



# Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## FY 20 Customer Service Annual Report



The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) works to promote and improve the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care and customer service. The Maryland Department of Health has four major administrations - Public Health Services, Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Maryland Medicaid. The Maryland Department of Health also has 20 statutorily independent health occupation boards and two commissions. These boards and commissions license and regulate health care professionals, issue grants, conduct research, and make recommendations on issues that affect Maryland's health care delivery system. The Maryland Department of Health consists of a staff of over 9,800 and a budget of more than \$15.2 billion to provide services to Maryland communities.

The **Public Health Services Administration (PHSA)** oversees vital public services to Maryland residents including: infectious disease prevention and control, environmental health concerns, family health services, emergency preparedness and response activities, food safety, health care quality, vital records, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the State Anatomy Board, and the activities of the 24 local health departments in Maryland.

The **Behavioral Health Administration (BHA)** promotes recovery, resiliency, health, and wellness for individuals who are at risk for emotional, substance related, addictive and/or psychiatric disorders.

The **Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)** provides a coordinated service delivery system to ensure appropriate services for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities to support each person to fully and successfully integrate into the community.

The **Maryland Medicaid Administration (MMA)** implements the Medicaid program, which features the department's HealthChoice and Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP) along with other initiatives, including those that help people with the cost of prescription medications.

The Office of Constituent Services (OCS) is a unique support and services office within the Office of the Secretary. OCS functions as the Department's customer service center, by managing inquiries, casework, and direct correspondence via telephone, email, and Maryland Department of Health website Purechat. Inquiries from the Governor's office, elected officials, direct inquiries to the Maryland Department of Health website, and

correspondence to the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries are received, managed and tracked through our web-based software system, Intranet Quorum (IQ). OCS provides information, feedback, and resources to facilitate and assist with access to appropriate services and resources.

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October 5, 2020

I'm proud to share with you the FY20 Customer Service Report which details the important work we have been doing, and the changes we have made in the last year at the Maryland Department of Health to improve the customer service experience for the citizens of Maryland.

In addition to providing exemplary service throughout this past year, the Maryland Department of Health has faced extraordinary circumstances due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Providing excellent customer service to Marylanders during this time, has remained the priority. I share Governor Hogan's commitment and dedication to providing exceptional customer service to every constituent, every time, across the state. This report demonstrates the intentional, focused culmination of services provided by a team of people who care about their work, while striving to create a culture of putting Marylanders first. Through the deliberate process and service delivery improvements highlighted throughout this report, we have successfully provided outstanding customer service, maintained professional integrity, and supported our valued communities, even during these unprecedented times. We are striving to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Marylanders by delivering outstanding customer service no matter the circumstance.

With the vision of lifelong health and wellness, the Office of Constituent Services continues to support, promote, and improve the health and safety of all Marylanders. This work is more significant than ever, as the Maryland Department of Health and the State faces this daunting Public Health Emergency. The Office consists of a director, deputy director, and 2 constituent services liaisons. This team is focused on providing personal attention to constituent matters by making the appropriate connections within our department, and by identifying the best solutions and resources to our constituents - the residents of Maryland. In addition, this team is committed to expansion of the controlled correspondence and customer service initiatives from FY19 into FY20 and beyond.

I am pleased with the progress that the Maryland Department of Health has made this year to continue improving exceptional customer service and look forward to the continued progression of customer service training and process implementation that will ultimately benefit the constituents we serve. I look forward to sharing our accomplishments and successes in this report every year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert R. Neall".

Robert R. Neall  
Secretary

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## Leadership Analysis and FY2021 Forecast

In FY20, the Maryland Department of Health has continued to implement its Constituent Services and Controlled Correspondence process guidelines on inquiries from the Governor's Office, State and Federal elected officials, direct inquiries to the Maryland Department of Health website, and correspondence to the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries. These inquiries are received, managed and tracked through our web-based software system, Intranet Quorum (IQ). In conjunction with IQ, the Office of Constituent Services implemented the "24/7 Rule" requiring that each inquiry receive an acknowledgement from the Maryland Department of Health within **24 hours** of receipt. After the acknowledgement has been sent, the clock will then start on a **seven business days** turnaround for case closure. Once the seven business days have elapsed, the case will be considered overdue. The Office of Constituent Services provides information, feedback, and resources to facilitate and assist constituents to access appropriate services and resources. The Office of Constituent Services manages case follow-up by remaining engaged with the Correspondence Managers (IQ license holders) across the Maryland Department of Health and the participating Boards and Commissions to ensure that constituents are receiving timely, compassionate and appropriate conclusions to their inquiry.

The Office of Constituent Services has strategically and collaboratively worked with Administrations, Offices and Boards/Commissions to identify subject matter experts, administrators, and chiefs of staff, to serve as the units Correspondence Manager, streamlining the constituent services process. Currently, each of the Maryland Department of Health's Administrations, and the Offices under the Secretary, have multiple staff representation in these processes. Since Fall 2019, the Office of Constituent Services has expanded services into the Public Health Services Administration, as well as Maryland Medicaid and began strategic implementation of the Developmental Disabilities Administration. In addition to expansion, the Office of Constituent Services has played an important role in providing constituent support during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

In FY21, the Maryland Department of Health plans to continue implementation of Phase 2 in the strategic implementation of Controlled Correspondence processes. In FY21, the Office of Constituent Services plans to add an additional 35 Correspondence Managers to the Maryland Department of Health IQ system from the Developmental Disabilities

Administration, Behavioral Health Administration and Public Health Services Administration.

## FY20 COVID-19 Response Highlights

### **Office of the Inspector General:**

In early May, the Maryland Department of Health's Office of the Inspector General, in collaboration with the Maryland National Guard created a Task Force for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the Governor's executive order dated April 29, 2020 concerning Maryland's Nursing Homes. As a part of the Task Force, the Maryland Department of Health has completed several key initiatives, and developed the communication, coordination, and structure necessary to successfully implement the provisions outlined within Governor Hogan's executive order.

### **Office of Communications:**

The Secretary's Office of Communications has produced or facilitated production of the following COVID-19-specific communications in coordination with multiple Maryland Department of Health administrations, offices, and programs, as well as, other state agencies:

- 1,692 media inquiries
- 144 interviews
- 40 press releases
- 303 videos/FAQs/fact sheets
- 459 Maryland Department of Health website updates, memos, general guidance, announcements, newsletters or webinars

The Maryland Department of Health Communications also developed, awarded and currently manages two contracts with two separate creative and marketing vendors to produce and place COVID-19 statewide multimedia campaigns. One contract is specific to encouraging awareness and participation in contact tracing efforts; the other encompasses use of behavioral-based messaging (e.g., use of masks, social distancing, etc.), which are likely to change as messaging needs change. The Office of Communications is also working with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities to develop messaging directed toward especially vulnerable and at-risk Maryland communities in both efforts. Benchmark analytics and performance metrics will soon be available. The Office of Communications also plays a critical coordination role in daily updates and ongoing maintenance for Maryland's COVID-19 website, [coronavirus.maryland.gov](https://coronavirus.maryland.gov)

### **Office of Constituent Services:**

The Office of Constituent Services has provided constituent support Monday through Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm since the onset of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, via the Maryland Department of Health website, telephone, email, and inquiries from the Governor's office and elected officials, without any changes to operating hours or availability. Additionally, the Office of Constituent Services served as the main point of contact for all inquiries from [coronavirus.maryland.gov](https://coronavirus.maryland.gov). Since March 2020, The Office of Constituent Services has processed 6,330 IQ inquiries, 1,788 Governor voicemails, and 1,320 website chats related to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

### **Public Health Services Administration:**

The *Environmental Health Bureau (EHB)* developed a new inspection process for summer youth camps so that inspectors can review most documentation virtually. The new process reduces the amount of time needed for the onsite inspection visit. EHB transitioned to virtual inspection for food service facilities requiring pre-opening inspections and food processors. The Kids in Safety Seats (KISS) program converted select operations to virtual platforms where possible. KISS has continued assisting families with video car seat assistance and related webinars.

*Maryland Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)* offices have adjusted operations to continue providing services to the citizens of Maryland. In order to provide safe operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, WIC altered clinic operations to deliver services to WIC participants remotely. Remote services include benefit issuance and the expansion of WIC-authorized foods. Many foods have temporarily been added to the WIC-authorized foods list to improve access. For example, the authorized types of milk for purchase with benefits were expanded. During the pandemic, skim and fat-free milk could not easily be found. Two percent milk was more readily available and was temporarily added as a WIC- authorized food to provide greater access for WIC families. In addition, Maryland WIC applied for a waiver for organic foods to allow for a wider range of potential choice for shoppers who were encountering diminished options on grocery store shelves.

The *Maryland Public Health Laboratory (MPHL)* has been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic in support of the public health efforts to protect the citizens of Maryland. Fast and accurate testing is a critical component in response to a communicable disease outbreak. Timely testing leads to the identification of infected individuals and their contacts to help guide medical interventions and public health disease mitigation efforts. Since March 2020,

MPHL has implemented five COVID-19 testing platforms to increase its COVID-19 testing capacity and overcome testing supply chain difficulties. To date, the MPH has completed over 65,000 COVID tests while maintaining a fast (24-48 hour) test turnaround time from specimen receipt to results reporting while supporting medical and public health professionals from across Maryland.

The *Dorchester County Health Department* established and led a virtual joint information center, engaging and collaborating with numerous partners to coordinate and communicate consistent, accurate, reliable information to all members of our community. Partners included law enforcement, emergency services, fire companies, public school system, state's attorney, city and county officials, social service agencies, tourism, chamber of commerce, community and faith-based organizations, hospital system, and more. COVID-19 statistics for Dorchester County were updated and shared daily on their website and Facebook page. The daily data updates evolved in response to community concerns and inquiries, to ensure they were informed and receiving meaningful statistics. Reports included the number of confirmed cases, active cases, current and total hospitalizations, deaths, released from isolation, decade of age, and gender. The Dorchester County Health Department hired two additional bilingual employees during FY20 (one as the receptionist and switchboard operator), bringing the total to eight full-time employees who are fluent in English and Spanish, to better assist their Spanish-speaking population.

**Behavioral Health Administration:**

The Behavioral Health Administration hosted frequent provider check-in virtual meetings for Recovery Residence and Residential Rehabilitation providers, Local Designated Authority Adult Service Coordinators, Crisis Response providers, and Crisis Intervention Team Coordinators, and other weekly/bi-weekly provider webinars in collaboration with Public Health and Primary Care, since the onset of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Additionally, the Administration provided almost weekly Frequently Asked Questions to provide latest communications from CDC and the Department to help programs remain operational and safe, including policies related to telehealth services. Behavioral Health also set up a specific email address ([bha.inquiries@maryland.gov](mailto:bha.inquiries@maryland.gov)) for individuals to send their questions and comments for a rapid response, 1 to 2 business days on average.

**Maryland Medicaid Administration:**

Medicaid Office of Provider Services (MPS) began closely monitoring telehealth questions from providers in order to respond quickly to providers immediate needs. Information was shared with executive leadership to assist in driving policy considerations and decisions around needed adjustments to our telehealth policies.

### **Developmental Disabilities Administration:**

The Developmental Disabilities Administration Deputy Secretary, Bernard Simons, held weekly webinars starting on March 20, 2020 to share up-to-date information on COVID-19. Also, the Developmental Disabilities Administration created a series of webcasts for families to have conversations using the Charting the LifeCourse trajectory worksheet and the opportunity to discuss and provide strategies on lessening the trauma of COVID-19 and isolation.

### **Office of Preparedness and Response:**

In March 2020, in response to COVID-19, the Office of Preparedness and Response stood up the COVID-19 Call Center for two purposes: 1) to respond to questions from the public 2) to call and monitor returning travelers. Additionally, the Call Center received calls from 211-MD that operators were not able to answer. Since March 3, 2020 the Call Center has received 19,387 inbound calls, had 41,123 total outbound calls, delivered 14,484 test results and received, on average, 420 calls a day.

## **Employee Recognition**

The Maryland Department of Health fully recognizes the major contributions and significant impact its employees provide on a daily basis, both in service to the Department and to the citizens of Maryland. As a result, annual recognition programs were established for Employee Recognition and Service Awards, in recognition of employees with 30 or more years of service. On a monthly basis, the Office of Constituent Services oversees the Secretary Spotlight for Customer Service. This award program, instituted by Secretary Robert Neall, seeks to showcase one example of exceptional customer service by Maryland Department of Health staff, whether individual or team, on a monthly basis. Employee recognition events are also conducted in other Maryland Department of Health facilities and local health departments throughout the State.

### **Employee Service Awards**

On December 10, 2019, the Maryland Department of Health hosted its Annual Employee Service Awards. The Employee Service Awards is a program that seeks to show appreciation

for the years of dedicated public services of Maryland Department of Health Employees, recognizing them for their longevity and to honor those who have successfully achieved 30 or more years in services to Marylanders. Considering that currently the average worker may change jobs five to seven times during their career, the Department is very fortunate to have so many dedicated, long term employees who contribute daily to the mission of the Maryland Department of Health. The December 2019 ceremony recognized 165 employees who have reached 30 and 55 years of service.

With 50 years of service, Maryland Department of Health congratulated Lolita Lowry from the Spring Grove Hospital Center.



*(Pictured, from left, Secretary Robert Neall, Lolita Lowry)*

With 55 years of service, Maryland Department of Health resoundingly lauded and congratulated Frances Davis and Mary Jackson, both from Springfield Hospital Center.



*(Pictured from left, Secretary Robert Neall, Frances Davis)*



*(Pictured from left, Secretary Robert Neall, Mary Jackson)*



*(Pictured from left, Springfield Hospital Center, CEO, Paula Langmead, Secretary Robert Neall, and the 55-year awardees, Mary Jackson and Frances Davis)*

### **Annual Employee Recognition Awards**

The Annual Maryland Department of Health Employee Recognition Awards is a program that showcases the accomplishments of its employees in a formal way. With nominations being encouraged, submitted by the entire Maryland Department of Health workforce, and then reviewed and selected by a nomination review team of their peers, awards are presented to both individuals and teams in the areas of Internal and External Customer Service, Exceptional Performance, and Innovation. The program culminates in June of each year with awardees, families, and colleagues alike enjoying a reception in their honor, followed by the awards ceremony, hosted in the lobby of the Maryland Department of Health Headquarters at 201 West Preston Street in Baltimore.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual nomination process and ceremony recognizing the outstanding achievements of individuals and teams has been temporarily paused and as a result, postponed. Nominations and submissions of notable achievements are still encouraged and accepted for future review and presentation. Secretary Robert Neall looks forward to the opportunity to once again formally recognize employees for their steadfast dedication.



### **Secretary's Customer Service Spotlight**

The Secretary's Customer Service Spotlight, inspired by Secretary Robert Neall, celebrated its one-year anniversary in March 2020. The Secretary's Spotlight recognizes exceptional customer service provided both by the Maryland Department of Health staff, individuals and teams alike. Employees across the Department have the ability to submit nominations. Facilitated by the Office of Constituent Services, nominations for the Secretary's Spotlight are reviewed monthly, with final recommendations submitted to the Secretary for final review. Some examples of this year's Spotlight were:

**Lisa Runk - IT Staff Specialist, Office of Enterprise Technology - January 2020 Spotlight**



Within her role in the Office of Enterprise Technology, with primary focus on Medicaid’s area of systems, operations, and pharmacy, her responsibilities include interfacing with the Office of Constituent Services in assisting providers with issues concerning the eMedicaid Web Portal, working directly with providers via email/phone with billing and compensation related challenges, assisting providers and the clearing houses when it involves billing electronically in the system, acting as subject matter expert for claims services, as well as working in the System Liaisons Unit and serving as contract monitor for OET IT-related contracts. With regard to her exceptional customer service to external providers, she provides the same high standard of internal customer service to those working around her. Her nominator remarks, “Lisa is so nice to work with and I noticed while working with her other people would come to her for help and if she couldn't help them, she does not stop until she directs them to someone who could help them.”

**Monique Wilson - Assistant Director, Vital Statistics Administration - March 2020 Spotlight**



Dr. Monique Wilson demonstrates customer service for our internal stakeholders by serving on several committees throughout the Maryland Department of Health representing the Vital Statistics Administration (VSA). For example, she serves as the VSA legislative liaison during the weekly meetings to discuss the impact of newly proposed legislation. She also participates on the State Child Fatality Review Committee and the Maryland Violent Death Reporting System Advisory Board. She also provides a quick turnaround for internal requests for vital statistics data from our Maryland Department of Health administrations and offices. Dr. Wilson is instrumental in the annual effort to publish the VSA's lead publication, the Maryland Vital Statistics Annual Report. Lee Hurt, Director of the Vital Statistics Administration, states that this publication provides statistical data on Maryland resident births, deaths, population, life expectancy, marriages and divorces each year. This report is posted on the VSA website and provides key information that is used by local Health Departments and policymakers to develop informed public health programs. The efforts of Dr. Wilson and her team are a vital source of outreach and customer service for the VSA.

### **Secretary's Customer Service Spotlight - 2020 Special COVID-19 Response Edition**

Since the Spring of 2020, the State has been hard at work fighting the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that is affecting constituents across the state, nation, and world. Considering the circumstances, the Secretary Spotlight had been placed on hold due to the COVID-19 response efforts taking precedence. With the pandemic response continuing to alter normal functions within the Maryland Department of Health, the Secretary's Office of Constituent

Services thought it best to continue to recognize and spotlight Maryland Department of Health employees for their exemplary service and contributions during these challenging times. All Maryland Department of Health employees, including executive staff, program directors, and supervisors are encouraged to nominate specific examples of exceptional customer service, especially examples occurring during the COVID-19 response period and present to showcase creative contributions related to teleworking, adjusted staffing, and other matters specific to the pandemic response.

In August 2020, Secretary Neall and the Office of Constituent Services presented the first Secretary's Spotlight - 2020 Special COVID-19 Response Edition. The following three Maryland Department of Health employees were recognized:

**Spencer Gear - Director of Licensing, Behavioral Health Administration**



At the onset of COVID-19, the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) and Medicaid recognized the need to alter how services were provided and reimbursed. Clinical services could no longer be provided in-person, as social distancing would be required, and PPE was not readily available. BHA and Medicaid implemented new rules and guidelines regarding which services could be provided by telehealth (tele-video and/or telephone and HIPAA and non- HIPAA compliant) Spencer without hesitation took the lead in the discussions and the development of Policy Statements and FAQs on the topic. He worked closely with Medicaid and Optum Maryland to identify procedure codes for implementation. He participated in numerous calls with the provider community, Medicaid, BHA staff, and Optum to flush out the details and implement the new guidelines. This was well beyond and in addition to his normal responsibilities. He spent countless hours (evenings and weekends) implementing guidelines and procedure codes for the multiple provider types and services in the PBHS.

**Nancy Etheridge-Guest - Acting Center Chief, Maryland AIDS Drug Assistance Program (MADAP)**



In spite of COVID-19 issues, Nancy made sure critical health insurance plan payments were made by working through premium installments, paying in advance, reinstating policies, tagging problem areas for special attention and resolution, and keeping clients and insurance companies notified. Nancy anticipated increases in existing MADAP clients and/or new applicants who would become unemployed as a result of nationwide layoffs due to COVID-19. She communicated to internal and external partners that If a client or an applicant is receiving unemployment benefits, that person would be eligible for MADAP for the duration of those benefits PLUS an additional 30 days, if the client or applicant meets MADAP's income guidelines and MADAP applicants without income would submit TAP and Medical Assistance applications as normal. Nancy worked with local pharmacies to insure MADAP clients could get early refills of their medications up to 90 days. When possible, she worked with companies to enable MADAP to pay clients' premiums through the end of the eligibility period. Nancy consistently demonstrates exceptional leadership in pulling together staff in the midst of internal leadership departures, technology updates, and state auditing procedures, as well as responding to a pandemic impacting program operations. MADAP never shut its doors on client needs and Nancy kept her team forward focused as each hurdle arose. Nancy is to be commended on her professional demeanor, her diligence to duty, and her ability to appropriately delegate responsibilities and keep essential operations flowing at a rate that was transparent to external users of MADAP services.

**Charlene Perry - Public Health Emergency Planner - Kent County Health Department**



Though COVID-19 falls into Charlene's role as Public Health Emergency Planner, Charlene goes above and beyond to ensure that all of our staff as well as our County partners, health care providers and organizations are kept up to date. She has put in countless hours keeping up with the forever changing guidance and information from CDC and the Maryland Department of Health. She was instrumental in pulling together our Incident Command, ensuring all roles were filled by qualified personnel, as well as making sure they understood their roles and responsibilities. She assisted with pulling our drive-thru testing site together in a week and insisted that we find office space to continue testing, so that staff did not have to be in full PPE in the summer heat. Once office space was found, she took it upon herself to make sure it was cleaned and ready to go (again in less than a week's time). She continues to keep frequent contact with all community and health care agencies to keep them up-to-date and to fulfill any needs that they may have. Charlene has frequent contact with the faith-based coalition in Kent County, keeping them educated and informed of the latest guidance. When there was an outbreak at two nursing homes, Charlene went into the nursing homes to help them with assessing their COVID-19 needs and has continued to provide contact/support to them on a weekly basis. Charlene has also helped with testing and contact tracing at several organizations with outbreaks. While Charlene will say that she hasn't done this alone, without Charlene, Kent County Health Department would not have been as prepared/organized and able to function as well as they have.

## FY20 Results and FY21 Plans

### Constituent Voices

**Developmental Disabilities Administration: *Email from constituent to Deputy Secretary:***

“Your response was exceptional to our significant problems with the transition from our service provider and the resultant critical timeline. With your help and flexibility in working with us and our Coordinator of Community Services. The PCP Plan began implementation in record time. Your attention to the needs was a great example of how DDA makes constituents your top priority.”

**Behavioral Health Administration: *Email from constituent to Deputy Secretary:***

“I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for the recent media attention to the use of naloxone and Good Samaritan law. As you are aware, since the Covid19 restrictions were put into place, the communities have experienced increased drug overdoses, both fatal and non-fatal. The “ads” and media attention have generated a lot of chatter in the neighborhoods we are servicing with peer outreach. And yet it still amazes me that some folks are not aware of the exact information you are sharing. The 'before it's too late' website is a fantastic tool that we consistently use and share with the families we are working with. Please keep up the good work - lives are depending on it.”

**Harford County Department of Health: *Email from constituent:***

“I am writing this letter to express my heartfelt gratitude for Ms. Kim Proutt, RN, BSN, Harford County Health Department, Care Coordinator Plus. Ms. Proutt is more than a Care Coordinator Plus. Ms. Proutt is a caring and compassionate human being who I had the opportunity to meet over-the-phone on Thursday. Ms. Proutt has gone above and beyond her role as a Care Coordinator Plus. Ms. Proutt has answered my numerous phone calls and responded to my countless emails providing valuable feedback pertaining to detailed information to my requests. She has researched information and contacted a host of individuals on my behalf in various departments, including the Department of Social Services in Harford County. Ms. Proutt listened attentively to my concerns during a particular phone conversation we had in early June 2020. Shortly thereafter, I received in the mail a list of mental health providers and primary health physicians in Harford County. Ms. Proutt worked hand-in-hand with (a person) to coordinate and find the best suitable programs most beneficial for my brother’s unique situation. Ms. Proutt’s outstanding service is very much appreciated and should be

recognized. I would like to thank Ms. Kim Proutt for making a difference in the lives of others such as my brother through a spirit of sincere dedication.”

**Anne Arundel County Department of Health: *Email from constituent:*** “The AA health department website made it easy to find the testing information, explained everything clearly, made it clear up front that asymptomatic people could get tested. I called the coved info line, they again made it clear I didn’t need symptoms and they didn’t even make me justify why I felt I needed to get tested. I got a call back within the hour to schedule my appointment. Everyone I talked to was calm and knowledgeable, no one seemed stressed. The testing was done only a few minutes from where I live, which is a huge plus. Communication as I made my way to the different stations was great. It took 30 mins to get through the whole process, but I think part of that is because I was in the first group of the day and there were some people who didn’t have appointments ahead of me. I could tell from conversations I heard from the employees they were still trying to iron out the best way to deal with certain situations, but that uncertainty never affected those of us who were waiting. I’m sure when I get a call with my results that part will be efficient as well. I don’t know if the office parking lot is going to be a long-term test site or if it was just for this week, but everything from start to finish was stress free for me and I really appreciate that. Thank you to everyone for their awesome work, thank you to everyone who is working weekends (since I’ll probably hear back with my results on a weekend), and since I’m writing this when it’s pouring down rain, thank you to everyone who has to be out in the rain and heat and humidity.

**Maryland Board of Physicians: *Email from a constituent:*** “I wanted to drop a quick note and let you know how impressed I was with Ms. Williams and her customer service yesterday. I was having trouble logging on to renew my license and Ms. Williams helped me tremendously. She patiently logged me on and walked me through the renewal process, step-by-step over a period of 15-20 minutes. I have dealt with other representatives of Maryland Department of Health, and I have to say Ms. Williams was by far the most helpful and friendly I have encountered. I know that you get a lot of complaints, so I thought it would be nice to recognize Miwa, and please pass this along to your staff.”

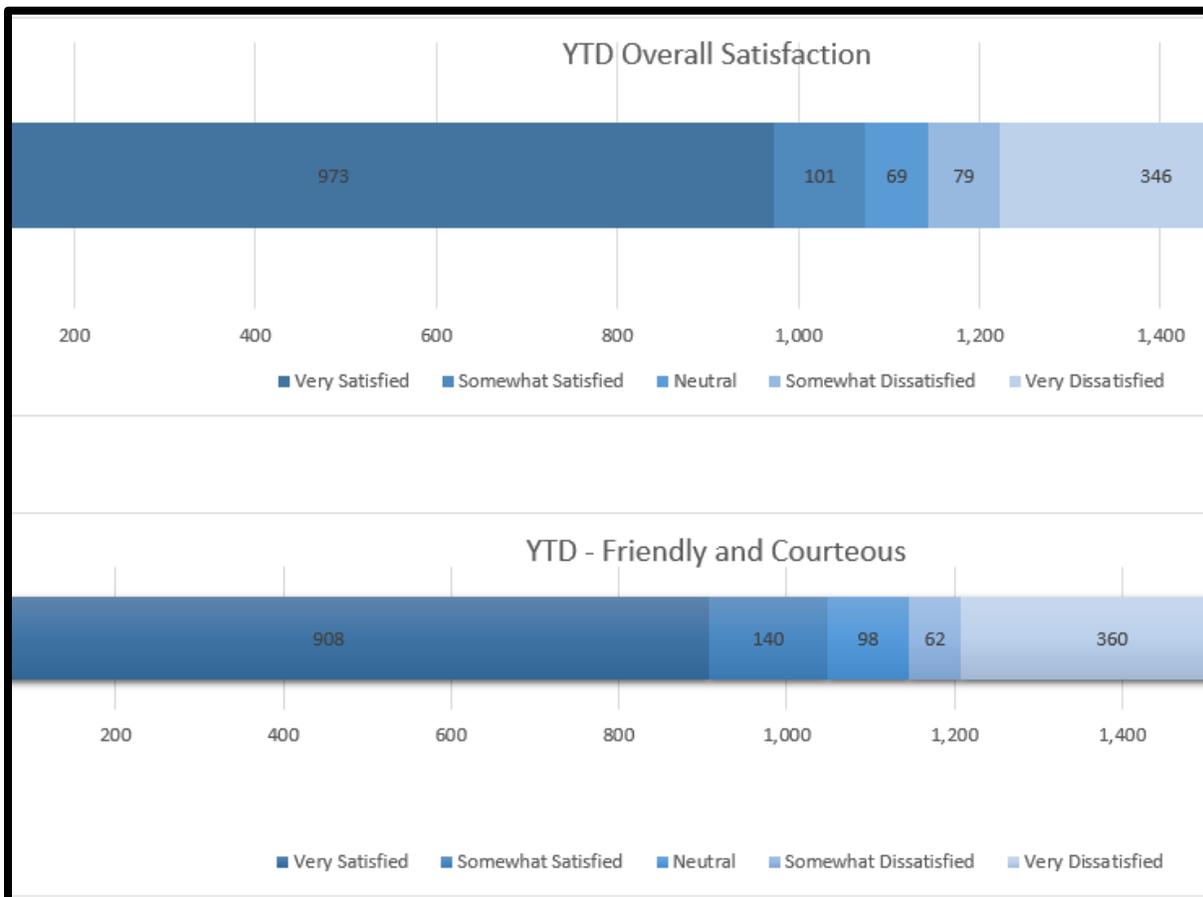
### **Customer Service Survey Results**

Since October 2019, the Office of Constituent Services has continually engaged with constituents who are providing survey feedback. The Maryland Department of Health receives the appropriated survey results from the Governor's Office of Performance

Improvement (GOPI) and highlights all neutral to negative survey results. The Office of Constituent Services then follows up with each of the highlighted results to:

- 1) Thank the constituent for their time in filling out the survey.
- 2) Apologize for the neutral to negative experience.
- 3) Offer assistance if the constituent’s issue is still not resolved.
- 4) Provide a contact at the Department for future inquiries.

Below is the FY20 Governor’s Office of Performance Improvement survey scale for the Maryland Department of Health. The scale shows satisfied to dissatisfied experiences include encounters with staff from the Maryland Department of Health Administrations and the 22 Health Occupation Boards and Commissions:



### Status of Customer Service Training

A detailed presentation on the Governor’s Customer Service Promise is an integral part of the monthly New Employee Orientation. During this presentation, messaging about the Online

Customer Service Training is shared with the clear directive that every employee is to complete the training within the first month of employment at the Department. To date, 98 percent of the Department's employees have completed the Online Customer Service Training.

Since late 2018, the Office of Constituent Services has been conducting Constituent Services and Controlled Correspondence Training to targeted staff who are engaging in front line constituent service work and using the IQ system to track cases and correspondence. These 1.5 hour in-person trainings review the Governor's Customer Service Promise, expectations of Controlled Correspondence and the software that manages the process.

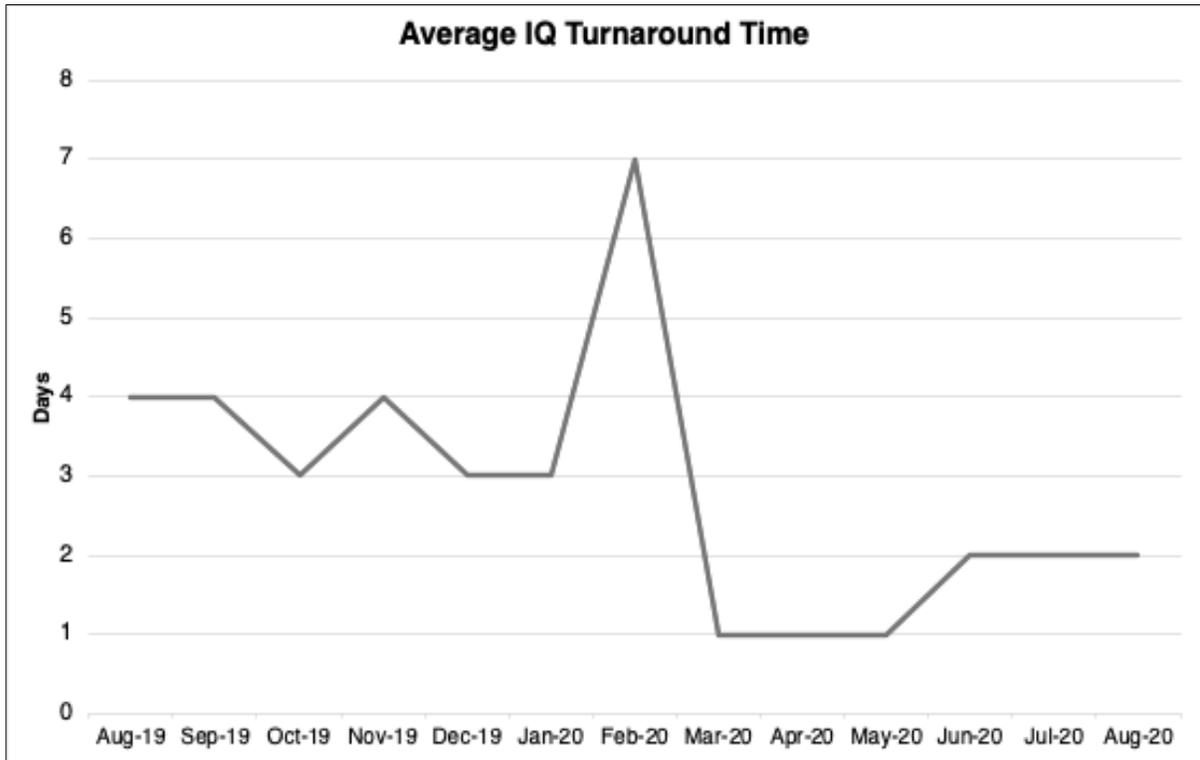
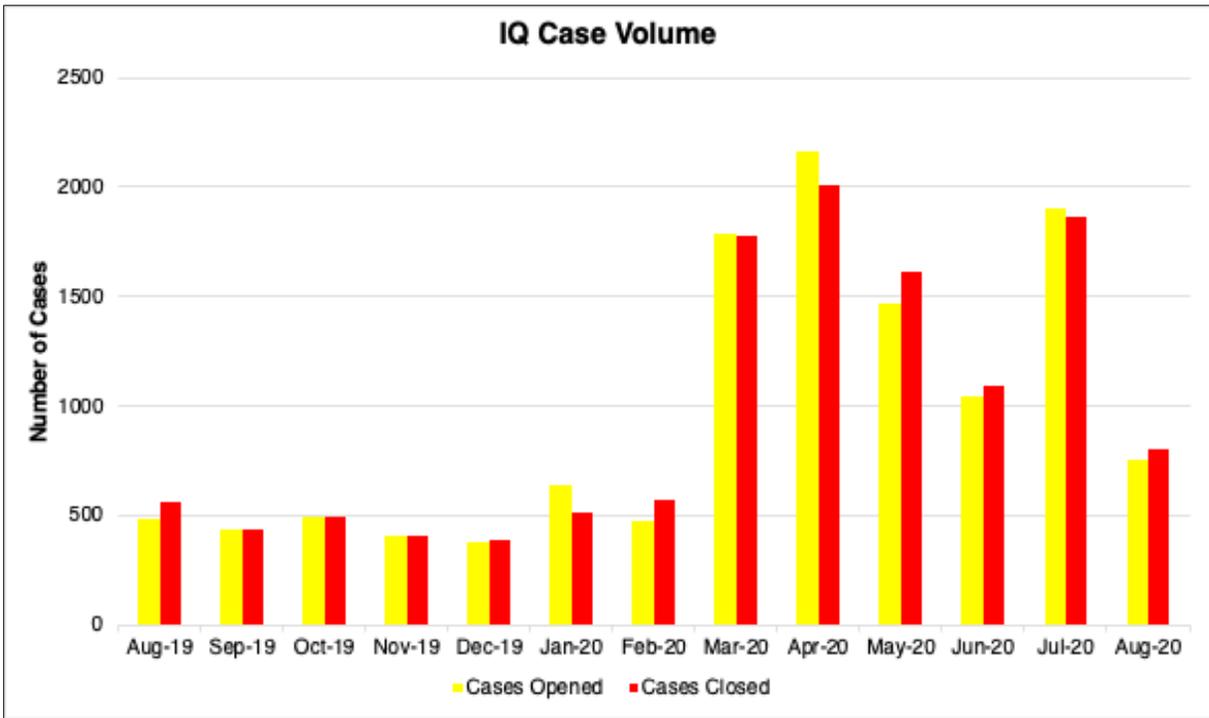
In FY20, the Maryland Department of Health's Office of Constituent Services continued to explore customer service training options previously approved and being offered by the Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBM) through the Customer Service Master Contract. The Office of Constituent Services has been in contact with both DBM staff managing this project, and internal Maryland Department of Health staff regarding projected costs, needs and timelines for delivering this type of training.

## Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution

### Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries, Best Practices, and Plans for Improvement

The results of the new Controlled Correspondence Process have demonstrated a significant decrease in turnaround times for Maryland Department of Health's Controlled Correspondence and open case volume at any given time.

In conjunction with IQ, the Office of Constituent Services implemented the "**24/7 Rule**" requiring that each inquiry receive an acknowledgement from the Maryland Department of Health within **24 hours** of receipt. Once the acknowledgement has been sent, the clock will then start on a **seven-business day** turnaround for case closure. Once the seven business days have elapsed, the case will be considered overdue. The Office of Constituent Services closely tracks the cases for status updates during the seven-business day window to ensure that the inquiry is moving towards resolution or completion. The end goal is for Maryland Department of Health staff to provide timely feedback, resources, and assistance to facilitate access to appropriate services and resources for the constituents of Maryland.



## Call Center Data

The Maryland Department of Health is vast and complex, comprising multiple administrations, offices, programs, hospitals, local health departments, and off-site call centers. Below are some examples from across the Department to demonstrate volume of constituent activity:

- **Office of the Inspector General:** OIG's Hotline for reporting fraud, waste and abuse
  - 5 staff
  - Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
  - Calls: 522
  
- **Medicaid: Maryland Medicaid Pharmacy (MMP)** has two call centers, one in house and one Point of Sale claim processing vendor (Conduent)
  - *MMP:* Four staff, one supervisor
    - Provides assistance to Medicaid participants, prescribers and pharmacy providers with participants benefits and eligibility, claims submissions details, etc.
    - Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
    - Calls: 66,808 (up 40,000+ from FY19)
    - Average call time: 2 min 60 sec
  - *Conduent:* 12 staff including supervisor, pharmacists, and staff
    - Provides Pharmacy providers and prescribers with member's benefits and eligibility, claims submission details, coordination of benefits, etc.
    - Hours: 24/7/365
    - Calls: 65,674
    - Average call time: 12 seconds
  
- **Maryland Board of Nursing (MBON)** has five departments broken down into 21 phone lines. These phone lines provide assistance to address certifications, criminal background checks, discipline and compliance, education and examination as well as initial RN.
  - Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
  - Calls: 43,760
  - Responses: 28,100
  - Average call time: 4 min 47 sec

- **Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (MMCC)** has one call center that handles one telephone line operated by seven to ten staff members. In February 2020, the MMCC terminated its contract with a third-party call center and transitioned to providing call center services in house. This transition has (1) reduced program costs, (2) increased the percentage of one-call resolution questions and issues, (3) improved customer service feedback, and (4) connected the public with subject matter experts on the program and patient application process. Overall, despite a surge in calls following the pandemic, the average time per call continues to decrease and the one-call resolution continues to increase.
  - This phone line provides assistance to patients and caregivers as well as general information pertaining to the Cannabis program.
  - Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
  - Calls: 250-350 per day
  - Responses: approximately 300 per day
  - Wait time: average wait time is less than 5 minutes
  
- **Vital Statistics Administration (VSA)** is responsible for processing birth certificates, death certificates, marriage and divorce certificates
  - 11 Staff
  - Hours: 8:00 a.m. to-4:00 p.m.
  - Calls: 93,936 in FY20
  - Responses: 76,103 in FY20

The Maryland Department of Health continues to closely evaluate and assess each call center across the department to make appropriate changes and updates for a more streamlined, efficient, customer friendly service.

## Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives

### Making Agency Services Available Online

#### Maryland Board of Physicians

- Specifically, in FY20, responding to the trend of increased email inquiries, to better serve licensees and constituents, the Board moved its general board email account to a new platform, which expanded employee access to the account and consequently

enabled the Board to increase the number of Board staff assigned to monitor and respond to Board email inquiries. As a result, the majority of email inquiries receive a reply within 48 hours. The Board's general contact information is provided on the *Board's Contact Us* page on the website with a link to the general email address. In addition, various email addresses (by topic) are available on the website through which the public may email their inquiries directly to the Board. These initiatives enhancing the Board's responsiveness to public inquiries are beneficial to the constituents of Maryland.

### **Maryland Medicaid Administration**

- *Medical Benefits Management* through its external quality review organization vendor, now uses an application called Proofpoint SecureShare to collect medical records and information from providers for quality assurance review activities. Proofpoint SecureShare replaces traveling to provider offices or exclusively relying on secure fax transmissions and mail. The platform is HIPAA compliant and user friendly.
- *Medicaid Provider Services* worked with the Office of Enterprise Technology to develop a new Medicaid Provider Verification System (PVS). It is a publicly available, easy to use self-service tool. PVS, which launched in July, enables providers to validate their enrollment details without contacting the Call Center.
- *Office of Eligibility Services* staff in the local offices are now accepting Medicaid applications via telephone, under guidance from CMS. This is an additional service to assist applicants who cannot go to an office or who are unable to apply online.

### **Public Health Services Administration**

- *Cecil County Health Department*: No services were provided online prior to the start of COVID-19. Since COVID-19, the following programs are available online: Diabetes Prevention Programs, Living Well/Diabetes Self-management Programs, Smoking Cessation, Drug Free Cecil/YES youth prevention meetings, and scheduling of COVID testing via social media and website.
- *Garrett County Health Department*: The Garrett County Local Health Improvement Coalition, Drug Free Communities Coalition, and other groups are now hosting online meetings. There are more community members engaged than prior to COVID-19 since the meetings previously were in person or call in.

- *Office of Provider Engagement and Regulation, Office of Controlled Substances Administration (OCSA)*: OCSA has changed how they address registrant FAQs by recommending registrants contact the agency via email in lieu of phone calls during COVID-19 to decrease the response wait time. As more registrants are providing current email addresses, OCSA is also ensuring that registrants are notified about the need to submit a renewal application through email notification instead of through mail. Updated guidance on the OCSA website has helped registrants interpret the CDS search feature, which allows registrants to check the status of their CDS registration in real-time.

### **Office of Human Resources**

- Training Services Division has begun offering the State mandated Sexual Harassment Prevention training through online webinars using WebEx. Since April 2020, nearly 2,400 Maryland Department of Health staff have attended the webinar training. One of the major advantages is that this has eliminated travel time for both facilitators and participants thus allowing for more time for normal business tasks. In addition, more sessions have been added including several evening sessions for employees that work second and third shifts at facilities.

### **Office of the Inspector General (OIG)**

- The OIG continues to make services available to the public online via the OIG website and online portal for hotline complaints. Additionally, the OIG is working with our partners, including the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) and other entities that OIG audits, i.e. local health departments and hospitals. OIG has established online protocols for receiving and reviewing partner's financial data and returning it to them after audit completion.

### **Processing Times for Customer Transactions**

The Maryland Department of Health continuously strives to improve on timeliness and accessibility to services for the constituents of Maryland. In FY20, many updates were made to improve customer transaction times, and experience. Here are examples of several updates:

### **Maryland Board of Physicians**

- Beginning in FY20, the Board began sending automatic system-generated email acknowledgements to applicants to confirm receipt of their initial or reinstatement application and payment. This improved customer transactions and enhanced Board efficiency. In addition, in FY20, the Board shifted to digital licenses. In lieu of Board staff printing and mailing hard-copy licenses, all newly licensed and reinstated practitioners now receive a digital copy of their license (after approval of their application) by email from the licensure analyst. This has resulted in a tremendous saving in printing and mailing costs to the Board and enhanced the customer experience by eliminating the waiting time for licenses to be delivered by mail.

### **Public Health Services Administration**

- Division of Vital Records (DVR) installed a new postage metering system on-site, which allows for same day postage and transfer to the U.S. Postal Service for orders being mailed out. Previously all mail had to be transferred to another location for postage, delaying shipment to customers. DVR often looks at the demand versus the processing times and works diligently to adjust those times in response to customer requests. DVR partners with a third-party company for online and phone orders to expedite customer transactions and wait times.

### **Behavioral Health Administration**

- The BHA SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) Initiative spearheaded a number of changes to ensure that SSI and SSDI cases could still be submitted during COVID19. To ensure that cases could be submitted safely, the Behavioral Health Administration facilitated a number of meetings with our SOAR specialists to apply new working practices, including undertaking virtual assessments, and produced written guidance. Behavioral Health also worked with Social Security Administration and Maryland Disability Services to agree to new processes and procedures that enabled cases to be adjudicated in a timely manner while staff were operating remotely. Additionally, SOAR in-person training and SOAR Train the Trainer program were adapted and delivered in a virtual format. These changes enabled the SOAR Initiative to have its highest ever number of SOAR cases adjudicated in any FY to date.

### **Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (MMCC)**

- The MMCC is transitioning from its current legacy system to a Cloud-Based Enterprise Management System that will improve system uptime and better support

MMCC's administrative and functional mission. In turn, this will reduce administrative wait times, increase user-friendliness, and increase customer satisfaction.

### **Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands**

#### **Office of the Secretary**

- The Office of Communications has essentially operated with 24/7 availability since the end of January 2020, when the threat of COVID-19 first presented in Maryland.

#### **Public Health Services Administration**

- *Dorchester County Health Department:* Hours have been expanded. For example, contact tracers work seven days a week and COVID-19 testing is offered at various hours, including weekends, to accommodate all members of the community.
- *Carroll County Health Department:* Holding evening hours two nights a week and will reinstitute these expanded hours once in building services have reopened. Staff respond to community complaints and concerns on evenings, weekends, and holidays. Testing and contact tracing take place on weekends, as well as compliance checks.
- *Laboratories Administration:* Work hours and testing days have been expanded to meet increasing COVID testing volume. The lab has been operating seven days a week for COVID testing throughout the pandemic.

#### **Developmental Disabilities Administration**

- The DDA Headquarters has adjusted its hours so that there is someone available after-hours to accommodate families. The DDA's Chief of Staff has provided the increased level of customer service after hours and many families feel that they are being heard when they get an email after hours. Also, the regional offices have on call staff,

allowing for constituents to reach a live person after regularly scheduled business hours.

### **Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience**

The Maryland Department of Health continues to promote the health and safety of all Marylanders through social media marketing on both Twitter and Facebook. Some of the Administrations, Local Health Departments and Health Occupation Boards operate their own social media pages to connect with their audience on a more granular level to provide directed content.

Through the Maryland Department of Health social media channels, the Office of Communications disseminates information to the general public including health care resources, public health announcements, press releases, safety and preparedness information from federal, state and local partners and updates on departmental and statewide initiatives. Maryland Department of Health employs a dedicated social media content manager whose sole responsibility is to monitor and manage social media content, in addition to acting in an advisory capacity on Department-wide policy and for other departmental social media accounts to support best practices.

The Maryland Department of Health has seen an unprecedented and dramatic increase in both the number of followers and audience engagement through its social media platforms due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a single week in March alone, the Facebook audience grew from 7,102 followers to 23,646 followers. Twitter gained 7,344 followers in March, compared to 225 new followers in February. Though the surge of new followers has significantly decreased in recent months, our audience continues to remain engaged with our messaging. Recent top-performing posts include #MasksOnMaryland: How to properly wear a face covering; CovidLINK: Don't ignore the call; and Contact tracing: Information investigators will not ask for. Social media post examples follow:

**Maryland Department of Health**  
2 hrs · 🌐

Wondering when to use a mask? Wear a mask when you're in public, especially when it's difficult stay at least 6 feet away from others. Remember, your mask should always cover both your nose AND mouth. #MasksOnMaryland

Learn more at: <https://bit.ly/CDC-WearingMasks>

### WHEN TO WEAR A MASK

Do I wear a mask?	Yes	No
At home with people who live in your household		✗
Running errands (e.g., grocery shopping)	✓	
Visiting the doctor's office or pharmacy	✓	
Dining at a restaurant (when not eating)	✓	
Driving in a personal vehicle with people who live in your household		✗
Riding in someone else's personal vehicle	✓	
Taking public transportation	✓	

Using a mask combined with social distancing can help slow the spread of COVID-19.

cdc.gov/coronavirus

**Maryland Department of Health**  
19 hrs · 🌐

Looking for a COVID-19 testing site near you? The **Maryland Department of Health's** new locator map makes finding a site easier than ever.

Plan to get tested today by visiting: [covidtest.maryland.gov](https://covidtest.maryland.gov)

MD COVID-19 Testing Sites

201 West Preston St

11.67 mi

0 30

Loading...

**Maryland Department of Health**  
August 4 at 2:00 PM · 🌐

Did you know, nearly 84% of Maryland car seats are not installed or used correctly? Schedule a Video Car Seat Assistance Appointment for remote face-to-face education and guidance.

To schedule, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/VidAppt20>

**Maryland Department of Health**  
August 12 at 8:21 AM · 🌐

**RELEASE:** The Maryland Department of Health has partnered with the Baltimore City Health Department and the NAACP - Baltimore City Branch to distribute free masks at the Pimlico Race Course COVID-19 testing site on Thursday, August 13 as part of the ongoing #MasksOnMaryland campaign.

The event begins at 8 a.m. and lasts until supplies run out.

Learn more: [bit.ly/PimlicoMasks](https://bit.ly/PimlicoMasks)

## #MASKSONMARYLAND

GET A MASK, GET A TEST

AT PIMLICO RACE COURSE

In addition to inquiries about COVID-19, the Office of Communications continues to field numerous inquiries from the public via its social media channels including service-related questions about Medicaid, programs for individuals with developmental and physical disabilities and those seeking mental health or substance use disorder treatment. In general, the Office of Communications responds either by directing users to resources or by referring inquiries to the Office of Constituent Services.

## Licensing and Permitting from Multiple Perspectives

- **Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (MMCC)** Licensing times vary significantly by category. Caregiver and provider registrations are processed the same day. Patient registrations are processed in 5-10 business days. All business licenses and registrations require full Commission approval in a public meeting and involve significant background investigations and safety/compliance inspections. Subsequently, licensing may take 30 to 60 days from complete submission. All turnaround times are conveyed via the MMCC website and licensee and registrant guidance documents
- **PHSA: Office of Population Health Improvement (OPHI):** Community Health Worker (CHW) Certification - Applicants receive an acknowledgment of receipt of the application within one business week and applicants with complete applications are certified within one business week. CHW Accreditation - Acknowledgement of receipt of application is sent within one business week and notification of the accreditation decision by the Secretary is sent approximately 60 days after receipt of a completed application.
- **PHSA: Office of Provider Engagement and Regulation (OPER):** The online Controlled Dangerous Substance (CDS) application process turnaround time is approximately five business days from the date of receipt. The paper CDS application process maintains approximately 10 business days from the receipt date.
- **Maryland Board of Occupational Therapy Practice:** Almost all licensing services can be completed online: license applications, renewals, license verifications, roster requests and continuing education requests.

- **Maryland Board of Examiners in Optometry:** The Board now accepts online applications and payment for licensure. In addition, the Board has the ability to send eblasts to licensees and stakeholders when necessary and post information and updates to its website.

The Maryland Department of Health employees continues to work together to promote and improve the health and safety of all Marylanders. Maryland Department of Health staff strives to support and carry out Governor Hogan's Customer Service Promise while carrying out the Department's vision of lifelong health and wellness for all Marylanders through a number of customer service touch points demonstrated in this report and more. The Department's customer service focus is on every person, every contact, every day.