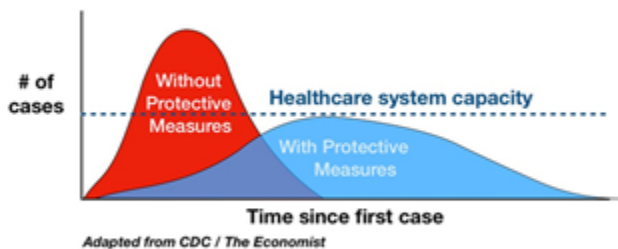


Wednesday, March 18, 2020 – 5:35 pm

CHICKEN WING!! (as an incentive, keep reading and you'll know what that means 😊)

The COVID-19 environment continues to be rapidly changing and evolving. As of this morning, Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is reporting 77 cases of COVID-19 statewide and 2 COVID-19 deaths (both on the Peninsula) (There were only 17 case as of last Friday). The Western Tidewater health district is still not reporting any cases within its health district. With the known community spread of the virus and the increased availability of testing, it is inevitable that number of confirmed cases and localities reporting cases will rise. Our current goal is to slow the spread of COVID-19 to help flatten the curve of COVID-19 cases hitting the system at any one time through social distancing and good hygiene practices. (Chicken Wing!...keep ready to learn more.)

The more limited (and slower) the spread of COVID-19, the better the systems we all have in place will be at adjusting to virus and its impacts. It's not so much a fear of the health impacts to individuals (not to discount this concern in anyway), but the ability to give our societally systems (including health, employment, food supply, education, etc.) the capacity they need to mitigate as many issues that arise from COVID-19 as possible. For example, if ICU beds and ventilators in hospitals are limited to a finite number, the best chances those very sick patients will have is if we can prevent a surge in the healthcare system that would far exceed the hospital's capability. The graph below demonstrates this concept very well – if we can hold the spread to a more consistent manageable level over an extended period of time, versus a massive, overwhelming surge we will have the capacity to address issues as they arise and see less severe impacts. At the end of the outbreak, we may see the same number of infections, but the systems will not have been overwhelmed and the overall impact to our day-to-day lives may much less significant.



Effective March 18th, in an effort to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the government offices of Isle of Wight County, Town of Windsor and Town of Smithfield have temporarily closed to the general public. Staff will continue to report to work and services can be accessed via telephone, mail, or on-line. If you have any questions, you can IOW County (757-357-3191, www.iwus.net) Windsor (757-242-4288 www.windsor-va.gov) or Smithfield (757-365-4200 www.smithfieldva.gov) during normal business hours for assistance.

As of March 18th, the Governor has also recommended/instituted the following actions to help prevent/slow the spread of COVID-19:

- **Further reduction of public gatherings** – Avoid all non-essential gatherings of more than 10 people (this includes private events).
- **Protect high-risk individuals** – Those with chronic health conditions or aged 65 or older should self-isolate. They should limit contact with others as much as possible. “Essential” trips (e.g. to the grocery stores, pharmacies, gas station, etc.) are okay. Also, check on your relatives, friends and neighbors who may fall into this category.
- **Increased social distancing** - All restaurants, fitness centers, and theaters are mandated to significantly reduce their capacity to 10 patrons, or close. Restaurants are encouraged to continue carry-out and takeaway options. While the Governor’s order mentions these 3 categories, the intent again is to limit all non-essential gatherings of 10 or more people as much as possible.
- **Support For Affected Workers** – No waiting for unemployment benefits, enhanced eligibility for unemployment, and fewer restrictions. (go to Virginia Employment Commission website for additional information <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/>)
- **Support for Impacted Employers** – Regional workforce teams activated, will not be penalized for increase of workers needing unemployment, and rapid response funding via the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- **DMVs closed** – Online services still available, licenses & registration that expire before May 15th will be granted a 60-day extension.
- **Courts** – Non-essential, non-emergency court proceedings in all district & circuit courts are suspended absent specific exemptions. This includes a prohibition on new eviction cases for tenants who are unable to pay rent as a result of COVID-19. All non-exempted court deadlines are tolled and extended for a period of 21 days.
- **Utilities** – Directed to suspend service disconnections for 60 days.

Current advice on the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is exactly the same advice to prevent the spread of colds and flu. **Practice social distancing, good hand hygiene and cough etiquette** (Chicken Wing!). **Everyone should wash their hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers regularly. Those that develop a cough or a sneeze should do so into a tissue or the inside of their elbow** (Chicken Wing!), **washing their hands afterwards.**

So about Chicken Wing!... In order to help break the habit of coughing into our hands, that so many of us learned as children (which probably does nothing much to stop the spread of germs unless you *immediately* wash your hands), we are encourage everyone to participate in our game of Chicken Wing! One of our directors uses the analogy of a chicken wing (think about the shape your arm makes when you cough into your elbow) to remind their 3-year old grandchild to cough into their elbow. I’ve found thinking Chicken Wing! has been very helpful in breaking my own personal habit of doing what my parents taught me about coughing into my hand. As a light hearted way to re-enforce this idea with others, we are encouraging the spread of a new game – CHICKEN WING! Much like the game from some of our childhoods – punch bug (or punch buggy) where you would punch someone in the arm every time you saw a VW beetle and exclaim “PUNCH BUGGY!”, *EXCEPT WITHOUT THE PUNCHING*; we are encouraging folks to exclaim “CHICKEN WING!” to help remind folks to cough into their elbow. If you see someone forget to cough into their elbow: exclaim “CHICKEN WING!” and politely remind them to cough into their elbow the next time. If you someone cough into their elbow: exclaim “CHICKEN WING!” and give them a thumbs up or an encouraging nod.

....now wasn’t that worth reading all this to learn how to play “CHICKEN WING!”?