DATE: May 15, 2020

TO: Members of the Richmond City Council

FROM: Mayor Levar M. Stoney

CC: Lenora Reid, Acting City Administrative Officer

RE: COVID-19 Response and Recovery Initiatives Update

Last week I provided my eighth weekly COVID-19 response and recovery update to members of the Richmond City Council and public.¹ This memorandum will build upon what was described last week as part of my administration’s comprehensive response to combat COVID-19.

To date, Richmond has 665 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 18 tragic COVID-19-related deaths.² Moreover, 42 percent of confirmed cases and 89 percent of Richmonders who have died from COVID-19 have been Black. Where we know the ethnicity of our cases, Hispanic and Latinx Richmonders make up an outsize proportion, representing 23% of cases while only accounting for 6-7% of our total population.

Due to deep concerns about how COVID-19 is impacting our communities of color, on Monday, May 11th I requested the Virginia Department of Health provide the necessary data to determine Richmond’s percent positivity ratio. We received this data on May 14th, which showed that Richmond’s percent positivity has increased over the past two weeks, rather than decreased. Combined with the total case count growth in the city of Richmond, I requested that Governor Northam allow Richmond to delay the implementation of Phase One reopening. Governor Northam granted this request on May 14th. You can see the data (dated May 14) we used to make this decision below and in our press release found here. As of May 15th, the percent positivity data is now publicly available to all localities in Virginia so that they may track local trends.

¹ [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e7a426cb2e1486cd43c9561/t/5ebedffee15d43134490cc9a/1589567489018/COVID-19+MEMORANDUM+5.8.20.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e7a426cb2e1486cd43c9561/t/5ebedffee15d43134490cc9a/1589567489018/COVID-19+MEMORANDUM+5.8.20.pdf)

Furthermore, last week I described how my administration and our community partners are providing assistance to our most vulnerable populations during this health crisis. Here are our updates on actions taken this week.
1. On May 11th, the Richmond City Council approved the city’s FY2021 budget. As I said on Monday, this budget is not the budget we first proposed, nor is it the budget we wanted, but it’s the budget we have to live with in light of these most difficult and challenging times. Amid the uncertainty of this pandemic, we must be prepared to make adjustments as we go, and we fully expect to do so in the coming months. I am appreciative of the councilmembers who supported the adjusted FY2021 budget;

2. On May 12th, working alongside the state, we launched a COVID-19 health equity pilot to provide masks and hand sanitizer in underserved neighborhoods. We distributed roughly 2,500 units of PPE on Tuesday and plan to distribute 40,000 by the end of the pilot. You can read more about this program here;

3. As of May 13th, Enrichmond has provided Family Crisis Funds to 278 individuals. The Office of Community Wealth Building will provide funds to 110 individuals over the coming weeks;

4. On May 14th, Dr. Danny Avula and I held a press conference to update the public on the status of COVID-19 in the City of Richmond and recent response efforts. During this conference, I announced that Richmond had formally requested to delay entering into Phase One of Governor Northam’s reopening plan. You can watch the press conference here and read my letters to Governor Northam here. Governor Northam granted this request on May 14th, meaning that Richmond will not enter Phase One for at least an additional two weeks. To report non-compliance in the city, please call the RPD non-emergency number: 804-646-5100.

This decision did not come lightly – I would like nothing more than to reopen the city. But, as you can see in this graph of Richmond’s daily case count (pulled from VDH website on May 15), our cases are continuing to increase and we must proceed with caution;
5. On May 15th, in coordination with the City of Richmond, Feed More announced that they would accept perishable food items from businesses for reimbursement. The City of Richmond has allocated $50,000 for this program. Food drop off times are as follows:
   a. May 15: 3-5pm
   b. May 16: 12-3pm
   c. May 18: 9am -4pm

To participate, bring a purchase invoice and items to the food donation door at 1415 Rhoadmiller Street.

6. As of May 15th, the city’s first responder meals program has had 56 restaurants apply, of which 49 have been approved and 7 are not eligible. From April 27 to May 9, 2020, 5,386 meals have been purchased from local restaurants for Public Safety First Responders. You can read more about this program here and find the application here;

7. As of May 15th, the Richmond Small Business Disaster Loan Program has had 66 applicants. Of those 66 applicants, 31 have been approved, valuing $574,920;

8. The following COVID-19 test sites are currently scheduled for next week:
   a. Tuesday, May 19 – Diversity Richmond, 1407 Sherwood Ave., North Richmond
   b. Thursday, May 21 – Tuckahoe Middle School, 9000 Three Chopt Road, West Henrico

   All sites are open to anyone who would like to be tested. Remember to call 804-205-3501 to register.

9. Members of my administration continue to work with the Commonwealth of Virginia and community partners on an education and outreach program specifically for our underserved, vulnerable populations that were not eligible for assistance through the CARES Act; and,

10. City of Richmond offices and facilities will remain closed through May 31. You can read more about this announcement here and find a list of essential services here.

We are in uncharted territory and are taking these measures out of an abundance of caution. My administration remains committed to working with the Richmond City Council and providing timely updates during these ever-changing times. This is an opportunity for us to come together and do what we were elected to do: serve our constituents when they need us most.