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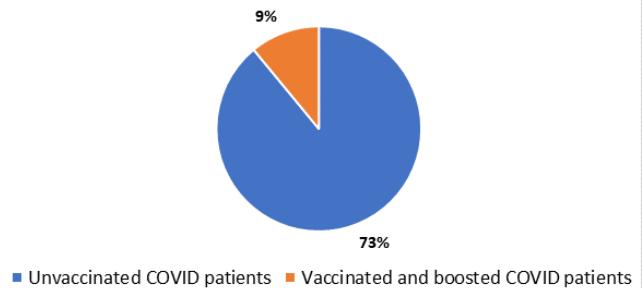
FROM MAYOR DAN GELBER

With March around the corner, it's appropriate to give you a briefing about our planning for Spring Break. So you know what to expect. But before we get into that, last night as so many enjoyed the offerings of our City, a horrible accident shattered our community. A driver lost control while parking in South Beach and overran tables of people in the midst of dining. At least one victim died, and others were injured. So shocking and devastating. Our entire city grieves for all the victims and their families, and we pray together for the recovery of those injured.

Now, let's talk about Spring Break.

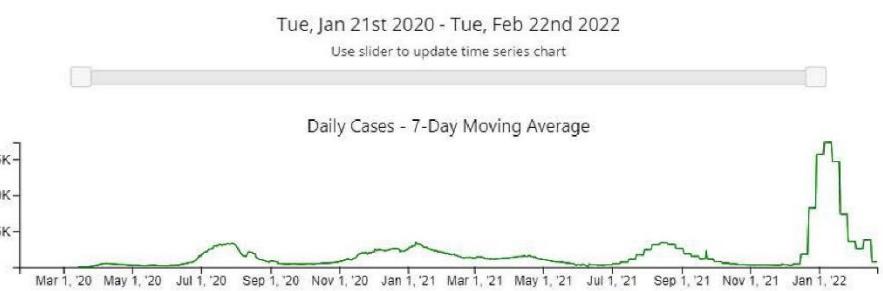
First, while COVID is still with us, it is not nearly as present, this Omicron variant has been less deadly and, frankly, beyond a few exceptions, most of our County and State, obviously, have abandoned mask requirements and social distancing. In our County less people are being hospitalized but what remains a fact is that those boosted make up a small percent of those hospitalized. So, please get the boost it will keep you safer.

Miami-Dade County COVID-19 Hospitalizations
Last 7 Days



Data through Tue Feb 22 2022

Total Cases (last 7 days)	4691
Case Rate (last 7 days)	172.66
% Change (last 7 days)	-80.61



This March we have to assume that the number of people coming our way will resemble previous Spring Breaks. Typically, the large crowds begin in early March and peak mid-March, receding as we move into April.

It would be foolish to assume less people are coming here. And nearly every year since I have been mayor, we have had so many people trying to get on our island that we closed our causeways at times, something that is rarely done and can be terribly inconvenient for residents.

So, here are some of the things we are doing to better control Spring Break.

First, while our City Commission is working on an ordinance to permanently implement the 2:00 am liquor rollback you supported in November, at our commission meeting this week we did pass a stop gap rollback ordinance sponsored by Commissioner Fernandez so something could go into effect next month. So, from

March 7 to March 21, there will be a hard stop of liquor consumption in our City south of 16th street at 2:00 am. No exceptions. I hope this will tamp down some of the disorder we have seen

But there is much, much more we are doing.

We will be increasing police staffing levels with extended hours from earlier this week through April 3, so more than just during the height of Spring Break. Expect to see an increased police presence along the causeways, 5th Street corridor, 41st street, Washington Avenue, Collins Avenue, Ocean Drive, and the beach. Uniformed officers will proactively patrol in vehicles, ATVs, mules, bikes, and on foot. Additionally, the Motor Unit will conduct proactive traffic enforcement details throughout the City.

We will also have substantial police presence from other departments including Miami Dade on our causeways and major thoroughfares.

We will deploy License Plate Readers at the entrances to our City to help identify those coming here with outstanding warrants. Our marine patrol will have substantially enhanced staffing with additional boats on the water to address the illegal charters that proliferate in March.

Starting Monday, Code Compliance officers will be on enhanced staffing to investigate and enforce short term rental violations and party house violations. Fire will also have augmented staffing throughout south beach, as will Ocean Rescue. We will also have dozens of goodwill ambassadors on the streets to help with community engagement.

Traffic has been a monster recently, but we will do what we can to manage congestion and disseminate information on major traffic incidents. You can receive that information by texting "MBTraffic" to 888777.

A new approach we are trying this year is a substantial counter-programming effort much like our approach to Memorial Day. It will include a wellness village, family zone, Friday night movies and Saturday night concerts. These programs are for you, and our hope is that they will redefine the month as more family friendly. I think it's worth trying as little else has changed the narrative of Spring Break. [Here is where you can find out what is available to do.](#)

I don't want to create unreasonable expectations. Until we shut down the 24-hour party zone in South Beach, we can't expect real change. And we are trying to do just that. But until that happens, we can only try to manage the disorder.

So, in short, everyone in city government responsible for protecting your quality of life will be out en masse. Working longer hours. Thanks to all our employees, our police especially. Every March a number of our cops get injured doing the hard work of policing massive crowds. So, thank you to our police men and women for putting yourselves at risk – for us.

So, let's hold on and hope for the best, but not be surprised by something less than that.

And thank you for your patience and calm, and sorry for the inconveniences that may impact us this upcoming month.