

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 9, 2020

Governor Larry Hogan
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan,

Thank you for your efforts and your collaboration with the Maryland Congressional Delegation to prepare for and respond to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis. We appreciate your recent announcement that Maryland will begin to collect and publicly report data on race and ethnicity for individuals tested for COVID-19 and the first reports of this information today. We share your concern about the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 appears to be having on black Marylanders and believe that this initial data demonstrates a need for more granular reporting by zip code. Additionally, we urge you to report complete and comprehensive data for all patients as expeditiously as possible and ensure that this data is informing Maryland's COVID-19 response efforts.

This data on race and ethnicity is critical to fully understanding whether certain groups face higher risks for contracting the virus or are experiencing more adverse outcomes. More granular data aggregated by zip code will help better understand the actual risks of infection and mortality in different communities, as well as inform response efforts to ensure testing and other resources are targeted in the most effective way.

Based on Maryland's initial limited data, we are seeing alarming trends with respect to race and ethnicity. For the 5,529 COVID cases that have race and ethnicity data available, 37% of patients are black and black residents comprise of 44% of COVID-related deaths, despite the fact that African Americans only make up 30% of the state's population. We are seeing similarly concerning trends from other states and localities as well. According to data from Louisiana – where about one-third of the State's population is black – black residents comprise about 70 percent of COVID-related deaths. In Chicago, African-Americans account for more than half of positive tests and more than 70 percent COVID-related deaths.

We need to be able to definitively confirm whether COVID-19 is having a disproportionate impact on people of color and use this data to implement public health strategies and allocate resources to mitigate this impact. We also know that health disparities continue to plague a number of our communities, which makes this data even more important. If we are to have our best chance at combatting this public health crisis, we need full visibility into how this virus is affecting our communities.

We believe that it is important for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to begin publicly reporting this data when it is received from state and local health officials across the nation. Unfortunately, we have seen many instances of leadership failures from this Administration, and as a result, states have stepped up to fill these voids. Maryland can do that here by ensuring the reporting of complete, accurate, and robust data for our state.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

/s/ Chris Van Hollen

Chris Van Hollen
U.S. Senator

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin

Benjamin L. Cardin
U.S. Senator

/s/ Steny H. Hoyer

Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

/s/ C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

/s/ John P. Sarbanes

John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

/s/ Anthony G. Brown

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

/s/ Jamie Raskin

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/ David Trone

David Trone
Member of Congress