MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 14, 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

To date, Richmond has 3,308 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 41 tragic COVID-19-related deaths. Moreover, approximately 31 percent of confirmed cases and 61 percent of Richmonders who have died from COVID-19 have been Black. Where we know the ethnicity of our cases, Latino Richmonders make up an outsized proportion, representing 35 percent of cases and 17 percent of deaths, while only accounting for 6-7 percent of our total population.

The City of Richmond is currently in Phase Three of the state’s reopening plan, Forward Virginia. The following is a list of guidelines all Richmonders should follow during Phase Three, provided by the Richmond City Health District:

- Continue to wear face masks.
- Keep six feet of distance from anyone outside your household.
- Continue to wash or sanitize your hands frequently, but especially after leaving a public place or before adjusting or removing your mask.
- If you experience symptoms of COVID-19, stay home and call your primary care provider to discuss testing opportunities, or call the Richmond and Henrico COVID-19 hotline at 804-205-3501 to register for a free testing event. Testing opportunities for City of Richmond residents are listed at RVAStrong.org/testing.

Complete state guidance on Phase Three can be found here. You can also find the complete details of Phase Three for the city’s operating plan here.

As the city moves forward with reopening, we will continue our “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. Lastly, we are working with our Safety Net

1 http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/
providers to ensure that our under- and uninsured residents who test positive for Covid-19 are connected with a primary care provider.

Below are several additional updates:

1. The city’s total $40 million CARES Act allocation is included in Ordinance 2020-185, which is currently on the agenda of City Council’s special meeting on August 20th. We are putting these dollars towards PPE, COVID-19 testing, business assistance, housing assistance, and more (see attachment for additional details).

2. We know that many residents are concerned about paying rent, mortgages, or are facing an eviction. That is why we have dedicated $14 million in CARES Act funding to support residents in need. To see if you are eligible for support through the emergency financial assistance program, please call 804-644-2401 or visit https://www.rvastrong.org/housingsupport.

3. The Economic Development Authority (EDA) of the City of Richmond authorized giving participants who have already received a loan through the Richmond Small Business Disaster Loan Program the option to convert those loans to grants. The city has allocated $1 million of its federal CARES Act appropriation to the EDA to pay for the program. You can read more about this announcement here.

4. Today, I announced the city’s Mask Distribution Network, which includes nearly 50 locations around the city where residents can pick up disposable surgical masks free of cost. Residents can pick up masks at many community locations, such as Richmond Public Library Branches, Parks and Recreation Community Centers and Richmond City Health District Resource Centers. To learn more about this program, see here.

5. The Richmond City Health District, alongside the City of Richmond, continues to provide testing opportunities, primary care support, mask distribution and supported isolations for those that need it. For information on testing availability in the Richmond area, visit RVAStrong.org/testing, use the Virginia Department of Health’s zip code testing locator, or call the Richmond City and Henrico County COVID-19 Hotline at 804-205-3501.

6. Each week, I hold a press conference with Dr. Danny Avula to update the public on the status of COVID-19 in the city. This press conference is live-streamed here.

7. As a reminder, RVAStrong.org continues to be our resource hub for all COVID-19 information and assistance programs.

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.