



## Mary Washington Healthcare

March 16, 2020

Dear Community Leaders,

I am writing today to implore you to take swift action to stem the incoming tide of COVID-19 cases in our region.

As demonstrated around the globe, we must act now to prevent devastating consequences including extraordinary demand on the local healthcare systems. Countries like Italy serve as a warning of how quickly COVID-19 spreads, leaving their healthcare system in peril. Preparations today may appear to be an overreaction but are the only way to get ahead of the spread of the disease.

The key to preventing the rapid spread of this disease is the phenomenon of "flattening the curve." If we can slow the spread of COVID-19 to months rather than weeks, we can lessen the impact on the healthcare system and give precious time to treat those with moderate and severe symptoms from the virus. With inadequate testing throughout the country, we can only assume that COVID-19 has already spread in our community. But to what extent can only be determined by efficient, rapid testing just beginning to arrive in our state.

Flattening the curve can be achieved if our state and regional governments act now. According to global data, approximately five percent of those infected need intensive care. If there is widespread community infection, we will exceed our ICU capacity in the Commonwealth and Fredericksburg region which can lead to disastrous consequences.

To flatten the curve in our community, we are asking you to take the following action:

- Postpone gatherings of more than 50 people.
- Ban gatherings of more than 10 people for those at high-risk for complications from the virus. This would include persons over 60, immunocompromised, or with cardiac or lung disease.
- Encourage places of worship to postpone services and other events with more than 25 people and adopt social distancing recommendations of staying more than six feet apart for small gatherings.
- Postpone or cancel all concerts, conferences, and sporting events.
- Close all schools, public colleges, and libraries in our jurisdiction.
- Limit restaurants and bars to at least half capacity and adopt social distancing recommendations.
- Encourage employers to require remote work options to the extent possible. Require the same for state and local employees.

These recommendations should stay in effect for at least three weeks, and possibly more, while health departments and the CDC monitor the spread of the disease. Without widespread testing, we cannot be certain of the impact of COVID-19 on our community. It is imperative that we lead by example.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. McDermott MD". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The "M" is large and prominent, followed by "cD" in smaller letters, and "ERDermott MD" written below the main line of the signature.

Mike McDermott, MD  
President and Chief Executive Officer