

For Immediate Release

June 12, 2020

Richmond and Chesterfield Partner to Address Elevated COVID-19 Risk in Hispanic/Latino Communities

Richmond City Health District is collaborating with Chesterfield Health District to coordinate and expand outreach and services to all communities disproportionately impacted, including Hispanic/Latino communities. Dr. Danny Avula, Director of Richmond and Henrico Health Districts, will discuss the regional prevention and care strategies at a press briefing on June 12, 2020, at 5:30 pm at 400 E. Cary St. Richmond, VA 23219.

While COVID-19 is a public health concern for all local residents, there are some members of the population witnessing an increased burden of cases due to a variety of circumstances like employment. Hispanics/Latinos are often employed in service industries including health care, childcare, food service, and cleaning. Due to frequent contact with the public, employment in the service sector increases risk of infection and can lead to community spread. In addition, Hispanics/Latinos of low socioeconomic status may be less likely to seek testing if they are uninsured or lack access to paid sick leave.

Statewide, minority populations comprise 32% of the general population and Hispanic/Latino comprise 9% of the general population. In Richmond, Hispanics/Latinos make up approximately 32% of all COVID-19 cases but represent only 6% of the population, and in Chesterfield County, Hispanic/Latinos make up approximately 15% of all cases but only 9% of the population.

COVID-19 response teams in Richmond and Chesterfield are working closely with Hispanic/Latino leaders and community members to better understand and overcome barriers to care for all residents. Current strategies include expanding testing access and outreach, using contact tracing to identify potentially COVID-19 positive individuals, ensuring positive residents have resources to recover safely in isolation, and providing communities with masks and other resources to limit further community spread.

Virginia Department of Health has also invited the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to support this work by helping to determine COVID-19 epidemiologic drivers, assisting with data collection and analysis, and providing insight to strengthen outreach and mitigation strategies. The CDC has sent a team of bilingual epidemiologists and community outreach specialists to support this work in both Richmond and Chesterfield.

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