

# HoCo RISE



Calvin Ball  
Howard County Executive

**What is HoCo Rise?** HoCo RISE is Howard County Executive Calvin Ball's plan of Reopening Innovatively, **S**afely, and **E**ffectively within the framework laid out by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan.

**HoCo RISE** uses **data** to inform decision-making

Data points currently used to guide decision-making around reopening and, if necessary, when to maintain or restrictions:

1. The number of new cases. <sup>1</sup>
2. The number of new hospitalizations.
3. The number of patients admitted to ICU.
4. The number of tests conducted.
5. The amount of available PPE.
6. Surge capacity at Howard County General Hospital (HCGH). <sup>2</sup>

**HoCo RISE** follows the Governor's guidance on the building blocks for reopening <sup>3</sup>

## Expanded Testing Capacity

**Best Practices:** The American Enterprise Institute <sup>4</sup> estimates that a national capacity of at least 750,000 tests per week would be sufficient to move to case-based interventions when paired with sufficient capacity in supportive public health infrastructure (*contact tracing*). The Center for American Progress suggested that 2.6 million tests per day are needed nationally, which would amount to approximately 2,575 tests per day in Howard County. <sup>6</sup> Harvard University's Safra Center for Ethics estimated 5-20 million tests per day are needed nationally, <sup>5</sup> which would amount to approximately 5,000 tests per day in Howard County. <sup>8</sup>

**Howard County Current Testing Capacity:** Currently testing 1,300 people per week at 7 sites across the county.

**Goal:** The goal is to test 6,500 people per week. <sup>9</sup>

## Sufficient Surge Capacity

**Best Practices:** According to the American Enterprise Institute, hospitals should have 5-7 critical care beds per 10,000 adults, 5-7 ventilators per 10,000 adults, and at least 30 acute care beds per 10,000 adults in the setting of an epidemic. <sup>10</sup>

**Howard County General Hospital Current Surge Capacity:** Howard County General Hospital has 133 staffed acute care beds (*89% utilization*), 33 staffed intensive care unit beds (*67% utilization*), and 38 ventilators (*21% utilization*). <sup>11</sup> Additional capacity is available as needed in medical tents.

**Goal:** The goal is to ensure that capacity always exceeds utilization, which we currently meet. An additional goal is to have an adequate alternate care site plan in the event our utilization exceeds our capacity. Howard County Government and Howard County General Hospital are currently working on the alternative care site plan with the state.

## Ramping Up the Supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

**Best Practices:** In order to determine the amount of PPE needed for government and hospital use, the following factors are considered: the number of COVID-19 patients per day, number of workers in contact with positive patients, expected duration of patient stay, estimated number of patients sharing rooms, reusability of PPE, available modeling, and other factors as needed.

**Howard County Current Supply of PPE:** Howard County Health Department has secured 54,559 N95s, 100,480 surgical masks, 10,807 gowns, 9,176 face shields, approximately 310,000 gloves and other PPE to date. Currently, Howard County has enough PPE to cover EMS workers, the Howard County Health Department, nursing homes, and Howard County General Hospital for 30 days. <sup>12</sup>

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**Goal:** The PPE goal is to have enough on hand for 30 days, which the county currently has. However, the amount of PPE needed is constantly changing based upon the forecasted number of COVID-19 cases. To increase supply, the County will continue securing donations, decontaminating masks for reuse, and partnering with manufacturers to develop innovative solutions.

## Robust Contact Tracing Operations

**Best Practices:** The Center for Health Security at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health estimates 15 contact tracers per 100,000 population are needed.<sup>13</sup> Estimates from the NGA indicated a range from 4 – 81 contact tracers per 100,000 population are needed based on the level of illness.<sup>14</sup>

**Howard County Current Contact Tracing Capacity:** Howard County has 11 staff dedicated solely to contact investigation and contact tracing, and 15 staff dedicated to outbreak investigation.

**Goal:** While 45 contact tracers is the initial goal based on the estimated need per 100,000, we believe we will exceed this goal. The Health Department will eventually have more than 60 contact tracers available.

**As Governor Hogan continues to move through the phases of the Maryland Strong Roadmap to Recovery, County Executive Ball will use HoCo RISE to...**

- Balance state guidelines with what is best for Howard County, including keeping restrictions as needed
- Take a phased approach to reopening government safely, following the recommendations of the internal **HoCo RISE Working Group**
- Provide guidance to non-governmental entities, as needed
- Use the HoCo RISE metrics to ensure the timeline laid out by Governor Hogan is appropriate for Howard County

Additionally, the internal HoCo RISE Working Group is in the process of developing guidance to assist county departments with safely bringing back employees and reopening government facilities.

**HoCo RISE** is also focused on long-term recovery, including but not limited to the following initiatives...

- Rental Assistance and Eviction Relief
- Job Training
- Behavioral Health Resources
- Food access
- Business Support

Howard County is applying for its share of **CARES Act** funding (\$28 M available for non-health expenses) to provide business assistance and support other unbudgeted county expenses. The county will also soon be launching a virtual disaster assistance center to help businesses and individuals access needed services.

<sup>1</sup> According to the National Governor's Association, the goal for cases should be a decrease for at least 14 days. "Roadmap to Recovery: A Public Health Guide for Governors." National Governor's Association. April 22, 2020. Page 34.

<sup>2</sup> According to the National Governor's Association, hospitals should be able to care for all patients without using crisis standards of care. NGA, page 35.

<sup>3</sup> "Maryland Strong Roadmap for Recovery." Maryland Governor Larry Hogan. April 24, 2020. Page 11.

<sup>4</sup> "National Coronavirus Response: A Road Map to Reopening." American Enterprise Institute. March 28, 2020. Page 4.

<sup>5</sup> "A State and National Plan to End the Coronavirus Crisis." Center for American Progress. April 3, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> 2.6 million represents .0079% of the U.S. population. That percentage of the County's population amounts to approximately 2,575.

<sup>7</sup> "Roadmap to Pandemic Response: Massive Scale Testing, Tracing, and Supported Isolation (TTSI) as the Path to Pandemic Resilience for a Free Society." Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University. April 20, 2020. Page 13.

<sup>8</sup> 5 million represents 1.5% of the U.S. Population. That percentage of the County's population is about 5,000.

<sup>9</sup> This estimate is based upon the testing levels recommended in the CAP and Safra reports.

<sup>10</sup> AEI, page 4.

<sup>11</sup> According to CRISP as of 5/13/2020

<sup>12</sup> At this time, the County's policy is to provide PPE to nursing homes, EMS workers, HGCH, and the Howard County Health Department.

<sup>13</sup> A National Plan to Enable Comprehensive COVID-19 Case Finding and Contact Tracing in the U.S." Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Health Security. April 10, 2020. Page 8.

<sup>14</sup> NGA, page 10.