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PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY TO REMAIN IN PHASE 2 REOPENING

*Releases Guidance for Upcoming Holidays, Advising Against Gatherings with
Individuals Not from Your Immediate Household*

LARGO, MD – Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks announced today that the County will remain in Phase 2 reopening since the County's key COVID-19 metrics have increased, similar to trends seen in other jurisdictions across the State of Maryland. This decision was made under the advice of County health officials after analyzing COVID-19 data and trends over the past three weeks.

“The COVID-19 trends we are seeing in our County and jurisdictions across the State are concerning and a stark reminder that this virus is still very much present in our community,” said Alsobrooks. “This unfortunately means that Thanksgiving and other upcoming holidays will not look the same this year. As difficult as it will be, as we approach the holiday season and the weather gets cooler, it is very important that we all avoid gathering at each other's homes.”

Preliminary data for last week shows the County's positivity rate has increased to 4.3%, after falling under 4% for two consecutive weeks. There were also 852 new cases for last week, a 19.2% increase from the previous week and the highest number of new cases in one week in the County since the beginning of August.

The County's infection rate has also increased, sitting at 1.07 as of October 20. The virus is still spreading in the County in a slow but controlled manner. Finally, the County's average daily case rate has steadily increased over the last three weeks, sitting at 13.4 new cases per day per 100,000 residents as of last week. The County will continue to monitor and analyze the data and trends, providing an update on the County's progress in another two to three weeks.

In addition, the County Health Department released guidance for the upcoming holiday season. The Health Department is advising against holiday gatherings with individuals who are not in

your immediate household. Instead, the Health Department recommends hosting virtual holiday gatherings for family and friends. If hosting an in-person gathering with people outside of your household, it should be small with a limited number of people so social distancing can be enforced. Everyone should also wear masks. In addition, wash and disinfect guest areas before and after these small gatherings.

The Health Department is also advising residents to reconsider travel during the holiday season. If you must travel, consider the mode of transportation you will take as well as the dates you will be traveling. Carry a small personal sanitizing kit with hand sanitizer, wipes and masks. If traveling, driving your own vehicle can reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Full holiday guidance will be posted on the Health Department's Coronavirus page at health.mypgc.us/coronavirus.

On Tuesday, October 27, the County's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) relaunched the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Unlike the first round of the ERAP, landlords, property managers and owners are now responsible for submitting applications on behalf of tenants. Landlords, property managers and owners may apply for each tenant's delinquent rental payments beginning on or after April 1, 2020. The tenant must have a COVID-19 triggering event, among other eligibility requirements. The amount of rental assistance available has also increased, capped at \$1,800 per month for up to 6 months.

A total of \$8 million was made available for the Prince George's County ERAP when the program was launched in May. To date, DHCD has distributed more than \$2.1 million in Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) for rental assistance to Prince George's County residents. However, during the first round of funding, the County received thousands of incomplete applications, with applicants not responding to multiple phone calls, emails and letters.

The relaunch will now make landlords, property managers and owners responsible for submitting documentation on behalf of their tenants to help streamline and expedite the application process. Almost \$6 million in CRF for rental assistance is available for the relaunch of the ERAP. Tenants are encouraged to speak with their landlord or leasing office to see if they may qualify for rental assistance. More information, eligibility requirements and the application portal can be found on the [DHCD website](#).

Finally, the County is taking several steps to eliminate barriers to voting. The County's public transit system, "TheBus", will extend service hours on Election Day, November 3, until 9:00 PM on all active County bus lines. In addition, service is free for all riders. Voters should check route and schedule information at mypgc.us/thebus, as not all polling locations are served by transit. Voters can find a full list of Vote Centers at elections.mypgc.us.

The County is also helping accommodate seniors and those with disabilities who are voting in person. If there is a line at one of the County's Vote Centers, election workers are performing line checks to look for seniors and voters with disabilities who may have trouble standing in line for extended periods of time. These voters are brought inside to a waiting area where they are able to take a seat while given a "place holder" number for their spot in line. In addition, the

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is providing golf carts to pick up seniors and voters with disabilities from parking lots and drive them to the buildings.

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