3/25/2020

The State of Florida Issues COVID-19 Updates 03/25/20

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 State Logistics Response Center and a briefing via live stream, where he announced additional efforts to respond to COVID-19:

- The State Logistics Response Center (SLRC) is running logistics missions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is being done with support from the Florida National Guard.
- At the SLRC, Florida will continue to deploy COVID-19 test kits, collection swabs, N95 masks, surgical masks, surgical gowns, goggles, gloves, respirators, ventilators, hand sanitizer, water and much more throughout the state as we continue to fight the spread of this virus.
- Governor DeSantis announced that hurricane supplies normally held at the SLRC have been moved to provide additional capacity for COVID-19 supplies.
- Governor DeSantis thanked President Donald Trump for granting his request for a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Florida, triggering the release of Federal Funds to help people and communities recover from COVID-19.
- Florida's Surgeon General, Dr. Rivkees, is responding to Governor DeSantis' direction and is issuing a public health advisory urging the following:
    - Persons 65 years or older are encouraged to stay home for 14 days;
    - Persons with certain underlying medical conditions are encouraged to stay home for 14 days;
    - All employers are encouraged to utilize telework; and
    - Consistent with CDC guidance, all individuals should avoid social gatherings of 10 or more.

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, 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.
- Developed a public website for addressing COVID-19: floridahealthcovid19.gov.

- Launched an interactive data tracking dashboard on floridahealthcovid19.com 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.

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
- Find more information on DEM’s response to COVID-19 here.

AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION

- AHCA expanded its event on the Emergency Status System (ESS) requesting hospitals to enter information on Personal Protective Equipment and ventilator counts. The ESS continues to track census information, emergency room status updates, isolation beds, and nursing home and assisted living facility bed capacity.
- 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-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.
- 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.
- Find more information on ACHA's response to COVID-19 here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

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

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

- 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 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 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 at https://floridadisaster.biz/
- Find more information on DEO's response to COVID-19 here.

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.
- 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 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.
- In addition, since Tuesday, March 24, public access to lands within DEP's Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas has been closed.
- Find more information on DEP's response to COVID-19 here.

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, commercial driver licenses and identification cards that will expire now through April 15, 2020.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Find more information on DJJ's COVID-19 response here.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

- FDLE is coordinating and staffing law enforcement missions statewide, including: Coordinating Law Enforcement (Orange County Sheriff's Office) traffic control for additional Orlando collection sites.
- Coordinating Law Enforcement security through the Florida Sheriff's Association, The Florida Police Chiefs association in reference to 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

- 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.

- Find more information on DMS' COVID-19 response here.

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

- There are 1,493 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 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 inbound from CA, WA, NY and NJ at major airports.

AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- APD issued an Emergency Order to providers suspending certain renewal deadlines due to COVID-19.
- Find more information on ADP's COVID-19 response here.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

- 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 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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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