



(703) 538-2190
info@bpsos.org
www.bpsos.org
6066 Leesburg Pike, Suite 100;
Falls Church, VA 22041

BPSOS Falls Church NEWSLETTER

December 2020

COVID-19 CASES IN VIRGINIA as of December 7th



VA Governor Ralph S. Northam

GOVERNOR NORTHAM ANNOUNCES NEW STATE-WIDE MEASURES TO CONTAIN COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Governor Ralph Northam announced new actions to mitigate the spread of the virus in Virginia. While the Commonwealth's case count per capita and positivity rate remain comparatively low, all five health regions are experiencing increases in new COVID-19 cases.

"COVID-19 is surging across the country, and while cases are not rising in Virginia as rapidly as in some other states, I do not intend to wait until they are. We are acting now to prevent this health crisis from getting worse," said Governor Northam. "Everyone is tired of this pandemic and restrictions on our lives. I'm tired, and I know you are tired too. But as we saw earlier this year, these mitigation measures work. I am confident that we can come together as one Commonwealth to get this virus under control and save lives."

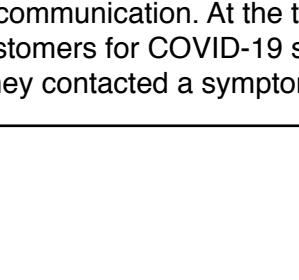
The following measures will take effect at midnight on Sunday, November 15th:

- Reduction in public and private gatherings:** All public and private in-person gatherings must be limited to 25 individuals, down from the current cap of 250 people. This includes outdoor and indoor settings.
- Expansion of mask mandate:** All Virginians aged five and over are required to wear face coverings in indoor public spaces. This expands the current mask mandate, which has been in place in Virginia since May 29 and requires all individuals aged 10 and over to wear face coverings in indoor public settings.
- Strengthened enforcement within essential retail businesses:** All essential retail businesses, including grocery stores and pharmacies, must adhere to statewide guidelines for physical distancing, wearing face coverings, and enhanced cleaning. While certain essential retail businesses have been required to adhere to these regulations as a best practice, violations will now be enforceable through the Virginia Department of Health as a Class One misdemeanor.

On-site alcohol curfew: The on-site sale, consumption, and possession of alcohol is prohibited after 10:00 p.m. in any restaurant, dining establishment, food court, brewery, microbrewery, distillery, winery, or tasting room. All restaurants, dining establishments, food courts, breweries, microbreweries, distilleries, wineries, and tasting rooms must close by midnight. Virginia law does not distinguish between restaurants and bars, however, under current restrictions, individuals that choose to consume alcohol prior to 10:00 p.m. must be served as in a restaurant and remain seated at tables six feet apart.

Virginia is averaging 1,500 newly-reported COVID-19 cases per day, up from a statewide peak of approximately 1,200 in May. While Southwest Virginia has experienced a spike in the number of diagnosed COVID-19 cases, all five of the Commonwealth's health regions are currently reporting a positivity rate over five percent. Although hospital capacity remains stable, hospitalizations have increased statewide by more than 35 percent in the last four weeks.

For information about COVID-19 in Virginia, visit vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus.



OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR HEALTH INSURANCE IS ALMOST OVER!

During the Health Insurance (Marketplace) this November, BPSOS – Falls Church's certified navigators have been helping more than 120 individuals and families with their annual individual and family health insurance enrollments.

Due to COVID-19, a lot of people and families were shaken up financially, which made it crucial that they update their income to be eligible for a more suitable plan than the plan they have been using before the pandemic. The Open Enrollment period is an important time for people with Marketplace coverage to re-evaluate their current plans. For people who don't have Marketplace coverage, Open Enrollment is even more important since this is the only time in the year when one can register and enroll freely. Outside of Open Enrollment, one must prove that they have experienced a special event that made them eligible for a Special Enrollment Period.

Our experienced navigators also helped enroll more than 60 individuals and families into Medicaid, an alternative healthcare program in Virginia. Due to COVID-19, VA has announced Medicaid coverage, even if they do not renew Medicaid coverage, not loss their existing Medicaid renewal, so renewals are still being processed during the pandemic, so renewals are still being mailed out to everyone.

Furthermore, we aim to educate our clients about how to renew their Medicaid coverage so they will be more confident in the future. For more information, please call (703) 538-2190.

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