3/20/2020

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

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, in a briefing at the State Emergency Operations Center, Governor DeSantis announced more actions on COVID-19:

- Today, Governor DeSantis issued four executive orders:
    - Executive Order 20-69: this Executive Order waives in-person meeting requirements so that public officials can safely continue their duties without impediment.
    - Executive Order 20-70: this Executive Order directs all movie theatres, concert houses, auditoriums, playhouses, bowling alleys, arcades, gymnasiums, fitness studios and beaches to close in Broward County and Palm Beach County.
    - Executive Order 20-71: this Executive Order directs all restaurants and food establishments within the state to suspend on-premises food and alcohol consumption for customers. The order also requires the closure of all gyms throughout the state.
    - Executive Order 20-72: this Executive Order prohibits medically unnecessary, non-urgent or non-emergency procedures or surgeries.
- The Broward Memorial Healthcare System drive-through test site has collected 407 samples as of 4 p.m., nearly double the amount anticipated. This site will continue to be open 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Sunday.
    - The Department of Health has more than 700 school nurses ready to help with the COVID-19 response.
- The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) has approved the first two Small Business Emergency Bridge Loans to businesses impacted by COVID-19.
- Governor DeSantis directed DEO to Waive Job Search Requirements for DEO Reemployment
    - Enables DEO to no longer require a claimant to register with the state job search portal to actively seek employment.
- Governor DeSantis directed DEO to waive penalties to employers
    - Currently an employer is “charged” for every employee that is laid off and this cost is reflected in the employer’s unemployment insurance paid to the state.
    - Waiving this penalty will eliminate any perverse incentive an employer may have to keep an employee on the payroll but with dramatically reduced or deferred hours thereby preventing them from seeking unemployment assistance.

assistance.

- Governor DeSantis directed DCF to waive work requirements for SNAP and TANF.
    - The federal “Families First Coronavirus Response Act” allows states to suspend these work requirements.
- Governor DeSantis directed DCF to work with the USDA to submit a plan to allow families whose children are eligible for free and reduced-price school lunch to receive SNAP benefits.
    - The federal “Families First Coronavirus Response Act” encourages utilization of this proposal which will provide additional benefits to parents of more than 2.1 million children in Florida.
- Governor DeSantis directed DCF to pursue extending food, cash and Medicaid benefits for an extra two months for those families who are scheduled to recertify to ensure that health care, food and cash assistance benefits are provided without interruption.
    - This will provide continuity for Florida families who are currently receiving SNAP, TANF or Medicaid benefits without requiring them to interact with the department during this public health emergency.

More Information on COVID-19

To find the most up-to-date information and guidance on COVID-19, please visit the Department of Health’s dedicated COVID-19 webpage. For information and advisories from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), please visit the CDC COVID-19 website. For more information about current travel advisories issued by the U.S. Department of State, please visit the travel advisory website.

For any other questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Department’s dedicated COVID-19 Call Center by calling **(866) 779-6121. The Call Center is available 24 hours per day**. Inquiries may also be emailed to **COVID-19@flhealth.gov.**

What you Should Know

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, including when an individual coughs or sneezes. These droplets may land on objects and surfaces. Other people may contract COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as many as 14 days following exposure. Most people recover from COVID-19 without needing special treatment. The elderly and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems and diabetes are more likely to develop serious illness.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The Department recommends everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick;
- Staying home when you are sick and avoiding contact with persons in poor health;
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- Covering your cough or sneezing into a tissue, then disposing of the tissue;
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing;

- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty; and
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

The CDC does not recommend that asymptomatic, healthy people wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

A person that experiences a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after travel from any other destination with community transmission should call ahead to their health care provider and local CHD and mention their recent travel or close contact.

If a person has had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from this area or been in contact with a person with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19, he or she should call ahead to a health care professional and the CHD. The health care provider will work with the Department to determine if the person should be tested for COVID-19.

Actions the state has taken to prepare for and 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, 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.
- 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.

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.
- Distributed a health care provider letter regarding enhanced surveillance and preparedness for COVID-19 to associations, licensed providers, Health Care Coalitions and CHDs.
- 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.
- Developing a clinician-level briefing for medical audiences.
- 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.
- Continued development of public information resources.
- 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.

THE 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

AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION

- 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-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 distributed a provider alert to licensed health care providers regarding the Division of Emergency Management's new Emergency Order tightening visitation restrictions at residential and long-term care facilities.
- AHCA, in coordination with the DEM and the Department, is hosting ongoing statewide calls for nursing homes, assisted living facilities, intermediate care facilities, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, group homes, and adult family care homes in conjunction with the Florida Health Care Association. Secretary Mayhew and Surgeon General Rivkees are continuing to address critical issues impacting these providers such as restricting visitors and providing updates.
- AHCA, in coordination with DEM and the Department, is hosting ongoing statewide calls for hospitals in conjunction with the Florida Hospital Association. Secretary Mayhew and Surgeon General Rivkees to provide the most up-to-date information to hospital partners and residential facilitates caring for aging and vulnerable populations.
- After previously opening an event on the Emergency Status System (ESS) for hospitals to enter census information, emergency room status updates and isolation beds, AHCA expanded the ESS event to track nursing homes and assisted living facility bed capacity, effective March 15.
- The Agency for Health Care Administration (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.
- AHCA participated in a collaborative call with the Florida Health Care Association, Florida Hospital Association and LeadingAge Florida to discuss patient transfer arrangements between health care facilities such as nursing homes and hospitals.
- The Florida Medicaid Program announced coverage of commercial testing for COVID-19 for dates of service back to

- The Florida Medicaid Program announced coverage of commercial testing for COVID-19 for dates of service back to February 4.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

- DBPR shared information with all agency staff statewide pertaining to the declaration of a state public health emergency, state response protocols as ordered in EO 20-51, and FDOH information and resources available on the dedicated FDOH COVID-19 webpage. DBPR communication with staff has emphasized the best practices and preventive steps recommended by FDOH for impeding the spread of respiratory illnesses.
- DBPR's Emergency Coordinating Officer and State Mass Care Coordinator is supporting the initiation of FDOH's joint information center and providing assistance as requested of State Emergency Support Function 6.
- DBPR added a web banner with information on COVID-19 and link to the Florida Department of Health's dedicated COVID-19 webpage at http://www.floridahealth.gov/COVID-19.
- DBPR is incorporating informational comments on all on-site inspection reports issued to public lodging, public food service, and alcohol and tobacco license holders that will promote situational awareness of the current public health emergency and will direct parties to the FDOH COVID-19 webpage for guidance and resources related to prevention best practices. Copies of informational flyers from the FDOH COVID-19 toolkit will also be available for inspectors to distribute when interacting with managers of these premises.
- DBPR has suspended all official business visits, including inspections, that involve licenses located at a facility covered under the visitation restrictions implemented pursuant to FDEM Emergency Order 20-002.
- DBPR hosted a senior management meeting with all program directors on Monday, 03.16.2020, to discuss the latest departmental actions and preparations associated with COVID-19 in Florida.
- DBPR is providing guidance to appointed professional licensing boards related to procedural considerations and available technology options for remote, web-based or telephonic board meetings.
- DBPR issued an emergency order, EO 2020-01 to extend license renewal deadlines and renewal requirements for a period of 30 days for licenses with an existing renewal deadline occurring in the months of March or April, 2020.
- DBPR has distributed the Governor's Executive Order (EO-20-68) regarding bars, nightclubs, beaches, and restaurants to all known e-mail addresses of record for alcoholic beverage, public food service, and public lodging license holders. DBPR will continue to push information and guidance relating to the directives of EO 20-68 to impacted parties through the DBPR Emergency Information Page, social media channels, and outreach to industry and public sector partners.
- DBPR has launched a dedicated emergency information page (http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr/emergency/) with direct links to the FDOH COVID-19 webpage as well as information on agency emergency orders, schedule and meeting changes for divisions and boards, and other important departmental information during this emergency.
- DBPR has distributed a document titled Frequently Asked Questions Related to Restaurant, Bars and Nightclubs pursuant to Executive Order (EO-20-68). This document helps to clarify the agency's role in the enforcement of the Executive Order as well as guidelines for restaurants per the Governor's directive.
- DBPR has implemented the DMS restrictions on public access at DMS-managed facilities and has adopted the same approach for all DBPR offices in privately-leased facilities. DBPR will continue to provide customer service and licensing support by phone and other electronic means to enable continuity of operations during these facility restrictions.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- The Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Office of Child Welfare is sending regular communication about

COVID-19 specifically to licensed child care providers, directing them to follow the CDC's Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). An FAQ document for providers was also posted prominently on DCF's Child Care webpage.

- DCF's Office of Child Welfare is disseminating a survey to licensed child care providers to assess closures throughout the state. Currently, the decision to close is at the discretion of each individual facility.
- DCF Secretary Chad Poppell continues to send regular communication to all DCF staff, contracted partners, and licensed facilities (including child care providers) about COVID-19, including precautionary measures (as outlined by the CDC) and temporary policy updates.
- 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.
- DCF is leading status update calls with both internal leadership and leadership from external contracted partners. For the time being, these calls will take place twice weekly, every Tuesday and Friday.
- DCF established strategies for COVID-19 prevention at all three state mental health treatment facilities, as well as the South Florida mental health facilities run by Wellpath Recovery Solutions, a contracted partner. They are reporting daily updates to ensure compliance with virus prevention and monitor potential outbreaks.
- DCF restricted visitation at all state-owned and contracted mental health treatment facilities through April 15. Meanwhile, all staff and new patients are being screened according to CDC/DOH guidelines prior to entry.
- DCF's Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency is communicating with DEO regarding work requirements and CareerSource operations and availability.
- DCF temporarily closed all economic self-sufficiency storefronts to the public. Customers of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Need Families (TANF), and Medicaid programs are encouraged to utilize the online Self-Service Portal. They can also make phone calls or submit information through secure drop boxes that have been placed outside at existing storefront locations.
- DCF General Services staff throughout the state are working with lessors and janitorial contractors to increase sanitizing measures in office buildings, especially restrooms and common areas. They also began taking inventory of sanitizing supplies (disinfecting wipes, Lysol spray, hand-sanitizer, etc.) and are ordering more as needed.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

- Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) has no known or suspected cases of COVID-19 within its correctional institutions at this time.
- FDC Community Corrections officers are working with offenders on supervision to adjust reporting schedules to minimize congregating at probation offices and prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- FDC's Office of Health Services coordinates with the Department for guidance on any type of outbreak and is closely monitoring new information as it is disseminated from the Department and the CDC.
- FDC has suspended visitation at all correctional institutions statewide through April 5, 2020. The decision to reinstate the normal visitation schedule will be evaluated in consultation with the Department.
    - Inmates will continue to have access to mail, email, phone calls and video visitation.
    - Legal visits will not be impacted.
    - FDC has partnered with vendors to provide some complimentary phone and video visitation services.

- Volunteer activities within correctional institutions statewide have been suspended.
- Anyone entering a correctional institution will be screened, and entrance will be restricted if they:
    - Have traveled internationally or on a cruise within the last 14 days.Have signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection such as fever, cough or shortness of breath.
    - Have had contact with someone who has been or is under investigation for COVID-19.
- All non-critical inmate transfers have been suspended.
- New commitments and intakes have been restricted.
- Outside inmate work squads have been restricted.
- FDC has a plan in place and dedicated staff members trained in the prevention and containment of infectious diseases.
- FDC initiated its Incident Command System in response to COVID-19.
- Education has been provided to staff, inmates and visitors to prevent the spread of any infectious disease, including COVID-19.
- Precautions are in place at facilities to protect inmates and staff from exposure to flu, COVID-19 or any other respiratory illness; preventative measures are being followed per CDC recommendations.

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- 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.
- The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) has created a Frequently Asked Questions document for individuals whose employment has been negatively impacted by mitigation efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Governor Ron 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 FloridaDisasterLoan.org 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 at https://floridadisaster.biz/.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran directed public and private K-12 and career and technical center campuses to closed through April 15, 2020, and institute distance learning by March 30th.
- Schools are encouraged to operate virtually or through other non-classroom-based means to the greatest extent possible to implement distance learning.
- School districts should be prepared to extend their educational calendars through June 30, 2020, to the extent feasible and necessary.

- For Collier, Duval, Sumter and Union county school districts, which are all completing their extended spring break on March 20, 2020, school campuses will remain closed through April 15, 2020, although they will begin instruction virtually on March 23.
- 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.
- Duval, Union, Sumter and Collier school districts have implemented distance learning which will begin on March 23rd upon the conclusion of extended spring break. All other school districts will begin distance learning on March 30th.
- Governor Ron DeSantis and Commissioner Corcoran cancelled all remaining assessments for school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten and K-12 assessments for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Requirements for graduation and promotion, and final course grades will be evaluated as though those assessments which were cancelled did not exist.
- K-12 school grades will not be calculated for 2019-2020 and schools in turnaround may continue their current status for 2020-2021 to avoid disruption to school leadership and operations.
- Eligibility for Florida Bright Futures scholarships shall be based on available data and results. Tests that were not available to be taken shall not be counted.
- The Commissioner of Education may reduce required instructional hours as necessary to accommodate for closures.
- The Florida Department of Education and K-12 school districts were instructed to redirect unspent 2019-2020 funds from Reading Scholarship Accounts, the Reading Instruction Allocation, the Digital Classroom Allocation and the Teachers Classroom Supply Assistance Program to help low-income students purchase digital devices and establish Internet services.
- In order to facilitate the remote connection between teachers and students, K-12 school districts are further permitted to redirect unspent Title 2 funds to help low-income students purchase digital devices and establish Internet services.
- K-12 school districts are permitted to redirect unspent 2019-2020 funds from the Safe Schools and Mental Health allocations to virtual and telephonic mental health counseling services for students who need emotional support due to COVID-19.
- All school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten, K-12, career and technical centers and state college programs will receive their full allocation of funding, and therefore staff and contractors can be paid fully, through June 30, 2020, as though there was no disruption in education.
- For the next 120 days, exam fees for teacher certification-related examinations will be waived, and test takers who were unable to take an exam due to test site locations closing will be granted an extension to meet these requirements.
- Commissioner Corcoran urged adherence to the CDC's guidance for higher-risk populations by cancelling any mass gatherings, community events and extracurricular activities, including sports of more than 10 people in a single occupied space at any educational program, school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten, public and private K-12, career and technical centers, and public and private colleges and universities.
- Commissioner Corcoran strongly recommend school readiness and voluntary prekindergarten programs adhere to the CDC's guidance for higher-risk populations by limiting students and employees to no more than 10 people convening in a single occupied space, therefore breaking students into groups as necessary, maintaining social distancing best practices and proper hygiene.
- All services provided by the divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services to clients shall be provided solely though virtual and telephonic methods to the extent possible.

- The Department will work with appropriate federal authorities to seek waivers for any federal requirements that may be impacted.
- All public state colleges, and private college and campuses and buildings are closed for the remainder of the spring semester.
- Colleges are encouraged to operate virtually or through other non-classroom-based means to the greatest extent possible.
- Colleges should be prepared to extend their educational calendars through June 30, 2020, to the extent feasible and necessary.
- Education Commissioner Corcoran is in constant communication with Florida Superintendents and districts to provide guidance on COVID-19 preparedness and response and will be holding daily calls to update districts on preparation efforts.
- FDOE has established a resource website for educators, parents, and students to utilize free resources that help students during distance learning at http://www.fldoe.org/em-response.

DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS

- Secretary Prudom hosted a conference call with the Director of Adult Protective Services (APS) and the Secretary of DCF to discuss capacity of serving APS high-risk referrals in the current crisis.
- The Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program distributed the SHINE press release—offering guidance for seniors on how to protect themselves from Medicare fraud—to more than 4,000 recipients including Area Agencies on Aging and DOEA independent partners.
- The Department shared the Florida Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (FLVOAD) guidelines for volunteers and volunteer organizations during the COVID-19 outbreak in Florida with leadership at the Florida Association of Senior Centers (FASC) for distribution throughout the senior center network.
- The Department disseminated the FLVOAD guidelines to over 2,500 individuals who receive Florida's Livable Communities e-newsletter.
- DOEA provided ongoing technical assistance to all 11 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) regarding the provision of meals, telephone reassurance, Adult Day Care closures and subsequent services being provided in clients homes, transportation, health and wellness programs, virtual wellness checks, and respite services.
- The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) continues to work with LTCOP staff and Regional Ombudsman Managers to discuss advocacy issues relating to COVID19.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- Most Florida State Parks remain open for day use; however, all Florida State Parks have changed day-use visitation hours to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- DEP will continue to keep the public updated on park operational status through the Florida State Parks web page and social media channels.
- In order to balance necessary resources, the following parks are currently closed, effective March 19:
    - Avalon State Park

    - Fort Pierce Inlet State Park
    - Florida State Caverns State Park
- Due to county ordinances closing adjacent public beaches, the following parks are currently closed, effective, Friday, March 20:
    - Topsail Hill Preserve State Park
    - Grayton Beach State Park
    - Deer Lake State Park
    - Henderson Beach State Park
- Additionally, in order to implement the Governor’s directive to limit crowds on public beaches to less than 10, effective March 19, DEP will be reducing the visitor capacity at State Parks with beaches and swimming areas. The department will actively evaluate the effectiveness of the reductions and will take additional actions if warranted up to and including **park closures**. The following parks will be subject to visitor capacity reductions and could be subject to closure if social distancing objectives are not achieved or adhered to:

- Andrews State Park (includes Shell Island)
- Ponce de Leon Springs State Park
- Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park
- Ichetucknee Springs State Park
- Rainbow Springs State Park
- Manatee Springs State Park (includes Anderson's Landing)
- Fanning Springs State Park
- Little Talbot Island State Park
- Fort Clinch State Park
- Ruth B. Kirby Gilchrist Blue Springs State Park
- Anastasia State Park
- De Leon Springs State Park
- Blue Spring State Park
- Wekiwa Springs State Park
- Sebastian Inlet State Park
- Honeymoon Island State Park
- Gasparilla Island
- Lovers Key State Park
- Delnor Wiggins Pass State Park

- Weeki Wachee Springs State Park
- Pierce Inlet State Park (includes Jack Island)
- Avalon State Park
- John D. MacArthur Beach State Park
- Hugh Taylor Birch State Park
- Von D. Mizell-Eula Johnson State Park
- Oleta River State Park
- Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park
- John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park
- Curry Hammock State Park
- Bahia Honda State Park
- Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park

- **All DEP administrative offices remain open and operational from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**Based on guidance from the Department of Management Services to help protect our visitors and employees, DEP will temporarily close all DMS-managed facilities to the public beginning March 19 until Sunday, April 19. We look forward to continuing to assist residents by phone or email. DEP Regulatory District Office contact information can be found here: https://floridadep.gov/districts.
- DEP continues to work to identify ways to develop a safe and sustainable work environment for all of our employees that will also ensure we are able to perform all of our core functions and meet our agency's mission. DEP has developed initial plans that will enable staff to begin teleworking beginning March 20, 2020. These plans are designed, and are expected to be, adaptive to meet any new guidance or circumstances that may arise, as well as ensure that unique staffing needs are appropriately addressed.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES

- At the direction of Governor Ron DeSantis, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor has issued an Emergency Order extending all Florida driver licenses and identification cards that will expire in the next 30 days.
- FLHSMV continues to encourage Floridians through social media and other channels to use convenient online options to complete transactions for driver licenses, ID cards, motor vehicle or vessel registrations, and more.
- FLHSMV has been in regular communication with the Florida Tax Collectors Association as well as Tax Collectors across the state to provide the latest COVID-19 information and guidance from the Florida Department of Health and other state partners.
- Pursuant to Executive Order 20-52 issued by Governor Ron 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.
- FLHSMV has been in close communication with the Florida Sheriffs Association, Florida Police Chiefs Association, and all other state law enforcement partners regarding the department's emergency orders impacting Florida driver licenses and commercial vehicles.

- The Florida Highway Patrol is deploying personnel and equipment to assist Broward Memorial Healthcare System and Florida National Guard's drive-through testing efforts.

OFFICE OF INSURANCE REGULATION

- 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 Insurance Commissioner David Altmaier is actively engaged with insurers and key partners at the state and national level regarding COVID-19. Commissioner Altmaier is collaborating with other state insurance commissioners and the National Association of Insurance Commissioners to share information and resources.
- OIR has issued Informational Memorandum OIR-20-01M to all health insurers and health maintenance organizations, directing them to:
    - Use every channel available to them to communicate with their policyholders and share official CDC and DOH information;
    - Devote resources to inform consumers of available benefits, quickly respond to inquiries, and avoid and dispel misinformation;
    - Work with public health officials to do everything possible to prepare and respond; and
- Consider all practicable options to reduce the barriers of cost-sharing for testing and treatment of COVID-19. OIR has issued Informational Memorandum OIR-20-02Mas 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.
- OIR has spoken with multiple insurers who are voluntarily waiving cost-sharing for consumers in an effort to remove barriers to testing for COVID-19.
- OIR is reaching out to insurers regarding their response to COVID-19 and working with insurers to make sure they are properly communicating to consumers.
- OIR has issued notices to all of its employees providing resources regarding COVID-19 and outlining the steps recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Florida Department of Health to take preventative health measures.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

- The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice's Office of Health Services developed COVID-19 guidance for all facilities serving DJJ youth. This guidance included Center for Disease Control criteria on how to assess and care for youth who are exhibiting fever and respiratory symptoms and environmental cleaning and disinfection recommendations.
- The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has modified screening protocols and procedures for youth taken into custody by law enforcement who are brought to juvenile assessment centers and detention screening units to now include precautionary coronavirus screening questions and protocols. This modified screening protocol was shared with law enforcement partners statewide.
- 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 and then will evaluate the health and safety of resuming normal visitation protocols. DJJ has also instituted additional screening

measures for outside vendors who work within juvenile facilities. Clinical personnel are still permitted to visit youth for treatment purposes, instructional personnel are permitted to provide educational services, and attorneys are permitted to conduct legal visits with youth.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

- The Florida Department of Law Enforcement's (FDLE) Firearm Purchase Program processed more than 53,000 transactions since Friday, March 13, including 11,645 transactions on March 19, an all-time single-day record and a 430% increase over the average for that Thursday.
- FDLE is working with state and local agencies and the Florida National Guard to set up testing collection sites in multiple locations across Florida.
- The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Regional Operations Centers are working with Regional Domestic Security Task Forces to prepare for any responses needed.
- FDLE's Office of Mutual Aid prepared and distributed a law enforcement guide on COVID-19 for law enforcement partners and state agencies and FDLE's General Counsel prepared a law enforcement guide for protocols in a quarantine.
- FDLE has distributed a COVID-19 legal guidance document to all its law enforcement partners in reference to Governor DeSantis' Executive Order and continues regular communication with them.
- FDLE Commissioner Rick Swearingen sent an email to all members outlining simple ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as well as links to the Florida Department of Health and CDC websites. Signs have been posted in all FDLE Regions and at Headquarters with prevention information.

FLORIDA LOTTERY

- As of today, all Florida Lottery offices remain open to the public. We are continuing to limit public access to a maximum of 10 people at a time in accordance with the CDC's social distancing recommendations.
    - Security Agents at each office are screening anyone who does attempt to enter, mirroring the screening questions required to gain entry into the EOC.
    - We have also reduced the seating in district office lobbies to ensure at least 6 feet of space is between each chair.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- DMS Secretary Jonathan Satter issued an emergency order that waived rules to allow for state employees to use any type of accrued leave for instances related to COVID-19, including self-isolation after potential exposure, staying home with children due to child care or school closures, and time needed to take care of dependents like an elder parent. The order also waived rules to expand the ability for employees to donate leave to fellow employees.
- Governor DeSantis directed the Department of Management Services Secretary Jonathan Satter to allow state employees to donate and transfer their available leave time to other state employees to mitigate the impacts of school closures.
- The Florida Department of Management Services' (DMS) Emergency Support Function-7 (ESF-7) Logistics team continues to coordinate with the Department of Health and the Division of Emergency Management on identifying the equipment or supplies that may be necessary for a mass response to COVID-19.
- DMS' Division of Human Resource Management has provided guidance to agencies on implementing preventive actions in the workplace, reporting symptoms, using leave, utilizing health insurance benefits, and applying travel

restrictions and telework policies.

- DMS' Division of State Group Insurance continues to coordinate with health plan providers to ensure that state employee health plan members receive the health benefits that can assist them and their dependents if needed.
- DMS' Division of Real Estate Development and Management (REDM) continues to provide guidance to agency facility managers across the state on steps to take to prevent workplace contamination and to pre-position environmental vendors to mobilize in the event a viricidal cleaning is needed.
- DMS' Division of Real Estate Development and Management continues to identify, purchase, and distribute additional hand sanitizing gel and cleaning supplies to state-maintained facilities.
- DMS' Division of State Technology-Public Safety Unit continues to coordinate with users and vendor of the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) vendors to ensure the continuation of mission critical services if a reduction of staffing resources occurs.
- DMS' Division of State Technology-Public Safety Unit continues to coordinate with statewide public safety communications personnel on their plans to ensure emergency communications systems are not impacted by potential reductions in staffing resources.

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

- There are 907 Florida National Guardsmen activated in support of COVID-19.
- The Florida National Guard continues to support the State's COVID-19 response as we enter the operational phase of the Community Based Testing Site.
- The Florida National Guard has activated medical professionals (Army Combat Medic Specialists and Air Force Medical Technicians) in support of the Florida Department of Health's (DOH) Drive-Through Screening operations. Guardsmen have reported in and formed Task Force Medical.
- The Florida National Guard has activated Guardsmen to augment the State Logistics Readiness Center, the State's Logistics Branch, as well as facilitate statewide logistics needs of the Florida National Guard formations on mission.
- The Florida National Guard has activated Guardsmen to augment the State Emergency Operations Center and local emergency management offices across the state.

AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- APD and AHCA sent information to all Providers on provider payment flexibility due to adjustments being made as a result of COVID -19.
- APD is implementing telework for employees throughout the state as directed by Governor DeSantis to reduce possible exposure to COVID-19.
- The agency's three state-run centers in Marianna, Gainesville, and Chattahoochee, as well as APD-licensed group homes, are restricting all visitors in compliance with the Executive Order to protect the health and safety of our customers.
- APD continues to provide an up-to-date status on COVID-19, best practices, preventative tips, and CDC guidance, in addition to CMS guidance, to APD providers, Waiver Support Coordinators, Stakeholders, and APD employees.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

- The Property Tax Oversight (PTO) program is reminding county property appraisers of their existing statutory authority

- 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.

- The Department of Revenue has temporarily closed all offices in Florida to the general public. The Department is encouraging taxpayers and child support customers to use the alternative electronic options detailed below while in-person services are suspended.

- The Department has added a dedicated COVID-19 webpage for child support customers at com/childsupport/coronavirus. The new page provides comprehensive information for alternative options for handling many routine child support case activities without visiting a local child support office. Efforts also include rescheduling genetic testing sample collection appointments and postponing other types of appointments.

- The Department of Revenue is advising child support customers who are scheduled for court hearings related to their child support cases to check with the local courts where the hearings are scheduled in case the courts have new requirements, such as appearing telephonically.

- The Department of Revenue has established a dedicated team to address tax-related issues pertaining to COVID-19 and has created an email address, COVID19TAXHELP@floridarevenue.com, where taxpayers can send questions and concerns. The Department encourages all taxpayers to use our e-services applications to file and pay taxesor contact the call center at (850) 488-6800.

- The Department of Revenue's General Tax Administration (GTA) program is working with its tax processing vendor to ensure continuity in tax data and payment processing.

- The Department has increased messaging on preventative measures through the deployment of DOH/CDC posters, ensured hand sanitizer is available, and increased cleaning of high-traffic areas in the public areas of service centers.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

- The Florida Department of State is working to solidify its telework policy and to identify essential employees. Additionally, with the closures of building to the public, we are continuing plans to develop and share valuable resources to the public digitally via social media, email, and online.

CAREERSOURCE FLORIDA

- Email communication from Board Chairman Kevin Doyle and President and CEO Michelle Dennard to the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors with a status update on state workforce system issues related to COVID-19 March 20 and on a recurring basis.

- In collaboration with the Department of Economic Opportunity, survey to be distributed March 20 to local workforce development board leaders requesting information on needs related to Reemployment Assistance processing and other COVID-19 related issues.

- Weekly (or more frequently as needed) email message to LWDB chief executives, board chairs, COOs and communications professionals with messaging appropriate for business partners, links to the most current digital tools and resources provided by state partners.

- Development and distribution March 19 of digital toolkit with a list of social media accounts to follow and draft social media posts to support local partners in expanding messaging to local employers and career seekers as well as sample email copy to draft broader messages to stakeholders.

- A mobile-friendly landing page (https://careersourceflorida.com/covid-19/) with links to the Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program managed by DEO in partnership with the Florida SBDC Network, the Florida Business Damage

Bridge Loan Program managed by DEO in partnership with the Florida SBDC Network, the Florida Business Damage Assessment survey and other state and federal programs as they become available. This resource is to complement existing websites that may not be mobile responsive.

- CareerSource Florida is adjusting its board-approved outreach budget for digital advertising to direct employers and career seekers, when appropriate, in hardest-hit counties to this landing page, as we did after Hurricane Michael and other recent hurricanes. As the COVID-19 situation evolves, this outreach can quickly be expanded statewide and updated in real time with appropriate messaging depending on programs that may become available.
- Outreach will be digital and will direct to online rather than in-person resources.

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

- The SUS has directed all state universities to continue remote instruction through the end of the Spring semester.
- All students who can return home should return home.
- 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.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

- To help keep toll collectors safe and distanced from customers, FDOT is not accepting cash payments for tolls temporarily. Toll collection will be conducted via Toll-By-Plate until further notice.
- 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.
- FDOT has provided portable roadway signage to the National Guard and is coordinating with other state and local agencies to help ensure mobility around the temporary testing site in Broward County. Once the site is open, FDOT plans to publicize testing site information regularly on its social media channels.
- FDOT completed a request to provide necessary supplies to harbor pilots working at seaports.
- At the direction of Governor DeSantis, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary Kevin J. Thibault, along with Surgeon General Dr. ScottRivkees, hosted a conference call with all Florida ports and their governing bodies as well as all public use airports to discuss Florida’s ongoing response to the COVID-19 virus.
- FDOT Secretary Thibault and staff from the department continue to host weekly conference calls with all passenger seaports and public use airports to provide updates related to COVID-19.
- FDOT is monitoring temporary lane closures near hospitals and Department of Health facilities. If congestion near these facilities and lane closures occur, FDOT will remove lane restrictions to help ensure mobility within the area.
- Pursuant to Executive Order 20-52 issued by Governor DeSantis, FDOT Secretary Thibault has suspended size and weight restrictions for divisible loads on any vehicles transporting emergency equipment, services, supplies, and necessary agricultural commodities on state roads.
- COVID-19 educational materials have been posted in FDOT facilities, which include welcome centers, service plazas and rest areas across the state.
- COVID-19 materials have been posted at all FDOT work sites across the state to help educate contractors, vendors, and stakeholders.
- SunRail has posted COVID-19 educational materials inside all trains and on all platforms, focusing on areas near entrances and bathrooms.

entrances and bathrooms.

- SunRail trains are being cleaned and sanitized daily andSunRail staff have been provided sanitizing towelettes and encouraged to wash their hands frequently throughout the day.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

- Effective March 11, 2020, FDVA is restricting visitor access to its State Veterans' Nursing Homes and Domiciliary until further notice, with the exception of essential visitors, such as family members of those residents undergoing end-of-life care. In addition, we are temporarily suspending admissions in our network of state veterans' homes. Thank you for your understanding.
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has also temporarily restricted access to their nursing and community living center facilities to only essential visitors until further notice.
- The VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8) is taking additional steps to slow the spread of COVID-19 to protect healthcare system's capabilities, healthcare workers and veterans. Facilities within the VISN 8 Network include the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital and Clinics, Miami VA Healthcare System, North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Orlando VA Healthcare System, VA Caribbean Healthcare System, and the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center.
- These actions include:
    - VISN 8 facilities are transitioning to virtual appointments to the fullest extent to allow veterans to stay at home, avoid exposure to others and reduce their risk; Veterans with appointments will be contacted several days beforehand to discuss virtual appointment options available to them.
    - Veterans can help with this transition by visiting the VA Video On-Demand webpage for more information: https://mobile.va.gov/content/getting-started-0.
    - 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. Veterans who are concerned they may have symptoms of Coronavirus, flu or cold should contact the center first before coming to a VA facility.
    - VISN 8 facilities will cease non-urgent elective procedures. Any impacted veterans will be contacted directly by their health care team to reschedule. Urgent and emergent elective procedures will continue during this period.
    - VISN 8 facilities are further restricting visitations. Only one visitor will be permitted per veteran if required to provide assistance moving a patient to and from an appointment, providing support to an inpatient in a palliative or hospice care unit, or for veterans who have major procedures. Visitors who screen positive will not be granted access to the medical centers.
    - These newly announced actions do not supersede or replace activities announced by VISN 8 last week. All VISN 8 facilities continue to use mandatory and enhanced screening protocols for all patients, employees and visitors, have restricted visitations to certain units, and have taken many other actions to mitigate the infection and spread of the virus.
- All VA Vet Centers in Florida, which provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to veterans and families, are open and implementing enhanced screening protocols. At this time, veterans may appear in person or opt in advance for an optional phone consultation.
- All U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemeteries are open for burial and visitation by the public. Florida has nine National Cemeteries. To schedule a burial, please call 800-535-1117, option 1. In light of concerns regarding COVID-19, some families may prefer to proceed with direct interment of their loved ones and postpone the formal committal services to a later date. Beginning March 20, the National Cemetery Administration will only conduct committal services at their cemeteries nationwide for groups of 10 or fewer people. In addition, volunteer veterans honor

committal services at their cemeteries nationwide for groups of 10 or fewer people. In addition, volunteer veterans honor guards may no longer be providing services at all cemeteries. Starting March 23, committal services and the rendering of military funeral honors, whether by military personnel or volunteer organizations, will not be conducted until further notice at VA National Cemeteries. Contact your local National Cemetery for additional information.

- All Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Regional Offices will be closed to the public starting March 19. The St. Petersburg Regional Office will remain open, but will no longer accept walk-ins for claims assistance, scheduled appointments, counseling and other in-person services. Veterans can continue to get information about benefits or file a claim for benefits by visiting our website at va.gov. Veterans with claims specific or other questions may request information via Inquiry Routing & Information System (IRIS)or telephone at 1-800-827-1000. VBA benefits and services provided to veterans, families, and survivors will continue to be delivered throughout the duration of COVID-19 impacts.
- The Board of Veterans' Appeals (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) has suspended Travel Boards until May 1, 2020, due to COVID-19 response efforts. As of March 23, the Board is suspending all video, travel board, and VA Central Office hearings through at least May 1, 2020.
- To contact a VA Homeless Veteran Coordinator in Florida, call toll free 1-800-827-1000.
- All Honor Flights have been postponed nationwide until May 31, 2020.
- All FDVA and VA facilities remain fully operational. Visit FloridaVets.org for the latest information.

VISIT FLORIDA

- VISIT FLORIDA is wholly focused on providing health and safety information to travelers and Floridians. This includes the activation of Florida Now, which includes the latest updates from state emergency response professionals hosted on VisitFlorida.com. All promotional media has been paused.
- VISIT FLORIDA is planning for future marketing campaigns to ensure that Florida's tourism industry has a strong, unified voice following COVID-19
- To protect the health and safety of the traveling public and staff, VISIT FLORIDA's four welcome centers will be closed until further notice.
- VISIT FLORIDA is tracking traveler sentiment across online platforms and social media to monitor how COVID-19 may impact travel and travel booking to Florida. VISIT FLORIDA remains in close contact with industry partners and travel organizations and is communicating all new information as it becomes available.

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.
- Volunteer Florida continues to work with Mass Care on the anticipated need of volunteers and safety guidelines that should be taken to protect volunteers and clients.
- Volunteer Florida encourages volunteers to screen themselves for COVID-19 (per CDC and Florida Department of Health guidelines) before volunteering/serving.

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONVERSATION COMMISSION

- FWC officers are assisting Bay County SO with beach patrol related to social distancing (EO 20-68).

Updated: Friday, March 20, 2020