



MESSAGE

FROM MAYOR DAN GELBER

This morning, Monday, June 1 we remain in the midst of a pandemic. Additionally, our community like much of the Nation has also been rocked by a wave of protests that have included unrest and violence. And, as if we needed more to consider, today also marks the beginning of hurricane season. So, let's take a deep breath and try to unpack where we are and what you can expect. It may seem like a lot, because it is, but it's not something we can't handle.

First, the pandemic. The State Department of Health reported this morning that the number of COVID-19 cases in Miami-Dade County approached 18,000 and 702 people in our County have succumbed to the virus. [As you can see from these charts](#), we are still adding about a few hundred new COVID cases a day, and the percent of positive cases fluctuates but is staying under 10%. So once again the virus has thankfully maintained its plateau or generally downward trajectory. We're hopeful this path will continue...so long as we continue to do all the things we've been doing.

As part of our phased reopening we were planning to open up beaches today, but County Mayor Gimenez extended that until at least tomorrow out of concerns that the protests have also included some unrest and looting. Last night there was a curfew countywide at 9:00 p.m. Also over the last two days we have sporadically stopped traffic on the MacArthur Causeway and even at one point raised the bridges on the Venetian Causeway as there was a well-founded belief that at least some of the protesters were planning to walk across the causeways at night to have an impromptu presence in our City.

About the protests, as Dr. King so rightly stated, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." And there can be no question that as a democracy we are stronger when we embrace protest, and recognize, as in this case, its validity. We have seen on the news that along with the many expressing rightful outrage over the killing of George Floyd and the inequities it represents, have come a few who are not interested in protest but in causing destruction or simply looting. We cannot in any way accept violence and theft as a legitimate expression of principle. No matter how righteous that principle may be.

So for the near future please pay attention to the City's communications so you can be aware of a curfew or whether traffic is being rerouted. That information is available through our various social media sites (@MiamiBeachNews) and we will text you the information right to your phone if you sign up (text MBAAlert to 888777).

When we do open the beaches [the rules will be simple](#). No groups over 10. Groups under 10 need to wear masks if they are not exercising social distancing, unless the group is from the same household. Please help us out and bring a mask in case you need to wear it at some point. We will have hundreds of ambassadors on the beaches helping everyone out.

Today [we are opening hotels with special protections and limited capacities](#). Our hotel industry has done a terrific job in putting together best in class measures. Hotels will be operating at reduced capacity and protective measures for many hotel operations.

What is opened and closed can be confusing, so [here is an easy list](#). For instance, pools and county buses are open, trolleys and gyms are still closed. For those of you wondering about summer camps for the kids, the City is rolling out its virtual camp on June 8. Here is how to sign up - [MiamiBeachParks.com](#). We are working with the County on an actual camp program, but that announcement is probably at least a week away as we are working out the details with our medical team.

Yes, today is the beginning of hurricane season. While there is no hurricane threatening it is recommended that now is the time to have a plan in place. Prepare an emergency supply kit for evacuation and for your return. Inventory and take photos of property and valuables, and make sure you know how to secure your home. For those concerned about how to evacuate during a pandemic, we have already begun to talk to state emergency managers about that possibility. For more information, visit our emergency preparedness website: [MiamiBeachFL.gov/CityHall/EmergencyPreparedness](#).

Even with everything else swirling around, this pandemic is still here and isn't going away anytime soon. I know many of you are frustrated and have let me know so. Some are looking for a reason to abandon our efforts to control its spread. The most common argument is: the flu is just as deadly and we don't take all these measures to protect us against the flu. So let me respond at least to that. It is true the flu is deadly and in fact in 2018, 288 people in our County are estimated to have died of influenza or pneumonia. That's a lot. But compare that to the 702 people who have already died of this virus in just 9 weeks in Miami Dade. And many more who unfortunately will likely die. And that is with all of our best efforts to hunker down and limit our interactions. Here is what Infectious Disease specialist Dr. Aileen Marty had to say:

But we have also demonstrated that we have the power to control its spread. Which is just what we have done. So please keep up these efforts. We are only able to open up our economy and get some folks back to work because of what you have done and the sacrifices you have embraced.

Finally, I want to join Commissioner Ricky Arriola in wishing a happy birthday to one of our most experienced residents...Clara Reinman, who turned 106 yesterday. Clara survived the Spanish Flu, two world wars and escaped the Nazi occupation of Europe. She's an inspiration. Happy 106th Clara.

And to our younger residents, thanks for your patience and calm. And stay healthy and mostly at home.