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Governor Hogan Announces Indoor Visitation Can Resume at Nursing Home Facilities, State Superintendent of Schools Expands Child Care Ratios

Limited Indoor Visitation and Compassionate Care Visits Can Resume
State Commits Additional $6 Million For Testing of Nursing Home Staff
Child Care Providers May Return to Full Teacher to Child Ratios and Capacities
Governor Provides Update on State's Flu Season Planning

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Governor Larry Hogan today announced that indoor visitation may resume at Maryland nursing homes where no new cases have been reported in 14 days or more, along with greater flexibility for compassionate care visits, and an additional $6 million specifically for testing nursing home staff. The governor was joined by State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Karen Salmon, who announced the expansion of child care in Maryland to full teacher to child ratios and capacities.

"This spring, for states across the nation, nursing homes became ground zero in the fight against COVID-19," said Governor Hogan. "Today, effective immediately as a result of new federal and state guidelines and our advances in rapid testing, indoor visitation is now able to begin in all nursing homes. We are also committing an additional $6 million specifically for testing of nursing home staff using state testing resources."

Maryland.gov

Watch today's press conference.

View the slides from today's press conference.

Earlier this week, the governor held his 25th meeting with the Maryland Coronavirus Response Team of doctors and public health experts. Discussions included additional measured and data-driven steps to continue moving forward with the state's safe, effective, and gradual reopening plans.

INDOOR VISITATION FOR NURSING HOMES. Governor Hogan announced that under new federal and state guidelines, nursing homes and assisted living facilities can begin allowing limited indoor visitation, as well as compassionate care visits to support residents who may require emotional and spiritual support. To qualify, facilities must have no active cases in the last 14 days and no outbreak testing in progress. On June 19, the governor announced a return of limited outdoor visitation. Read the Department of Health's notice to nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

- As part of this transition, state health officials are implementing new testing guidelines expanding the use of rapid antigen tests—which could be used to screen visitors—while continuing to require regular diagnostic testing depending on local conditions. The state will commit an additional $6 million to help facilities cover the cost of nursing home staff testing. To date, the state has dedicated nearly $102 million to testing and PPE for nursing homes.
- On August 5, 130 Maryland nursing homes had active COVID-19 cases; as of October 1, that number has decreased to 76. This represents a decline of 41.5%.

CHILD CARE RATIOS EXPANDED. State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Karen Salmon announced that child care providers in Maryland are now able to return to the full teacher to child ratios and capacities for which they are licensed. Child care centers can now serve up to 20 three- and four-year-olds in a room with a ratio of 1 teacher to 10 students and up to 30 school-age students with a ratio of 1 teacher to 15 students. Providers must continue to follow all appropriate public health and safety guidance.

"We have heard very clearly from many parents and providers who have written and called me, that we return to licensed capacity to meet the needs of working families and prevent the closure of child care centers once it could be done safely," said Dr.

families with access to safe child care programs."

- During Stage Two, when the capacity limit for child care programs was increased from 10 to 15 individuals per room, state health officials did not see any adverse impacts.
- To date, more than 82% of child care providers in Maryland have reopened. Reopened programs will receive a one-time grant of $800 for family child care providers and $1,600 for center-based child care providers. These grants will be available through October 31. MSDE is also providing $1,000 in start-up grants to eligible, new child care providers in an effort to bolster new small businesses.

LOCATE: Child Care at (877) 261-0060 or through the LOCATE Webpage.

FLU SEASON PLANNING. The governor discussed the state's ongoing planning for flu season, including hospital contingency planning, and adapting Maryland's long-term testing strategy.

"The First Lady and I have already gotten our flu shots, and I want to again strongly encourage all Marylanders to do the same," said Governor Hogan. "The flu vaccine is the most effective way to prevent flu disease. To get your flu shot, you should go to your doctor, your local pharmacy, or you can call your local health department."

Visit health.maryland.gov/flu to learn more.

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