



MESSAGE

FROM MAYOR DAN GELBER

This morning, Friday, August 14th, the State Department of Health reported that the number of COVID-19 cases in Miami-Dade County has surpassed 142,000 and today we will exceed 2,000 people in our County having succumbed to this virus.

[So here is the snapshot of where we are today](#)...we are doing better but have a ways to go -- and there are some data distortions that need to be explained.

First, over the last 14 days the County positive numbers and County positive percentages are continuing to show some slow but downward movement. It is likely that some of the drop last week was just from the interruption of testing from the hurricane which distorted all the trendlines. To complicate matters more, on Wednesday one of the labs reported 7 weeks of results, including over 4,000 people who tested positive, on a single day, which resulted in a large distortion and spike in both positives and percentages on that day. The lab that reported so late should be fired, as the delay was inexcusable and dangerous, and made it impossible to contact-trace any of the 4,000 people who tested positive.

But that spike aside, if you review the same two data points over the course of the entire lifespan of the virus, you can see that we are clearly doing better overall over the last month... but still not doing well yet. We are still above the levels of virus that existed months ago, and our percentages are also too high. For perspective, our County's positivity percentage today is in the mid to low teens right now. By contrast, New York's positivity rate is below 1%, and it is only because they have reached that point that they are considering opening their schools. So if we have any hope to really return to some normalcy, we need to make much more progress.

Some good news having to do with hospitalizations. Remember the need to be hospitalized is unaffected by data distortions or mistakes in lab reporting. You either need to be hospitalized or you don't. As you can see, about 100 new people every day require hospital care in Miami-Dade County. That's still a lot but is about half of the number it was just a few weeks ago but still higher than what it was a few months ago. We are still tragically seeing dozens of Miami-Dade County residents die every day -- but that number will also come down as fewer sick people begin moving through the system.

Here is Dr. Morris, Director of the Emerging Pathogen Institute, providing his informed commentary on these trendlines.

I appreciate that scrutinizing these data trends to see what the future may hold can be maddening. But I think there are some lessons we are learning that are clarifying and may even give rise to optimism, namely that our mask usage is working. You can see the change in trajectory from when we mandated masks, especially in the number of people requiring hospitalization. In the absence of a vaccine it is perhaps the best tool we have short of staying in our homes.

But we need to do a better job. Our Park Rangers, Code Compliance, and Police teams have issued over 335 citations for failure to wear a mask, and shut down 33 different businesses that were not operating safely. I want to thank them for their efforts, as constantly confronting folks without masks involves some peril. But we will never be able to stop everyone or even most of the folks who refuse to wear masks. So it is really up to our

community to create and foster a culture of compliance. My practice is, when I see someone wearing a mask, I thank them, because they are doing it to protect my loved ones.

Finally, I want to take a moment to talk about something that has apparently not been on many of our minds -- the 2020 Census. No nice way to say it: our City is doing terribly. Only around 30% of our residents have responded, which is well behind most other places in the County and State.

The Census is the baseline to get federal resources for everything from local schools to rebuilding roads and infrastructure; to being counted for Congressional representation; and so many other things that matter. I know lots else is happening, but this is our only shot for the next 10 years to make sure we get our fair share of federal funds. And your identity and responses are confidential - the answers you provide are used only to produce statistics.

We can't keep blowing it off especially since it is so easy to take care of. [The Census can be filled out online or by phone](#) in less time than it takes to order a pizza - so please, finish this video, then finish your census, and help make sure Miami Beach counts. They are scheduled to stop counting at the end of September, so please take care of this. Sorry to nag, but it is important.

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