



MESSAGE

FROM MAYOR DAN GELBER

This morning, Monday June 8, the State Department of Health reported that the number of COVID-19 cases in Miami-Dade County nears 20,000 and 767 people in our County have succumbed to the virus. Plenty is going on right now: Protests; Continued opening up of commerce and recreation. So first, let's take a look at the data. [The County daily number of cases](#) while lower than it was at its peak, has seen a noticeable uptick as we have loosened our economy. But the percentage of positive tests is still relatively low even if it does fluctuate. Also, the County hospital admissions has been relatively low which is a good sign since it appears that there are more people checking out of hospitals than checking in. So, we will continue to cautiously, and in phases, reopen.

We are only able to reach this point of reopening because of you and your efforts to limit the spread of the virus. I can't stress that enough.

One of our medical consultants, Dr. Morris who directs the Emerging Pathogens Institute at University of Florida, makes some good observations about how we got here and the need to be cautious.

So it would be wrong to believe we don't need to socially distance ourselves, or don't need to wear masks where asked to, or shouldn't wash hands regularly. These are all important to keep doing.

[Regarding opening up, we are entering the next phase of actions](#). Today the County is opening lots of elements mostly related to recreation. Gyms are opened as are dog and skate parks. Doubles tennis is back, full court basketball is not. Playgrounds and exercise equipment remain closed. Our City Commission has previously approved beach openings, and it appears that Mayor Gimenez will open them this Wednesday June 10. The County's 9:00pm curfew is no longer in effect, but our city's midnight curfew is. I appreciate there may seem to be a randomness about some of these decisions, and I can't explain all of them. The bottom line is, whatever we are doing, we need to practice physical distancing.

We have already opened up a virtual camp for our kids, and our City intends to open up its actual summer camp program on Monday, June 15 with a very limited number of slots that will be awarded via a computer-based lottery. [305-673-7730 or email cmbsummer2020@miamibeachfl.gov] Here is the contact info for our Parks team if you'd like more information. You should talk to your pediatrician about whether summer camps work for your family. Dr. Judy Schaechter, a Miami Beach resident, who is the Chair of Pediatrics at University of Miami and served on the County's camp opening taskforce, gave some thoughtful advice on this question.

Finally, I'd like to speak to the protests spurred by the killing of George Floyd. There is no question that this tragedy has caused the Nation to take a long and needed look at policing and broader issues of race. And no one should think that they are exempt from this kind of self-reflection that is long overdue. You should know that our police department has made significant efforts to lead when it comes to use of force and policing. We were the first city in Miami-Dade to deploy body cams across the department. We do not use choke holds and we teach de-escalation in response to resistance, and train our officers on implied bias. Our police have a duty to intervene and report instances of wrongdoing by other officers. And we use outside agencies to investigate all police discharges of weapons and in-custody deaths. But the hallmark of a great department must be its willingness to truly examine itself as that is the only way to improve. We can and must do better. As I have said many times, and believe to my core, we are not the City that checks all the right boxes, we are the City that creates the boxes for other places to check. It is with this goal in mind that we have asked our Police Chief to begin that process of self-examination and report back to our Commission. Chief Clements has embraced this mission and I have great confidence that he is up to the task.

These are interesting times and there is stress. It is times like these when our mettle as a community is tested. It's almost too easy to disagree with one another. About policing, race issues, and even the wearing of masks. But we are the same people, and this is the same community as we were a few months ago, even if we are being tested. We know how to disagree agreeably, and how to demonstrate mutual respect even in times of distress and conflict. That is who we are, and who we should always aspire to be.

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