COVID-19 AND MARYLAND'S OLDER ADULTS

ONE-PAGE RESEARCH BRIEF #3

UMBC Center for Aging Studies
Lifelong Learning Lab

Public Policy Building 252
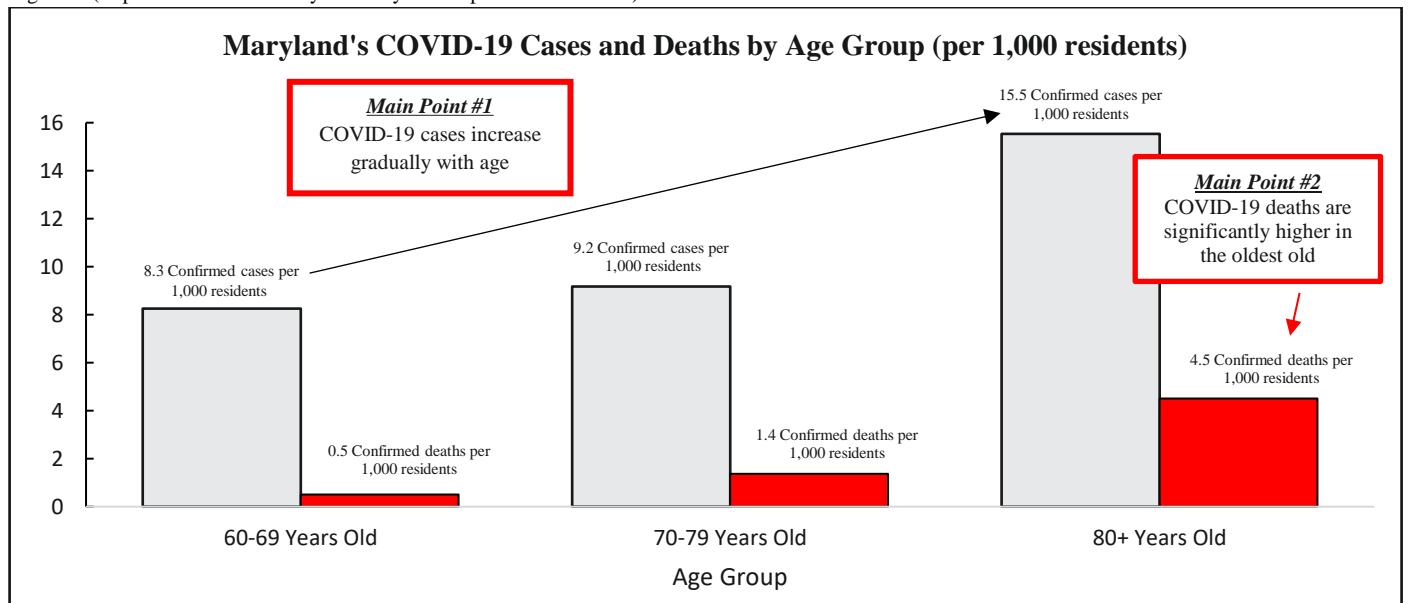1000 Hilltop Circle,
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COVID-19 and Maryland's Older Adults

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Similar to national trends (see https://mdsoar.org/handle/11603/18399), the oldest old (80+ years old) Marylanders are being particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.[1] Figure 1 shows the number of COVID-19 cases and confirmed deaths per 1,000 Maryland residents age 60 and older. The number of cases and deaths gradually increases starting with the 60-69 age group and is significantly higher for those age 80 and older (i.e., 4.5 confirmed deaths per 1,000 Marylanders).

Figure 1. (Reported as of 5/26/20 by the Maryland Department of Health)

Maryland's COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by Age Group (per 1,000 residents)

Main Point #1
COVID-19 cases increase gradually with age

Main Point #2
COVID-19 deaths are significantly higher in the oldest old

8.3 Confirmed cases per 1,000 residents
9.2 Confirmed cases per 1,000 residents
15.5 Confirmed cases per 1,000 residents
0.5 Confirmed deaths per 1,000 residents
1.4 Confirmed deaths per 1,000 residents
4.5 Confirmed deaths per 1,000 residents

60-69 Years Old / 70-79 Years Old / 80+ Years Old

Age Group

Note: Estimates do not include 116 *possible* COVID-19 related deaths, or 52 deaths with no data on age range.[1]

The Maryland Department of Health has issued recommendations and guidelines to limit the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the state's older population.[2] Efforts include preventative steps (e.g., increased testing, social distancing) to ensure the safety of older adults living in the community and guidelines to limit the spread of the virus in long-term care facilities (e.g., nursing homes), where a majority of residents are in the most vulnerable age of 80 and older.[3]

Take-home message:

Older Marylanders (80 + years old), who make a large majority of long-term care residents, have the highest risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19. Complying with the preventive measures suggested by the Maryland Department of Health is critical to protect Maryland's oldest old, both in communities as well as in long-term care facilities.

For more information, visit
1. https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/
2. https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Documents/FAQ_covid19_older_adults.pdf
3. https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Documents/FAQ_nursing_facility_orders_response.pdf