



MESSAGE

FROM MAYOR DAN GELBER

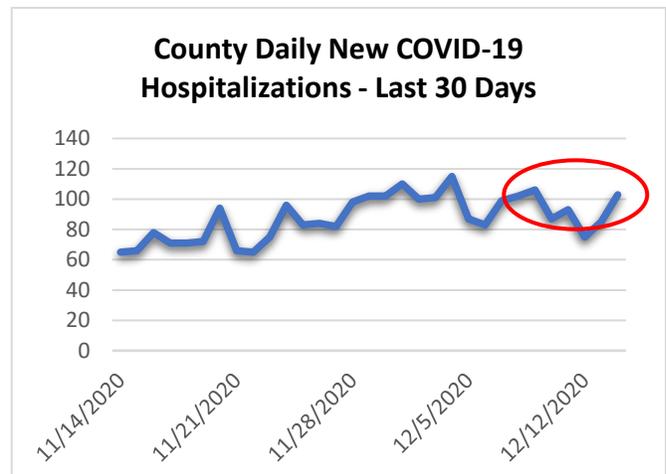
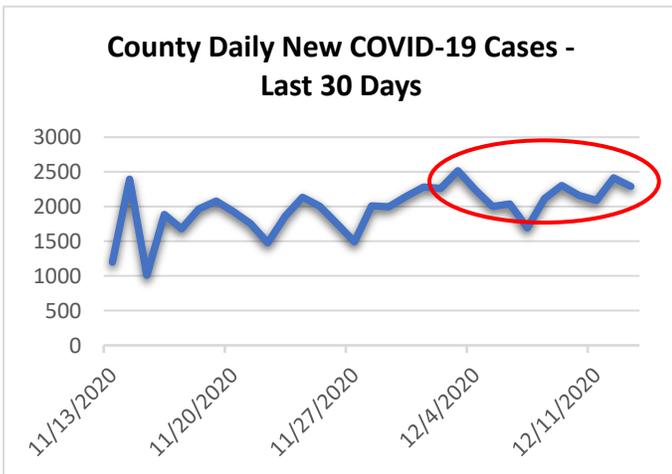
Let's start with this. This morning Jackson Memorial hospital received its first allotment of the vaccine, and today health care workers in our County, and soon thereafter seniors at long-term care facilities will begin receiving their vaccinations. Our City staff is already coordinating with County personnel to help prepare for the weeks and months ahead as more vaccine doses become available for distribution. If you would like up to date information about the vaccine [you can find it online](#).

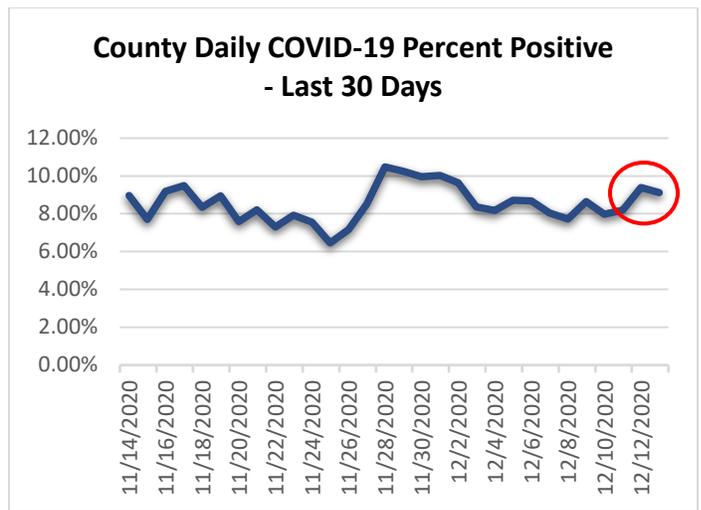
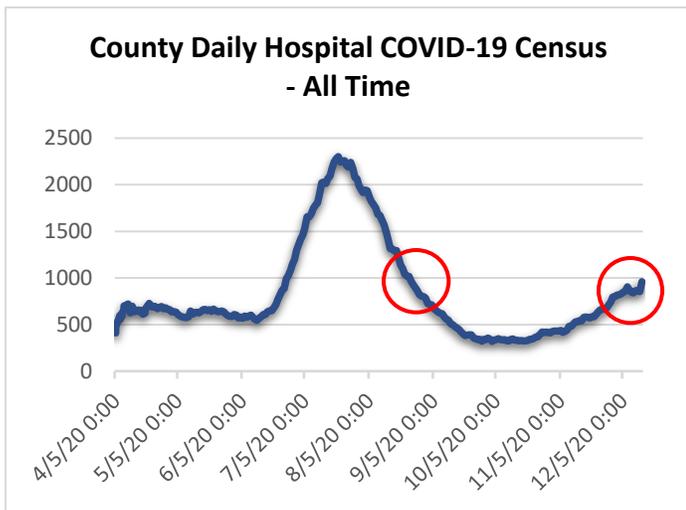
This is wonderful news and marks the beginning of the end of what has been one of the darkest moments in history for our community, our nation and frankly the world. And it couldn't have arrived a moment too soon. The toll this virus has had on our lives, on our livelihoods, on our sense of security, has been incomprehensible.

But even with the vaccine now available that toll still continues today. This morning, Tuesday, December 15, the State Department of Health has reported that COVID-19 cases in Miami-Dade County surpassed 257,000 and more than 4,000 people in our County have succumbed to the virus.

So even though we have an apparent end-point to this miserable journey, we can't let up our efforts right now because we are in the midst of a surge of the virus and there is community spread that remains very deadly. [Here are the data points we generally care about](#).

Nearly every day we are getting in excess of 2,000 people testing positive. That's a lot and means that there is too much virus around us. We are also still continuing to see around 100 people each day so sick they need hospitalization. That is why the Miami-Dade hospital census is about to break 1,000, which has not happened since August 24th. And our percentage of those testing positive continues to be hovering just under 9%. There does seem to be a levelling off since what our experts believe was a surge from Thanksgiving. But the levels are way too high, and with more holidays coming, we can't afford to let up.





And this, I believe, is the message. Don't quit early. Don't stop wearing the mask, continue to be careful about indoor activities, be especially careful about protecting older relatives and those with vulnerable conditions. As happy as this moment should make us, we need to realize that it will be months before our community is safe again. Even as the vaccine is being provided, we can't celebrate early. In Super Bowl 27, the Dallas Cowboys were ahead when the Buffalo Bills quarterback fumbled the football. The Cowboys' defensive tackle Leon Lett famously recovered the ball and began a dash toward the endzone. But just before he crossed over for a score, he started to prematurely celebrate by waving the ball, which allowed an opposing player to smack it out of his hand, denying him his touchdown. Let's not celebrate early. Let's finish strong.

Finally, for those of you in the midst of Hanukkah and those about to celebrate Christmas, let me convey my best wishes this holiday season. For many, these weeks are about hope, ad kindness and rededication. It's a season when we celebrate light piercing the darkness. This week, as the vaccine begins to find its way literally into the arms of many, it feels like there is light at the end of this dark tunnel. I believe there is. So, let's get there safely, together.

Thanks for your patience, calm and sacrifice. Stay healthy and mostly at home. And have a great holiday.