FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harford County COVID-19 Update for May 1: Nursing Home Cases, Help for Businesses

BEL AIR, Md., (May 1, 2020) – *County Executive Barry Glassman issued the following weekly update on COVID-19 in Harford County.*

"As of this morning, the Maryland Department of Health is reporting a total of 437 COVID-19 cases, 9 deaths and 6 probable deaths among Harford County residents. Although there is a lag in reporting nursing home cases, the outbreaks at Bel Air Health & Rehabilitation Center and Forest Hill Health & Rehabilitation Center appear on track to represent approximately one-third of our total cases and nearly one-half of those who have died, which is consistent with trends statewide. Thank you for keeping all the victims and their families in your prayers.

Nursing homes

Public health officials continue to expect dramatic increases in cases in nursing homes and other group living facilities given their density and how easily COVID-19 is transmitted – more easily than they originally thought.

On Monday, Gov. Larry Hogan ordered data to be published on cases in congregate living facilities statewide. This includes nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and group homes with 10 or more occupants. Our health department has gathered this information for Harford County and published it online as part of their map of **county** cases by ZIP code. This map now includes age and gender for reported cases.

On Wednesday, the governor announced **executive orders** requiring mandatory testing of all nursing home residents and staff, daily evaluations of residents by medical personnel, the creation of surge staffing plans, and regular updates to residents and their families. These new measures are welcome as they bring additional resources to vulnerable populations and transparency for those who are concerned about their loved ones.

Help for small businesses

While public health is the primary focus in this pandemic, our economy is approaching a critical point. Harford County businesses need help and workers need jobs to go back to. Our **Office of Community & Economic Development** is open and growing our list of **business resources**; and I am working to secure Harford's $44 million share of federal CARES Act funding, a portion of which we can use to support local businesses. To tailor our programs to their needs, we have created a **survey** that will inform our efforts moving forward.

Reopening Maryland

A week ago today the governor laid out his recovery plan contingent on a 14-day downward trend in hospitalizations and deaths. This plan is based on the state ramping up testing and PPE supplies, and increased contact tracing and hospital surge capacity. The governor is hopeful that the first phase of recovery can begin in early-to-mid May, and I believe this is a critical time for small businesses to begin reopening with precautions in place. Curbside pickup, social distancing and other safety measures may be the "new normal" for a while to balance public health with economic survival.

Honoring heroes

To honor first responders and healthcare workers across the state, we recognize Fallen Heroes Day today and Gov. Hogan has declared Healthcare Heroes Day this Saturday, May 2nd. The State House dome and sports stadiums will be lit in blue and Harford County will join in by lighting our county building in Bel Air blue for all those who risk their lives to save others.

Thanks & be safe."