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County Executive

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Health Officer, Department of Health

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To Jewish Faith-Based Leaders:

As you prepare for upcoming holiday observances, I ask that you incorporate specific safeguards to help protect against the spread of the coronavirus. Please also remind your congregates to remain vigilant in adhering to safety protocols during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The Maryland Department of Health (MDH), and the Baltimore County Department of Health (BCDH) stipulate wearing face coverings and practicing social distancing to help contain the spread of the coronavirus. This includes gatherings held in houses of worship. While we understand the importance of observing the high Holy Days, please remind your congregates to remain at home if they do not feel well or are waiting for a COVID-19 test result. Individuals who are already in quarantine or isolation should continue to stay at home.

We appreciate that synagogues are usually at their fullest capacity during the High Holidays, however due to the seriousness of the risk of spreading COVID-19, we ask that residents and houses of worship consider alternatives to their normal crowded indoor services. In accordance with Stage III of the Maryland reopening plan, houses of worship **should not exceed 75% of normal capacity**. Seating should be spaced to accommodate social distancing, and congregants should wear masks.

Other safety precautions include the following:

- If a member of a household is in quarantine after having been in contact with COVID-19, all other household members should monitor themselves for symptoms (including regular temperature checks), but may attend services if they are asymptomatic;
- Stay at home if you or any other household member develops symptoms; and,
- Households that have someone in quarantine or isolation should not have guests over the holidays for meals or for overnight stay.

We recognize the strain that the pandemic is placing on all of our communities and we thank you for working with us to contain the spread of the virus in Baltimore County. We wish you and your families a *Shana Tovah*, and look forward to continuing to work with you to make Baltimore County a healthy and safe place to live, work and play.

Sincerely,

Gregory Wm. Branch, M.D., MBA, CPE, FACP
Health Officer, Baltimore County Department of Health
Director, Baltimore County Department of Health and Human Services