

**COVID-19 Update Press Conference Transcript**  
**April 11, 2020**

**Ms. Jennifer Lyall – Public Information Officer for Cecil County Government:**

Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us today on such late notice. My name is Jennifer Lyall and I'm the Public Information Officer for Cecil County Government.

County Executive Alan McCarthy requested this press conference today to allow our Health Officer, Lauren Levy, to provide an update on recent developments concerning COVID-19 pandemic in Cecil County.

It just a moment, Lauren Levy will give a statement, followed by Director of Emergency Services Richard Brooks.

Questions from the media will be entertained at the conclusion of the press conference.

Written questions may be emailed to me afterwards and that's [pio@ccgov.org](mailto:pio@ccgov.org).

Ladies and gentlemen, County Executive Dr. Alan McCarthy.

**Dr. Alan McCarthy – Cecil County Executive:**

Thank you very much, Jennifer.

Good afternoon everyone.

I was notified earlier today of a situation involving increased spread of the coronavirus at one of our nursing home facilities.

What started out as two isolated cases, two days, has now infected a number of other residents and staff at this facility.

I am deeply saddened that this disease has spread to a location which houses some of our most vulnerable citizens.

I will now ask Health Officer Lauren Levy to step to the podium and provide you with the most recent details.

Thank you, Lauren.

**Ms. Lauren Levy – Health Officer of the Cecil County Health Department:**

We called this press conference today to update the residents of Cecil County on the state of the COVID-19 pandemic in the county.

There are currently 74 cases of COVID-19 in Cecil County and 1 COVID-19 related fatality.

On Thursday we announced that several positive cases were identified at an area nursing home in Cecil County. The Health Department has since received notification that additional residents and staff members at Calvert Manor Healthcare Center have tested positive for COVID-19. Additional test results are pending and more testing is underway for residents and staff of the facility.

The Health Department has been working closely with Calvert Manor to ensure that appropriate measures are being taken to keep residents as well as staff and their families as safe as possible. To that end, after consultation with the Maryland Department of Health, we made the decision to submit a request for a Strike Team through the state. A team from the Maryland National Guard will be arriving on site this afternoon to assist the facility in controlling the outbreak.

The National Guard team is comprised of emergency medical physicians, nurse practitioners, and other healthcare personnel who will assist with stabilization and triage at the facility.

I want to take a moment to thank these brave men and women who put their lives on the line every day to keep Marylanders safe.

In addition to the Strike Team, the Health Department, in close collaboration with ChristianaCare Union Hospital and the Cecil County Department of Emergency Services, are working with Calvert Manor to ensure that staff are adequately supplied with personal protective equipment and trained in its proper use.

I want to ensure everyone that all steps are being taken to stop the spread of COVID-19 at Calvert Manor.

Before I conclude, I would like to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the support of our state and local partners. We at the Health Department are extremely fortunate to have such strong partnerships with ChristianaCare Union Hospital, the Department of Emergency Services and Cecil County Government among many others. At the state level, I am deeply grateful for the support of the Maryland Department of Health for mobilizing these resources. Especially Dr. Tricia Nay, Deputy Secretary for Public Health, Fran Phillips, Former Cecil County Health Officer, Stephanie Garrity, as well as Dr. Tim Chizmar of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems.

I know that these past several weeks have been extremely challenging for all of us. Please, everyone, do your part to slow the spread of COVID-19. Stay home. Only go out if it is essential and wear a cloth mask if you do. We are all in this together and we all have a part to play in protecting the most vulnerable members of our community. Thank you.

**Dr. Alan McCarthy – Cecil County Executive:**

Thank you, Lauren.

Going forward, we will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as often as possible giving complete respect to those affected.

I have a tremendous amount of faith in the abilities of our National Guard, our Emergency Services personnel and our Health Officer and her team to manage this situation and care for all of those involved.

I plead to each of you to honor and please take Governor Hogan’s “Stay at Home” orders seriously.

Please continue to practice social distancing, wash your hands, protect yourselves and your families.

We absolutely MUST heed the warnings to have any hope to flatten the curve and put an end to this devastating disease.

Thank you so very much.

**Ms. Jennifer Lyall – Public Information Officer for Cecil County Government:**

If there is anyone from the media who would like to ask a question?

**Doug Donley – Cecil TV:**

Uh, yes, this is Doug Donley from Cecil TV and I have a question.

**Ms. Jennifer Lyall – Public Information Officer for Cecil County Government:**

Go ahead.

**Doug Donley – Cecil TV:**

Is testing being done proactively at other adult care facilities?

**Dr. Alan McCarthy – Cecil County Executive:**

I’m going to refer that to Lauren Levy.

**Ms. Lauren Levy – Health Officer of the Cecil County Health Department:**

In terms of proactively, could you explain what you mean?

**Doug Donley – Cecil TV:**

I mean now that we know Calvert Manor has some cases, are people being tested...I know there is a large facility...there are other large facilities I won't attempt to name because I can't think of them at the moment, but are other similar facilities being...are you going there and testing people?

**Ms. Lauren Levy – Health Officer of the Cecil County Health Department:**

We are working very closely....

**Doug Donley – Cecil TV:**

Do you understand what I'm saying?

**Ms. Lauren Levy – Health Officer of the Cecil County Health Department:**

Yes, I understand. We are working very closely with the other area nursing homes to ensure that they have the personal protective equipment that they need in order to prevent the spread of infection in facilities and if they have identified symptomatic patients, the Health Department is providing them with kits and those are being processed through the state lab to ensure that results are obtained very quickly. And, you know, we are in regular communication with the management and staff of those facilities to make sure that they have what they need and to provide them with necessary support.

**Doug Donley – Cecil TV:**

Right. So, essentially, the protocol is the protocol that we all follow as far as testing is preceded by symptoms is being followed at these facilities as well? There is no attempt to go and test everybody in these places?

**Ms. Lauren Levy – Health Officer of the Cecil County Health Department:**

Unfortunately....

**Doug Donley – Cecil TV:**

Are you waiting for symptoms?

**Ms. Lauren Levy – Health Officer of the Cecil County Health Department:**

Right. Unfortunately, the testing kit availability remains limited and so we have to be strategic in our use of testing kits. So certainly if someone is identified as having symptoms we address that. I mean, the facilities also have strong screening measures in place for staff entering the facility on the daily basis and anyone who has contact with someone who is subsequently found to be positive, although we don't any positive cases in any of the other nursing homes, we would be potentially testing them as well.

**Doug Donley – Cecil TV:**

Okay. Thank you.

**Jacqueline Covey – Cecil Whig:**

Jaqueline Covey, Cecil Whig. I was just wondering what, as far as concerning mild to severe, is anyone being hospitalized at this time?

**Ms. Lauren Levy – Health Officer of the Cecil County Health Department:**

No one from the nursing homes is currently hospitalized to my knowledge, but I don't have any additional information about the severity of cases.

**Ms. Jennifer Lyall – Public Information Officer for Cecil County Government:**

Okay. Are there any other questions?

*(silence)*

Alright, thank you for being with us this afternoon. Again, if you have a follow up questions, you may email me at [pio@ccgov.org](mailto:pio@ccgov.org). Thank you for being with us.

**Doug Donley – Cecil TV:**

Will this video be put online?

**Ms. Jennifer Lyall – Public Information Officer for Cecil County Government:**

Yes, probably within a couple hours I will have video and transcript on the county's website.

**Doug Donley – Cecil TV:**

Great, thanks.

**Ms. Jennifer Lyall – Public Information Officer for Cecil County Government:**

You're welcome.

*(End of Tape)*

Transcribed: April 11, 2020  
By: Rebekah Corle