



UMB Recovery | Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Encouraging the Use of MD COVID Alert

November 12, 2020

Dear UMB Community:

As COVID-19 cases in Maryland continue to rise, the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) is committed to doing all we can to ensure the safety of our students, faculty, staff, and community. This week, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) launched a smartphone app called MD COVID Alert. As a university committed to knowledge, accountability, and excellence, **I strongly encourage you to take part in this important initiative by [downloading the app and/or activating Exposure Notifications](#) on your phone.**

When someone in our community tests positive for COVID-19, UMB's infection prevention professionals conduct robust contact tracing to identify and notify anyone at increased risk for exposure to COVID-19 based on contact with someone who has tested positive. Despite our best efforts, there are often challenges when accounting for those whom the COVID-positive patient doesn't know or can't remember. People also may not answer calls from contact tracers because they do not recognize the number. MDH's MD COVID Alert notifies those who may be at risk for infection more quickly than traditional contact tracing and addresses these challenges.

How does it work? Users can opt in to Exposure Notifications on their phone. Once opted-in, your phone will create a random ID number that changes every 10-20 minutes. This number ensures that no personal identification or location information is ever stored or exchanged.

When you come in close contact with another person whose phone is opted-in to Exposure Notifications, both phones will exchange their random ID numbers ("close contact" means within 6 feet of another person for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period). If someone with one of those phones reports a COVID-positive test result, all people who were in close contact with that person within the past two days will receive a notification that they may have been exposed to COVID-19. Your identity and location will never be revealed.

Because both phones must be opted-in to exchange information, this app works best when more people use it. It operates in the background and doesn't drain your battery or data usage. While you don't need to leave the alert or app open for it to work, you do need to ensure your Bluetooth is turned on so it can exchange random IDs with other phones.

How do I get it? The app is free and using it is voluntary. iPhone users can opt in from Settings>Exposure Notifications>Turn On Exposure Notifications. Android users can download the MD COVID Alert app on Google Play. Learn more about the MD COVID Alert app at <https://covidlink.maryland.gov/content/mdcovidalert>.

If you test positive for COVID-19 or receive an alert about a close contact from MD COVID Alert, stay home

and call the UMB Hotline at 800-701-9863. They can assist you with decisions about quarantining, testing, and more. You also can help by answering the phone if MDH or UMB contact tracers call. If you receive a call from "MD COVID" or 240-466-4488, answer the call. In fact, program that number into your phone right now.

Please strongly consider participating in MD COVID Alert to ensure the health and safety of ourselves, our family and friends, and our entire community.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Bratt, MS, CCEMTP

Executive Director, Office of Emergency Management

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