DATE: June 5, 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 eleventh 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 1,527 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 25 tragic COVID-19-related deaths.² Moreover, 27 percent of confirmed cases and 68 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 approximately 30 percent of cases while only accounting for 6-7 percent of our total population.

The City of Richmond is currently in Phase 1 of Forward Virginia, and per Governor Northam, will not enter Phase 2 for at least another week. City government offices and facilities are also in stage one of reopening operations. The City of Richmond workforce has been operative throughout the State of Emergency, providing essential services to residents and businesses despite the public health crisis. Phase 1 largely entails the phasing in of limited in-person services in key city facilities, mostly through appointments. You can read the details of city facilities reopening here.

I have detailed a number of best practices for residents and business owners to ensure Phase 1 is successful and safe. The best practices emerged from conversations between my administration and members of the business community, faith leadership, and health professionals.

1. All residents who are medically able to should wear a face-covering that covers the mouth and nose when in public spaces. The wearing of a face covering does not negate the need for 6-foot social distancing.

¹ https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e7a426cb2e1486cd43c9561/t/5eda64ce3355d72a1c6f512c/1591370960041/COVID-19+MEMORANDUM+5.29.20.pdf
² http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/
2. Faith communities should continue to meet virtually if possible. If in-person meetings are absolutely necessary, the city strongly recommends faith groups meet outside while practicing strict social distancing and enforcing the face-covering requirement.

3. Food and drink establishments that choose to offer outdoor service at half capacity are asked to request a name and contact information of patrons who dine in for contact tracing purposes. This practice is voluntary for both patrons and restaurants. However, collecting this small amount of information for each dine-in party will go far in assisting the Richmond City Health District in tracing and containing outbreaks.

In addition to the best practices outlined above, the city is also implementing the “box it in” approach to combating COVID-19, which includes programs to test, trace, and isolate. Specifically, we have expanded our testing capacity, built out our contact tracing apparatus, and are ensuring that everyone who is COVID-19 positive can isolate safely. If an epidemiologist recommends an individual for voluntary supported isolation, that individual will get one-on-one guidance from a health district social worker or community health worker to get a hotel room and keep their families safe for the entire isolation period. We have also partnered with the state to distribute protective supplies in the neighborhoods that need them most.

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

1. To find out what Phase 1 of reopening looks like for small businesses in the City of Richmond, visit RVAStrong.org. We have included information on best practices, the application and guidelines for a temporary outdoor dining encroachment permit, and how to register for a ForwardRVA toolkit.

2. As of June 5th, 502 residents have been referred to Enrichmond to receive Family Crisis Funds. Enrichmond has provided Family Crisis Funds to 557 residents.

3. As of June 5th, the city’s first responder meals program has had 60 restaurants apply—six restaurants are not eligible to participate in the program and 20 have voluntarily stopped participating. This program will end on June 10th.

4. As of June 5th, the Richmond Small Business Disaster Loan Program has had 68 applicants. Of those 68 applicants, 44 have been approved, valuing $854,920. Three applicants withdrew their applications and seven loans have been denied. The following outlines a summary of business type for the approved applicants:
   - 4 – Brewery / Distillery
   - 2 – Commercial Cleaning / Janitorial Services
   - 1 - Construction
   - 3 – Event Services
   - 1 – Food Manufacturing
5. The following community COVID-19 test sites are currently scheduled:
   - Tuesday, June 9 – Second Baptist Church
   - Thursday, June 11 – Community Supermarket
   - Friday, June 12 – Hotchkiss Field Community Center

   All events run from 10 am – 1 pm and are free to city residents. Remember to call 804-205-3501 to register.

   CVS is now offering drive up testing at some locations in our area. Register online or call to find out more. As part of my administration’s efforts to ensure all of our valued city institutions are working together to response to this crisis, we have partnered with members of our Safety Net to support expanded testing at their locations. The Capital Area Health Network and Health Brigade each have testing events coming up that will be open to the public.

   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.

When public health is on the line, blindly pushing forward is not an option. Decisions must be thoughtful, and they must be based in our collective knowledge of and love for our city. 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.