

COVID-19 Update

Talbot County Emergency Services
Clay Stamp, Director, Asst. County Manager
www.talbotdes.org



Talbot County Health Department
Dr. Fredia Wadley, Health Officer
<https://health.maryland.gov/talbotcounty/>

Key Points for May 8

- ✓ Maryland reported 1,111 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, bringing the statewide number to 30,485.
- ✓ The number of new hospitalizations in the past 24 hours is holding steady at 148, with a statewide total of 5,811. The number of deaths rose by 52 for a total of 1,433 deaths cause by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ There have been no new outbreaks at long-term care facilities in the past 24 hours.
- ✓ The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Talbot County has risen to 58.
- ✓ Gov. Larry Hogan cleared the way for elective surgeries to resume at hospitals around the state, but safety protocols must be implemented before these services begin. Preparations at local facilities will take several weeks.
- ✓ Talbot County Public Schools will be closed through the end of the school year, but continuity of learning will continue, as will plans to provide food for children in need.

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COVID-19 Heroes: Local Retired Physicians Are a Silver Lining to COVID-19 Darkness **By Amelia Blades Steward**

“I definitely believed that a pandemic from a novel could happen, but I am actually stunned that it is happening now,” says Dr. Lisa Stone, a retired medical and public health professional newly relocated to Easton.

Dr. Stone, along with Dr. Michael Fisher, a retired gastroenterologist with Digestive Health Associates and University of Maryland Shore Medical Group in Easton was asked to join Talbot County’s COVID-19 Task Force to offer their services to help the County plan for the medical impact of the virus on its citizens.

When Gov. Larry Hogan declared a state of emergency, the Talbot County Department of Emergency Services activated the Emergency Operations Committee made up of medical professionals, law enforcement, government officials, and agency representatives from around the county.

In addition to the core operations group, several working groups were identified to address specific issues including medical surge, food security, sheltering operations for children of essential workers, mental health, law enforcement, business sector needs, and communication with the immigrant community.

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Drs. Fisher and Stone stepped up to help in the area of medical surge. Dr. Fisher shared that he was approached by Ken Kozel, President and CEO of the University of Maryland Shore Regional Health (UM SRH) and Dr. William Huffner, Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President, Medical Affairs at UM SRH, to serve as a community/hospital liaison for the pandemic.

Kozel comments, "Sometimes we find silver linings, even in things like a worldwide pandemic," Kozel said. We at Shore have found one silver lining in the support we are receiving from Dr. Michael Fisher and Dr. Lisa Stone."

Dr. Fisher retired a few years ago as a gastroenterologist but has offered his valuable experience by working with a team focused on how the allocation of scarce resources could be managed during this health crisis, an essential but challenging initiative.

"Faced with early retirement because of medical issues, I was looking to find those meaningful things in the community I had practiced in for 30 years in which my experience could be utilized," Dr. Fisher says. "I have been honored to work among such dedicated doctors, nurses, and medical professionals, and I have been impressed by the very smart and creative people on the task forces and working groups."

Dr. Fisher began to work immediately to secure additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) from the dental community and specialty areas of medicine that were not doing as many elective procedures. He recalls, "Three carloads of gowns, masks, and gloves were donated by these compassionate doctors and dentists which helped immediately with the shortages in these items."

He and Dr. Stone are on the daily Incident Command Calls with Shore Regional Health addressing the coronavirus pandemic. "Just being on the daily task force calls gives another perspective for one who has been both a patient and a long-standing provider," Dr. Fisher states.

"It has been inspiring to see people's innovations during an event like this. I think people are inclined to step up and find ways to help. We are all learning about our community," he continues. "We are blessed with living in a generous, giving place where we help each other get through this. It's been a benchmark moment in our nation's history and we have learned we can't undermine the nation's investment in health and research to prepare for times like this."

Kozel comments, "Dr. Stone was referred to us by Talbot County Health Officer, Dr. Fredia Wadley. Dr. Stone's expertise in surge management and workforce procurement has been incredibly valuable in our planning and preparations for COVID-19."

"One great thing about Talbot County is the number of people that move to our county with fantastic and varied experience. When Dr. Stone sent her resume to the Health Department asking if she could help, I knew there were several places that public health and Shore Regional's hospitals could use her expertise. Drs. Stone and Fisher's willingness to volunteer has greatly helped our Talbot's COVID 19 efforts," says Dr. Wadley.

Before moving to Easton, Dr. Stone worked in public health in Boston, Mass., as well as internationally dealing with pandemics, including working for 10 years in developing countries around Avian influenza and Ebola. She felt she could bring her expertise in surge planning to help Talbot County. "The hardest days were sitting here and knowing I should be doing something," she says.

Once engaged with Talbot County's efforts, one of Dr. Stone's primary responsibilities was to help with planning for alternative sites in the County for hospital beds, which included evaluating Chesapeake College as

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a possible location. Dr. Stone and Dr. Fisher were worried about a surge affecting adequate personnel needs and both were making calls to inactive or retired medical professionals who could help.

With her knowledge, Dr. Stone plugged into an existing Maryland emergency resource – the Maryland Responds Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps. The Corps includes volunteer medical and non-medical personnel who can be activated in any kind of statewide public health emergency. She found that there were over 100 active and retired nurses in the region who had signed up for the Corps and who may be available to help if the need arises.

Looking to the future, Dr. Stone says, “Things have never been fundamentally the same since 9/11 happened. The same is true of COVID-19. We are going to be so much safer now for the next virus which will be dealt with swiftly with much better preparedness.”

“It has been wonderful to be contributing locally to the planning around this pandemic. I was absolutely stunned by how organized the team is and so impressed by the ‘can do’ attitudes, and the energy and efficiency of the workers. The public should be confident in what is happening here,” she adds.

Reflecting on the process thus far, Kozel remarks, “Having these local experts donate their time and talents in support of our healthcare system’s response to the coronavirus pandemic is a silver lining indeed.”

Captions:

#1: Dr. Michael Fisher

#2: Dr. Lisa Stone

Talbot County Public Schools

Maryland State Superintendent Dr. Karen Salmon has announced that all Maryland public schools will be closed through the end of the 2019-2020 school year with continuity of learning continuing for the remainder of the approved school calendar. Dr. Salmon also announced that the Maryland State Department of Education will be releasing the Maryland Together Recovery Plan for Education which guides local school systems in preparing for the reopening of schools in phases depending upon each district’s circumstances and under the direction of local superintendents. These guidelines will dovetail with the Governor’s Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery Plan.

TCPS meals and CarePacks will be distributed Tuesday, May 12 and Friday, May 15 from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. at all school sites. Sodexo is now providing frozen food items that require refrigerated storage and reheating. If you are unable to pick up meals and need emergency delivery, please call Crystal Miller at 443-432-5091.

The TCPS Instructional Technology Help Desk will be open on **Tuesday, May 12 from 9:00 a.m. to noon at St. Michaels Elementary School ONLY** and on Friday, May 15 from noon - 3:00 p.m. at BOTH Easton High School and St. Michaels Elementary School. Please send an email to helpdesk@talbotschools.org for virtual support or to schedule a help desk appointment for iPads or laptops.

TCPS encourages parents to wear masks/cloth face coverings during meal pickups or IT Help Desk visits to help fight the spread of COVID-19.

The high school Administrators have sent detailed plans to the seniors and their families for next week’s graduation filming and we look forward to this innovative recognition for our graduates. We are asking

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families to respect the guidelines that have been set based on Governor Hogan's existing "Stay at Home" order and on directives we have received from law enforcement.

Please continue to share photos of graduating seniors wearing gear and/or holding signs to celebrate their commitments to college, career, or the military by emailing them to their guidance counselors or to dgardner@talbotschools.org.

"I know that I can speak for all of our teachers and school administrators in saying that the news of schools remaining closed is disappointing for us, as we really hoped we would see our students again in person," said Dr. Kelly Griffith, Superintendent. "However under the current circumstances this is the only safe alternative for our students and staff. We are grateful to Dr. Salmon and Governor Hogan for their leadership through this very challenging and unprecedented situation. Please Stay Tuned, Stay Healthy, and Stay Hopeful!"

Where to Find More Information

- **CDC COVID-2019 Website:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- **Talbot County COVID-19 Information** www.talbotcovid19.org
- **Shore Regional Health COVID Information** <https://www.umms.org/shore/patients-visitors/coronavirus>
- **Maryland Department of Health Website:** <https://health.maryland.gov/pages/home.aspx>
- **Talbot County Health Department Website:** <https://health.maryland.gov/talbotcounty/Pages/home.aspx>
- **Maryland COVID-19 Website:** <https://governor.maryland.gov/coronavirus>