



**ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
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**NEWS RELEASE** *for Immediate Release*

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***Released in coordination with St. Mary's County Health Department***

**State of Emergency Declared to Expand Response to COVID-19**

*Three Confirmed Maryland Cases in Montgomery County, Patients in Quarantine in Good Condition*

**LEONARDTOWN, MD** (March 6, 2020) – On March 5th during an evening **press conference**, Governor Larry Hogan announced the first positive cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Maryland and declared a state of emergency to ramp up Maryland's coordinated response across all levels of government. According to the state health department, the three patients, who contracted the virus while traveling overseas, are in good condition and are in quarantine at their homes in Montgomery County.

“Our community here in St. Mary's County should stay informed, continue infection prevention strategies such as hand-washing and staying home when sick, and pay attention to travel guidance for areas where there is localized, sustained transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19,” said Dr. Meena Brewster, St. Mary's County Health Officer. “We have been working with state and local partners to monitor the evolving COVID-19 situation, to share important information, and to prepare for local response efforts.”

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. Community members are reminded that prevention measures are the best protection against COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses. These include:

Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; if soap and water is unavailable use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol

Avoiding close contact (within six feet of distance) with people who are sick

Staying home when you are sick

Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue and throwing the tissue in the trash

Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth

Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces

The majority of people who have had COVID-19 thus far have experienced mild or moderate cold-like symptoms. Older adults and people with underlying health conditions, such as heart

disease, lung disease, and diabetes, are at higher risk of developing more serious illness from COVID-19. Such community members should consider the following *additional precautions*:  
Avoid large crowds

Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications and supplies in case you need to stay home for a prolonged period of time.

At this time, the CDC does not recommend the use of facemasks for the general public. Those who are showing symptoms of illness or those caring closely for people showing symptoms (healthcare providers, emergency medical services, etc.) should wear a facemask or the appropriate personal protective equipment for their setting.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses, like the common cold – coughing, fever, shortness of breath. Anyone displaying symptoms and who are at risk due to travel or contact with others who may have COVID-19 should call their healthcare provider for further guidance – do not visit your healthcare provider without first calling them as this can potentially expose others to illness.

Community members, healthcare providers, and local business owners are encouraged to visit the SMCHD website for updates and information at: [www.smchd.org/coronavirus](http://www.smchd.org/coronavirus).

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