



# MESSAGE

FROM MAYOR DAN GELBER

This morning, Tuesday July 21, the State Department of Health reported that the number of COVID-19 cases in Miami-Dade County are approaching 90,000 and 1,325 people in our County have succumbed to the virus. While we are still in the midst of a multi week surge, some recent data points suggest that our latest efforts, namely the mask requirements and curfew, are slightly slowing the rate of increase of the virus. Let's talk about the data points.

Remember, [the lifecycle of this disease in our community we now know follows a somewhat predictable path](#). A certain percentage of people test positive. Some are symptomatic and some are not. Out of that group that is showing sickness some will require hospitalization. A smaller group will ultimately require intensive care. And from that group an even smaller will ultimately require the use of ventilators. Right now about half of those who require ventilators eventually die from the disease. Each of these metrics don't necessarily happen at the same time. There is a lag. For instance, if you have a spike in positive cases it is likely you won't see that group of sick people impact hospitalizations, intensive care or ventilators for days or weeks as they move through our health care system. That's important because you can't wait until there is an increase in ventilator usage or a spike in deaths to decide to take action to reduce the infection rate. By then the numbers are already baked in and you're starting two weeks behind.

[So here is where we are in each of those categories.](#)

The number of positive cases each day has increased dramatically, though over the last 14 days we have hovered in the same area. While it's good it is not increasing as much, it is bad that the daily increases are still so great.

The percentage of those testing positive also seems to be levelling off or even going down slightly. For context, the CDC thinks over 10% is too much, so we still have far too much virus in our community. There has been a conflict between how the county and state report percentages...I am using the Miami-Dade County data so we can compare apples to apples.

The hospitalizations have followed the same trajectory but remember that while some people are admitted each day, others are discharged. The current census, the number of admitted patients today, is the highest it's been as we continue to feel the impact of the surge from a few weeks ago.

Similarly, the number of people in intensive care is much higher than it was from even when we last issued a shelter at home order in March. If you notice, we are above "ICU capacity." That doesn't mean we don't have beds, it simply means we are reprogramming beds from other places in the hospitals. While we have plenty of capacity to reprogram, ICU beds require much greater staffing and it has been a challenge to find available health care professionals.

Finally, ventilators and death. It is miserable that we have over 300 people on ventilators. Many will not make it. That number is much higher than it has ever been and will likely grow even more as sick people move through the system.

[This is the number of deaths per day in Miami-Dade](#). The orange are those who are above the age of 60 and the blue under 60. Don't think that the number is going down because there appears to be a decline over the last week or so of data. It takes that much time to assign a date of death, so those deaths are not yet displayed. In a week you can expect today's number to be much higher. Perhaps 20 or even more.

The data points are important because they inform decision making. But they should never become just data points. They are each a person, with families and loved ones, who never expected to find themselves in this precarious moment in their lives.

As we consider what to do next, a few final points.

First, please do your part. Wear the mask. Maintain physical distancing. Don't decide that you're younger or healthy and you won't be impacted should you get the virus. The truth is, you could be impacted as this virus has sent an increasing number of younger people into the hospital. And you could easily spread it to others who are not so fortunate and will end up as one of those data points.

Second, soon we will have to see whether our curfew, mask order and other measures have been sufficient. I speak with other mayors throughout each day, and no one wants to shelter in place again as it was incredibly destructive to our economy. But if we don't get our arms around this virus soon, at some point soon we may have to if even for a limited period. When we have this much virus in the community it is hard to protect clearly vulnerable populations. It's also hard to open the economy and our schools.

So do your part, please. This repetition may feel a little like groundhog day. But it will end, eventually, and we will get back to our old normal.

Until then, thanks for your calm and patience. Stay healthy and mostly at home.