3/27/2020

The State of Florida Issues COVID-19 Updates 03/27/20

The State of Florida is responding to COVID-19. In an effort to keep Florida residents and visitors safe and aware regarding the status of the virus, the Florida Department of Health will issue this update every day, seven days per week.

Governor Ron DeSantis is in constant communication with Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Jared Moskowitz and State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees as the State of Florida continues to monitor and respond to the threat of COVID-19.

Today, Governor DeSantis held a briefing at the Florida Capitol and a briefing via live stream, where he announced additional efforts to respond to COVID-19:

- The National Guard is now stationed at Palm Beach County International Airport and Ft. Myers International Airport to help enforce the Governor's order on travel from the New York Tri-State area. So far, the National Guard has collected 3,406 enforcement forms from New York travelers.
- All travelers from Louisiana will be required to self-isolate for 14 days. This will be executed through checkpoints along major highways where drivers will be directed to stop and fill out information regarding their Florida stay. Sheriffs and FHP will take lead on this. DOT will be placing signage along major roadways entering Florida. This excludes commercial travel.
- Governor DeSantis is directing a 14-day moratorium on the operation of vacation rentals in Florida.
- Palm Beach County has developed a new state-supported testing site at the Ballpark of Palm Beaches.
- The state will provide 1,000 swabs to each of the four counties with the highest number of positive COVID-19 cases (Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Hillsborough).
- As of today, SNAP recipients will receive an increased monthly allotment for March and April.
- The Governor has directed sales and use taxes to be due on April 30 (originally due April 20), and property taxes to be due April 15 (originally due March 31).
- The Governor asked the Attorney General to investigate Larkin Community Hospital in Hialeah in Miami-Dade, who has charged individuals $150 to get tested for COVID-19. Tests are free statewide.
- The Governor directed the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to issue Emergency Order to enforce social distancing on waterways.

Actions the state has taken to respond to COVID-19:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

- At the direction of Governor DeSantis, State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees declared a Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 in Florida.
- Governor DeSantis announced that the State ordered an additional 2,500 test kits to supplement the adequate resources already available to test for COVID-19. These additional test kits will enable the Department of Health

resources already available to test for COVID-19. These additional test kits will enable the Department of Health, working with Florida health care providers, to test up to an additional 625,000 individuals. The Governor also suspended non-essential in state and all out-of-state travel for state employees for 30 days.

- Established an Incident Management Team to coordinate response operations.
- Defined a high-level phased response strategy for COVID-19.
- Activated a dedicated incident command post for on-site response activities.
- Conducted three public health and health care stakeholder conference calls to provide statewide updates on the current outbreak situation, response actions and guidance for pandemic planning. Over five hundred participants joined the calls.
- Established a public call center for questions regarding COVID-19. The call center launched Monday, March 2 and is open 24/7.
- Developed and distributed COVID-19 presentation materials to County Health Departments (CHD) for use at community meetings.
- Activated the Joint Information Center in coordination with the Division of Emergency Management.
- Developed and implemented protocols for investigation, surveillance and monitoring for COVID-19 to rapidly detect and contain cases.
- Established mechanisms for monitoring and coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding epidemiological activities.
- Distributed CDC Interim Guidance for public health personnel evaluating Persons Under Investigation (PUI) and asymptomatic close contacts of confirmed cases at their home or non-home residential settings to CHDs.
- Approved and disseminated an updated Clinician Screening Tool for identifying COVID-19 PUIs.
- Implemented testing at all three State Public Health Laboratories.
- Distributed updated CDC guidance for schools to CHDs and the Department of Education.
- Distributed updated laboratory guidance regarding implementation of testing at State Public Health Laboratories.
- Developing a laboratory surge plan.
- Identifying and monitoring close contacts of presumptive cases. Any close contacts with symptoms will be tested.
- Implemented private lab testing.
- Developed and disseminated pandemic planning guidance.
- Advised CHDs and HCCs to retain expired personal protective equipment until further until further notice.
- Developing infographics for first responders (fire, law enforcement and EMS) regarding infection control and personal protection for COVID-19.
- At the Governor’s direction, a public-private partnership has been put in place between Memorial Healthcare in Broward and the National Guard to set up a mobile testing unit.
- At the direction of Governor DeSantis hiring additional epidemiologists from university health programs to help with workload.
- Governor DeSantis directed the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to extend all existing nursing home and

assisted living facility licenses for 90 days to remove distraction from patient care.

- Launched an interactive data tracking dashboard on floridahealthcovid19.gov that is updated twice daily.
- Developing protocols for County Health Departments in the protection of their staff and clinic activities through the development of safety and health guidance.
- Continue to have daily hospital calls and began having daily calls with the aging and vulnerable population groups.
- Continue to coordinate efforts for obtaining lab testing supplies.

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- To support communities responding to COVID-19, Governor DeSantis has directed FDEM Director Jared Moskowitz to expedite the delivery of more than $170 million in Hurricane Irma reimbursements to cities, counties and hospital districts that have now reached the 50-percent auditing threshold to receive funds.
- After conducting a thorough assessment of needs, Director Moskowitz has requested the following supplies through Direct Federal Assistance. Supplies are being delivered on a rolling basis, and inventory is being distributed throughout the state 24 hours a day.
    - 5 mobile intensive care units
    - 5,000 ventilators
    - 5,000 hospital beds
    - 50,000 two oz. bottles of hand sanitizer
    - 250,000 coveralls
    - 500,000 gloves
    - 500,000 gowns
    - 500,000 collection kits
    - 100,000 16 oz. bottles of hand sanitizers
    - 150,000 Personal Protective Equipment kits, including coveralls, gowns, and goggles
    - 2 million N95 face masks
- Find more information on DEM's response to COVID-19 here.

AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION

- AHCA distributed guidance on behalf of the Department to hospitals in regard to COVID-19 testing of Persons Under Investigation, outlining actions to take for testing individuals prior to being transferred to other facilities.
- AHCA and the Department issued guidance for Senior Living Communities (independent living) on COVID-19 best practices, advising facilities to cease communal activities, practice social distancing and restrict community outings.
- AHCA distributed telemedicine guidance to health care providers for behavior analysis services.
- AHCA distributed an overview to iBudget providers of the revised payment methodology that will be used over the next few months to help support providers of adult day training, residential habilitation, life skills development level 1

few months to help support providers of adult day training, residential habilitation, life skills development level 1-companion and in-home personal supports. Retention payments will be made to give necessary financial support to providers who would otherwise not receive payment due to current public distancing requirements.

- Secretary Mayhew is working directly with hospitals and large health systems to identify potential vacant wings or buildings to provide additional hospital inpatient capacity should it become necessary.
- On March 16, Florida became the first state to receive CMS approval of its 1135 Medicaid Waiver giving AHCA more flexibility for its COVID-19 response efforts. This federal action lifts Medicaid prior authorization requirements for critical health care services and allows for expedited provider enrollment.
- AHCA will be granting a 90-day extension to all licenses for health care providers and regulated facilities.
- AHCA is distributing information regarding regulatory flexibilities created by waivers from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) related to skilled nursing facilities, critical access hospitals, home health agencies, durable medical equipment, provider enrollment, etc.
- Find more information on ACHA's response to COVID-19 here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

- DBPR has distributed a document titled Frequently Asked Questions Related to EO 20-71 Related Restaurants and Alcoholic Beverage Vendors pursuant to Executive Order (EO-20-71). This document helps to clarify the agency's role in the enforcement of the Executive Order as well as guidelines for restaurants and alcohol vendors per the Governor's directive.
- Find more information on DBPR's response to COVID-19 here.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- DCF is working with DOH to develop precautionary protocols for child welfare professionals and adult protective investigators who may have to make in-person visits to ensure the safety of those vulnerable populations.
- At the request of Governor DeSantis, and in accordance with the federal Families First Coronavirus Act, DCF waived work requirements for individuals participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.
- Find more information on DCF's response to COVID-19 here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

- FDC is aligning operations with the CDC Interim Guidance on Management of COVID-19 in Correctional and Detention Facilities.
- New inmate commitments from county jails have been temporarily restricted.
- Anyone entering a correctional institution will be screened in accordance with CDC and Department guidelines.
- FDC has suspended visitation and volunteer programs at all correctional institutions statewide through April 5, 2020.
- All non-critical inmate transfers have been suspended.
- Outside inmate work squads have been restricted.
- Find more information on FDC's response to COVID-19 here.

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Florida's 24 local workforce development boards are available to provide career and business services remotely, with services and technology varying by location. For more information, visit careersourceflorida.com.
- Governor DeSantis' request to the federal U.S. Small Business Administration to make the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program available for Florida's small businesses impacted by COVID-19 has been granted. Small businesses are eligible to apply for the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans that offer up to $2 million in economic assistance to help small businesses overcome the temporary loss of revenue resulting from COVID-19.
- Governor DeSantis activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The bridge loan program, managed by DEO, provides short-term, interest-free loans to small businesses that experienced economic injury from COVID-19. The application period is open and runs through May 8, 2020. Interested businesses should visit www.FloridaDisaster.Biz for more information.
- The Business Damage Assessment survey is activated to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Florida's local business operations. The survey, managed by DEO, will evaluate businesses affected by COVID-19 and the impacts the virus has had on the local economy so actions to implement appropriate relief programs can begin. The survey can be taken online here.
- Find more information on DEO's response to COVID-19 here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- DOE created a website that consolidates hundreds of free resources for teachers, parents, and students as they transition to distance learning. It includes best practices for distance learning, frequently asked questions, guidance from the department, and resources in Spanish. It can be found here.
- Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran strongly recommended public and private K-12 schools, colleges, and career and technical center campuses to close through April 15 and institute distance learning by March 30.
- To support students with identified IEP-related services who may have a disruption in services, school districts are given flexibility for the remainder of the school year to provide alternative services or delay services until later in the summer months, in coordination with a student's parents and IEP team.
- Find more information on The Department of Education's response to COVID-19 here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS

- DOEA coordinated a call with SEOC, FRLA, 4Rivers Smokehouse, and Feeding Florida to connect private sector restaurants to Area Agencies on Aging to expand the partnership and provide meals to seniors statewide.
- The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is researching methods program participants may remain engaged with the program while host agencies are closed to ensure participants continue to receive training necessary for them to transition to unsubsidized employment.
- Coordinated the delivery of several hundred N95 masks donated from Florida A&M University to the Area Agencies on Aging throughout the state.
- Held a conference call with the Deputy Mayor of Miami to discuss elder needs in the light of upcoming Adult Day Care closures expected over the next several days.
- The Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) program hosted a conference call with the 11 liaisons located

throughout Florida. The program website has been revised to indicate that the program continues to serve Floridians via telephone counseling while in-persons counseling has been temporarily suspended.

- Find more information on DOEA's response to COVID-19 here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- At the direction of Governor DeSantis and to successfully uphold CDC guidance to maximize social distancing and avoid gatherings larger than 10 people, DEP closed all Florida State Parks to the public effective Monday, March 23. Park field staff are taking full advantage of this time to perform maintenance and other park improvements so that when we are ready to welcome visitors again, we will be better than ever.
- In addition, since Tuesday, March 24, public access to lands within DEP's Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas has been closed. This closure includes state-owned uplands, such as beaches, islands, sand bars and emergent shoals within Aquatic Preserves. Vessel landings are strictly prohibited.
- Find more information on DEP's response to COVID-19 here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES

- At the direction of Governor DeSantis, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles has issued an Emergency Order extending all Florida driver licenses, commercial driver licenses and identification cards that will expire now through April 15, 2020.
- Pursuant to Executive Order 20-52 issued by Governor DeSantis, FLHSMV Executive Director Rhodes has waived commercial truck hours of service regulations and other related regulations so that emergency supplies, equipment, commodities and resources can be moved more quickly and efficiently throughout the state.
- Find more information on FLHSMV's COVID-19 response here.

OFFICE OF INSURANCE REGULATION

- OIR has issued Informational Memorandum OIR-20-04M providing general guidance on the treatment of policyholders as part of the state's ongoing efforts to protect Floridians. Guidance within this memorandum includes:
    - Encouraging regulated entities to be flexible with premium payments in order to avoid a lapse in coverage and only consider cancellation of policies if all possible efforts to work with consumers to continue coverage have been exhausted;
    - Removing exclusions on certain personal auto exclusions;
    - Exploring virtual options for underwriting and adjusting claims and for premium audits of employers' records; and
    - Other general considerations, including a 30-day extension for the filing of annual statements for certain regulated entities.
- OIR has issued Informational Memorandum OIR-20-03M directing all insurers and other entities regulated by OIR to review and update their business continuity and/or continuity of operations plans. Companies are directed to immediately contact OIR if their continuity plans are activated and/or if business operations become compromised so it can work with insurers to avoid any disruption in consumer services.
- OIR has issued Informational Memorandum OIR-20-02M as a reminder to all health insurers, health maintenance organizations, and other health entities to allow for early prescription refills following the Governor's Executive Order 20-52 declaring a state of emergency in Florida.

52 declaring a state of emergency in Florida.

- Find more information on OIR's COVID-19 response here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

- The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has issued an emergency order that will suspend visitation at all state-operated juvenile detention centers and juvenile residential commitment programs until April 15, 2020.
- DJJ has also instituted additional screening measures for outside vendors who work within juvenile facilities.
- Pandemic plans have been developed and disseminated for all state-operated juvenile detention centers and juvenile residential commitment programs.
- Find more information on DJJ's COVID-19 response here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

- FDLE is leading the coordination and staffing of law enforcement missions statewide, including: coordinating Law Enforcement (Orange County Sheriff's Office) traffic control for additional Orlando collection sites.
- Leading the statewide coordination of Law Enforcement through the Florida Sheriff's Association and the Florida Police Chiefs Association in Airport security for screening at Tampa International, Orlando International, Jacksonville International, Fort Lauderdale international, and Miami International Airport.
- Find more information on FDLE's COVID-19 response here.

FLORIDA LOTTERY

- Players who have winning tickets are encouraged to mail them to Florida Lottery Headquarters or their closest district office during this office closure.
- Find more information on Lottery's COVID-19 response here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- As directed by Governor DeSantis in Executive Order 20-52, DMS has amended the state employee health plan benefits plan documents to include delivery of covered benefits through telehealth at no additional cost to the employees and to ensure all state employees have access to telehealth through the state's contracted HMO and PPO organization plan without cost sharing during this public health emergency.
- As directed by Governor DeSantis in Executive Order 20-52, DMS has amended the state employee health plan benefits plan documents to cover immunizations at participating in-network retail pharmacies at no cost to the member during this public health emergency.
- Find more information on DMS' COVID-19 response here.

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

- There are 1,486 Florida National Guardsmen activated in support of COVID-19.
- The Florida National Guard (FLNG) continues to support the State's COVID19 response through operational support of Community Based Testing Sites (CBTS), augmentation to airport screening measures, statewide logistics support, coordination, planning and operational mission sets. To date, the FLNG has assisted in the testing of over 4,300

coordination, planning and operational mission sets. To date, the FLNG has assisted in the testing of over 1,000 individuals for the COVID-19 virus.

- The Florida National Guard has been asked to augment local law enforcement and airport authorities in application of the Governor's order to conduct screening on passengers at major airports.

AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- APD issued an Emergency Order to providers suspending certain renewal deadlines due to COVID-19.
- Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) has donated 45,000 pairs of gloves to APD's three centers in Gainesville, Marianna, and Chattahoochee. This very generous donation will help the agency meet the health care needs of the 700 individuals who live at the facilities.
- The Florida Baptist Convention has donated 7,095 N95 masks that will be shared among APDs three centers in Gainesville, Marianna, and Chattahoochee. This very generous donation will help the agency meet the health care needs of the 700 individuals who live at the facilities.
- Find more information on ADP's COVID-19 response here.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

- DOR issued an emergency order extending the March 31 property tax due date to April 15, 2020. More information can be found here.
- DOR issued an emergency order extending the due dates for March sales taxes for taxpayers adversely affected by COVID-19. More information can be found here.
- The Property Tax Oversight (PTO) program is reminding county property appraisers of their existing statutory authority to grant a 30-day extension beyond the April 1 deadline for taxpayers to file tangible personal property tax returns. PTO is also advising taxpayers who contact the Department about this deadline to contact their county property appraisers' offices for more information about requesting the extension.
- Find more information on DOR's response to COVID-19 here.

CAREERSOURCE FLORIDA

- In collaboration with DEO, a survey to be distributed March 20 to local workforce development board leaders requesting information on Reemployment Assistance processing needs and other COVID-19 related issues.
- Launched digital advertising outreach campaign March 25, targeting employers in hardest hit counties, directing them to available small business loans and resources via CareerSource Florida's COVID-19 landing page, available here.
- Find more information on CareerSource Florida's response to COVID-19 here.

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

- The SUS has directed all state universities to continue remote instruction through the end of the Spring semester.
- The SUS has directed that traditional on-campus commencement ceremonies will not be held in May. Instead, each university is directed to develop an alternate schedule or method of delivery.
- Find more information on SUS' response to COVID-19 here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

- FDOT continues to coordinate with public use airports, DOH and law enforcement to implement Executive Order 20-80.
- FDOT has closed its SunPass Customer Service Walk-In Centers located throughout the state.
- FDOT coordinated with transit agencies throughout the state to ensure the safe return of the Florida residents who were quarantined in Georgia and had previously been aboard the Grand Princess voyage outside of California.
- Find more information on FDOT's response to COVID-19 here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS.

- Veterans enrolled for care within VISN 8 can continue to use the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center for 24/7 virtual urgent care by calling 1-877-741-3400 (toll free) or by using the VA Health Chat App.
- FDVA is restricting visitor access to its network of State Veterans' Homes until further notice, with the exception of essential visitors, such as family members of those residents undergoing end-of-life care. Additionally, admissions in the network of State Veterans' Homes have been temporarily suspended.
- Find more information on DVA's response to COVID-19 here.

VISIT FLORIDA

- VISIT FLORIDA has launched a new data dashboard available on VisitFlorida.org to track the impact that COVID-19 has had on Florida's tourism industry.
- To protect the health and safety of the traveling public and staff, VISIT FLORIDA's four welcome centers will be closed until further notice.
- Find more information on VISIT FLORIDA's response to COVID-19 here.

VOLUNTEER FLORIDA

- As the lead agency for volunteerism and service, Volunteer Florida is working to support voluntary organizations across the state and nation by pushing resources, surveying needs and requesting that continuity of operations plans be created to avoid any service delivery disruption.

Find more information on Volunteer Florida's response to COVID-19 here.

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