

To: Montgomery College Community

From: Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President

Subject: **Capitol Unrest, COVID-19, and Vaccines (Update #122)**

Date: January 13, 2021

Good morning! This is my first message to you after the new year, so I hope everyone got some rest over the break. I wish I could say that we are easing into the new year but, as you know, there are some dramatic local and national events happening, which are consuming much of our attention.

I am in close communication with county health officials about [local COVID infections](#) and the rollout of vaccines. The College's Coronavirus Advisory Team (CAT) is currently investigating any new MC protocols that will need to be considered as more Marylanders get access to vaccination and safety levels rise. This will likely happen much more slowly than we would all like. I will share these discussions with the broader community as soon as we have official guidance from the county and state, which is still evolving. Governor Hogan predicts that Maryland will have vaccine doses for only about 30 percent of the state by the end of May. As we have done throughout this emergency, I am sensitive to the need to make planning decisions as early as possible and will communicate such details when we have sufficient information to announce them.

National political conditions have also been dramatic in this past week, and I am grateful for everyone who joined the Let's Talk event yesterday to unpack them. With impeachment votes on Capitol Hill predicted for today, I am certain these topics will continue to be prominent in our discussions with colleagues and with students once they return. Please watch for opportunities to participate in civil dialogues about these circumstances, and to lead discussions that may arise in the classroom. There are many teachable moments in this crisis, which can help students build critical thinking skills and learn more about the fundamentals of democracy. Please share these terrific MC Library resources on [media literacy](#) and [social justice](#) as we navigate these conditions with intellectual rigor.

Attention to basic needs for our students continues with the Student Health and Wellness Center for Success (SHaW) Center hosting a Pop-Up Pantry on January 22 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. on the Rockville Campus. Students can pick up food and hygiene products on a first-come-first served basis. We are hopeful that conditions will allow Mobile Markets to re-start after their suspension in December. Montgomery County Libraries are lending [mobile hot spots](#) to individuals without internet connections. COVID [testing](#) is also robust in the county, and registration for the [vaccine updates](#) is now posted.

Please keep in mind that the vaccine distribution will improve conditions slowly, but will depend on multiple variables. The CDC advises that more research is needed to determine if people who have been vaccinated can still transmit the virus to others. In order to limit the spread, please continue to practice social distancing, wear masks, and wash your hands.