

March 10, 2020

Dear Homecare Providers:

The Maryland-National Capital Homecare Association (MNCHA), along with government officials, other state associations and the Maryland Department of Health, is gathering information from other sources to bring you the most up-to-date information on COVID-19.

On Friday, March 6, MNCHA was represented at a meeting called by Senator Ben Cardin in Baltimore, MD. The leaders of most Maryland healthcare agencies were in attendance including: University of Maryland Health System, Directors of local Public Health Departments, the State Health Department, MEDCHI, Health Commission, epidemiology departments of various hospitals, Maryland Nurses Association, Kaiser Permanente, Care First, many local news reporters, and more. The meeting covered the following issues.

- Senator Cardin reviewed what we know about the virus, standard precautions including social distancing, containment vs. mitigation. He informed the group about the new supplemental bill passed Thursday in Washington. D.C. to fund COVID-19, as well as State funding by Gov. Hogan through the State of Emergency.
- MNCHA, along with the other leaders shared their similar same concerns:
  - Funding and availability/accessibility for appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and test kits,
  - Concerns for seniors in aggregate housing and the homeless population's inability to self-contain if infected.
  - The reality that the number of infected in Maryland will increase and providers will need to be ready to handle those who will need to seek medical attention.
  - Understanding that the majority of those infected will be able to self-manage in their homes with mild symptoms, but the compromised populations (mostly the elderly and the medically frail) will not, and will be seen in Urgent cares, Emergency Departments, and will likely fill up the ICUs.

The discussion included travel guidelines which are changing daily and being updated by the CDC and Department of State.

**Senator Cardin's staffer, Lauren Jee, leads his health initiatives and the providers were instructed to reach out to the Senator's office with any problems or roadblocks to obtaining needed supplies/PPE. Her contact information is: [Lauren.Jee@cardin.senate.gov](mailto:Lauren.Jee@cardin.senate.gov), 202-224-4524.**

**The key take-aways:**

- Remain calm, arm yourselves with knowledge from the appropriate sources (CDC and WHO).
- Ask the questions: Fever, cough, shortness of breath, any recent travel out of the country, or exposure to someone who has.
- Continue to practice standard precautions as we do for the flu and educate your staff on the same. Provide staff with talking tips for patients, so that we, as health professionals are providing accurate information and are not adding to the hysteria.

MNCHA maintains an Emergency Preparedness Network (EPN) through a grant from the Office of Preparedness and Response. Information is being pushed out to the network members frequently. Membership to EPN is free. Please visit this [link](#) on the EPN site to join.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [dseek@mncha.org](mailto:dseek@mncha.org).

Regards,  
Dawn

Dawn Seek  
Executive Director  
MNCHA

