

# The Prince George's Post



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## 'Forever Chemicals' Trigger First Fish Consumption Warning In Chesapeake Region

By TIM WHEELER  
The Bay Journal

Anglers who fish Piscataway Creek off the Potomac River are being warned to limit their consumption of what they catch after Maryland regulators discovered elevated levels of so-called "forever chemicals" in fish downstream of Joint Base Andrews, an air base in Prince George's County.

The Oct. 15 announcement from the Maryland Department of the Environment announcement is the first official warning issued anywhere in the Chesapeake Bay watershed for fish containing unsafe levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS. But one expert said he expects more, given the amount of contamination found so far throughout the region.

PFAS are a group of thousands of synthetic chemicals that have been used since the 1940s in a wide variety of products, including firefighting foams. They persist in the environment and can build up in the blood and tissue of fish and people. Studies have found evidence that exposure to certain PFAS compounds increases risks of cancer and damage to the liver, thyroid and immune system. Infants and children may also be at risk of developmental problems.

The MDE recommended that adults eat no more than one meal a month of redbreast sunfish and three meals monthly of largemouth bass caught in Piscataway Creek. Children, who are more vulnerable to toxic exposures, should consume even less bass, the state agency advised, and eat no more than seven monthly portions of a third fish, yellow bullhead catfish.

Greg Allen, chair of the toxic contaminants workgroup of the Chesapeake Bay Program, said he was "not terribly surprised" by the MDE advisory. PFAS has been detected in soil and groundwater at nine military facilities in Maryland and at multiple other sites, both military and civilian, around the Bay watershed.

Testing by the MDE and by others has detected PFAS in fish and shellfish from around Maryland, including in Antietam Creek farther up the Potomac and in southern Maryland waters. Allen said he expects more warnings about eating PFAS-contaminated fish in the future, particularly on the Western Shore of the Bay, where more facilities have been identified as having handled PFAS.

The Piscataway advisory stems from an investigation begun after a July 2020 fish kill in the creek that was tied to a "release" of firefighting foam at the air base, according to an MDE report. A 2018 site investigation by the Pentagon also had detected "relatively high levels" of two PFAS compounds used in firefighting foams—perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, and perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA—in surface water and stormwater on or near the base, the MDE report said.

The MDE reported that sunfish caught in the upper creek contained PFAS levels in their fillets up to 247,000 parts per trillion, while a bass recovered from tidal waters near where the creek joins the Potomac had nearly 101,000 parts per trillion.

The fish consumption advisory was welcomed by Sherman Hardy, a resident of nearby Clinton who was so concerned about PFAS contamination from Andrews that he tested the creek's water himself



PHOTO CREDIT: WILL PARSON/CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM

The Maryland Department of the Environment has issued a fish consumption advisory for Piscataway Creek, shown here, because it found high levels of PFAS or 'forever chemicals' in the tissue of three fish species.

last month. He called the state announcement "awesome" news but wants more to be done. He contended that government at all levels has been slow to tackle the environmental health threats posed by PFAS, in this case putting at risk the predominantly African American communities surrounding the base. Hardy, who is Black, said it raises questions of environmental racism.

"Why [aren't] the state and the county doing enough to protect the citizens?" he asked. "Are they turning a blind eye, or are they uneducated on it?"

To test the creek's water, Hardy said he connected with Pat Elder, an environmental activist from St.

Mary's County who has been researching and publicizing PFAS contamination in the region. The two traipsed through woods and briars to sample just downstream of the base, and a private lab detected nearly 2,800 parts per trillion combined of several PFAS compounds.

That's on par with what the MDE found last fall, according to its recent report. The agency said it detected a maximum PFAS concentration of 3,100 parts per trillion in the upper nontidal waters of the

See WARNING Page A3

## New Immigrant Affairs Office To Connect Resource Centers

By RACHEL LOGAN  
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Oct. 27, 2021)—A new Governor's Office for Immigrant Affairs is tasked with connecting immigrant advocacy resources across the state to those in need, and Maryland's nonprofits and high-ranking officials have thrown in their support—and expectations.

Bills SB85 and HB15, which chartered the office on Oct. 1, require that its administrators form a network of existing immigrant advocacy groups across the state to share resources, as well as to pass along information about government programs and to advise Gov. Larry Hogan, R, on immigrant needs.

The main goals for the office, according to the bills, are to help with career placement, English language programs and naturalization processes for Marylanders who are foreign-born, about 15% of the population, according to an August 2020 American Immigration Council report.

The bill also requires the office to configure a website and a multilingual hotline for finding services and referrals, as well as for reporting fraud and crime against immigrants, which they are to forward to police authorities.

Lorena Rivera was appointed on Oct. 1 as director of the new office, which is housed under the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives.

Rivera is also the director for the governor's Hispanic Commission under the same department, which she has been involved with since 2015, working on both census data collection and COVID-19 aid access.

First on Rivera's to-do list is planning site visits for nonprofits and stakeholders to scope out available resources for the immigrant advocacy group network, she said.

Rivera told Capital News Service that her main goals are to complete the website and hotline before a new governor potentially appoints a new director in 15 months.

She could not give a timeline for the completion of either tool except that the website is currently underway.

Details about hiring the other three required staff, a legal adviser and two administrative assistants, were also still hazy, but she said their hiring depends on her workload and whether she'll need extra help completing her duties.

"It's really up to my superiors on what they want to do," she said, "But we're still very early, very early."

Rivera said she feels very comfortable forming partnerships for the advocacy network.

"Everyone knows who all the players are, who the nonprofits are. We all work together on a daily basis, you know—they have events, they all invite one another. So we're all connected."

She said some fledgling advocacy groups might not be linked in yet, but are slowly reaching out to her.

She said forming partnerships with new and existing groups would be "very easy" for her, drawing on her background of media and marketing.

Rivera is a daughter of immigrants from El Salvador and recalled being a little girl translating for her parents when they lived in Washington, D.C.

"I remember my parents asking me, because they didn't speak English, 'How do I get my driver's license?' And I remember having to call and ask for them."

In 2021, she said, it's much easier to find the information, but not necessarily in an individual's own language.

"That, I'm truly excited about," she said, "because back then it was so hard."

Now, she said, she can connect people to resources multilingually and "be able to show people what our state has to offer."

Bill sponsor Del. Joseline Pena-Melnyk, D-Prince George's and Anne Arundel, said the idea for a state-level immigrant affairs office sprang from need exacerbated by the pandemic.

"I started getting calls from every-



PHOTO CREDIT TRISHA AHMED / CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

In the harsh sun, people huddle under shady trees with signs that read, "DACA is the 1st step," "Immigrants Built America," and "Bridges Not Walls" at CASA's march for citizenship in Washington Sept. 21, 2021.

See IMMIGRANT Page A4

## Swan Inducted Into Goucher College Hall of Fame

By JOLISA WILLIAMS  
Bowie State University Athletics

BALTIMORE (Oct. 23, 2021)—Bowie State University head women's basketball coach Shadae Swan was inducted into the Goucher College Hall of Fame Friday, Oct. 22.

"It is an honor to be inducted into the Goucher Athletics Hall of Fame," said Swan. "As a student-athlete at Goucher, there was always an emphasis placed on being a student first, leading by example, and establishing positive relationships with teammates."

Swan donned the Gopher colors from 2005–2008 where she is the women's basketball all-time leader in 3-point field goals made (116), 3-point field goal percentage (35.5) and free-throw percentage (80.6).

The Baltimore native, is now second in 3-pointers made, second in points (1,636), third in scoring average (17.5 ppg.), third in field goals made (602), fourth in free throws made (316), and sixth in steals (201) in program history. She was the conference-leading scorer in each of her final three seasons (2005–07 Capital Athletic Conference, 2007–08 Landmark Conference), and became the third women's basketball player in program history to earn three all-conference selections in her career (2006 All-CAC first team, 2007 All-CAC second team, 2008 All-Landmark first team).

Along with leading the conference, Swan ranked 11th in NCAA Division III in scoring in 2005-06 and 15th in 2006-07.

On February 6, 2007, Swan became the eighth player in program history to score 1,000 points, against Gallaudet. Swan led the Gophers 66 times in scoring, while she posted 46 20-game performances and four 30-point games in her ca-



PHOTO COURTESY BSU ATHLETICS

Shadae Swan

reer. In a 16-game span in her senior year, Swan recorded 20 points 15 times, and in the other game, she scored 19 points. She averaged 24.0 points per game in that stretch, including scoring a career-best 34 points against Christopher Newport on December 1, 2007.

"As a player, my goal was to be a leader by helping my teammates grow in any capacity and giving my all each day. Having my hard work recognized at this magnitude is one of the best feelings in the world. I am thankful for my family, coaches, and teammates because, without them, I would not have reached this milestone."

Goucher College is a NCAA Division III-member institution out of Baltimore, Md. Fans can re-watch the Goucher Athletics Hall of Fame ceremony here.

For the most up-to-date information on Bowie State University Athletics and its 13 varsity sports teams, please visit [www.bsubulldogs.com](http://www.bsubulldogs.com).

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# TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

## In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

### Adventures in Washington (part 2): Hirshhorn Museum and Eisenhower Memorial

Daughter Therese is back in Brownsville, Texas, taking care of her flooded garage and catching up on her mail. But before she left we made another trip into Washington. It was Sunday and we had no trouble finding free street parking behind the Department of Education.

We headed to the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum (next door to Air & Space), currently shrouded in huge spooky eyes and faces, to hide new construction.

Inside, we self-guided through an immersive audiovisual experience in the Museum's second-floor galleries. This dynamic exhibition showcases artist Laurie Anderson's "The Weather" in boundless creative storytelling, featured in video, performance, installation, painting, and other media. It is the largest-ever U.S. exhibition of artwork by this groundbreaking multimedia artist, performer, musician and writer.

I cannot possibly describe what it's like to walk into those rooms. You'll have to go and see for yourself.

The show will be there until July 31, 2022 so you have time, but put it on your must-attend list. And, of course, it's free. By the way, we were steered to this amazing exhibition by a dynamite review in The Washington Post.

Between the Hirshhorn and our car, we stopped off at the new Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial (540 Independence Ave SW) in front of the Department of Education. It pays tribute to President Eisenhower as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II and the 34th President of the United States.

The memorial was established Sept. 1, 2020, Frank Gehry, architect. A National Park Ranger was there to answer our questions.

### Neighbors & other good people

Helen Cordero, longtime Skyline resident and my good friend, died of cancer Oct. 27. Viewing and Mass of Christian Burial will be at St. Philip's with day and time to be announced. I'll tell you a lot more about Helen in next

week's column.

Catrina C. Aquilino, Esq., 34, who was honored with the 2021 Prince George's County Bar Association President's Award, died of triple negative breast cancer on Oct. 15. She was the daughter of Mike and Jean and is survived by brothers Charles and Caleb, loving aunts, uncles, cousins, friends and co-workers.

Nichole Williamson, of Upper Marlboro, graduated in May from Berkeley College with a BS in Fashion Merchandising and Management.

Happy 73rd anniversary to the VFW Post 9619 Auxiliary, Morningside, which was chartered Nov. 13, 1948.

### Town of Morningside

The monthly Morningside Work Session will be Tuesday, Nov. 9, 7 p.m. in the Municipal Center. For information, call 301-736-2300.

The Town office will be closed Nov. 11, for Veterans' Day, honoring the men and women veterans who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

Town Seniors will be feted at the annual seniors' Luncheon on Thursday, Nov. 18.

### Are you working on your gingerbread house?

Darnall's Chance House Museum Contest & Show is coming up. If you're participating, you must register Friday, Nov. 5 (registration fee, \$5).

Entry forms may be obtained by visiting [history.pgparcs.com](http://history.pgparcs.com), clicking on Darnall's Chance Museum, and then clicking on Gingerbread House Contest & Show, or by calling Darnall's Chance House Museum at 301-952-8010.

I'm pleased to report that my great-grandchildren, Mary and Wesley McHale (and mom Heather), constructed a Mystery Shack last year—and won.

Maybe you can do it, too.

### Zebra report

Officials say the owner and caretaker have taken two zebras from the herd and are keeping them in an enclosure in the center of a corral. They hope by utilizing food and the other zebras, the loose zebras will return to the corral—and the herd.

"Our priority is to make sure the zebras are captured and returned to the herd," says DoE Director Andrea L. Crooms. "Once this is accomplished, the County will conduct a further investigation, and any actions, including any appropriate charges against the owner, will be evaluated."

### Mary's COVID report: 13 more Marylanders died

As of Wednesday, Oct. 27, through 5 p.m., 731 more cases were reported, bringing the Maryland total to 557,923. With 13 more deaths, that total is now 10,840.

D.C., Prince George's and Baltimore City have recommended indoor mask-wearing in areas with substantial or high transmission.

### Joe Burgess, Suitland High 1962

Joseph Abner Burgess, 77, of District Heights, who used to come every July 4 to the Morningside Independence Day Parade with his nephew Wayne, died Oct. 10.

The son of Abner and Catherine Burgess, Joe lived his whole life in District Heights. He graduated from Suitland High School in 1962 (when the school was in its 11th year). He worked at E.C. Ernst, Curtis Brothers Furniture, FW Woolworth Co. and at JC Penney's, for 20 years, until he retired.

Aviation, trains, cars and motorcycles were his hobbies.

His brother James and sister Jeanine Burgess preceded him in death. Services were held at Lee's with burial at Washington National Cemetery.

You might remember that, back in 1959, Curtis Brothers Furniture had the larger-than-life Big Chair that sat in front of the store, on the former Nichols Avenue. I guess Joe was too young to work there then.

### Milestones

Happy birthday to Tyrell Boxley, Nov. 14; Michael Spenard, Ty Poe, Bob Davis and Carolyn Holland Bennett, Nov. 15.

Thank you to Eastover Auto Parts that loaned me a monitor, temporarily replacing mine, which kept going black. I guess we look for a new one tomorrow.

## Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

### HONOREE

McKinley Mann Hayes was honored by University of Maryland Eastern Shore's Washington Metropolitan Area Alumni Chapter. The theme for the program was "Making a Difference -The Power of One"

McKinley Hayes was praised by his local Alumni Chapter with an Endowment Breakfast on September 18, 2021. He was recognized for his participation and commitment to Prince George's County.

Angela Alsobrooks, County Executive for Prince Georges' County proclaimed the 18th day of September as McKinley Mann Hayes Day in recognition of his community service in Prince George's County and the State of Maryland.

For thirty-six years his contributions as an educator, a teacher, Assistant Principal, Acting Principal and Counselor in elementary, junior high and high school, he made many impressions on his students who saw him as positive role models for them to illuminate.

In 1990, McKinley Hayes started a driving force for several recruitment programs which have been held for the college over twenty-nine years. This opportunity has given many students to attend the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

As a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. the Washington Metropolitan Area Alumni Chapter saw Mr. Hayes spear head several connections and contributions for communities in Prince George's County.

### 154TH CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

Nottingham Myers United Methodist Church located at 15601 Brooks Church Road, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772 Rev. Shemaiah, Pastor will celebrate their 154th Church Anniversary November 21, 2021, at 11 a.m. The Best is Yet to Come, Vision Street, Future Ave.

However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived—the things God has prepared for those who love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9 (NIV)

Guest Speaker will be Pastor Bresean Jenkins, Ebenezer United Methodist Church, Washington, D.C. For more information call the church at 301-888-2171.

### PGC CALL CENTER

Please see information about Prince George's County Coronavirus Call Center. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Prince George's County Health Department Coronavirus hotline at 301-883-6627 during the hours of 8

a.m.–8 p.m. to receive updated information about the coronavirus disease. "Please contact 911 for medical emergencies only." Do not contact 911 for Coronavirus related issues.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT SYSTEMS, INC.

A Virtual Celebration for Catherine Brooks 25 years of service at Baden Food Pantry was held Sunday, October 24, 2021.

### BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bowie State University Wednesday, October 27, 2021, Virtual Alumni House had a chat with Shalom Omo-Osagie ('20), Filmmaker and the 2021 winner of the Miami Film Festival. Tune in on the Office of Alumni Engagement's Facebook page. Questions??? [alumi@bowiestate.edu](mailto:alumi@bowiestate.edu).

### COUNTY SCHOOL EXAMINERS

Mr. Thomas S. Stone (1850–1919) became Examiner of Schools in Prince George's County in 1877 being appointed to fill the unexpired term of his late father, Dr. M.J. Stone. He continued in this position until 1883 having been re-appointed for two full terms.

Mr. Stone's next appointment as Examiner came on May 1, 1886. He then served uninterrupted for twelve and a half years. In 1898 he was replaced for one term only to be re-appointed for a third time in 1990. His last official connection with the schools of the county occurred during the year 1914 when he acted as assistance to the newly appointed Superintendent of Schools.

Mr. Stone received his education at the Charlotte Hall Academy and at the Maryland Agricultural College. For a short period of his life, he was engaged in business in North Carolina as a buyer of cotton for a firm in New York. He had no experience as a classroom teacher but teaching and teacher's problems had been a part of the home atmosphere in the family seat in Aquasco.

Mr. Stone had the distinction of directing the development of the public-school program in our county for a total of more than twenty years. He was tireless in his efforts to raise the educational level in the county. New buildings were erected in many communities. The schools at that time were mainly one and two teacher units. The Examiner was required by law to visit each school at least three times per year.

Those who knew "Tom" Stone best considered him "the kindest man in the world" He was a man who helped everybody. He was short of stature but truly great of heart. Information taken from the Forty-Second Annual Report State Board of Education of Maryland 1908.

## Around the County

### CASA Is Recruiting Volunteer Advocates

CASA/Prince George's County is seeking volunteer advocates to support youth transitioning in foster care. Apply Now! [www.pgcasa.org/volunteer](http://www.pgcasa.org/volunteer)

Learn more about Court Appointed Special Advocates of Prince George's County at [www.pgcasa.org](http://www.pgcasa.org).

—Montré Dupree, CASA/Prince George's County

### Prince George's County Releases Draft Climate Action Plan for Public Comment

Public review and comment period is November 1 to December 1, 2021

LARGO, Md. (Nov. 1, 2021)—Today, the Prince George's County Climate Action Commission (CAC) released the Draft Climate Action Plan (CAP) for public review and comment through December 1, 2021. The plan will be finalized in the winter of 2022. Residents, organizations, businesses, and County-based entities can comment on the plan by online form, email, regular mail, and in-person meetings.

The Climate Action Plan aims to help the County reach its carbon emissions goal of 50% reduction by 2030, compared with 2005 levels. The goal aligns with the State's projection for 50% emission reduction by 2030 through the implementation of the Maryland 2030 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's goals for the region. The Prince George's County Department of the Environment chairs the Climate Action Commission.

"The Climate Action Commission came together to write an ambitious plan with clear goals contributing to greenhouse gas reductions and the impacts of climate change that reflect our County and communities," said Andrea L. Crooms, Director of the Prince George's County Department of the Environment. "I look forward to hearing the feedback of County residents on the Draft Plan."

With the growing cost and impacts of climate-related disasters, the plan provides recommendations on how Prince George's can invest in green infrastructure and programs, such as renewable energy, smart growth communities, low-carbon transportation, and resilient water systems.

The Draft Climate Action Plan outlines bold action for the County government, residents, and businesses to work together to bring about these changes and help create a future where all residents share the benefits of healthy air, clean water, job opportunities, and safe places to live, work and play.

The County will host in-person sessions on the Draft Climate Action Plan during the public comment period. For a list of upcoming sessions, to review details of the Draft Plan, recommended actions, and to provide feedback, visit [mypgc.us/climateactionplan](http://mypgc.us/climateactionplan).

### Prince George's County Releases Annual Evaluation Report on Hazard Mitigation Plan Flood-Related Action Items

Report outlines County's flood-related activities, accomplishments, and progress

LARGO, Md. (Oct. 28, 2021)—The Prince George's County Department of the Environment (DoE) invites residents to view the Annual Evaluation Report (2020 Progress Report) on flood mitigation actions as outlined in the County's 2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan update. The Annual Evaluation Report and the 2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan will be available for review at DoE's Sustainability Division, 1800 McCormick Drive, Suite 500, Largo, and may be viewed online at <https://bit.ly/2K9w8yO>.

The Annual Evaluation Report outlines the County's activities, accomplishments, and progress on flood-related action items in the Hazard Mitigation Plan. These flood-related actions include:

- Partner with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to update flood hazard mapping;
- Reduce risk for surface water contamination by pollutants from HazMat sites in the floodplain;
- Integrate mitigation plan requirements and actions into other County plans;
- Pursue grant opportunities to aid communities in obtaining elevation certificates to support reduced insurance premiums;
- Support mitigation projects that result in the protection of public and private properties from the impacts of natural hazards;
- Incorporate flood protection and reduction elements in water quality improvement projects to the extent possible;
- Update to emergency action plans;
- Do public outreach and education;
- Improve Anacostia River levee system to secure FEMA accreditation;
- Enhance and expand tools to issue warnings and alerts; and
- Coordinate the Building Code and Floodplain Ordinance.

For more information on the Annual Evaluation Report or the Hazard Mitigation Plan, contact Dawn Hawkins-Nixon, Associate Director, Sustainability Services Division, at 301-883-5839.

—Linda Lowe, Department of the Environment

### City of Bowie Celebrates Expansion of its Electric Vehicle Fleet and Charging Stations

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Held October 22

The City of Bowie took another step toward sustainability and reducing its dependence on fossil fuels in October, with the expansion of its electrical vehicle fleet and the installation of new electric vehicle charging stations at City Hall. These achievements were celebrated at a short ribbon cutting ceremony at the vehicle charging stations on Friday, October 22.

Bowie adopted a Sustainability Plan in 2016 and has been working to follow it by implementing more sustainable practices and making more green purchases, whenever possible. To that end, it recently began operating its own solar farm and expanding the number of electric vehicles in its pool of vehicles. The City's electric vehicle fleet includes two electric motorcycles used by the Police Department, and several hybrid cars and an all-electric Nissan Leaf for staff to use around Bowie. It has now added three electric Chevrolet Volts to be used by Code Compliance Officers.

The new charging stations are located on the side of City Hall, near the pond at Centennial Park and may be used by the public. There is also an electric charging station at the Kenhill Center, another city-owned facility on Kenhill Drive. The new-dual headed chargers were obtained through Sema Connect, a Bowie-based company. The company participated in the ribbon-cutting celebration along with the Maryland Department of Environment and other state government officials.

—Una Cooper, City of Bowie

# COMMUNITY

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MDVA Announces Special Veterans Program

Tuesday, November 9, 2021, 7 p.m.

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs is excited to announce a special Veterans Day event featuring Valhalla Sailing Project.

This virtual event will take place on Tuesday, November 9, at 7 p.m.

Please join us as we provide an MDVA briefing and documentary short screening of True North: Honest Stories of Finding Home. This documentary short features veterans who use the power of sailing to successfully transition home. The film features aerial footage above Maryland's own Chesapeake Bay.

The screening will be followed by a panel discussion featuring local veterans, local documentary producer Suzie Galler, and Valhalla Sailing Project leadership.

Register: [https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/WN\\_fSHVnE-QTx-GAi2\\_QoWOM9A](https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_fSHVnE-QTx-GAi2_QoWOM9A).

—Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

### “With Eagles on Their Buttons”: Remembering Veteran’s Day in Prince George’s County

Thursday, November 11, 2021, 6:30–8 p.m.

Marietta House Museum is in partnership with the Surratt House Museum, and Sankofa: A Mobile Museum, to present a FREE hybrid presentation on November 11, 2021, 6:30–8 p.m., “With Eagles on their Buttons”: Remembering Veteran’s Day in Prince George’s County.

The onsite program will be held at Surratt House Museum, while the hybrid presentation will be on Microsoft Teams. The program is free but you must register for this event!

Discussions will include the history of the U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War and Prince George’s County veterans’ experiences from the national arena.

Katherine Brodt, Assistant Curator and historian at Marietta, will open the program by discussing her research on the Civil War draft and how it affected the enslaved population of Prince George’s County, including three men who were drafted from Marietta in 1864.

Marvin-Alonzo Greer, Interpretive and Community Engagement Manager of Sankofa: A Mobile Museum, will discuss the experiences of U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War. His presentation will outline a day in the life of the soldiers, many of whom were not considered “soldiers” at all.

Coby Treadway, the Education Coordinator of Surratt House Museum, will discuss the history of U.S. Colored Troops from Prince George’s County, specifically, including their experiences after the war was over.

The program will also feature interviews, a live Q&A session, and a performance by the “United States Colored Troops Ensemble,” an a cappella vocal ensemble performing songs and stories from the Civil War era.

To register for this event, please register on Parks Direct at [www.pgpc.com](http://www.pgpc.com) or email [Stacey.hawkins@pgpc.com](mailto:Stacey.hawkins@pgpc.com) or call 301-464-5291.

Marietta is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD. 20769 and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

—Stacey Hawkins, Marietta House Museum

### HARAMBEE!

### In Celebration of the Life and Legacy of Benjamin Banneker

Saturday, November 13, 2021, 12–3 p.m.

Banneker-Douglass Museum, 84 Franklin Street, Annapolis 21401

Register: <https://bdmuseum.maryland.gov/events/>

Families are welcomed to join BDM for an afternoon of art, education, and fun as we learn about the life and contributions of Maryland’s great native son, Benjamin Banneker.

Visitors will also experience a lively Harambee filled with dancing, celebratory cheers, and uplifting chants, led by our Director of Programs, Sabriyah Hassan.

—Banneker-Douglass Museum

### America Recycles Day

November 15, 2021

The annual America Recycles Day pledge is back, and you could win! This year’s prizes are awarded to Prince George’s County residents of all ages and students from kindergarten through 12th (high school).

America Recycles Day aims to build consumer demand for recycled products and educate all Americans about the environmental and economic benefits of recycling. Take the pledge today to recycle and buy recycled at [www.mwcog.org/recyclesday](http://www.mwcog.org/recyclesday).

For more information, contact Helen Register at [hregister@co.pg.md.us](mailto:hregister@co.pg.md.us), or visit [bit.ly/KPGCB](http://bit.ly/KPGCB).

—The DoE Sprout

### Warning from A1

Piscataway, not far from the air base. It reported a much lower concentration of 207 parts per trillion in the tidal lower creek. Neither, according to the MDE, is considered high enough to cause concern for people wading or swimming in the creek.

After getting his own Piscataway water test results last month, Hardy said he wrote local and state officials calling on them to “investigate, remediate and regulate.”

“Neither the county nor the state have set limits on the concentrations of these chemicals in surface water,” he wrote. “Shouldn’t we do so?” He said he’s only heard back from a few officials so far.

A spokesperson for the Air Force wing that operates out of Joint Base Andrews, said the service “is committed to identifying and addressing environmental impacts from perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) to communities surrounding our installations.” The Air Force has barred training with PFAS-containing firefighting foam, the spokesperson said, and has “begun to treat uncontained releases of

[foam] as if it were a hazardous material spill and require immediate cleanup.”

State officials say they’re carrying out a “science-based, comprehensive plan” for addressing PFAS, focusing on contaminated sites where people are exposed to unacceptable health risks and where PFAS may still be getting into the environment.

“Maryland is committed to reducing the risks of PFAS chemicals in our state and continuing our close coordination with scientific, local, state and federal partners,” MDE Secretary Ben Grumbles said in a press release. “Our focus on PFAS in fish tissue and the resulting consumption advisory is another step forward in understanding, communicating, and reducing the potential for harm.”

Concern over PFAS has been building for nearly two decades amid growing discoveries of its presence in community and private wells. There are no enforceable federal standards limiting how much is safe to consume in drinking water, though the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2016 set a health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion combined for PFOS and PFOA, the two most studied

compounds. Surveys conducted by Pennsylvania and Maryland since 2019 found at least some PFAS in a large percentage of water systems checked statewide, though levels exceeded the EPA recommendation in only two systems in each state.

Maryland has opted to leave such regulation to the federal government, but other states have set their own PFAS limits or guidelines in drinking water. Pennsylvania is in the process of doing so.

And after years of study, the EPA has pledged to set an enforceable limit on PFOA and PFOS in drinking water by the end of 2022. The agency also released a “strategic roadmap” on Oct. 18 calling for more testing, research and reporting of PFAS uses, while regulating entire groups of compounds, rather than individual chemicals. That plan has drawn praise from some environmental groups, but others have criticized it as weak.

The effort to check fish for PFAS contamination is growing. In 2020, the MDE tested surface water and oysters in St. Mary’s County after the Naval Air Station Patuxent River there disclosed high levels of the chemicals in its soil and ground

water. This year, disclosure of PFAS in creeks flowing off the Naval Research Laboratory Chesapeake Bay Detachment in Calvert County prompted the nearby town of Chesapeake Beach to check fish offshore. But the MDE said the levels of chemicals found in those fish weren’t high enough to pose health risks under normal consumption scenarios.

The MDE began looking more broadly for PFAS in fish tissue last fall as part of its regular fish contamination monitoring effort. “No levels of concern” were found in tests of fish caught last fall in the Chesapeake Bay and Ocean City’s Isle of Wight Bay, and at several locations on the Eastern Shore—the Chester, Choptank, Corsica, Elk and Wicomico rivers.

Now, after the need to issue a fish consumption advisory for Piscataway Creek, the MDE said it plans to expand its sampling in the Potomac River and tributaries through next fall. Regulators also are looking to see if there could be additional sources of PFAS in the creek, including a Prince George’s County fire training facility in the vicinity.

At least two other Bay watershed states—New York and Pennsylvania—

would you give to legislators who are considering legalizing marijuana for recreational use in Maryland this year? If this topic is placed on the ballot next year, the Coalition will share their views on this controversial topic. Over the past nine years, the Prince George’s County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc. has awarded over \$200,000.00 in scholarships to students, allowing them to continue their education in preparation for their future careers.

Students were involved in a variety of community and leadership activities. Some have served in leadership roles for sorority or fraternity projects in their community or academic institutions, served as an election judge, traveled abroad for service projects in Haiti, St. Croix and Brazil, distributed hygiene packets for the homeless and served at local hospitals and clean-up programs in the community.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, speakers at the Coalition’s breakfast program have included: Mrs. Jacqueline Griffin, motivational speaker and mother of NFL Quarterback RG. III, Judge Arthur Burnett, Sr. National Executive Director of the NAADPC, former States Attorney Glenn Ivey, Former U.S. Marshal, Matthew Fogg, and Ronald Blakely, Former Associate Director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Dr. Ivory Toldson, Ex-

ecutive Director of the White House Initiative on HBCUs. Mrs. Ebony N. McMorris currently with the White House Press Corp and former National News Correspondent for Reach Media, Radio One, often served as the Coalition’s Mistress of Ceremonies for their scholarship breakfast awards programs.

Dr. Valencia Campbell, President of the PGCDPC said, “Despite the impact of COVID-19 on our business and so many of our partners, we are extremely pleased that we were able to continue helping students realize their academic goals. Our donors deserve a special thank you during this difficult time,” she added.

The Prince George’s County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that promotes policies and laws that embrace the public health nature of drug abuse. Through our scholarship program, we provide community-based support to families within the county with a focus on students obtaining higher education and living a drug free life. Through the support of interested organizational partners, and grassroots members like you, we hope to prevent and reduce illegal drug abuse and related crimes in Prince George’s County. For more information about upcoming events and how to partner with us, please visit our website at <https://www.pgcdpc.com>.

## Prince George’s County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc. (PGCDPC) Awarded 13 \$1,000 Scholarships to Students for its Annual “Empowering Future Leaders” Scholarship Awards Program

By SHAWN HAY  
PGCDPC

OXON HILL, Md. (Oct. 25, 2021)—The Prince George’s County Drug Policy Coalition, Inc. awarded 13 \$1,000 scholarships to students for its annual “Empowering Future Leaders” scholarship awards program. Student applications were reviewed by the Coalition’s scholarship awards committee chaired by Jerome “Duke” Haggins. Aside from this recognition, the students received citations from Maryland State Senator Obie Patterson. Congressman Steny Hoyer will be sending the students citations as well.

The thirteen students receiving scholarships this year were: Trinity Gourdin, Cassandra Swilley, Nia Nottingham, Arielle Swilley, Nicholars Read, Evelyn Anderson, Shayne Richmond, Seth Adams, Taylor Nolan, Ronald Weaver, Victoria Costen, Matthew Waits and Marlon Waits. Two of the students were high school graduates, attending either Oxon Hill High School or Crossland High School with the remaining students attending either the University of Miami, Old Dominion University, Frostburg State University, Towson University, University of Maryland College Park, or Morehouse University.

Aside from the documentation required with the application, students provided their views on the essay question, What advice

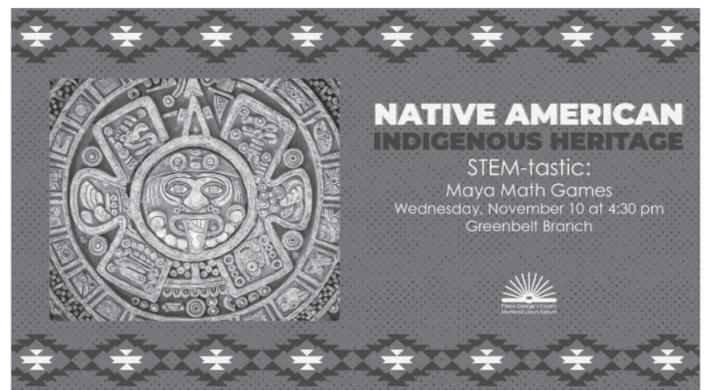
## Commemorate Native American and Indigenous Heritage Month This November at PGCMLS

By DONNA SCOTT-MARTIN  
Prince George’s County Memorial Library System

LARGO, Md. (Oct. 28, 2021)—The Prince George’s County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) celebrates Native American and Indigenous Heritage Month this November with an exciting array of programs for all ages. Featured virtual events are: Community Conversation: Land Acknowledgement and Invisibility; a cure (11/4 at 4 p.m., Adults), Independent Film Series: The Condor and the Eagle (11/22 at 7 p.m., Adults), Film: The Forgotten Slavery of Our Ancestors (11/23 at 7 p.m., Adults), and Indigenous Poetry Tweetalong (11/15–19 at #PgcmlsPoetry on Twitter, Teens/Adults).

As residents of Prince George’s County, we acknowledge that we gather on the traditional lands of the Mattapanient, the Patuxent, the Piscataway, the Moyaone, the Pamunkey, and the Accokeek, past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well. Visit the Library’s Native American and Indigenous Peoples Heritage Hub to learn more about their contributions, culture, and history, available year-round.

Additional Native American and Indigenous Peoples programs (virtual, unless otherwise indicated):



- Craft and Create: Petroglyph Rock Art (11/4 at 6:30 p.m., Adults)
- Crafternoon: Traditional Crafts (11/5 at 4 p.m., Ages 5–12)
- Craft and Create: Native American Inspired Sand Painting (11/18 at 6:30 p.m., Adults)
- Reader’s Advisory: Native American and Indigenous Peoples Heritage Month (11/8 at 7 p.m. Teens and Adults)
- STEM-tastic: Maya Math Games (11/10 at 4:30 p.m., Greenbelt Branch/Outdoors, Ages 5–12)
- Book Discussion: There There by Tommy Orange (11/10 at 7 p.m., Adults)
- Ready 2 Read Storytime: Ages 3–5 Native American and Indigenous Peoples Heritage Month (11/17 at 12:15

p.m., Greenbelt Branch/Outdoors, Ages 5 and under.

- Read Aloud: Native American/Indigenous Peoples’ Heritage Month (11/18 at 10 a.m., Ages 5 and under)
- Craft and Create: Native American Inspired Sand Painting (11/18 at 6:30 p.m., Adults)

Other events of interest this November include and Health and Wellness Open Houses featuring free coats for kids (11/6 | Oxon Hill Branch and 11/13 | New Carrollton Branch). The Health and Wellness Open Houses being held from 1–3 pm, on Saturdays, November 6 and 13, offer activities and a free new coat (sizes 2T–18) for kids in need of one this winter. Limit two coats per family, while supplies last. The PGCMLS Foundation generously sponsored the free coats.

have issued warnings about eating PFAS-contaminated fish, but not for waterways that drain to the Chesapeake.

Elder, the activist who collaborated with Hardy to test the Piscataway’s water, said he doesn’t believe the fish consumption advisories issued by Maryland or other states are conservative enough to protect people from PFAS, which studies have shown to be harmful at minute levels.

“They are protecting their recreational industries at the expense of public health,” he said.

Hardy, who served a stint in the Air Force as a military policeman, said he’s an avid fisherman and for a time had thought about joining other anglers he’s seen casting lines in the Piscataway.

“I have wanted to go find a spot,” he said, “but now I’m not.”

Tim Wheeler is the Bay Journal’s associate editor and senior writer, based in Maryland. You can reach him at 410-409-3469 or [twheeler@bayjournal.com](mailto:twheeler@bayjournal.com). This article was originally published October 19, 2021, on Bayjournal.com and was distributed by the Bay Journal News Service.

# COMMENTARY

## Marion Wright Edelman

President Emerita,  
Children's Defense Fund



### ChildWatch:

## A Chance to Close the Gulf

For many American families the COVID-19 pandemic brought significant new challenges, and more than half of all households with children have lost income since the pandemic began. But a new report by Americans for Tax Fairness—a campaign of more than 420 endorsing organizations, including the Children's Defense Fund, united in support of a fair tax system that works for all Americans—shows total U.S. billionaire wealth has increased \$2.1 trillion, or 70 percent, during the pandemic. As Americans for Tax Fairness executive director Frank Clemente put

it, "From Maine to Arizona, Washington State to Florida, America's billionaires have enjoyed a bonanza of growing riches during the past 19 months of shutdowns, job losses, overcrowded ERs and lost hope. This boom in billionaire wealth occurred against a backdrop of millions of other Americans losing their health, jobs and lives."

The report also cites a ProPublica analysis of IRS data that found billionaires including Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, Michael Bloomberg, and George Soros have paid no federal income taxes in some recent

years, and the nation's 25 top billionaires paid a tax rate of just 3.4 percent on the \$400 billion they collectively accumulated between 2014-18. It's time to insist rich corporations and individuals pay their fair share and not live by their own set of rules. As Americans for Tax Fairness notes, the \$2.1 trillion increase in billionaire wealth during the pandemic is more than Congress is considering spending on the entire Build Back Better plan over 10 years. Polls show large numbers of Americans support increasing taxes for the wealthiest Americans as a means of funding our collective future and infrastructure. How is it possible that some of our leaders would still rather protect billionaires over babies and corporations over children?

Every American family should have a decent safety net. Everyone must be able to live in safe communities with affordable housing, nutritious food, affordable health care, and high quality child care. But something is awry in our nation when the gap between rich and poor has widened to historic levels and the rich are allowed to keep getting richer even during a global pandemic. There must be some concept of enough—both for those at the top and the

bottom. The Build Back Better framework released this week represents a critical first step towards correcting this injustice and closing the growing gulf between the haves and have nots.

Since 2010 the number of American billionaires has doubled while the number of poor children has remained shamefully and stubbornly high—but the temporary expansion of the Child Tax Credit earlier this year made a significant reduction in child poverty. The latest reconciliation proposal would extend the enhanced Child Tax Credit for one year and make it permanently refundable, ensuring the poorest children in families with little or no income continue to benefit. It would also expand access to preschool and child care for millions of children; provide more money for school meals, affordable housing, and health care; and take steps to address the climate crisis our children and grandchildren will inherit. It will move us closer to being a nation with a true concept of enough for all—enough income, food, shelter, child care, and health care for every child. Congress must pass the Build Back Better Act and begin to build the better nation our children deserve.

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## Build Back Better Framework Is a Down Payment on the American Dream

"We need to build America from the bottom up and the middle out, not from top down with the trickle-down economics that's always failed us. I can't think of a single time when the middle class has done well but the wealthy haven't done very well. I can think of many times, including now, when the wealthy and the super-wealthy do very well, and the middle class don't do well.

These are not about left versus right, or moderate versus progressive, or anything else that pits Americans against one another. This is about competitiveness versus complacency. It's about expanding opportunity, not opportunity denied. It's

about leading the world or letting the world pass us by.

—President Biden

For decades, American families have struggled to achieve the American dream of economic prosperity, homeownership, and financial freedom due to years of neglect and failure of investment from Congress and the Trump administration.

The United States ranked 22nd in U.S. News & World Report's 2021 "Best Countries for Raising Kids" rankings, and 34th of 35 in Asher & Lyric's "Raising a Family Index." Among 31 countries

rated by UNICEF for family-friendly policies, the United States fell at the very bottom. The World Economic Forum's Global Social Mobility Report ranked the United States 27th. We have the worst income inequality among the G7 nations. The Social Progress Index, which measures the extent to which countries provide for the social and environmental needs of their citizens, ranks the United States 27th.

By almost every conceivable metric, the United States has fallen behind. This week, President Biden reassured the American people that their dreams have not been forgotten.

While the framework for the Build Back Better Agenda and Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill President Biden announced on Thursday does not include all of the National Urban League's priorities, it is a substantial down payment on a historic investment in a prosperous future.

The framework is heavily based on the Main Street Marshall Plan, the National Urban League's comprehensive plan to lift urban communities out of poverty and stimulate their economic growth.

It will facilitate the creation of millions of family-sustaining jobs, enable more Americans to join and remain in the workforce, and expand the American economy to allow equal opportunity for growth. Elements of the Main Street Marshall plan

include:

- Universal and free preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds, making high-quality education available to more than 6 million children.
- Extension of the American Rescue Plan's expanded Child Tax Credit, which reduced child poverty by 25 percent after only one payment, and could slash child poverty by more than 40 percent in a typical year.
- Extension of the American Rescue Plan's tripled Earned Income Tax Credit for more than 17 million low-wage workers
- Closing the Medicaid Coverage Gap, extending insurance coverage to 4 million Americans who are currently uninsured
- Investment in the construction, rehabilitation, and improvement of more than 1 million affordable homes.
- Down payment assistance that will allow hundreds of thousands of first-generation homebuyers to purchase a home and build wealth.

The Build Back Better Agenda and Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill is an investment in a nation that is inclusive, equitable, and most of all, attainable. It is time for the House and Senate to pass it and send to the President's desk so we can put the American people first.

## Van Hollen, Cardin Push Pilot Program to Curb Military Vehicle Rollover Deaths

By NATALIE DRUM  
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Oct. 29, 2021)—During a May 2019 training exercise at Camp Pendleton in southern California, Marine 1st Lt. H. Conor McDowell of Chestertown, Maryland, was crushed to death when his light armored vehicle dove into a crevasse concealed by tall grass and rolled over.

Just 24 years old, McDowell recently had been promoted and was days away from being engaged to his girlfriend, Kathleen Borque.

The young Marine was one of 123 service members who died in similar tactical vehicle accidents between 2010 and 2019, according to a Government Accountability Office report.

Maryland Sens. Chris Van Hollen and Ben Cardin, both Democrats, have introduced legislation aimed at curbing such fatal accidents. Their proposed law would be named after McDowell.

The senators' measure would create a pilot program requiring data recorders to be placed on Army and Marine Corps tactical vehicles.

"The goal of the pilot program is to improve safety both in training and in vehicle design in order to prevent unnecessary and tragic deaths," Van Hollen told Capital News Service.

Additionally, the bill would require the Army and Marine Corps to use the data recorders to identify near accidents and other potential hazards that would otherwise go undetected.

The services also would be required to identify soldiers and Marines who needed more training in handling vehicles.

Michael McDowell, Conor's father, said his son would be proud that the legislation is named in his honor, particularly because the family did not ask for that.

"But this can be his legacy and he can share it with the other young people, many in their teens, who were killed or

maimed in preventable training fiascos," McDowell said. "We are so proud because it shows how much the country lost."

"We remain committed to preventing needless loss of life during military training exercises," Cardin told Capital News Service in a statement. "The DOD must focus its efforts on addressing this matter."

Congress requested the report from the GAO, the nonpartisan auditing agency, regarding military vehicle accidents. The GAO concluded that there was a lack of consistency in training across the Army and Marine Corps, said Cary Russell, the GAO's director for defense capabilities and management.

For example, some military units did not deal with speeding, while others did not enforce the wearing of seatbelts, Russell said.

Between October 2019 and July 2021, the GAO team conducted over 100 interviews at nine Army and Marine Corps training ranges to understand the context of safety issues, Russell said.

"It's critical to get down and hear firsthand perspectives from the operators and

the people living those programs," he said. "You can only get so much at the command and headquarters levels...."

The GAO also found that there was a shortage of safety officers in Army and Marine units.

"By the time you get to a full-time safety officer in the Marine Corps, you're talking about a division that has 22,000 Marines with only one safety officer covering them," Russell said. "We thought that was a concern."

Marine Capt. Andrew Wood, a spokesperson for the service, said in a statement to CNS that accidents "are investigated swiftly and thoroughly to identify and ensure appropriate corrective actions take place in order to prevent future occurrences."

"Through improvements in our reporting culture and mechanisms, design and acquisition processes, training requirements, and information sharing with Department of Defense partners, the Marine Corps is making every effort to reduce the rate of mishaps," Wood said.

The GAO report's nine recommendations, all agreed to by the Department of Defense, include tracking driver profi-

ciency and sharing information about potential hazards before, during and after training events. The recommendations are included in the Maryland senators' bill.

Van Hollen said he would hold the Army and Marine Corps accountable in implementing the GAO report recommendations in a timely manner. But he added that the military needed a push by Congress when it came to outfitting tactical vehicles with data recorders.

Van Hollen expects the legislation will get bipartisan support.

"Right now we are proposing this as an amendment to the Senate to the National Defense Authorization bill," Van Hollen said. "I have a pretty high degree of confidence that at the end of the day, this provision will be included in the National Defense Authorization Act...before the end of the year," he said.

Rep. Anthony Brown, D-Upper Marlboro, introduced similar legislation that passed the House as part of its version of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2022.

See PROGRAM Page A7

## Immigrant from A1

where, even from my colleagues across the aisle, all of them asking—"What are the services available to the immigrant community?"

Pena-Melnyk said in an interview this month. When no such list arose, Pena-Melnyk said she collaborated on what she called a "brown paper," a list of services in Spanish stretching from abuse hotlines to fair housing assistance, from legal help to resources for unemployment.

"But it's all piecemeal," the delegate said. The bill requires the immigrant affairs office to connect all these services together under one umbrella and remove language and access barriers to each.

But Pena-Melnyk had some concerns. The bill went into effect without Hogan's signature and was instituted under his Community Initiatives office instead of at the cabinet level as the delegate had intended.

"I hope they can budget to do all the bill requires," she said.

The bill sets aside more than \$321,000 initially, with increases every year to cover salary raises and the cost of turnover, up to \$400,000 in 2026.

The first year, almost \$256,000 is assigned for salaries and benefits and nearly \$21,000 is

assigned to operating expenses. Ongoing hotline and website costs ring in at \$38,000 for the year, and one-time technology set-up costs are set at \$6,500.

"To enhance, enrich someone's life, help them get educated and work and contribute—their life is worth much more than \$400k by itself," Pena-Melnyk stressed.

Residents and organizations from across Maryland spoke out against the creation of the immigrant affairs office at hearings in February.

At least seven witnesses called the office a "magnet" for more illegal immigration to Maryland. At least five called it unfair that services would be provided to a small sector of Marylanders on what at least six called a "strained" state budget, out of 10 written opposition testimonies recorded for both bills on the Maryland General Assembly's website.

At the time of the hearing, Hogan had just signed the \$1 billion RELIEF Act of 2021 releasing COVID-19 aid to Marylanders due to fiscal stress. This month, a \$2.5 billion surplus was announced in the state's general fund from the past fiscal year.

Other opponents called the office duplicative when other state agencies already exist, like the Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees in the state's Department of Human Services.

According to that agency's website, however, its services are for "federally recognized refugees and political asylees" only.

A representative from the Maryland Federation of Republican Women said, "While it is a noble goal and desire to help all residents of Maryland, spending more Maryland tax dollars and creating more bureaucracy does not seem the best way to accomplish this task."

Proponents of the immigrant affairs office include high-level Democrats, including candidate for governor Comptroller Peter Franchot and Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh.

A program director for the Esperanza Center, an immigrant resource center Catholic Charities runs in Baltimore, said in testimony that a state-level office would mimic the support the center has received since 2014 from the Baltimore Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs, ensuring programs are accessible and equitable.

A representative from CASA, which he called the largest immigrant advocacy group active in Maryland, said in testimony in January that a state-level office would have "tremendous positive impact on immigrant families in Maryland who still lack basic language access, experience exploitation in a variety of different spaces, maintain distrust of the government and more."

## The Prince George's Post

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# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Social Security Matters

### Ask Rusty:

## Is Waiting Until 70 Still the Best Plan to Maximize Social Security?

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

**Dear Rusty:** My wife started her Social Security at 62 in March 2017 and I filed a Restricted Application to collect a spouse benefit from her shortly thereafter. Our plan is for me to file for my own Social Security later this year when I turn 70. Then my wife will file for her spousal benefit from me. Our life expectancy is 93 & 96. Is this still the best plan for maximum payments? **Signed: Planning Ahead**

**Dear Planning:** Yes indeed. You've chosen an excellent strategy, and one which is no longer available to younger beneficiaries. The Restricted Application option you chose, to get only spouse benefits and let your own increase, was eliminated for anyone born after January 1, 1954.

When you turn 70, you will be eligible for your maximum SS retirement benefit to start at that time. Social Security recommends that you apply about 3 months before you wish benefits to begin (you will specify on the application when you want benefits to start), so you can apply before your birthday if you like but just be sure to be explicit that your benefit-start-month is the month you turn 70. That way, you won't lose any of the Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) you've been accumulating since you reached your full retirement age (FRA) of 66. Your benefit at age 70 will be 32% more than it would have been at age 66.

Note that when you apply, Social Security will probably offer to pay you 6 months of retroactive benefits. Although that lump sum can be quite tempting, accepting it will also reduce your Social Security benefit amount by 4% for the remainder of your life. With a life expectancy in your 90s, I suggest you choose wisely.

After you have submitted your application for Social Security retirement benefits your current spousal benefit will stop as soon as your higher benefit starts. After you apply for your age 70 benefit, your wife's spousal benefit will be automatically awarded when your own benefit begins (automatic because she was born after January 1, 1954). For information, your wife's spousal benefit will be based upon your full retirement age benefit amount, not the increased amount you will receive because you delayed until age 70. You should also be aware that your wife's benefit as your spouse will be less than 50% of your FRA benefit amount because she claimed her own benefit at age 62 (claiming her own benefit early affects her spousal benefit amount).

Nevertheless, with a life expectancy in your 90s you have chosen an excellent strategy which will pay you the highest possible monthly amount and the most in lifetime cumulative benefits, while also providing the highest possible survivor benefit for your wife should you die first. Although waiting until age 70 to claim isn't the right decision for everyone, in your specific case I congratulate you for making a very wise choice.

*The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [www.amac.us](http://www.amac.us) is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation ([www.AmacFoundation.org](http://www.AmacFoundation.org)) is the Association's non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America's Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members' 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 [www.amac.us/join-amac](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).*

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## Prince George's County Releases the Full FY22 Green Book With a \$215 Million Small & Minority Business Spending Goal by County Government Agencies

*Prince George's County Enlists All Agencies and Departments to Support Local, Small and Diverse Suppliers with Increase in County Government Spending*

By PRESS OFFICER  
Prince George's County MD

LARGO, Md. (Oct. 28, 2021)—The Office of Central Services today released the County's full FY22 Green Book via a virtual event. The digital guide for small businesses made its debut last year with a pilot run. After a successful trial, the Green Book is now available with the full participation of over thirty (30) County agencies and departments.

"Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, and we need to continue doing everything we can to support them as we work to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks. "Our Administration is committed to supporting small and minority-

owned businesses in the County, and the full rollout of the Green Book is our latest effort to make it easier to do business with County Government."

The release of the Opportunity Guide for Fiscal Year 2022—the "Green Book"—provides a comprehensive look at the small and minority business spending goals for County agencies and outlines resources to increase access to procurement opportunities. The Green Book is a part of the County's Business Highway, an online business resource portal which houses a suite of business support services. The Business Highway provides a central location for County businesses to access procurement opportunities, certification, registration, and capacity-building tools.

"The goal continues to be creating platforms and services that make it easier for

entrepreneurs to start, grow and maintain local businesses within the County," says Office of Central Services Director Jonathan R. Butler.

The Green Book assists in navigating the local government procurement process by providing an agency-by-agency overview of County-based small and minority business spending availability. Additionally, the Business Highway allows County businesses to search for opportunities in real-time while helping streamline and personalize the interactions professionals and business owners have with County agencies and departments.

View the FY22 Green Book and spending goals online at <https://pgcbusinesshighway.com/>.

## The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Fast-Tracks Minimum Wage Increases to \$15 Per Hour

*Pay increases start January 1, 2022, and impact 3,128 employees.*

By PRESS OFFICER  
Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

RIVERDALE, Md. — The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) announced it will increase its minimum wage to \$15 per hour beginning January 1, 2022. M-NCPPC decided to implement the increase now, rather than follow the State of Maryland's recommended incremental approach to increase rates of pay over the next four years to meet the goal of \$15 per hour.

"M-NCPPC employees provide unprecedented service to our communities year round and many of their families have been severely impacted by the pandemic," said Elizabeth M. Hewlett, Chairman of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Prince George's County Planning Board. "Increasing the minimum wage now allows our employees to better provide for their families and show our support for all of their hard work."

M-NCPPC is a chartered agency through the State of Maryland. The agency has geographic authority in Montgomery County and Prince George's County. The new pay rates will impact 2,841 seasonal employees in Prince George's Parks and Recreation Department and 287 in Montgomery Parks.

"The Commission is a great place to work, with excellent benefits and a sense of mission that attracts motivated employees," said M-NCPPC Vice Chair Casey Anderson. "The increase in our minimum wage will help us recruit and retain top-quality people who will help us continue to deliver excellent service to our community."

"The Commission is committed to quality of life for its employees by increasing the minimum wage," says Director of the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation Bill Tyler. "The dedicated employees in Parks and Recreation for Prince George's

County provide unparalleled programming and amenities and they deserve this," Tyler concluded.

Local minimum wages already increased to \$15 per hour on July 1, 2021, in Montgomery County. Prince George's County is following the State of Maryland's phased-in approach towards the goal of \$15 per hour by 2025 for large employers (15 employees or more) and 2026 for small employers (4 or fewer employees). The minimum wage in Maryland is \$11.75 per hour.

On March 28, 2019, the Maryland General Assembly approved the \$15 per hour minimum wage. Under the new legislation, businesses with at least 15 employees began paying workers a series of increases which started on January 1, 2020, and continue until 2025 to arrive at \$15 per hour.

"Increasing the minimum wage for our employees is the right thing to do," said M-NCPPC, Montgomery Parks Director Mike Riley. "I am proud to be part of an organization that prioritizes improving the quality of life for all of its employees."

*Founded in 1927, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is a nationally recognized leader in land use planning, parks, and recreation achieving countless awards for innovation, stewardship, and exemplary vision for enhancing the lives of current and future generations for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The agency improves the well-being of over two million residents and countless visitors within this region by planning the coordinated and harmonious physical growth and development of the region; protecting and stewarding natural, cultural, and historical resources; providing an award-winning system of parks; creating recreational experiences that enhance the quality of life of all individuals; and planning great communities that are vibrant, livable, accessible, and sustainable. Visit <http://www.mncppc.org>.*

## City of Greenbelt, Maryland's Cooperative Businesses Set Example During National 'Co-op' Month

By PRESS OFFICER  
City of Greenbelt

GREENBELT, Md. (Oct. 28, 2021)— October is national cooperative (co-op) month and serves as a time to reflect upon the shared principles of cooperative businesses. In the City of Greenbelt, cooperative businesses are a long-standing tradition, and their resiliency shined throughout the darkest days of the COVID pandemic. Greenbelt's co-ops are an example of why co-ops make the U.S. economy stronger.

"A co-op is a democratic approach to business, and it operates in the interest of the community members," said Charise Liggins, Greenbelt's economic development coordinator. "In the city of Greenbelt, we are committed to strengthening the greater community we serve, and co-ops thrive here. We welcome more cooperative business opportunities here."

Co-ops have played a critical role building wealth since 1844.

According to the International Cooperative Alliance, today co-op members represent at least 12% of humanity. In the City of Greenbelt there are multiple co-ops, including the Greenbelt Federal Credit Union and the New Deal Café.

"Working in a Co-op means working together to achieve a common goal," said Cindy Compton, Treasurer of Greenbelt Federal Credit Union. "We're providing financial services to our community."

Greenbelt Co-op Supermarket and Pharmacy flourished throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to grow in popularity. Its mission is to provide food, pharmacy and other consumer services to its members and the community and is currently owned and operated by nearly 11,000 members.

"Greenbelt is essentially built for cooperation," said Dan Gillotte, general manager of Greenbelt Co-op Supermarket and Pharmacy. "The city is civic minded and was designed to be

for the people to meet their needs."

Research shows that countries with more co-ops experienced fewer job losses during the Great Recession and more job growth following the economic crisis. According to Communitywealth.org there are 64,017 cooperatives across the U.S. operating within a range of diverse industries including banking, agriculture, utilities, and childcare.

To learn more about how businesses are thriving in Greenbelt visit our Business Spotlights (<https://www.greenbeltdmd.gov/government/departments/economic-development/business-spotlights>) and sign up for the Greenbelt Business Brief Monthly Newsletter.

*Located in Prince George's County, Greenbelt, MD is a welcoming and diverse community. The city offers many amenities and programs for people of all ages, fostering a safe and friendly environment. Visit the City of Greenbelt website to learn more.*

## Recruiting Efforts for State Police Underway With Increased Starting Pay

By PRESS OFFICER  
Office of Media Communications

PIKESVILLE, Md. (Oct. 27, 2021)— Maryland State Police are actively recruiting motivated young men and women to join one of the most prestigious law enforcement agencies in the state with an increased starting pay.

The Maryland State Police announces a salary increase for newly hired troopers as many law enforcement agencies around the country work to recruit qualified applicants. Effective January 1, 2022 the state will increase the starting pay of trooper candidates from \$35,000 to \$51,000.

Salary upon successful completion of the Maryland State Police Academy will be \$55,704 per year. Upon graduation candidates with verifiable prior law enforcement experience will be eligible for advanced placement on the Troopers Salary Schedule on a year for year basis up to midpoint (Step 9).

The salary enhancement is a result of an agreement reached by the Maryland State Police, the State Law Enforcement Labor Alliance (SLEOLA) and the State of Maryland. This is a part of Governor Hogan's recent law enforcement funding initiative to enhance public safety statewide.

The Maryland State Police is currently accepting applications for an Academy Class, slated to begin January 2022. The 153rd Maryland State Police Academy Class is almost at the half-way mark of

their six months of training. Forty-two candidates are expected to graduate in March 2022 and join the ranks of Maryland's Finest.

The minimum qualifications to apply to become a Maryland state trooper are as follows:

- Trooper applicants must be at least 20 years of age, having not reached their 59th birthday.
- Applicants must be a United States Citizen.
- Applicants must become a Maryland resident upon graduation as Trooper.
- Applicants must have a High School Diploma or GED before being hired.
- Applicants must have a valid driver's license in any state and have a satisfactory driving record.
- Applicants must have sound morals and a clean drug history and criminal history.

While the basic duties of a trooper include investigating traffic crashes and criminal incidents, issuing citations and enforcing the laws of Maryland, many troopers are assigned to specialized divisions and units. For most troopers, the opportunities available make for a truly rewarding career.

Along with the variety of career opportunities, the Maryland State Police offers a competitive benefit package. Troopers are provided take home vehicles, the ability to earn college credits, excellent health coverage, paid leave, annual salary increases, a defined benefit retirement package, education

# HEALTH *and* WELLNESS

## Less Than a Year Before '988' Suicide Help Number Is Activated, Some States May Not Be Ready

By KELLY LIVINGSTON  
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Oct. 26, 2021)—A new three-digit phone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, set to launch next July, is expected to increase the use of mental health crisis services as access becomes easier.

But advocacy organizations worry some states may not have the funding or capacity to support increased use of the "988" hotline and its related programs.

"We're envisioning the number... to be a way to really transform the way national crisis response is handled in the United States," Laurel Stine, senior vice president of public policy for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, told Capital News Service. "It's a pivotal moment for the mental health and behavioral health community."

The "988" line is intended to be a faster, easy-to-remember way to get help in a mental health emergency. Calls to the new number will be routed to the already-in-existence National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

The Maryland Department of Health is expecting an increase in the volume of calls and messages once 988 goes live, spokesman David McCallister said in an email to CNS.

"We expect contact volume to increase due to ease of remembering a three-digit number," McCallister said.

An increase in calls means additional costs for local crisis centers in the hotline network that field calls and provide care.

McCallister said the federal government has provided funding to states, including Maryland, through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to support these services. Maryland is using those funds to support crisis call centers, he said.

The state has also submitted a draft plan addressing issues like

funding and capacity to Vibrant Emotional Health, the administrator of the hotline. McCallister said the department is awaiting feedback on the draft plan. The finalized plan is due in January.

According to a state legislation map provided by the mental health advocacy group National Alliance on Mental Illness, only 20 states have so far have even proposed 988-related bills for funding and implementation.

Federal funding for the hotline flows through the Substances Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. According to a press release from that agency, the Biden administration's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2022 allots \$102 million for the transition to 988, in addition to separate funding for other suicide prevention programs.

The proposed federal funding is "significant," according to Stine. "However, we believe that additional resources are needed."

Cost estimates for one year of nationwide implementation for the three-digit number go as high as \$240 million, she explained.

When Congress cleared the way for the establishment of the three-digit number with the passage of the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 last fall, it included provisions to allow individual states to levy taxes on phone bills to help fund and implement the hotline and crisis intervention services that would follow calls for assistance. That bill was signed into law by then-President Donald Trump.

Four states so far have passed bills including phone bill fees for this purpose. One signed into law in Virginia establishes a 12-cent fee for most wireless phone plans, and an 8-cent fee for prepaid wireless plans, which will fund crisis call centers in the state.

But because individual states need to develop their own funding and implementation plans, there is some concern among mental health advocates that they won't all be ready for the "988" launch less than nine months from now.

"This kind of crisis infrastructure is going to take a lot of com-

munities some time to develop, but they need to get started now," said Angela Kimball, national director of government relations, policy and advocacy for the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

"The real fear though, is that if people call 988 and expect a mental health response, we want them to get a mental health response," Kimball said. "We don't want what we've always had, which is typically a law enforcement response."

Kimball explained that police calls to mental health emergencies have sometimes led to arrests, inappropriate uses of emergency departments and hospitals, as well as deaths.

"That kind of trauma and tragedy is the last thing that we need," Kimball said.

On average, 130 people die by suicide every day in the United States, according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. As a result, crisis intervention and care are major public policy priorities for mental health advocacy organizations.

Those groups say the work doesn't stop at providing the hotline—there needs to be a system that addresses the need for care after someone calls.

"There is a subset of people, about three in 10, for whom the phone call isn't going to be enough," Kimball explained.

In 2020, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline received 2.4 million calls.

Of those calls, 42,934 came from Maryland. About two-thirds of those Marylanders were connected with one of the eight crisis centers covering all regions in the state.

These crisis centers are facilities for people experiencing a mental health crisis where they can receive evaluation, care and referrals for more long-term treatment. Advocates say they are more effective and humane alternatives to placing someone in a hospital emergency department during a mental health crisis.

"A lot of our work is focused on the states in order to ensure that states take up legislation to fund the work," Stine said. "And so we're devoting a lot of our time to this."

**The 988 three-digit hotline is not yet operational. If you are struggling with thoughts of suicide, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1(800)273-8255 or visit its website at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/e>**

## Prince George's County Health Department Offering Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Booster Shots

Booster shots of all three vaccines in the United States are available at Health Department COVID-19 vaccination clinics and other health care providers

By GEORGE LETTIS

Prince George's County Health Department

LARGO, Md. (Oct. 26, 2021)—Following the FDA's emergency use authorization, the CDC's official recommendation, and the State of Maryland's approval, Prince George's County residents in the following groups who received a Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine are eligible for a booster shot six months or more after completing their initial series:

- 65 years and older
- Age 18+ who live in long-term care settings
- Age 18+ who have underlying medical conditions
- Age 18+ who work or live in high-risk settings

Individuals 18 and older who received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine are eligible for a booster shot if they were vaccinated two or more months ago.

"Federal health regulators have recommended booster doses to address the possibility of decreasing immunity over time. The booster dose will help maintain levels of immunity for longer," said Prince George's County Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Health, Human Services, and Education Dr. George L. Askew. "The availability of booster shots of all vaccine brands used in the United States is another critical step in keeping more Prince Georgians as safe and as healthy as possible, especially those who are at highest risk of severe illness or exposure to the virus."

Residents may self-attest at a clinic that they are eligible for a booster dose. The FDA and the CDC now allow for mix and match dosing for booster shots. Eligible individuals who prefer a vaccine brand may choose which one they receive as a booster dose, regardless of the brand they previously received.

"Data continue to show each of these vaccines are highly effective in reducing the risk of hospitalization and death due to COVID-19. Prince Georgians now have more options and opportunities to strengthen their protection," said Prince George's County Health Officer Dr. Ernest Carter. "At the same time, we are continuing the push for more eligible residents to take that first step and get their initial doses as soon as possible to greatly increase their chances of staying healthy and alive."

The County and other health care providers are also offering third doses of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to residents who are moderately or severely immunocompromised, based on CDC guidance. A third dose of Pfizer or Moderna is recommended at least 28 days for those individuals who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 and may not build the same level of immunity to a two-dose vaccine series compared to people who are not immunocompromised.

Visit [mypgc.us/COVIDvaccine](https://mypgc.us/COVIDvaccine) for more information about COVID-19 vaccinations, including locations and hours of operation for vaccine clinics operated by the County and other public and private organizations.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES

## Managing Complications of Lupus

(Family Features) Many people may recognize the term "lupus" and think of it as an autoimmune disease that can cause joint pain and swelling, but you may not be aware lupus impacts an estimated 1.5 million Americans and can affect many parts of the body.

The disease that causes the immune system to attack its own tissues mainly impacts women, who make up 9 out of 10 lupus patients. Genetics also play a role in lupus; if you have a family member with lupus or another autoimmune disease, you are at greater risk.

Some racial and ethnic groups are also at elevated risk, including those of Black, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American and Pacific Islander heritage. Additionally, Black, Hispanic/Latino and Asian American lupus patients are more likely to develop complications, including kidney damage, also known as lupus nephritis, and these patients tend to have worse outcomes than white patients.

Lupus nephritis—kidney swelling and irritation caused by lupus—affects up to 60% of patients with lupus, according to the American Kidney Fund. It can cause permanent kidney damage, called chronic kidney disease, which can affect your quality of life. People with lupus nephritis also have a higher chance of heart problems, blood vessel problems and developing certain types of cancer.

Symptoms of lupus nephritis include weight gain, fatigue, joint pain or swelling, muscle pain, fever, high blood pressure and frequent urination. Because some of the symptoms of lupus nephritis can also look like symptoms of other diseases, it's important for lupus patients to talk to their doctors about testing their kidney function regularly. Testing your kidney function involves a urine test to look for protein and a blood test to check for waste products in your blood.

If you are diagnosed with lu-

pus nephritis, it is important you see a kidney doctor, called a nephrologist. Treatment for lupus nephritis focuses on preventing additional kidney damage. It's also important to recognize lupus nephritis can impact your mental health, too. These tips from the American Kidney Fund can help you navigate your care and cope with lupus nephritis:

- Ensure your kidney function is tested regularly and you are referred to a nephrologist.
- Keep records of your symptoms, tests and test results so you can share them with your doctors in detail.
- Consider medication to lower your blood pressure, if directed by your health care provider, which can help lower the amount protein in your urine.
- Write down questions you have for your doctor and bring them to your next visit.
- Take notes on what your doctor says during your visits.
- Find healthy ways to cope, such as meditating, journaling or exercising.
- Take a diuretic, or water pill, if directed by your health care provider, to help rid your body of extra fluid, which can raise your blood pressure and cause strain on your heart.
- Talk to a professional, such as a mental health therapist, counselor or social worker, to help understand and process emotions, improve coping skills and advocate for your needs.
- Join a support group to connect with others who have similar experiences.
- Ask your doctor for handouts or suggestions for where you can go for more information.
- Don't be afraid to get a second opinion if you feel your doctor is not taking your concerns seriously.

To learn more and find resources to help cope with lupus nephritis, visit [KidneyFund.org/lupus](https://KidneyFund.org/lupus).

Source: American Kidney Fund

**A Capital News Service story on rabies published Oct. 21 included numerous reporting errors. Below is a corrected version.**

## Rabies: Animal Bites Can Come at a Price

By Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Oct. 22, 2021)—In 2016, Nicholas Fletcher said, he was in the process of moving out of his Baltimore home when several bats swept in through the chimney and into his basement.

As Fletcher was ushering the winged creatures from his home, he was bitten on his left foot leaving a faint but potentially life-threatening red mark.

With little hesitation, Fletcher decided to get treated at the nearest emergency room, where the medical professional asked whether he had brought the bat with him so that it could be tested for rabies.

"No. Why would I bring you the bat?" Fletcher said. "I don't have the bat. The bat's outside living its best life."

Fletcher endured immunizations and treatment costing at least \$5,000, which his insurance covered.

Rabies treatment consists of a single immunoglobulin injection administered at the wound site and the arm followed by four vaccinations given over a 14-day period. The regimen is proven to be virtually 100% effective in preventing rabies.

"If I didn't have health insurance, I probably would have hesitated a little bit. But at the end of the day five grand is not worth my life," Fletcher told Capital News Service.

However, everyone in Maryland who needs to be treated for rabies exposure can get treatment.

Those seeking treatment in Maryland should go to an emergency department for

medical evaluation and treatment associated with a bite or serious injury in addition to the rabies exposure, according to the state health department.

Rabies hasn't been eradicated and still poses a public health threat that needs to be addressed, said Dr. David A. Crum, public health veterinarian for the Maryland Department of Health.

"We know rabies is here (everywhere)," Crum said, and it's important to get medical treatment.

"Those who meet the criteria are not going to be denied the vaccine in Maryland," Crum said.

Patients are advised "of all financial assistance programs that are available," according to the Maryland health department in a written statement to Capital News Service. "The Department will cover the charge of the rabies biologics for those persons deemed unable to pay that meet established criteria."

Each year, more than 10,000 animal bites are reported in Maryland, and an additional 2,000 reports are tallied of non-bite exposures. <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OIDEOR/CZVBD/pages/Data-and-Statistics.aspx>

The five-year average in the state is approximately 446 post-exposure rabies treatments every year, a media representative for the Maryland Department of Health said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 55,000 Americans receive the treatment every year. As of 2019, the average cost of rabies treatment and pre-

ventatives was \$3,800, which doesn't include an emergency department visit or wound care, according to the CDC.

There have been about 30 rabies-related deaths in the U.S. from 2009 through 2018, according to the CDC.

The only rabies fatality in Maryland during this period was in 2013 via kidney transplant, according to the CDC.

In 2018, Maryland had the seventh-largest number of positive animal rabies cases in the United States with almost 270, which ranks it above some more populated states, according to CDC data.

From 2015 through 2019, Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Montgomery and Baltimore counties and Baltimore City had the most reported cases of rabies exposure in the state.

In Maryland, among wild animals, raccoons, foxes, skunks and bats most often carry the virus. Cats are most frequently infected among domestic animals, including livestock, according to the health department.

Rabies is usually transmitted to humans through saliva of an animal infected with the virus, but it can also be transmitted through brain and nervous system tissue.

Among those who are not vaccinated, the virus is nearly always fatal.

"In the rare event that rabies PEP is declined, Maryland state and local health officials and the clinician providing care would counsel the individual to ensure that they fully understand their decision," according to the Maryland health department.

