



MESSAGE

FROM MAYOR DAN GELBER

This morning, Friday, October 23, the State Department of Health has reported that COVID-19 cases in Miami-Dade County surpassed 181,000 and 3,597 people in our County have succumbed to the virus.

[So the numbers are worth a close look at today](#) as they do show some trendlines worth taking note of. First, the total number of infections in the County has been slowly but steadily rising. As you can see there also appears to be a spike. I checked with the Department of Health and they believe a few hundred of that figure are actually attributable to some other day or days earlier in the week when there appeared to be a dip. So for our purposes, a few weeks ago while we were seeing most daily infections below 500 and sometimes even under 200, the infections have now gone up to over 500 on most days. Also, the 14-day rolling infection percentage has increased to around 5%.

Fortunately, the increase in infections has not yet caused a commensurate increase in hospitalizations which I believe is the most important metric. Currently most days see just less than 50 people needing to be admitted to the hospital. That number has stayed fairly consistent. I think it's important to note that while this is better than the numbers from a few months ago, when over 200 daily hospitalizations were not unusual, a little over 10% of all those admitted lose their life to the disease. So while it's not yet surging it's certainly still tragic.

Here are some interpretations of these data points. First, there has been a spike in the number of young people that are getting infected. Namely people between 18 and 40 years of age. So in the past we have seen those increases causing a lagging increase in infections with everyone else including the more vulnerable. Hopefully that won't occur. Also, the increase has been steady but not extensive. That means we need to double down on our mask wearing and distancing because frankly a surge or a slow extended increase end up in the same place. Too much infection and too many hospitalizations. So please continue to do what you have been doing. It can be the difference.

A few programming notes. First, today the State closed the temporary hospital in the convention center. Pride Park will, therefore, reopen. With regard to our testing facility there, here is what to expect. While the State decided to close the drive-up line for tests, we prevailed on the County and they agreed to cover the costs to keep it going. While the drive-through may be unavailable beginning today, next week, perhaps midweek, it should reopen. The walk up line will continue to give the rapid test, but residents will be served there through the mobile unit. So, bottom line, for a few days we will not have a drive-up testing site but will continue to have uninterrupted walk-up testing.

Also, I've been getting lots of questions regarding Halloween which takes place next weekend on Saturday night. The CDC does consider traditional trick or treating to be a "higher risk activity." The same for crowded, indoor costume parties. And Halloween masks typically do not provide the same protection as the masks we wear to protect ourselves. Still, Halloween is not cancelled. Please let your kids know that we did not cancel Halloween. But the City is not sponsoring or providing permits to any special events for Halloween. And in areas that have traditionally attracted literally thousands of trick or treaters, namely the Lakeview area, police will be limiting cars to residents only.

In other words, if you do decide to go out trick or treating, please try to do it in your neighborhood or one nearby. Also, [the CDC has an entire section on its website devoted to safe ways to trick or treat](#), or alternative

ways to give out candy to kids in masks. I would urge you to visit their website and also go online to get some creative ideas that keep it fun and safe. And if you do not want to participate please leave your front light off. I think everyone understands that the times may warrant caution and we need to respect one another.

Finally, if you haven't noticed there is an election going on. We have two early voting sites in the City. One at City Hall and one at the Library in North Beach. About a thousand residents have been voting in each site every day. They are open this weekend and all next week from 7 in the morning to 7 at night. There have not been substantial wait times but that may change as election day draws closer. So go vote. Also, both sites have a secured drop box where you can drop off mail-in ballots during this same time. They are manned by election officials, and are drive-up as well as walk-up. If you need to bring a friend or family member's ballot, they will accept it.

Voting and Halloween are good reminders that there is much more happening in the world than just this crummy virus. So celebrate democracy, enjoy your family as we begin the season of Thanksgiving, and as always, thanks for your patience, your calm and sacrifice. Stay healthy and mostly at home. And please vote.