DATE: May 22, 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 ninth 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 934 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 20 tragic COVID-19-related deaths.² Moreover, 34 percent of confirmed cases and 80 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 outsized proportion, representing approximately 30 percent of cases while only accounting for 6-7% of our total population.

As you are aware, I requested and Governor Northam approved, a request to delay Richmond entering Phase One of Virginia’s reopening plan. We made this request because Richmond’s percent positivity data indicated an upward trend instead of a downward trend. You can review our press release on this request and decision 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/5ec81c9d513ee57dded59064/1590172831255/COVID-19+MEMORANDUM+5.15.20.pdf
² http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/
As of May 22nd, Richmond’s percent positivity data (below) is showing a downward trend – dropping nearly three percentage points from approximately 24 percent earlier this week to 21 percent. We will continue to closely monitor this data going into next week to inform our decision regarding entering Phase One for the City of Richmond.

This week, we announced a series of programs and policies that demonstrate how Richmond can safely reopen. Specifically, in order to best contain the spread of COVID-19, cities need to provide ways to support testing, tracing, and isolation. This “box-it-in” approach creates a pathway to safely re-mobilize the economy. Below are additional details on how we plan to implement this approach in Richmond:

1. Significantly expand public testing capacity with a continued emphasis on making testing accessible to priority communities with higher vulnerability to the COVID-19 pandemic.
   - Additionally, we will collaborate with members of the local safety net to facilitate access to primary care and invest in professional navigation services, through RCHD, to match residents with providers and other needed supportive services.
2. Expand COVID-19 tracing capacity through the RCHD.
3. Offer COVID-19 positive individuals with demonstrated need an opportunity to isolate safely and securely in hotel units, in partnership with RCHD and the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care.
4. Continue to distribute units of face coverings and sanitizing supplies provided by the state to Richmond communities that may benefit from immediate access to these resources.
5. **Advocate** that the Commonwealth of Virginia require Virginians to wear face coverings when in a public space or visiting a business.

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You can read more about testing and protective equipment distribution efforts here. You can read more about the isolation program here, with more details to come soon.

We also announced a number of efforts to support small businesses, including:


2. Establishing a streamlined process for restaurants to request additional patio space, and working with members of the Richmond City Council and Bike Walk RVA to understand district-specific requests for additional pedestrian friendly space using the open streets model.

3. Launching ForwardRVA, a regional collaboration to ensure small businesses have the protective supplies they need to safely reopen. Businesses can register for a PPE toolkit here.

In addition to this week’s new efforts, below are several updates on established response programs:

1. On May 21st, Dr. Danny Avula, Julie Timm (CEO GRTC), Brian Anderson (CEO ChamberRVA), Superintendent Jason Kamras, 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, we provided updates on various programs and safety efforts being taken to ensure the health of residents, GRTC bus drivers, and small businesses. You can watch our full press conference here.

2. As of May 22nd, 502 residents have been referred to Enrichmond to receive Family Crisis Funds. Additionally, this week, the Office of Community Wealth Building distributed 76 reloadable gift cards to residents.

3. As of May 22nd, the city’s first responder meals program has had 59 restaurants apply – six restaurants are not eligible to participate in the program and seven have voluntarily stopped participating. From April 27 to May 6, 2020, 8,679 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.

4. As of May 22nd, the Richmond Small Business Disaster Loan Program has had 66 applicants. Of those 66 applicants, 31 have been approved, valuing $594,920. The following outlines a summary of business type:

   - 3 – Brewery / Distillery
   - 1 – Commercial Cleaning / Janitorial Services
   - 3 – Event Services
   - 1 – Food Manufacturing
   - 2 – Healthcare / Fitness
   - 1 – Industrial Services
o 1 – Other
o 3 – Professional Services
  o 4 – Restaurants
o 2 – Restaurant Equipment
o 4 – Retail Sales
o 2 – Retail Services
o 4 – Tourism

5. The following COVID-19 test sites are currently scheduled for next week:
   a. Wednesday, May 27 at Eastern Henrico Recreation Center from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
   b. Wednesday, May 27 Southwood Apartments from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
   c. Saturday, May 30 at Martin Luther King Middle School from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
*Remember to call 804-205-3501 to register.

   Additionally, Richmonders can view their testing options on RVAStrong. On this page, you can view the weekly schedule of free community testing events and see how to get tested if you do not qualify for a community event.

6. 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.