

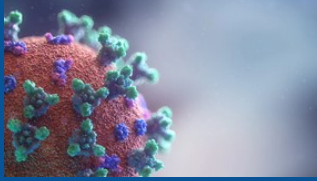
BRANCATI CENTER BULLETIN

Dispatched from Baltimore, Maryland

VOL. 1. ISSUE 4

JUNE 23, 2020

A Time to Reflect: Humbly Standing in Solidarity and Support



KEEP YOURSELF SAFE and HEALTHY

As certain restrictions may be lifted and the summer begins, individuals and families may seek to spend more time outdoors or, if allowed, in small groups.

Even as Maryland and the city of Baltimore start to lift certain restrictions, it remains very important to continue to take actions to remain safe. Remember:

- It is still recommended that people stay at home as much as possible, particularly those at high-risk for severe illness.
- Follow social distancing guidelines even when outdoors. If you are dining, make sure you maintain 6 feet from other tables. If you are at a park, avoid high-traffic areas.
- Wear a mask when you are out.
- Wash your hands and disinfect surfaces.
- If you think you have COVID-19, or were exposed to COVID-19:

- self-isolate

AND

- ◆ contact your primary care provider or call 2-1-1 if you do not have a primary care provider and live in Baltimore City

- ◆ The BCHD is offering mobile, walk-up testing sites, see <https://coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov/where-get-tested-covid-19-baltimore-city>

Dear Neighbors,

Last week, we decided to take a pause. Issue 4 of the Brancati Center Bulletin was drafted, with a continued focus on health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. But, as the world mourns the senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbury and the countless others whose names we know and don't know, we felt it was important to reflect on how centuries of racial prejudice have led to disparities in health and well-being in the African American community.

Racism, in all its forms, has shaped structural inequalities that impact how people live, work, access healthcare, are educated, travel and are treated by law enforcement. And as we see in our work, as you have taught us, these have had deep impacts on health and well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its disproportionate impact among African American and Latinx communities, is a pandemic that exists within the shadow of this long-standing epidemic.

The Brancati Center has always been committed to working with our community partners to fight these inequalities and promote equity. We, as a team and as individuals, believe strongly in community-driven and community-responsive programming. We believe strongly in listening to and learning from the communities we serve. And now, more than ever, we, as a team and as individuals, need to hear from you and learn from you. We are eager to know how we can continue to not only stand in support, but also how to take active steps to eliminate structural racism in our communities.

Please share your voice with us. What are steps we as a Center can take to support efforts to promote equity? What are steps individuals like us can take? On the 2nd page, you will find the contact information for the Center. Please let us know when you contact us if it would be okay to share your thoughts – anonymously or not– in the next issue of this Bulletin.

As our fight against COVID-19 continues, we also discuss how to continue to manage other chronic diseases (with a focus on high blood pressure), and continue to highlight how to keep yourself and your loved ones safe and healthy.

- The Brancati Center Team

COVID-19 in Maryland: The Current Situation

- As of 6/18/20, 63,229 Marylanders have been diagnosed with COVID-19. The total number of cases of COVID-19 in Maryland continues to rise.
- The 21224 zip code in Baltimore remains one of the top 5 in the state for total number of cases

[Source: BCHD]

Managing Chronic Diseases During the COVID-19 Pandemic: High Blood Pressure



Your primary care doctor's office will be taking precautions against the spread of COVID-19. For most practices, this means that routine visits are being done via video (or phone) rather than in the doctor's office.

If you have **high blood pressure (also called hypertension)**, here are some things you can do to work with your healthcare team to manage your blood pressures:

- **Take your medications regularly as prescribed.** Ask your provider if you can get 90 day supplies of the medications (and if your pharmacy can arrange delivery to your home) so you can avoid running out or needing to go to the pharmacy frequently for refills.
- Follow your provider's recommendations regarding diet and exercise. **Most people with high blood pressure are recommended to limit the salt in their diet.**
- **Check your blood pressures at home!** If you don't have a blood pressure monitor at home, ask your provider about whether your insurance will cover one. See the side box for tips on how to check your blood pressure correctly.
 - Ask your healthcare provider what your blood pressure goals are. This can vary depending on your age and other health conditions, but for most people with hypertension, the goal is <130/80.
 - **Come up with a plan** with your provider about how frequently to check blood pressures, how frequently to report them and what blood pressure numbers may require you to call them urgently.

Stay Well, Stay Connected: A Healthy Heart with Low Salt

Diets low in salt are recommended to help lower blood pressures (or prevent you from getting high blood pressure). For most adults, it is recommended that they limit their intake to 2300 mg daily, or for those with high blood pressure or other conditions, to less than 1500 mg daily.

Some tips for cutting down:

- Use fresh fruits or veggies when you can; if you have to buy canned options, look for no-salt added versions
- Don't add salt when you are cooking and keep your salt shaker away from the table. Consider a salt substitute— ask healthcare provider about which salt substitute may be best for you!



Source: AHA

RESOURCE CORNER

- ♦ **Employment:** In Baltimore City, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development offers assistance with unemployment benefits and finding employment opportunities: check out <https://moed.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/COVID-19-FAQ.pdf> for more info or call 410-396-3009
- ♦ The **Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute (UHI)** website has info on community resources: <https://urbanhealth.jhu.edu/what-we-do/community-resources.html>

Tips To Accurately Check Your Blood Pressures At Home

- **Rest** at least 5 minutes before taking the reading. Make sure your bladder is empty, and that you haven't exercised, had a beverage with caffeine or smoked in the 30 minutes before.
- **Position yourself** correctly: sit with your back straight and supported, your legs uncrossed and your feet flat on the floor. Your upper arm should be at the level of your heart and supported on a flat surface.
- **Place the cuff** correctly— above the bend of your elbow. The cuff should be placed over your bare arm, not over clothes.
- Sit still and do not talk while the reading is being conducted.
- Measure at the same time every day.

Source: AHA



We want to hear from you!

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The Johns Hopkins Brancati Center is based in Baltimore, Maryland.