



April 29, 2020

**Health Facilities Association of Maryland responds to Governor Hogan's
Executive Order Mandating COVID-19 Testing for all Nursing Home Staff and
Patients**

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH DEMATTOS, PRESIDENT & CEO OF HFAM:

"We applaud the steps Governor Hogan took today to help all of us to work together in our continuing fight against COVID-19. As we expressed to the Governor in our joint association and earlier letters, mandatory testing for all nursing home residents and staff is vital to helping nursing homes and assisted living communities identify those who are infected but asymptomatic, which is imperative if we are going to stop the spread of this deadly virus.

"We are also grateful to hear the Governor recognize that mandatory testing will cause the number of positive tests in nursing homes to rise and will likely create staffing shortages in these centers as workers who test positive are forced to isolate. The support of the new Bridge Teams will be necessary to maintain workforces to care for residents, and HFAM will work with the Bridge Teams, other associations, and our hospital partners to support staffing.

"Finally, we support transparency and the reporting of COVID-19 data associated with Maryland nursing homes. But we also emphasize that the data does not provide critical context. The public reporting does not take into account the total number of people receiving care, the total number of healthcare professionals providing care who are COVID-19 negative, or the fact that there are more recoveries than deaths.

"There are about 28,000 nursing home beds in Maryland, and about 30,000 dedicated healthcare heroes working everyday to provide quality life-saving care to the people in these beds. We thank the Governor for drawing attention to these individuals, and we look forward to celebrating their work and sacrifices this Saturday on Healthcare Heroes Day in Maryland."

###