



MESSAGE

FROM MAYOR DAN GELBER

Before we begin discussing the pandemic, I'd like to quickly discuss the tropical storm we just experienced. Eta was a wet one. Our City received about seven inches of rain. Thanks to our Manager Jimmy Morales and his staff who did a great job of preparing the City and addressing issues as they came up. But it would be a lost opportunity if we didn't use this event to inform our path forward. In areas where we have done work to address flooding, [the result showed our engineering approach worked](#). In other areas where work has not been done, it is pretty clear that flooding will continue to be an increasingly recurring problem unless we take action. Seven inches is a lot of rain, but we could have received over ten inches. And we were lucky that this storm happened before King Tide which would have raised our base water level even more. Now, even after the storm, we are seeing flooding just from King Tide increases in the water level. So, we need to continue our approach, our street raising program, our pumping systems, and our efforts to dedicate more green space to create more resilient and absorbable swales and surfaces. Recently the Commission approved a sequencing of our projects City-wide based on various factors. You can find substantial information about the City's program including where your neighborhood falls in the queue on [our MB Rising Above website](#). Please stay involved and informed.

So, this morning, Friday, November 13, the State Department of Health has reported that COVID-19 cases in Miami-Dade County surpassed 197,000 and 3,706 people in our County have succumbed to the virus.

The storm altered some of the trendlines earlier this week due to temporary closures of testing centers. But it is clear we are still feeling a very real increase in the spread of the virus in our community as it is now common to have far [more than 1,000 infections per day](#). And the percentage of those testing positive is really beginning to climb. It has been months since our percent positive was over 9%. And for a few days in a row we've had over 70 people need to check in to the hospital. So, this is more than just a little uptick. It's a substantial and steady increase. Arguably, the beginning of a surge.

Undoubtedly you heard the announcement that a vaccine may be coming soon. And if that holds true, it's wonderful news. But you need to know that it won't help us for the next few months and likely a little longer than that. And we are in the midst of a serious increase and possibly a surge. So, we can't let the prospect of a vaccine lull us into letting our guard down. By the way if you would like to learn about and keep track of vaccine efforts, I would recommend [the New York Times vaccine tracker](#). Lots of information there for you.

One of the reasons why we have not just let this virus spread through the community is because we know at some point a vaccine will make us all safer. But another reason is that even before the vaccine comes, therapies and treatments have made this disease much less deadly.

At the beginning of this pandemic for every 100 people that needed to be hospitalized over 20% succumbed to the illness. Today for every 100 people that need hospital care, closer to 10 will not make it. While some of that is attributable to a younger average patient population, most is because of improved treatments. That is why I always say I would rather get this virus in three months rather than three months ago. And why controlling its spread in the community makes so much sense.

That is also why for months we have been urging you to wear masks and exercise social distancing. To make sacrifices in order to help reduce the likelihood of infection. And by and large we have complied. But not

everyone has and notwithstanding our efforts, so many have died and too many have suffered in the hospital. The sheer volume of suffering is so enormous that it's easy to lose sight that each number is a person. Each death, each hospitalization is a trauma to a person, a family and a community. So, here is Gabrielle Benesh, a UM Med student, who I invited to talk about the experiences of her father, one of the hundreds of our Miami Beach neighbors who was hospitalized due to COVID.

So, please continue to do all you can including wearing a mask. Don't let up. The end of this is getting closer and now is not the time to coast. Even with the holidays approaching, please exercise due care. We need to finish strong. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel, so let's get there safely! Together.

So, thanks for your patience, calm and sacrifice. Stay healthy, and mostly at home.