

To our esteemed community,

We, members of the community healthcare professionals of Baltimore, write this letter of encouragement at the request of multiple community institutions and *Rabbonim*.

From the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, our remarkable *kehilla* has shown unprecedented unity, caring and vigilance. We are in awe of the heroic commitment to public health recommendations, and the sacrifices that individuals and families have made in order to keep this infection at bay. We have, *b'ezras Hashem*, seen limited spread of infection in our community, likely in part because of our efforts.

As we enter the fall, we want to give *chizuk* to our community, and encourage continued vigilance. Despite the incredible success that we have been blessed with until now, COVID-19 is still present in our midst. **While we continue to “open up” our institutions and our social lives, avoiding infection of vulnerable individuals and preventing widespread infection in the community need to remain a priority.** Although most patients recover completely, COVID-19 can still result in severe post COVID-19 complications and even worse outcomes. We have already seen a fourfold to fivefold increase in infections over the last month, mostly due to large and unrestricted *simchas* where masks were not worn and social distancing was not followed. In addition, many challenges lie ahead: Children coming together as schools reopen, people closer together in *shuls* during *yamim noraim*, and travel and mixing over *yom tov*. All of these wonderful and important opportunities also significantly increase the risk of community spread.

Finally, a word about our schools. Recognizing the importance of keeping our schools open for the best *chinuch* of our children and for the welfare of our community, our schools have done an incredible job limiting risks where possible. In addition to the schools doing their part, our community must do our part to keep them open. If the schools would close *chas v'shalom*, this would have a dramatic ripple effect on every area of life.

Therefore, we want to reiterate the need to continue following the national and local public health guidelines, including:

- **Wearing a mask properly, over both the mouth and nose**, whenever you are around others. This applies even when outdoors, when one is closer than 6 feet to others, and especially indoors or when attending a public event or *simcha*. Masks work primarily to protect others from our germs, but they also protect the person who is wearing the mask.
 - a) **Recommended masks include multi-layered cloth masks, surgical masks and N-95 masks**, as per [CDC recommendations](#).
 - b) **Masks with valves should NOT be worn** as they vent your breath to the outside.
 - c) **Bandanas and scarves are not ideal** as they may not block respiratory droplets as well.
 - d) **Face shields are not a replacement for masks, and should ideally not be used alone without a mask, especially indoors**. They are designed to protect your eyes from exposure to COVID-19 in high risk settings.
- **Maintaining social distance of six feet or more from others**, even when outdoors, and especially indoors or when at a public event or *simcha*
- Practicing frequent hand hygiene with soap and water or hand sanitizer

- **Remaining at home at the onset of any COVID-like symptoms until there is an alternative diagnosis or other physician guidance**
- Quarantining for 14 days (if exposed to an infected individual) and isolating for 10 days (if diagnosed with COVID-19 or testing positive) as per CDC and state guidelines, in consultation with a health professional. More details on quarantine can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- Following the state health department guidelines when travelling. We recommend that travel be limited, particularly to and from “hot spot” areas.
- In addition, we encourage everyone to “check in” with others with whom they will be in close contact: has anyone been sick? Has anyone been exposed to COVID-19?
- **Lastly, we want to remind the community that we are here to help.** Weekly updates and more information on the above may be found at [covid.baltimorejewishlife.com](https://www.covid.baltimorejewishlife.com). Please watch for further educational and informational materials which will be forthcoming. Questions, suggestions, or concerns may be addressed to medical@jcovid.com.

As we approach the *Yemai Hadin*, we pray that *Hashem* will see our concern and actions on behalf of our neighbors and will judge us all favorably, removing this *mageifa* from our midst and from the world. Through such action, following in the merciful ways of *Hashem*, may we all merit a year of good health and the seeing the *Geulah Shelaymah b'korov*.

Respectfully submitted,

Levi Atanelov, MD
 Bernhard Birnbaum, MD
 Tuvia Blechman, MD
 Bruce Blumenthal, MD
 Adena Cohen, RN BSN
 Menachem Cooper, MD
 Moshay Cooper, MD
 Tikva Dixler, PA-C
 Ethan Dubin, MD
 Hinda Dubin, MD
 Samuel Durso, MD
 Robert Edelman, MD
 Michael J. Elman, MD
 Ari Elman, MD
 Moshe L. Gavant, MD

Jeremy Gradon, MD
 Daniel Grove, MD
 Craig G. Haber, MD
 Sondra Heiligman, MD
 Todd Heller, MD
 Esther Hollander, MD
 Yoel Jakobovits, MD
 Clifford Katz, MD
 Shalom Kelman, MD
 Brocha Lawrence, RN BSN
 Yosef Levenbrown, MD
 Elizabeth V. Loeb, MD
 Lauren Mayer, MD
 Yehuda Mond, MD
 Brian P. Neuman, MD

Dani Poliakoff, MD
 Joseph Rabin, MD
 Barry J. Reiner, MD
 Chana Richter, MD
 Johnny Ringo, MD
 Tzvi Romer, MD
 Avi Z. Rosenberg, MD PhD
 Elliot Rothschild, MD
 Jamie Rubin, RN
 Ron Samet, MD
 Netanel Schwob, MD
 Sidney A. Schechet, MD
 Ethan Spiegler, MD
 Joshua Steiner, MD
 Shoshana Yudkowsky, CRNP