



# MESSAGE

FROM MAYOR DAN GELBER

This morning, Wednesday, October 7, the State Department of Health has reported that COVID-19 cases in Miami-Dade County surpassed 172,100 and more than 3,368 people in our County have succumbed to the virus.

We have some important news today, virus-related and city-related.

First, regarding [the COVID-19 data points](#). It's pretty clear that our number of daily infections, our positivity rates, and our number of people who need to be hospitalized, are hovering at about the same level with a very modest tack upward. The numbers this week are just a little worse than those from last week. Of course, we've been reopening some aspects of the economy for about a month and, more recently, the Governor opened practically everything. So, we do expect some level of increase.

The question, which is a critical one, is whether we are going to get a surge like the last time we reopened. Or whether our mask usage, and better contact tracing will keep the virus close to the levels we see right now.

[This chart is helpful](#) as it shows the lifespan of the virus and provides some comparison as to how it responded to the last reopening. As you can see, the last time we reopened there was a slight upward trajectory that appears nearly identical to the upward increase we are experiencing right now. Our biostatisticians pointed out this morning just how identical it seems to be. The last time we reopened that slight increase was followed by an enormous surge in the virus that caused thousands of deaths in our County and resulted in the curfews and closures which we are only now emerging from. If we repeat the last surge, they tell us it is likely we would feel it in the next few weeks as the virus spread settles into the community. It is critical that we not repeat this cycle.

There are some things in our favor. First, the last time we reopened the state department of health was woefully understaffed with contact tracers, far below the recommended levels to the point where on some days only 7% of those infected were reached. In response to a good deal of outrage, they have staffed up. Hopefully that will help. Secondly, we have become more accustomed to mask usage which our experts agree is critical. I realize that you have probably heard other opinions about this. I also realize it has inexplicably become a political issue. So, you know, we didn't go on to the internet looking for opinions that reflected what we thought we should do. Rather, we asked the experts occupying positions of trust and experience what they thought we should do. Our experts include a chief of infectious disease at Mt Sinai, the County advisor on infectious disease, and the director of the State of Florida's emerging pathogen institution. And all of them are unanimous in their view that mask usage is vital.

So, no matter what you hear or find on some Facebook post, or from a political leader, please trust the physicians and scientists who do this for a living and reflect the mainstream of opinion on best practices. In other words, while we hope this time will be different, hope is not a plan, wearing a mask is. So, thank you for leaning into this.

On a related note, the State has indicated it will be closing down the drive through part of our convention center testing center. In fact, it will be closing down all the drive through centers in Miami Dade other than at Hard Rock stadium. The walk-up line will continue but the only available test will be a 15-minute rapid test for

antigens which will tell you whether you are positive or negative. So, testing will continue but only through a walk-up system and with a rapid test.

Finally, some bittersweet news. Today, our City Manager Jimmy Morales advised our Commission and his staff that after 8 years he has decided to move on from his service to our community. I have known Jimmy since he was a middle school kid at Nautilus and it's not an overstatement to say we have been close friends for nearly half a century. His story is an American story. His parents came here with nothing and made sure their son had opportunities unimaginable in other nations. I like to joke that Jimmy was class president, valedictorian and homecoming king of Beach High. Always modest, he politely corrects me each time: he was actually only salutatorian. He went on to Harvard undergrad and law, and a stellar career in public service in his own right -- we were fortunate to have him steering our ship through the many challenges we've confronted. Jimmy will leave our City financially secure and a better version of itself. Our community will miss him as will I. Here is a message from our Manager, Jimmy Morales:

At our next Commission meeting we will discuss the process for replacing him though he will be around for a few more months. Fortunately, there will be many qualified candidates interested including some of his senior staff that I believe already have proven themselves fully capable of taking on greater responsibility.

So stay tuned.

Thanks for all your patience, calm and sacrifice. Please, stay healthy and mostly at home.