

To: M. Norman Oliver, MD, MA; State Health Commissioner

From: Melody Armstrong, MPA, Chair, Advisory Council on Health Disparity & Health Equity (ACHDHE),
Virginia Department of Health (VDH)

Date: January 12, 2021

Subject: ACHDHE Recommendation for Program Enhancement:

In response to the October 13, 2020 presentation on “VDH Testing Teams’ Activities Overview,” presented to the ACHDHE by Dr. Parham Jaberri, Chief Deputy Commissioner, VDH, we respectfully present the following:

- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) improves access to COVID -19 tests by providing more walk-ins testing programs in communities with limited personal transportation.
- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) continue to conduct testing in intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and as well make available data on COVID-19 tests, cases, hospitalizations, and deaths by disability status.
- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) increases the frequency of public service announcements to include television and social media advertisements with community testing information and times. The messaging should include the input of collaborative partners that work with symptomatic individuals and those with possible exposures to the COVID-19 virus.

In response to the October 13, 2020 presentation on “VDH Contact Tracing Activities Overview,” presented to the ACHDHE by John Ringer, Public Health Planning and Evaluation Director, VDH, we respectfully present the following:

- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) collects data on disability of contact tracers and include more diversity of contact tracers.
- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) together with the Governor’s Office considers more strategic approach to contact tracing; mandates mask wearing at all indoors events, with failure to comply a misdemeanor with fine. Increase the opening of small businesses and the arts with required social distancing as well as other precautions.

In response to the October 13, 2020 presentation on “ACHDHE Recommendations/Policy Documents,” presented to the ACHDHE by Harvard University Fellows, we respectfully present the following:

- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) considers adopting the policy of nondiscrimination in all healthcare programs supported by the agency similar to the state of Connecticut.
Links: <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Nondiscrimination-Certification>
https://www.cga.ct.gov/olm/lbd/docs/procurement/forms/Nondiscrimination_Certification.pdf
- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) develops the state policies that are include specific crisis standard of care sections that require hospitals to allow support staff of people with disabilities provide assistance in hospitals.

Signed: *Melody Armstrong*

Melody Armstrong, BSN, MPA, & Chair, ACHDHE