's County State's Attorney Events Cancelled:

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the March 31 Community in the Courthouse is cancelled. Please stay tuned for announcements to resume this monthly event. For more information, contact Thelmetria Michaelides at tamichaelides@co.pg.md.us.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Crime Victims Awareness Day event scheduled for April 26 has been postponed. Please stay tuned for a rescheduled date. For more information, email Gerald Collins at gacollins@co.pg.md.us.

—Office of the State's Attorney for Prince George's County

URGENT! Prince George's County Further Reduces Service on TheBus Due to COVID-19

LARGO, Md. (March 20, 2020)—Prince George's County will begin to implement phase 2 of service reductions on TheBus as fewer riders are expected to utilize services due to coronavirus (COVID-19). Additional service reduction will begin on Monday, March 23, 2020.

TheBus will suspend transit service on Routes 11, 12, 14, 15x, 23, 27 and 34, in addition to the bus lines already suspended (Routes 21x, 22, 25, 35s, 51 and 53). There will be no fare charged on TheBus routes in service until further notice to maintain frequency on all TheBus routes at one hour. Also, to promote social distancing, TheBus will allow riders to enter and exit using the rear doors only, to limit close contact between passengers and the driver. Exceptions will be made for the disabled and mothers with strollers.

****If YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL, DO NOT TAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.** This is for your personal safety and the safety of our public transportation drivers. Call your healthcare provider immediately and ask for guidance and assistance.

For updates and additional information please visit the Prince George's County website (www.princegeorgescountymd.gov), call 301-324-2877, check the Department of Public Works and Transportation social media pages @PGCountyDPWT or sign up for NextBus alerts.

For Metro service updates please visit wmata.com/about/news/METRO-SERVICE-FURTHER-REDUCED-TO-SUPPORT-ESSENTIAL-TRIPS-ONLY.cfm#main-content ... #WMATA #dc #md #va #coronavirus #COVID19

For further information on COVID-19 visit health.mypgc/coronavirus or call 301-883-6627.

—Paulette L. Jones, Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation

State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy's Statement Regarding Efforts to Reduce Possible Spread of Coronavirus at Department of Corrections

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (March 18, 2020)—Prince George's County State's Attorney Aisha N. Braveboy released the following statement regarding efforts to reduce the possibility of the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) at the Department of Corrections:

"As everyone knows the coronavirus (COVID-19) is seriously impacting our communities as well as others throughout the country and world. According to health officials, the number of confirmed cases continues to rise in Prince George's County and the region,

"In light of this information, drastic steps have been taken to curb the spread, including closing county buildings to the public, implementing teleworking in many agencies and suspending in-person meetings. It is also important that we take steps to ensure that the virus doesn't spread among our jail population.

"The jail is a place that could present a breeding ground and further prolong this crisis. Therefore, my office is working with the public defender's office to review release conditions for inmates. We will consider cases in which individuals are charged with low-level, nonviolent offenses or have a short time left on their sentence. Our goal is to safely and judiciously reduce the inmate population considering the public health crisis caused by the coronavirus. While no cases of the virus have been confirmed at the jail, it is important that we work proactively.

"Together I am confident that we will contain this deadly disease. As State's Attorney, my top priority is the security of every resident and I will continue to implement common-sense strategy to promote safety and justice for all. I urge you to be safe and take care of yourself and your family. Also, please look out for those most vulnerable in our society, including the elderly and those with disabilities. We are a strong county because we care about each other. We will get through this and come out stronger together."

—Denise Smith, Office of the State's Attorney, Prince George's County

Prince George's County Students Named to President's List at Berkeley College

(March 17, 2020)—Students from Prince George's County, MD, have been named to the President's List at Berkeley College for the fall 2019 semester.

"The work ethic and talent of these students will serve them well as they prepare to graduate and progress toward their future success," said Michael J. Smith, President of Berkeley College.

The following students from Prince George's County have been recognized:

- **Zyaira Peters** of Fort Washington
- **Nichole Williamson** of Upper Marlboro

Berkeley College students who achieve a grade point average of 4.00 with a minimum of 12 academic credits qualify for the President's List.

—Ilene Greenfield, Berkeley College

Senior Shopping

These grocery stores have set special hours to serve our seniors' shopping needs.



SAFeway

7:00 am - 9:00 am
Tuesday & Thursday



Giant

6:00 am - 7:00 am
Daily Hours



7:00 am - 8:00 am
Daily Hours

HEALTH DEPARTMENT
Prince George's County

ANGELA D. ALSOBROOKS
County Executive

prince georges
County, MD
Proud
Get to Know Us

COMMUNITY

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

The Benefits of Volunteering

Regardless of where you live, virtually every community has programs that rely on volunteers to operate. Hospitals, homeless shelters, schools, local theater and just about every other community-oriented program you can think of has a need for volunteers to keep it up and running.

And yet many of us don't volunteer. Of course, we have plenty of excuses. Lack of time, work demands, family responsibilities, we're too old—it's a long excuse list that you might think about as you sit front of the TV most nights wondering why you're bored or lonely or feeling somewhat irrelevant.

One of the main benefits of volunteering is that it can perk up an otherwise fairly static social life. Volunteering offers the opportunity to make connections with the people you are helping and provides the chance to cultivate friendships with other volunteers.

Studies have found that when you volunteer your time and skills, and increase your social interaction, you are likely to improve both your mental and physical health. Experts advise that consistent socializing can lead to better brain functioning and help reduce the risk for depression and anxiety.

These benefits are particularly important in helping improve our lives as we get older. Surveys have found that some 45 percent of people admit to feeling lonely and that as many as one in ten people report having no close friends. Clearly, the improvement in socializing that comes with volunteering pays dividends in these areas, and those are dividends that accumulate regardless of age.

Volunteering to help with organizations serving the less fortunate is not only a way of doing something good for your community but also can bring a variety of personal benefits. It's been shown to be a way to improve self-esteem and to help develop emotional stability.

Some research has shown that people who volunteer may be at lower risk for dementia as they age and that volunteer activities may help strengthen the immune system. Studies have found that seniors often gain real physical benefits from volunteering, including a possible reduction in heart disease and a general sense of feeling younger.

Volunteering isn't a magic cure for all of life's ills, but it is a way to stay more active, to contribute to your community and to expand and strengthen your social life. And all of that can add up to a happier and healthier you.

Counseling Corner is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACAcorner@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org.

Best Friends During Our Worst Times: Consider Fostering a Shelter Pet During the Coronavirus Crisis, Says American Humane ... For Their Sake—and Yours

By MARK STUBIS
American Humane

WASHINGTON (March 17, 2020)—For thousands of years, our companion animals have been our best friends in good times and bad. Now, as we face one of the worst pandemics in modern history, accompanied by the fear and loneliness that come hand in hand with the isolation of mandatory quarantining, we have a chance to make a difference in the lives of millions of animals—and our own—by fostering a shelter animal.

"Shelters are swamped in the best of times, and with more and more staff in every sector of American life self-quarantining and falling ill, animals already abandoned and without homes are going to be increasingly vulnerable," says American Humane President and CEO Dr. Robin Ganzert. "At the same time, so many of us, especially the elderly, are coping with the loneliness, stress and anxiety that comes with isolation and the sheltering in place so necessary during a pandemic. Why be home alone when you can snuggle up with a loving new buddy? You might save a life, improve your own during these trying times, and end up with a new best friend."

Each year, some 4–6 million beautiful animals end up in U.S. shelters and more than one and a half million are euthanized. As shelter workers are affected by the virus and false rumors spread about the transmissibility of CV-19 from animals

to people (there is no evidence of this), shelter animals will need help more than ever.

The rewards of fostering a pet can be great for both people and animals. Animals facing uncertain futures can find the love, care and attention every living creature needs. And engaging with animals has been shown to be a remedy for stress. When people are in high-pressure situations, the hormone cortisol spikes in the body, making it a useful tool for measuring stress. Interaction with animals is proven to lower both cortisol levels and blood pressure, according to the National Institutes of Health. In other words, science backs up what many people know intuitively—they feel better after petting a dog or cat.

Amber Batteiger is a case in point. An American Humane Rescue worker who deploys year-round to save animals from natural disasters and cruelty cases, she is now enjoying the company of her new foster dog and "pandemic pal," Tux, a two-year-old American Bulldog mix she fostered for a rescue group out of Coral Springs, Florida called "Bullies-N-Beyond." She finds his company a welcome distraction from the news and he is enjoying all the extra attention, treats and playing with his three foster siblings that living with Amber gives him.

"If you have the time, the desire and the physical and financial ability to foster an animal from a local shelter or rescue for at least the next several weeks, it will



PHOTO COURTESY AMERICAN HUMANE

Amber and Tux Meltwater

be a much-needed and welcome way to help," says Dr. Ganzert. "Please think about it and spread the word. You will be helping yourself and an animal in need... and best of all, only their unconditional love is contagious."

American Humane is the country's first national humane organization. Founded in 1877, American Humane saves, shelters, feeds, and protects some one billion animals around the world each year. Visit www.americanhumane.org. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter.

Visit Facebook: PGC Department of the Environment, @PGCDoE, March 17, 2020, for more info on adoption / fostering pets

Online Library & Drive-up WiFi Available 24/7 During Health Emergency

By NICHOLAS A. BROWN
PGCMLS

LARGO, Md. (March 18, 2020)—The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) is providing access to free resources and services online 24/7 throughout the COVID-19 health emergency and while the Library's branches are closed until further notice. Customers can access online library content with their library cards via pgcmls.info. The Library's wide range of online resources and apps include curated content collections, such as PGCMLS Digital Suite and PGCMLS Creative Suite, and over 85 online resources for all ages. Special content is available for kids, teens, and educators. The resources cover 12 different categories, including languages (Mango Languages), academics (The Great Courses), jobs and careers (Career Transitions), and academics (Brainfuse HelpNow tutoring). The Library also offers accredited online high school education for adults (Career Online High School).

Though Library branches are closed, drive-up public WiFi is accessible from all PGCMLS parking lots and the exterior of permanent and temporary PGCMLS facilities (except for pop-up locations and branches that are under construction: Surratts-Clinton and Hyattsville). Drive up to your local branch to check email, download eBooks or audiobooks, use online resources, or access community resources online.

Customers are encouraged to track their reading during the Library's closure with the "Spring Into Reading" program, available through Beanstack (March 16–May 17, 2020). Readers can log daily accomplishments and unlock badges as they progress. Families with children under the age of five can also register for the Books from Birth program, a partnership between PGCMLS and the Dolly Parton Foundation that sends children a free book once a month by mail. Register here.

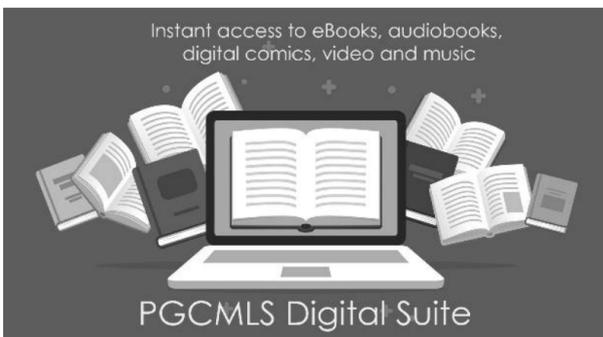
During the public health emergency, PGCMLS is maintaining a COVID-19 webpage that shares current County Health Department guidance and highlights special temporary resources for all ages and businesses from cultural organizations, government agencies, educational institutions, health-care providers, and utilities. Explore the list of temporary resources (Español), which is being regularly updated. The Library is also promoting a

virtual events for all ages throughout the closure, including children's programs and health information events. Visit the PGCMLS Facebook page for details.

Spanish speaking customers are invited to explore the Library's "Su biblioteca" portal, which features numerous community resources and information about the online library. The Library also has a new Spanish Facebook page where customers can connect with staff and resources. Publicamos una página de Facebook en español! Siguenos aquí.

What to do with physical materials during the closure:

- Hold onto books, DVDs, and other materials until PGCMLS reopens
- Fines incurred during the closure will be waived
- Book drops are closed
- Please do not leave materials outside at libraries



Featured Online Resources:

- **PGCMLS Digital Suite**
- ComicPlus (digital graphic novels and comics)
- Freegal (streaming and downloadable music)
- Hoopla (streaming movies, tv programs, and music)
- Kanopy (streaming movies, documentaries, and tv programs)
- Libby by OverDrive (audiobooks and eBooks)
- RBDigital (magazines, audiobooks, and streaming video)

PGCMLS Creative Suite

- Artist Works (online music lessons)
- Creative Bug (arts and craft activities and classes)
- The Great Courses (online courses, including creative disciplines)
- Hobbies and Crafts Reference Center (hobby and craft resources)
- PebbleGo (research skills for K-3 students)
- Qello (concerts and music documentaries, ranging from classical to country)

Meal Sites from A1

may not pick up meals for children. Student IDs are not required.

The full list of sites is below:

- **Andrew Jackson Academy**, 3500 Regency Parkway, Forestville
- **Benjamin Stoddert Middle School**, 2501 Olson Street, Temple Hills
- **Benjamin Tasker Middle School**, 4901 Collington Road, Bowie
- **Buck Lodge Middle School**, 2611 Buck Lodge Road, Adelphi
- **Calverton Elementary**, 3400 Beltsville Road, Beltsville
- **Carmody Hills Elementary**, 401 Jadeleaf Ave., Capitol Heights
- **Clinton Grove Elementary**, 9420 Temple Hill Road, Clinton
- **District Heights Elementary**, 2200 County Road, District Heights
- **Drew-Freeman Middle School**, 2600 Brooks Drive, Suitland
- **Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School**, 13725 Briarwood Drive, Laurel
- **Gladys Noon Spellman Elementary**, 3324 64th Avenue, Cheverly
- **Hillcrest Heights Elementary**, 4305 22nd Place, Temple Hills
- **J. Frank Dent Elementary**, 2700 Corning Ave., Fort Washington
- **John Bayne Elementary**, 7010 Walker Mill Road, Capitol Heights
- **Judge Sylvania Woods Elementary**, 3000 Church St., Glenarden
- **Kenmoor Middle School**, 2500 Kenmoor Drive, Landover
- **Kettering Middle School**, 65 Herrington Drive, Upper Marlboro
- **Langley Park-McCormick Elementary**, 8201 15th Ave., Hyattsville

- **Laurel Elementary**, 516 Montgomery St., Laurel
- **Lewisdale Elementary**, 2400 Banning Place, Hyattsville
- **Longfields Elementary**, 3300 Newkirk Ave., Forestville
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School**, 4545 Ammendale Road, Beltsville
- **Nicholas Orem Middle School**, 6100 Editors Park Drive, Hyattsville
- **Oxon Hill Middle School**, 9570 Fort Foote Road, Fort Washington
- **Port Towns Elementary**, 4351 58th Ave., Bladensburg
- **Samuel Chase Elementary**, 5700 Fisher Road, Temple Hills
- **Springhill Lake Elementary**, 6060 Springhill Drive, Greenbelt
- **Stephen Decatur Middle School**, 8200 Pinewood Drive, Clinton
- **Suitland Elementary**, 4650 Towne Park Road, Suitland
- **Templeton Elementary**, 6001 Carters Lane, Riverdale
- **Thomas S. Stone Elementary**, 4500 34th Street, Mount Rainier
- **Thurgood Marshall Middle School**, 4909 Brinkley Road, Temple Hills
- **Waldon Woods Elementary**, 10301 Thrift Road, Clinton
- **Walker Mill Middle School**, 800 Karen Blvd., Capitol Heights
- **William Paca Elementary**, 7801 Sheriff Road, Landover
- **William Wirt Middle School**, 6200 Tuckerman St., Riverdale Park

For more information, visit www.pgcps.org/coronavirus.

BGE Donates to Local Nonprofits For Coronavirus Response and Relief

\$175,000 to Maryland organizations is part of more than \$1 million donation by Exelon companies nationwide to help communities during pandemic response

By TASHA JAMERSON
BGE

BALTIMORE, Md. (March 18, 2020)—Today, BGE is joining with Exelon and Constellation to donate \$175,000 to Maryland relief organizations including the United Way of Central Maryland, the Maryland Food Bank, and the Baltimore Community Foundation to support their efforts to provide essential services during the coronavirus

(COVID-19) pandemic. This is part of a more than \$1.15 million donation by Exelon Corporation and its family of companies nationwide to relief organizations to support communities impacted by the spread of the coronavirus.

"BGE is committed to helping our community during this challenging time," said Carim Khouzami, BGE CEO. "These donations and our continued partnerships with the United

Way, the Maryland Food Bank, and the Baltimore Community Foundation are essential in efforts to help our customers address their needs during the COVID-19 health crisis. Getting through this requires everyone to lean in and do their part to lift up our community and help protect its most vulnerable members. We are grateful to

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COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Coronavirus Crisis Highlights Racial Disparity In Healthcare and Economy Federal Response Must Include Targeted Relief To Hardest-Hit Communities

“Far too many African Americans still struggle to lead healthy and economically secure lives. This is due to the long-standing effects of racism, which touches all African Americans, regardless of socioeconomic status. These effects can be reversed, but it will take real commitment and systemic change. It shouldn't have taken an international pandemic to prove to America's leaders what civil rights activists have known all along: a system in which people can't afford to seek medical care and are forced to go to work sick is a recipe for national disaster.”

— Jamila Taylor, Director of Health Care Reform and Senior Fellow, The Century Foundation

At every point along our health care and economic systems, Black Americans are more vulnerable to the most serious effects of the coronavirus crisis. We are more likely to have underlying health complications, like asthma. Our complaints are less likely to be taken seriously by medical professionals. We are less likely to receive treatment for our complaints. Even with treatment, we are less likely to experience positive outcomes. The high level of disparity erodes Black Americans' trust in the health care system.

Although the Affordable Care Act extended health insurance to 2.8 million African-Americans, 9.7 percent remained uninsured in 2019, compared with 5.4 percent among whites. Out-of-pocket health care expenses represent 20% of household income for Black families, compared with 11% for white households.

Several months ago, researchers found that a process used to guide health care decisions for millions of people was beset with racial bias, drastically underestimating the needs of the sickest Black patients.

According to the Washington Post:

The algorithm wasn't intentionally racist — in fact, it specifically excluded race. Instead, to identify pa-

tients who would benefit from more medical support, the algorithm used a seemingly race-blind metric: how much patients would cost the health-care system in the future. But cost isn't a race-neutral measure of health-care need. Black patients incurred about \$1,800 less in medical costs per year than white patients with the same number of chronic conditions; thus the algorithm scored white patients as equally at risk of future health problems as black patients who had many more diseases.

Because of systemic barriers, African Americans receive less health care—so the algorithm identified Black patients as less in need of care, creating a vicious cycle of neglect.

We cannot allow this neglect to continue in the face of a deadly epidemic. We must insist that testing and treatment are available in underserved low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, and that the care is commensurate with that offered in other communities.

The nation's two-pronged response—delivering health care and economic relief—presents a unique opportunity to address bias and disparity and, and to begin to build a more equitable system.

The National Urban League is leading the effort to shape the nation's response so that the communities hardest hit by the crisis are not overlooked. We are working with Congressional leaders to ensure that coronavirus response legislation must take racial equity into account—not just in the wake of the crisis, but permanently.

Black families need access to quality, affordable health care—not just now, but all the time. Schoolchildren need broadband access—not just now, but all the time. Workers need paid sick leave, paid family leave and unemployment compensation—not just now, but all the time.

Times of crisis expose the cracks in an institution's structure. Now is the time to repair them.

Marion Wright Edelman

President Emerita,
Children's Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

Help Through Our Shared National and World Crisis

As our nation and world enter the full terrors of the COVID-19 crisis the Children's Defense Fund has been taking special steps to ensure that our most vulnerable children and their families are protected. We urged and applauded the swift passage of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which includes critical provisions for children and families like access to coronavirus testing and expanded food assistance, unemployment benefits and paid sick leave. And we are pushing for children to be a priority in the next relief package, which must include supports for families facing financial crisis and homelessness, children in the child welfare system, and much more. Congress must put people before politics and act now to help children.

We will also continue to share resources from experts on how the coronavirus impacts children, how to talk to children about the outbreak, and more. For example:

- American Academy of Pediatrics has information on the COVID-19 pandemic, including symptoms, how to protect your family, how to prepare for school or child care closings, and talking to children. The AAP also has information on hand washing.
- Our partners at Generations United have created a fact sheet for grandfamilies and multigenerational families to stay healthy, informed, and connected.
- The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) has compiled a list of resources related to ensuring that children who are out of school can still access meals. They are also sharing an action and advocacy tool for maximizing the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)'s role in supporting health, food security, and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The US Department of Labor has a portal to provide information about applying for unemployment benefits in your state.
- The Juvenile Law Center, The Hope Center, and School House Connection published a fact sheet on supporting students who are homeless or in foster care.

UNICEF has tips for how to talk to your children about the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Centers for Disease Control is sharing guidance on managing mental health and coping during COVID-19 for children and caregivers.

We've put together a round-up of free digital education tools that may be of interest to caregivers (non-educators) who are looking for engaging and enriching content to share with their children while at home, ranging from great videos to digital explorations, games, and even full text books.

And I and millions of others and you if you are a person of faith should continue to pray. So I share a few prayers here for a quick end to this scourge.

God, make our hearts bigger
our love deeper
our faith stronger
our hope unwavering
our strength greater
our efforts unceasing
our voices unflinching
our vision and actions Yours.

I have turned to Thomas Merton's wonderful prayer "The Road Ahead" again and again in many different situations as I've asked for guidance.

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

God, help us to do what we have to do each day, and leave tomorrow to You.

I end with "A Prayer for Our Streets" by Rev. Frederick J. Streets, the Senior Pastor of Dixwell Congregational Church in New Haven and former Yale Chaplain. He is a licensed clinical social worker and the anchor and co-chaplain-in-residence at CDF's annual Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry.

A Prayer for Our Time
Spirit of All Creation:
May our faith in you and one another guide us as we cannot yet see our way through this time of crisis.

May our hope in you and the goodness of our neighbors strengthen us as we endure our discomforts and fears.

Give comfort to all who are emotionally, physically and spiritually distressed.

Bless our health care providers and all who are taking care of those who are ill.

Grant wisdom and discernment to those who are researching and searching for medicines to combat our diseases, the coronavirus and other illnesses.

Help us to reassure and comfort our children and protect them from harm and danger.

Grant, O God, those who lead our governments, institutions, hospitals, our schools and local organizations, safety and emergency services and us, wisdom beyond our own wisdom to contain the coronavirus; faith beyond our own faith to help us to fight our fears and strength beyond our own strength to be resilient and sustain all of our vital institutions through this time of turmoil.

Although we are physically separated from one another help us, Eternal One, to maintain our social connection to one another by our creatively and ethically using social media.

Help each of us to know that there is something in us stronger than fear. Birth in us a new sense of hope that will help us to rise above the clouds of despair.

Grant, Eternal Love that we emerge from this time of crisis a more loving people who are more committed to the welfare of all and the earth that sustains us. Amen.

Harriet Tubman Goes To Congress

Gwendolyn Briley-Strand, world-renowned actress, outside of Senator Tom Carper Office (D-DE) in Washington, D.C.

(Black PR Wire) WASHINGTON (March 23, 2020)—In commemoration of Harriet Tubman Day on March 10, internationally renowned actress, Gwendolyn Briley-Strand, brought Harriet Tubman to the Halls of Congress, and she brought some passengers with her. Local 1-2 of Utility Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO, Worcester County NAACP Branch, and HR 1242 Resilience Project were present to encourage Congress to introduce legislation to rename Virginia Inside Passage to the Harriet Tubman Waterway.

Harriet speaks at the Office of Senator Carper [https://youtu.be/VpMPTfBoCI]

On September 24, 2016, Ms. Briley-Strand was given the honor of introducing the President of The United States Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, President George W. Bush, former First Lady Laura Bush, and all the dignitaries and celebrities at the Grand Opening of the African American Museum Of History And Culture in Washington DC.

Wherever there was a waterway, it was an escape route for the enslaved. The Virginia Inside Passage, along with several bays located in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware was the corridor for freedom along the Eastern Shore of Delmarva Peninsula and saw countless enslaved Africans take this route to emancipate themselves from the shackles of slavery. Harriet Tubman made 13 trips between her home in Dorchester County on the Delmarva Peninsula. The mouth of this waterway begins at the Chesapeake Bay, which was the entry point of many slave ships arriving from West Africa.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY HTTP://BLACKPRWIRE.COM/GC MEDIA
Actress Gwendolyn Briley-Strand portraying Harriet Tubman.

This legislation is designed to bring a wave of healing to the United States of America. In no way is this aimed to rewrite history, but to acknowledge the past, and move our country towards the future. This waterway will honor the enslaved who traverse this route, and the abolitionists and Native Americans who gave refuge to them along the way. There are no appropriations needed from Congress for the Harriet Tubman Waterway Act.

On the net: www.hr1242resilience.com

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Using IRA Instead of Claiming SS; Disability Appeal

By RUSSELL GLOOR,
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Dear Rusty:

I am currently unemployed and drawing funds from my IRA. I am 62 years old. My financial adviser instructed me to not take Social Security because once I do that the percentage of increase would stop. He said to wait until the benefits increased to the point where I could then take Social Security and leave my IRA alone. Does that seem right? Also, I have applied for SS Disability benefits and have been rejected, but I am currently appealing that decision. Is my next step a lawyer? If so do you have any recommendations?
Signed: Befuddled

Dear Befuddled: If you take your Social Security (SS) benefits at age 62, your payment will be cut by about 27.5% from what it would be at your full retirement age of 66½. If you wait, your SS payment when you claim it will have grown for each month you delay. You only get 100% of the SS benefit you have earned from a lifetime of working when you reach your full retirement age (FRA). The rate of benefit growth before you reach your FRA is a bit more than 6% for each year you wait, so I expect that your financial advisor compared that guaranteed growth to the interest you are receiving on your IRA and concluded that waiting to claim a higher SS benefit for the rest of your life is a better deal. Provided you are in good health, that seems like a prudent suggestion. And just so you are aware, if you delay claiming SS beyond your FRA, you'll earn an additional 8% for each year you further delay, up to age 70 when your SS benefit would be about 75% more than it will be if you take it now.

Regarding your disability appeal, I cannot recommend a specific attorney, but I suggest you seek one who specializes in Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) claims. SSDI attorneys must adhere to Federal law and they are limited in what they can charge you. Usually that limit is 25% of whatever back SSDI benefits they can secure for you (paid from those back benefits) to a maximum of \$6000. There should be no charge for an initial consultation, and you shouldn't be required to pay anything unless they win your case for you. The easiest way to find someone to assist you is to do a search for "SSDI attorneys near me" and then do some initial research on your search results before selecting. You'll be able to judge the strength of your SSDI appeal by whether the SSDI attorney accepts your case—they'll only accept your case if they believe they can win and be compensated for their efforts. Only you can judge if engaging an attorney is a wise idea at this point. You still have multiple SSDI appeal levels available to you, and an SSDI attorney can be engaged at any point you choose.

The 2 million member Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC)(<https://www.amac.us>) is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. We act and speak on their behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at <https://amac.us/join-amac>.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadviser@amacfoundation.org.

Effective March 17, 2020, Social Security Offices Will Only Offer Phone Service

Online Services Remain Available

By MARK HINKLE
Social Security Administration

All local Social Security offices will be closed to the public for in-person service starting Tuesday, March 17, 2020. This decision protects the population we serve—older Americans and people with underlying medical conditions—and our employees during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, we are still able to provide critical services.

Our secure and convenient online services remain available at www.socialsecurity.gov. Local offices will also continue to provide critical services over the phone. We are working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and local governments, and other experts to monitor COVID-19 and will let you know as soon as we can resume in-person service.

If you need help from Social Security:

- First, please use our secure and

convenient online services available at www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices. You can apply for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits online, check the status of an application or appeal, request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas), print a benefit verification letter, and much more—from anywhere and from any of your devices. We also have a wealth of information to answer most of your Social Security questions online, without having to speak with a Social Security representative in person or by phone. Please visit our online Frequently Asked Questions at www.socialsecurity.gov/ask.

- If you cannot conduct your Social Security business online, please check our online field office locator for specific information about how to directly

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Governor Hogan Announces Closure of All Non-Essential Businesses, \$175 Million Relief Package for Workers and Small Businesses Affected By COVID-19

*Activates Field Hospital at Baltimore Convention Center and Hilton Hotel
Establishes Pilot Assessment Location at FedEx Field
Laurel Hospital to Reopen as Part of Hospital Surge Plan
Issues Emergency Order to Prohibit Price Gouging
Signs Directive to Bring More Testing Capacity Online*

By SHAREESE CHURCHILL
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (March 23, 2020)—Governor Larry Hogan today ordered the closure of all non-essential businesses in the state and announced a \$175 million relief package to assist employees, small businesses, and nonprofit organizations affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The governor again urged Marylanders to help their neighbors by staying home in order to slow the spread of COVID-19.

"We are telling all Marylanders to follow all of the directives and to follow the state law against crowds of more than ten people," said Governor Hogan. "And we are telling you, unless you have an essential reason to leave your house, stay in your home. Today's actions of closing non-essential businesses are absolutely necessary to protect the health of Marylanders and to save lives."

"To my fellow Marylanders, let me say that I know how difficult this is on each and every one of you," continued the governor. "There is a great deal of fear and anxiety, and the truth is, none of us really know how bad this is going to get or how long it's going to last. But I can promise you that there are a great many dedicated people doing tremendous things, working around the clock, and doing their very best to help keep Marylanders safe."

Below is a list of the comprehensive actions Governor Hogan announced on Monday:

CLOSURE OF ALL NON-ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES: Governor Hogan has enacted an emergency order to close all non-essential businesses across the state, effective at 5 p.m. Monday, March 23.

In addition to what is already closed by prior orders, this order requires the closure of anything that is not included in the new federal guidelines for critical infrastructure sectors (<https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>).

While this is not a shelter-in-place order, all Marylanders are urged to remain home and adhere to the governor's guidance for social distancing. The governor announced that beginning today, further enforcement actions will be taken to disperse any gatherings in violation of the governor's orders.

ECONOMIC RELIEF PACKAGE: Governor Hogan announced more than \$175 million to assist small businesses and workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. More information and resources about these programs is available at businessexpress.maryland.gov/coronavirus.

The Maryland Department of Commerce will offer up to \$125 million in loans and grants to small businesses and nonprofits through the Maryland Small Business COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund. A \$75 million loan fund and a \$50 million grant fund, with \$1 million in grants dedicated to non-profits, will provide working capital to be used for payroll, rent, fixed-debt payments and other mission critical cash operating costs. Businesses and nonprofits with under 50 full- and part-time employees will be eligible, and loans will range up to \$50,000 and grants up to \$10,000. Additional eligibility requirements can be found at <https://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/maryland-small-business-covid-19-emergency-relief-fund-programs>.

Maryland Commerce is also working on creating a \$5 million fund to incentivize businesses to manufacture personal protective equipment (PPE) and other supplies to satisfy the increasing needs of the healthcare industry.

The Department also has a number of existing financing programs, like Advantage Maryland, which provides conditional

loans for new businesses or business expansions; the Maryland Industrial Development Financing Authority and Fund (MIDFA), which provides loan guarantees; the Maryland Small Business Development Financing Authority (MSBDF), which provides financial assistance to economically disadvantaged businesses; and the Non-Profit Interest-Free Micro-Bridge Loan Program, which provides loans to nonprofits to support ongoing operating costs while waiting on a future government grant or contract. A total of about \$40 million is available through these existing programs.

Governor Hogan has allocated \$5 million and the Maryland Department of Labor has allocated \$2 million to collaboratively launch the COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund. A total of \$7 million in funds will be available to provide flexible rapid response services to proactively support businesses and workers undergoing economic stresses due to COVID-19. Funding can help Maryland's workforce adhere to social distancing policies by purchasing remote access equipment and software to allow employees to work from home, providing on-site cleaning and sanitation services at businesses that have workers delivering essential services, and implementing other creative strategies to mitigate potential layoffs or closures in the business community.

AN ORDER TO PROHIBIT PRICE GOUGING: Governor Hogan has signed an emergency order to protect families from price gouging on everyday household items and essentials. Retailers who attempt to exploit this crisis for profit or personal gain will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

FIELD HOSPITAL AT BALTIMORE CONVENTION CENTER: As part of the state's hospital surge plan, Governor Hogan has ordered the establishment of an Alternate Care site at Baltimore Convention Center and Hilton Hotel. This will be a joint partnership with the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) and Johns Hopkins. The governor has asked FEMA to deliver 250 beds and 50 bed packages to support the initiative.

REOPENING OF LAUREL HOSPITAL: As part of the state's hospital surge plan, UMMS has agreed to reopen Laurel Hospital, which will make another 135 beds available.

PILOT ASSESSMENT LOCATION AT FEDEX FIELD: Governor Hogan has directed the Maryland National Guard and the Maryland Department of Health to collaborate with Prince George's County and UMMS on a pilot assessment location at FedEx Field in Landover.

FAST-TRACK PROCESS FOR TESTS: The governor has enacted an emergency order to authorize a fast-track process to bring more testing capacity online without FDA approval—dramatically shortening a process that would ordinarily take several months. Read the governor's order.

NEW HEALTH TESTING ORDERS: The Maryland Department of Health is issuing an order requiring health care providers to prioritize tests for hospitalized and chronic care patients, symptomatic first responders, and symptomatic nursing home patients; and requiring all health care facilities to cease elective or non-urgent medical procedures at 5 p.m. tomorrow. Read the Health Department's order.

State of Emergency. The World Health Organization has declared the coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic. The State of Maryland is continuing to operate under a state of emergency, and all levels of government are taking a comprehensive, collaborative approach to keep Marylanders safe. The list of ongoing state actions is available at governor.maryland.gov/coronavirus.

For health resources regarding COVID-19, including case counts and clinician guidance, Marylanders should visit coronavirus.maryland.gov.

SBA Offers Disaster Assistance to Maryland Small Businesses Economically Impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

By MICHAEL LAMPTON
U.S. Small Business Administration

ATLANTA, Ga. (March 19, 2020)—The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to Maryland small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), SBA Administrator Jovita Carranza announced today. SBA acted under its own authority, as provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act that was recently signed by the President, to declare a disaster following a request received from Gov. Larry Hogan on March 18, 2020.

The disaster declaration makes SBA assistance available in the **entire state of Maryland**; District of Columbia and the contiguous counties of Kent, New Castle,

and Sussex in Delaware; Adams, Bedford, Chester, Fayette, Franklin, Fulton, Lancaster, Somerset, and York in Pennsylvania; Accomack, Alexandria (City), Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun in Virginia; and Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan and Preston in West Virginia.

"SBA is strongly committed to providing the most effective and customer-focused response possible to assist Maryland small businesses with federal disaster loans. We will be swift in our efforts to help these small businesses recover from the financial impacts of the Coronavirus (COVID-19)," said Administrator Carranza. SBA Customer Service Representatives will be available to answer questions about SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program and explain the application process. "Small businesses, pri-

vate non-profit organizations of any size, small agricultural cooperatives and small aquaculture enterprises that have been financially impacted as a direct result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) since Jan. 31, 2020, may qualify for Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to \$2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the disaster not occurred," said Carranza.

"These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. Disaster loans can provide vital economic assistance to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing," Carranza added.

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HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Take Charge of Your Healthcare Decisions

By ERIC BUSH, M.D., RPh, MBA
Chesapeake Supportive Care and Hospice of the Chesapeake

As a physician, I rely on my patients and their families to guide me on the focus of care they want to live their best life. However, if a patient hasn't discussed that care with their loved ones, and becomes unable to share their healthcare wishes with me, how can I honor unexpressed decisions?

Help your family and your care team by taking charge of your healthcare decisions. You can start by setting time aside on April 16, National Healthcare Decisions Day, to talk about your healthcare plan.

The first step is to understand your options. In addition to speaking with your physician, the website www.prepareforyourcare.org offers excellent step-by-step instructions with video and free forms to guide you in your planning.

Once you have an idea what your wishes are, it's time to talk about them. It is hard to start this conversation. So approach it from the perspective that it is an act of love to make your family aware of how you would like to be cared for in the event of a medical emergency, while coping with advanced illness, or at the end of your life. You will be taking the first step of removing the burden these decisions may have for your family, by making these decisions on your own behalf.

The final step is to document these decisions, and in a way that is legally binding. It is important to understand that certain states and jurisdictions require different documentation for certain medical decisions. In the state of Maryland, the documentation physicians look for are advance directives and the Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment form, known as the "MOLST".

An advance directive is a legal document that has two parts. One part names a medical proxy or healthcare agent, someone you have selected to make healthcare decisions when you are unable

to make those decisions yourself. The other part is the living will, which includes the instructions for your future medical treatment, whether it is future inpatient treatment or end-of-life care. An excellent website to help you create a legal advance directive is www.fivewishes.org.

The MOLST form is a set of medical orders that define life-sustaining treatment that a patient wants to receive or avoid. A physician, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant must complete or change the MOLST based on the patient's current medical condition, prognosis, values, goals and preferences. If you live in Maryland and you do not want CPR, a MOLST form is the only document first responders and healthcare professionals will follow. You can download a form to share with your primary care team at www.whymolst.com.

If you don't tell them, how will they know? Take charge of your healthcare: Understand your options, discuss your preferences, document your decisions and advocate for yourself.



PHOTO COURTESY HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE
Dr. Eric Bush, Chief Medical Officer for Chesapeake Supportive Care and Hospice of the Chesapeake

Council from A1

operations, maintaining essential processes, and providing opportunities for critical public engagement.

While the current and imminent threat to health and safety challenges in-person participation in Council processes, CR-10-2020 provides for alternative public participation options, including utilization of digital technology, teleconferencing, the web, email, and live streaming, where such meetings, sessions or hearings are mandated.

We encourage you to visit the County Council at online at <https://pgccouncil.us> for additional information and updates.

The County Council continues to encourage County residents and employees to practice the guidelines provided by the CDC and Health Department, including:

- Social Distancing—Remember six feet of safety. Stay six feet or more away from others in public settings.
- Avoid Shaking Hands—Use the elbow bump or wave as an alternate greeting.
- Cover Your Cough or Sneeze with a tissue, your sleeve or elbow.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds; and if that's not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, stay at home, except to get medical care.

For the latest updates on COVID-19 in Prince George's County, please visit the Health Department's dedicated web page, health.mypgc.us/coronavirus, or call the Health Department Coronavirus Hotline at 301.883.6627, daily between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

The Council wishes to especially thank the members of the County Council staff and administration, for their work and commitment to our County, during this difficult time.

We are proud of how Prince Georgians have come together to address this health emergency. Please continue to pray for those directly impacted by this crisis, and for our world, the United States, Maryland and Prince George's County.

Half of Primary Care Physicians on the Front Lines Of Diagnosing and Providing Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Say Medical Profession Not Prepared to Meet Expected Increase in Demands

By CINDY SCHELHORN
Alzheimer's Association

MCLEAN, Va. (March 18, 2020)—A new survey of primary care physicians finds that 9 in 10 expect to see an increase in people living with dementia during the next five years. Half say the medical profession is not prepared to meet this demand.

The Alzheimer's Association 2020 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures report provides an in-depth look at the latest national and state-specific statistics on Alzheimer's prevalence, incidence, mortality, costs and impact on caregivers. The report estimates there are currently more than 5 million Americans age 65+ living with Alzheimer's—a number expected to nearly triple by 2050. New disease-related statistics for Maryland revealed the following:

- The current number of Maryland residents aged 65 and older living with Alzheimer's is 110,000. That number is expected to increase to 130,000 in 2025.
- There are an estimated 294,000 Maryland residents serving as unpaid family caregivers.
- In 2019, those Maryland residents provided 335 million hours of unpaid care valued at almost \$4.4 billion (\$4,389,000,000).

"The new Facts and Figures report shows that Alzheimer's disease and other dementias continue to be a significant burden for too many families in Maryland," said Kate Rooper, president of the Alzheimer's Association National Capital Area Chapter, which serves Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's and St. Mary's Counties in Maryland, as well as the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. "Alzheimer's disease is a triple threat, with soaring prevalence, lack of treatment and enormous costs. We must continue to work aggressively to advance new treatments that can stop or slow the progression of Alzheimer's, while also continuing to provide care and support services to help all those affected."

For the first time, the Facts and Figures report includes a special report "On the Front Lines: Primary Care Physicians and Alzheimer's Care in America," which found that 82% of primary care physicians say they are on the front lines of providing dementia care, but not all are confident in their care for patients with

Alzheimer's and other dementias. Among the survey findings:

- 22% had no residency training in dementia diagnosis and care. Of the 78% who did, two-thirds reported that the amount was "very little."
- 27% report they are "never" or only "sometimes comfortable" answering patient questions about Alzheimer's or other dementias.
- 39% report they are "never" or only "sometimes comfortable" making a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or other dementias.

While one-third of primary care providers say they refer dementia patients to specialists at least once a month, more than half say there are not enough dementia care specialists in their area to meet patient demand, a problem more common in rural areas. A state-by-state analysis of the number of geriatricians needed to meet future

care needs of seniors living with dementia revealed severe shortages in several states. In 2019, there were 150 practicing geriatricians in Maryland. It is estimated that 288 are needed to meet the future dementia care needs of Maryland seniors in 2050—a 92% increase.

Full text of the 2020 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures report, including the accompanying special report, "On the Front Lines: Primary Care Physicians and Alzheimer's Care in America," can be viewed alz.org/facts.

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia—by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia. Visit alz.org or call 800.272.3900.

2020 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures

6th Alzheimer's disease is the leading cause of death in the United States

50% of primary care physicians believe the medical profession is not ready for the growing number of people with Alzheimer's or other dementias

More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's

1 in 3 seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia

16 million Americans provide unpaid care for people with Alzheimer's or other dementias

It kills more than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined

These caregivers provided an estimated 18.6 billion hours valued at nearly **\$244 billion**

In 2020, Alzheimer's and other dementias will cost the nation **\$305 billion** — By 2050, these costs could rise as high as **\$1.1 trillion**

Between 2000 and 2018 deaths from heart disease have decreased **7.8%** while deaths from Alzheimer's disease have increased **146%**

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alzheimer's association

Health and Well-Being

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity For Life

(NAPS)—No matter what stage of life you're in—whether you're an adult, an older person, a pregnant woman or a parent—consuming healthy foods and beverages, combined with getting regular physical activity, stress relief and adequate sleep, may help you or your children stay healthy for life!

The recently updated National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases' (NIDDK) Healthy Eating & Physical Activity for Life series offers tips for developing and maintaining healthy habits for many stages of life.

Health Tips for Adults

Reaching and maintaining a healthy body weight as an adult may help prevent future health problems. Some tips to follow include making healthier food choices, being aware of food portions and the kinds of foods and beverages you consume, and how often you have them.

It's also important to engage in regular physical activity. Try to get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as biking or brisk walking. Aim for at least two days a week of muscle-strengthening activities, such as heavy gardening. If your time is limited, work in small amounts of activity throughout your day.

Finally, get enough sleep and manage your stress to stay on track with improving your health.

Health Tips for Older Persons

As you get older, good nutrition and staying active are as important as ever. Your lifestyle choices may prevent some health problems, such as diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. For example, focus on eating nutrient-dense foods and drinking fluids throughout the day, including those with added vitamin D and calcium.

As you get older, it's also important to engage in physical activities you enjoy—either on your own or with a friend. Ask your healthcare professional about whether and how you can safely become active or increase your physical activity.

Also talk with your healthcare professional if you feel that changes in your home life, health, medicines, income, mobility or sense of smell and taste are affecting your interest in consuming healthy foods and drinks and engaging in physical activity.

Health Tips for Pregnant Women

Whether you're ready to try for a baby or are already pregnant, you may be inspired to get healthy. Developing and following a healthier eating plan may help you have a safe pregnancy and delivery and a healthy baby.

Think about new, healthful foods and beverages you can try—such as berries or a banana with hot or cold cereal for breakfast; a salad with beans, tofu or other non-meat protein for lunch; and a lean serving of meat, chicken, turkey or fish and steamed vegetables for dinner.

It's also important to engage in physical activities while pregnant. Most women need the same amount of physical activity as they did before they became pregnant.

Helping Your Child: Tips for Parents

As a parent, it's important to share tips with your children on what to eat and drink to fuel their bodies and get them moving. Healthy habits may help children grow, learn and build strong bones and muscles while maintaining a healthy weight. Work together as a family to form healthy habits—such as consuming healthful foods and beverages, doing regular physical activity, getting adequate sleep and limiting screen time. You can set a good example by going for a walk or riding a bike. Or find an activity that you enjoy and can do together.

Learn More

To find more tips and resources for weight management and healthy living at whatever life stage you're in, or to access the Healthy Eating & Physical Activity for Life series, visit the NIDDK website at <https://www.niddk.nih.gov>.

Maryland Department of Human Services Continues to Provide All Programs and Services to Marylanders While Closing Buildings to the Public In Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Residents Can Continue to Access Services Online and via the Call Center.

Decision Supports Governor Larry Hogan's Executive Orders and Reinforces CDC Guidelines to Slow the Spread of Coronavirus

By KATHERINE MORRIS
DHS

BALTIMORE, Md. (March 18, 2020)—To further support Governor Larry Hogan's unprecedented actions to slow the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, Maryland Department of Human Services Secretary, Lourdes R. Padilla, announced that all buildings at each of the 24 local Departments of Social Services (DSS) would be closed to the public, effective at noon today, March 18, 2020.

"Across Maryland, our Department's leadership team and staff are prepared for, and have put into place, measures to ensure the continuity of services during this period of buildings being closed to the public," said Secretary Padilla. "We are also committed to protecting the public and our staff as we do our part to help slow the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19)."

The Department of Human Services (DHS), through its 24 local Departments of Social Services, assists people in economic need, provides preventive services, and protects vulnerable children and adults in each of Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City.

Marylanders can get information, apply for DHS programs and services, and check the status of applications online at www.mydhrbenefits.dhr.state.md.us. Services include emergency food assistance, cash assistance, SNAP food benefits, child support services, and home energy assistance, among others.

Residents may also call the

DHS Call Center at 1-800-332-6347 (TTY 1-800-735-2258), available from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday. Medical Assistance and health insurance applications may be submitted at www.marylandhealthconnection.gov.

Additionally, Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS) buildings closed to the public on March 16, in accordance with Mayor Young's closure of all city government buildings. Montgomery County Department of Social Services

buildings, governed by County Executive Marc Elrich, are currently open to the public, but residents are encouraged to use online services to support social distancing.

The list of ongoing state actions is available at governor.maryland.gov/coronavirus. For health resources regarding COVID-19, including case counts and clinician guidance, Marylanders should visit health.maryland.gov/coronavirus.

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) is the state's primary social service provider, annually reaching more than one million people. Through its 24 local departments of social services, the agency pursues opportunities to assist people in economic need, provide preventive services, and protect vulnerable children and adults in each of Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City. Additional information may be found at dhs.maryland.gov.

Luminis Health Enforces Tighter Visitor Restrictions to Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

By ARMINTA PLATER
Luminis Health

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (March 18, 2020)—Caring for and protecting patients, families, employees, and the community during the COVID-19 pandemic is most important to Luminis Health. In order to do that, the health system is putting measures in place that further restrict visitors to its facilities.

Effective March 18, 2020 at 8 p.m., Luminis Health is restricting all visitors at Anne Arundel Medical Center, Doctors Community Medical Center and Pathways until further notice. Exceptions are noted below. Where visitation is allowed, it will be limited to one visitor per day.

- For patients in extremely critical, life-threatening condition or in hospice care/comfort care/end-of-life care, visitation will be determined by physicians caring for the patient.
- Mothers in labor may have one visitor per day.
- Children who are 21 years of age or under may have a parent or guardian accompany them.
- Patients undergoing surgery may have a support person/visitor. This support person will be asked to leave the hospital/procedural area while waiting for the patient to complete surgery. Hospital staff will call the support person/visitor to return when it is time to pick up the patient.
- Patients requiring an outpatient test or procedure where a companion is required for assistance, including discharge, may have one visitor. The visitor will be asked to

leave the hospital or procedural area and will be called to return when the patient is ready for pick up.

- People who serve as a surrogate decision maker, including power of attorney or court-appointed guardianship for a patient, and need to be physically present to engage in the decision-making process are permitted. The attending physician will be the final arbiter as to whether someone needs to be physically present.
- People performing official governmental functions.

To support this safety measures, all visitors will be screened upon arrival, and must pass a health screening to enter the facility.

Luminis Health appreciates patients and families' understanding during these extraordinary times. Find additional frequently asked questions and answers at Luminis.blog/COVID-19.

Luminis Health, a new integrated health system formed in 2019, serves residents of Anne Arundel County, Prince George's County and the Eastern Shore. Comprised of Anne Arundel Medical Center and Doctors Community Hospital, Luminis Health includes 635 licensed beds, more than 6,400 employees, 1,800 medical staff and 1,300 volunteers. Luminis is symbolic of light, signifying a commitment to being a beacon of hope and healing for the region, while igniting new possibilities for how and where health care is delivered. The new brand will be fully revealed in spring 2020. Learn more at LuminisHealth.org.

MedStar Health Postponing Elective Procedures and Surgeries Starting Thursday, March 19 in Response to COVID 19

By MARIANNE WORLEY
MedStar Health

COLUMBIA, Md. (March 17, 2020)—MedStar Health is committed to delivering the highest levels of quality, safe care for our patients throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Equally important is the safety of our physicians, nurses and

associates. The community spread of COVID-19 requires that we take unprecedented measures to ensure these goals. With these important priorities in mind, starting Thursday, March 19 we are postponing all elective procedures and surgeries across MedStar Health. This decision was made after thoughtful consideration and planning, including how we best use our resources to

meet the needs of our patients balanced against mitigating risk to our patients, associates and families. Our department leaders and our physicians will make case-by-case decisions using the specific clinical circumstances of each of our patients. We will be reaching out to our patients in the event their care will be affected.

Living

Tips to Weather Seasonal Joint Pain

(StatePoint) Do April showers bring May flowers or just a lot of aches and pains? While research on how weather affects a person's pain levels is inconclusive, many people swear that the pain in their joints or ache "in their bones" can predict rainy or chilly weather ahead. The general theory is that this is caused by changes in temperature and barometric pressure.

"Sometimes joint pain can occur in flares that your body can predict: a change of weather in a usually dry climate, a change of temperature or staying in contact with water for too long," says Dr. Ken Redcross, author of "Bond: The 4 Cornerstones of a Lasting and Caring Relationship with Your Doctor" and founder of Redcross Concierge. "Particularly as we age, pain tends to sneak in, so managing it is a useful skill to acquire. However, it's not just about taking a pill to numb the pain and hoping for as few side effects as possible."

If a chill in the air or damp, humid temps bring you discomfort, Dr. Redcross recommends the following simple measures, which may help you find relief:

• **Keep Moving:** Inclement weather can keep us sedentary. When you reduce your movement or don't get out as much, pain can increase. Don't let potential aches and pains stop you from regular activity. The sooner you start moving, the better you will feel.

• **Know Your Limits:** Don't increase the intensity of physical activity too quickly, especially if you have existing cardiovascular, joint or muscle problems that could be aggravated as a result. Work with a licensed trainer at first, who can assess your strength, flexibility, balance and endurance, and create a custom workout program accordingly.

• **Relieve Pain Naturally:** The next time you experience pain, avoid popping a conventional pain reliever. Arnica montana, a type of mountain daisy, has been used for centuries for natural pain relief and is one of the most popular homeopathic medicines worldwide. As a first-line therapy, consider using an unscented, non-greasy topical treatment like Boiron Arnicare Gel for muscle pain, stiffness and swelling from injuries and bruises. More information can be found at Arnicare.com. Claims for Arnicare are based on traditional homeopathic practice, not accepted medical evidence. They are not FDA evaluated.



PHOTO SOURCE: (C) NENSURIA / ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

• **Spice it Up:** Turmeric, ginger and cayenne pepper all have anti-inflammatory properties, as well as many other health benefits. Stick to an energy-boosting diet by giving your foods a low-calorie kick with spices, roots and herbs.

Don't let the weather get the best of you this spring. With a few key strategies, you can better manage weather-related joint pain, rain or shine.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/>

TUESDAY TIP

EVERY DAY PRECAUTIONS FOR COVID-19

Take these several important actions every day to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or while singing the Happy Birthday song.
- If you cannot wash your hands, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- If you start to experience symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath, stay home and contact a health care provider.

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TUESDAY TIP

PRECAUCIONES DIARIAS CONTRA EL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Asegúrese de utilizar estas precauciones diarias para prevenir la propagación de enfermedades respiratorias como el Coronavirus (COVID-19).

- Cubra su tos o estornudo.
- Lave sus manos con agua y jabón por 20 segundos o mientras cantas la canción de Feliz Cumpleaños.
- Si no puede lavar sus manos, utilice desinfectante de manos con un 60% o mas de nivel de alcohol.
- Si está experimentando síntomas como fiebre, tos o falta de aire, quédese en casa y contacte a su proveedor de salud.

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Felony from A1

passed House Bill 233 (HB233) and Senate Bill 212 (SB212), "Criminal Law - Assault in the First Degree - Suffocation or Strangulation." This legislation will make strangulation a first degree felony assault.

"Strangulation is one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence. A victim of strangulation is seven times more likely to end up a victim of a homicide. Victims may experience unconsciousness within 5-10 seconds and death within minutes," said Braveboy. "This law will result in more appropriate charging decisions and sentencing and enable state's attorneys in Maryland to save more lives and protect the public."

After the governor's signature, it is anticipated that these laws will become effective on October 1, 2020.

State's Attorney Braveboy's recent Op-ed on making strangulation a first degree felony assault was published in the Baltimore Sun. Visit the following link to read more: <https://bit.ly/2TQ6kh4>.

State's Attorney Braveboy's recent Op-ed on strengthening Maryland's hate crime statute was published in the Washington Post. Visit the following link to read more: <https://wapo.st/39097ba>.

BGE from A3

support such worthwhile relief organizations making a difference in central Maryland's pandemic response."

Nonprofits are experiencing a disruption in fundraising and decreased volunteer support due to the recently announced safety protocols, and it is critical that these organizations, serving the most vulnerable populations, have the resources needed to continue operating at the highest levels.

The donation to the United Way of Central Maryland's COVID-19 Community Fund will support the United Way of Central Maryland 211 Call Center. The 211 Call Center has seen volume more than quadruple since Monday with over 1,500 calls requesting information about food, COVID-19, and counseling and calming.

BGE's donation to the Maryland Food Bank will provide necessary additional funds to help purchase and safely distribute nutritious food to hungry Marylanders while our community continues to deal with COVID-19.

The donation to the Baltimore Community Foundation's COVID-19 Evolving Community Needs Fund will aid in rapid response actions during the public health emergency our region is currently facing. One hundred percent of these funds will go directly to address the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our region's communities, workforce, and vulnerable populations.

To assist families and businesses experiencing financial stress during this public health crisis, BGE and all Exelon utilities—Atlantic City Electric, ComEd, Delmarva Power, PECO, and Pepco—have suspended service disconnections and are waiving new late payment charges until at least May 1.

As a provider of the critical infrastructure that powers hospitals and health care facilities, federal, state and local response centers, and the millions of homes and businesses where people live and work, BGE recognizes its foundational role in crisis response plans for the communities it serves. The company has robust plans and contingencies to ensure business and operational continuity across a wide range of potentially disruptive events, including extensive preparedness for a major public health crisis. BGE, along with Exelon and its sister utility companies are also working in close coordination with designated state and local emergency preparedness and health officials, and at the federal level through the Electric Subsector Coordinating Council.

Effective from A5

contact your local office. Your local office still will be able to provide critical services to help you apply for benefits, answer your questions, and provide other services over the phone.

- If you already have an in-office appointment scheduled, we will call you to handle your appointment over the phone instead. If you have a hearing scheduled, we will call you to discuss alternatives for continuing with your hearing, including offering a telephonic hearing. Our call may come from a PRIVATE number and not from a U.S. Government phone. Please remember that our employees will not threaten you or ask for any form of payment.
- If you cannot complete your Social Security business online, please call our National 800 Number at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778). Our National 800 Number has many automated service options you can use without waiting to speak with a telephone representative. A list of automated telephone services is available online at www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/contact/phone.html.

To get more Social Security news, follow the Press Office on Twitter @SSAPress.

SBA from A5

Eligibility for Economic Injury Disaster Loans is based on the financial impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The interest rate is 3.75 percent for small businesses. The interest rate for private non-profit organizations is 2.75 percent. SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years and are available to entities without the financial ability to offset the adverse impact without hardship.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. Individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may call (800) 877-8339. Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

The deadline to apply for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan is Dec. 21 2020.

For more information about Coronavirus, please visit: Coronavirus.gov.

For more information about available SBA resources and services, please visit: SBA.gov/coronavirus.

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