



Health Department



May 24, 2020

To: Dr. M. Norman Oliver, State Health Commissioner, Virginia Department of Health
Mark Jinks, Alexandria City Manager
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manger
Bryan Hill, Fairfax County Executive
Tim Hemstreet, Loudoun County Administrator
Christopher Martino, Prince William County Executive

Dear Dr. Oliver and Chief Administrative Officers,

Governor Northam issued Executive Orders 53 and 55 that closed businesses in the Commonwealth to help maintain the public’s health in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Various metrics have been provided for determining when entering into Phase 1 of re-opening could be safely accomplished. Executive Order 61 was issued on May 8, 2020, to provide for the Phase 1 easing of certain temporary restrictions due to COVID-19. Executive Order 62 was subsequently issued on May 12, 2020, maintaining Phase 0 through May 28, 2020 for the Northern Virginia region.

The Northern Virginia Health Directors assessed the status of the Northern Virginia region against the April 24 Forward Virginia metrics on May 9 and recommended Northern Virginia continue existing community mitigation strategies. We have now reassessed the status of the metrics on May 24. We appreciate the efforts of the Virginia Department of Health to provide the key metrics by the Northern Virginia region (<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/key-measures/#northern>). **Based on our May 24 assessment, our region has met four (4) of the six (6) April 24 metrics for moving into Phase 1 at this time.**

We recommend that policymakers continue to consider the status of these Forward Virginia metrics when contemplating moving into various phases of reopening. In addition, we suggest additional public health metrics for moving into subsequent phases of reopening (see “Requests Regarding Metrics” below).

The following table is our May 24, 2020, assessment against the metrics issued on April 24:

Metric	Met or Unmet	Health Directors’ Comments
Moving downward: Percentage of positive tests over 14 days	<u>Met</u> (previously “unable to assess”)	* See chart below: “Testing Measures”
Moving downward: Hospitalizations over 14 days	<u>Met</u> (previously unmet)	** See chart below: “Hospital Measures”

Increased testing	<u>Met</u> (previously “unable to assess”)	* See chart below: “Testing Measures”
Increased (contact) tracing (capacity)	<u>Unmet</u> (previously unmet)	Infrastructure is currently being put into place, with sequential increased capacity anticipated in the coming weeks
Enough hospital beds and intensive care capacity	<u>Met</u> (previously unable to assess)	** See chart below “Hospital Measures”
Increasing and sustainable supply of PPE	<u>Unmet</u> (previously unmet)	<u>Met</u> : PPE for hospitals appears to be adequate at this time <u>Unmet</u> : PPE for outpatient facilities (private practices, long-term care facilities and first responders) continues to be a challenge - although there is increased supply for these entities, there is not a sustainable supply through non-government sources.

Requests Regarding Metrics

- 1) Refinements of Existing Metrics
 - a) Regarding Hospital Beds and ICU Capacity: should indicate whether hospitals are able to double the number of patients treated in ICUs from current census (including staffing).
 - b) Regarding Increasing and sustainable supply of PPE: clarification needed about the meaning of “sustainable” (e.g. “assured resupplies available from vendors within 2 weeks”). The metric of “Sustainable supply of PPE” should include entities other than hospitals and that all entities can readily obtain PPE supplies from non-government sources.
- 2) Additional Metrics: need to be considered for Phase 2 and Phase 3, including Contact Tracing indicators, Availability of Facilities for Non-hospitalized Persons Needing Isolation and/or Quarantine, Long-Term Care Facility metrics, etc.
- 3) VDH and the Office of the Governor
 - a) Use indicators, thresholds and triggers developed by national public health experts such as
 - i) [CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response](#)
 - ii) Resolve to Save Lives’
 - (1) [COVID-19 Vital Strategies](#)
 - (2) [When and How to Reopen](#)
 - (3) [When and How to Close](#)
 - b) Coordinate indicators, thresholds and triggers for the National Capital Region with DC and Maryland because of the unique dynamics of the region, including Northern Virginia.
- 4) The status of all existing and additional metrics be publicly posted on the VDH website for the Commonwealth and by VDH regions.
- 5) All metrics need to be examined using an equity perspective.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Haering, MD, MPH, FACPM
Director, Alexandria Health Department

Reuben K. Varghese, MD, MPH
Director, Arlington Health District

Gloria Addo-Ayensu, MD, MPH
Director, Fairfax Health District

David Goodfriend, MD, MPH
Director, Loudoun County Health Department

Alison Ansher, MD, MPH
Director, Prince William Health District

*Testing Measures (<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/key-measures/#northern>)



