



MESSAGE

FROM MAYOR DAN GELBER

I'd like to try to provide some clarity to what is happening regarding vaccines. Right now, the Governor's executive order is prioritizing seniors over 65 along with health care workers, and those who are especially vulnerable. Yet, even among that limited group it's still very hard to secure an appointment for a shot. The problem at this moment is simply the demand is dwarfing the supply. The state and county, along with authorized hospitals, only offer appointments for the number of vaccine doses they know they will have. Since they have only been promised a week or so in advance by the federal government, and because what we are receiving has been limited, most places are only able to take a relatively small number of appointments. That's why the appointments run out so fast.

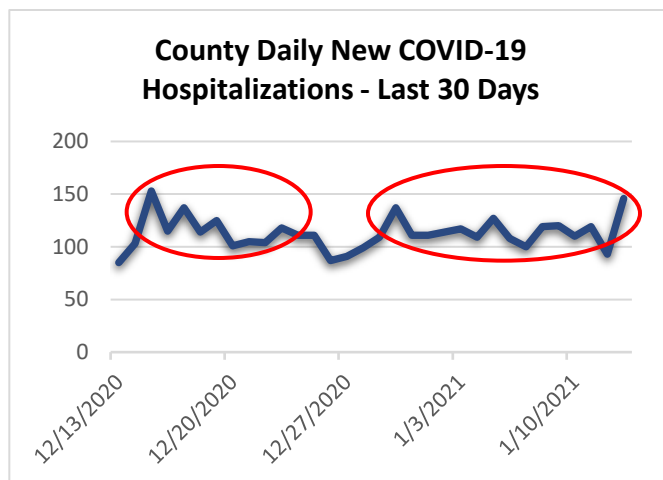
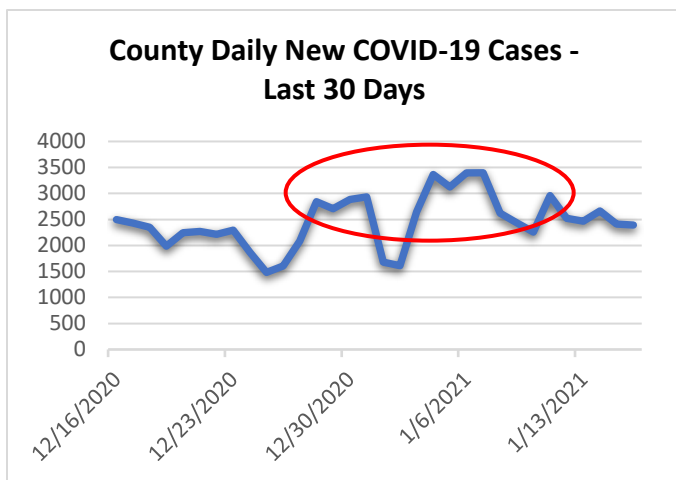
I need to add, though, that Miami-Dade has clearly not received its fair share of vaccines compared to the rest of the state. We endure 20% of the infections and have suffered around that same percentage of deaths statewide, yet we have only received about 11% of the vaccine available to Floridians. It's not fair.

But you should also know that Miami Beach is doing our part. We were, I believe, the first City to actually start vaccinating our residents. We've been distributing the limited vaccine we have to residents in our congregate living communities, seniors in need of assistance, and the homebound who would otherwise have great difficulty getting to a hospital or vaccination center. We are also transporting seniors to Mt. Sinai which has been providing most of the vaccines in the area.

But many are still in need of the vaccine. If you are still trying to get a vaccine and you are over 65, check [the Miami-Dade County website](#) that lays out all the different places that are providing vaccinations. It doesn't matter where you live in Miami-Dade, you are eligible to go anywhere for an appointment if one is available. You can even go to Broward or Palm Beach.

We will do all we can as a City to be prepared to help with the logistics of delivering the vaccine as it becomes available. Our convention center stands ready, our city staff is prepared, our fire rescue personnel are fully trained. Whatever we can do to get shots in arms, we will do.

With regard to the virus, it needs to be said that we are not doing enough to slow the spread. Fatigue combined with the prospect of the vaccine, has caused too many to let down their guard.



Looking over the last month it is abundantly clear that there remain too many infections and too many hospitalizations. Most days the number of daily infections is usually over 2,000 and sometimes far over 3,000, and over 100 are hospitalized in Miami-Dade alone most days. For many it will be a lengthy stay that, though painful, they will endure and survive. But for at least a dozen of every 100, they won't make it.

So, let me repeat something I've said a lot but not enough. We cannot forget that more virus means more suffering. Even if you believe you can withstand it, because you think you're too young, or too healthy, or just lucky, if you catch it you will likely spread it to another. And they may not be as young or as healthy or as lucky. And even young, healthy people can suffer. Everyone needs to lean into wearing a mask and being smart. To help, our City and the County will be enforcing our emergency orders even more so. We've closed down dozens of businesses. It's not something we want to do so please don't put your business in a position of being closed. Be responsible.

Finally, today, our County and the incoming Biden Administration have asked all communities to remember those that we have lost to the coronavirus. Since the first county resident died on March 27 of last year, 4,617 residents have succumbed to the disease, including 76 lost in Miami Beach. To put it in perspective, the number has surpassed cancer and stroke as the second leading cause of death in the County and it is likely that after a year it will surpass heart disease as the leading cause of death in any 12 month period in Miami-Dade County history.

I do fear that we have normalized mass death. Over the last week, for instance, DOH has reported dozens of deaths in Dade-County almost every day. Sometimes mass shootings or accidents that result in a single or handful of deaths will make headlines. Somehow, 30 or more people dying every day has just become another casual reference buried in another COVID news story. But each are real lives. For their children, spouses, parents, coworkers and neighbors, these are people, friends, loved ones, all lost too early. 4,617 empty seats at the dinner table.

So today remember them, take a moment, individually, or with your family to pray that their loved ones can find comfort. But as we remember them, let us commit to doing better to control the spread of this virus so that fewer of our loved ones are taken.

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