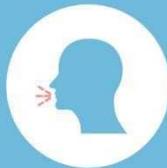
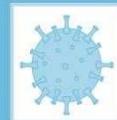


Coronavirus



MAYOR'S AUGUST 14, 2020 STATEMENT

The Honorable Joseph M. Corradino

Good afternoon, Pinecrest. This is our update for August 14th.

We have encouraging news to report. All indicators are now consistently moving in the right direction. While this is good, it is not the time to relax. This is the time to press as hard as possible and continue doing what we have been doing by staying in, wearing masks, washing our hands, and not engaging in large indoor activities. If we do this, we will be able to control the disease, then destroy it with contact tracing and testing.

From a government standpoint, we are continuing to coordinate with all other cities and Miami-Dade County as we work with the State of Florida to perfect contact tracing and the time it takes to get back test results. This is the weakest and most disappointing part of our response thus far.

From an individual standpoint, we need to continue to do our duty. The primary ways the disease is now being transmitted are at work and at home. Social gatherings, as innocent as visiting family and friends and attending small parties may seem, are simply dangerous. Wearing a mask is going to protect your neighbor. Washing your hands is going to protect you. Continuing to act responsibly will protect all of us. It has been five months of this and we are all tired. We all feel the physical, emotional and financial fatigue. I know it's hard, but we need to keep with it. If we do, we will be back to normal more quickly. This is up to us as individuals. It's so much easier to do what we are doing than it will be to go back to a time where we are worried about the catastrophic results of the disease exploding.

The Numbers

This week, the incidents of the disease have continued to drop, but it is not yet under control.

Symptoms: Hospital emergency rooms report that the number of people exhibiting COVID or flu symptoms, like cough, fever and shortness of breath, are going down rapidly.

Tests: We are testing on average over 12,000 people per day. This is about 22% less than what we were doing two weeks ago.

Infection Rate: The numbers are going down. When measuring the rate of infection, we have a goal of keeping the percent of positive cases out of total tests under 10% on average over a two-week period. This number has gone from a low of 8.6% in early June, to a peak at about 21% in the third week of July. It is now about 14%, which is down 7 percentage points from the July peak. We cannot consider relaxing any of our current rules until the positivity rate goes under 5%. Medical experts tell us it could take until the end of September for this to occur. Over 133,000 people have tested positive overall. It is estimated that the actual number of people who have had this is 10 times as high, or over 1,300,000 out of 2,700,000 people countywide. It is being reported that 40% to 60% of the people who have had this disease may not have ever had moderate symptoms. The disease is all around us, and it's likely that every time you leave the house you are coming in contact with someone who has it or had it. Again, wearing a mask, washing your hands and staying distant are critical to our success.

Cases: This week, most of the cases are still affecting people in the age group between 18 and 34 years old. The median age is 43, which is about the same as last week. Most people are reporting getting the disease at home, work and social gatherings as simple as visiting family and friends or going to a "small" party.

Hospitalizations: The numbers are going down. At the peak in April, we had 710 COVID-19 patients in the hospitals. By early June, we had managed this number down to 546 patients, 23% less than the April peak. Since that time, the number of COVID-19 patients in the hospital has again peaked at 2,302, over 320% higher than our April peak. This week we reached 1,568. This is 32% less than the July peak, and 220% higher than the April peak. We still have a very long way to go. The disease is receding more slowly than it increased.

Utilization: When we measure hospital capacity, we look at beds, ICU beds and ventilators. We should stay below a 70% utilization rate. This week 22% of regular beds are being utilized. This number is 4 percentage points less than last week and 48% less than the recent peak. When we count the potential cumulative amount of ICU beds available, we see 41% of ICU beds are being utilized, down 9 percentage points from last week. Ventilators are about 37% occupied, 7 percentage points less than the July peak.

Deaths: Average deaths per day over the last 14 days are rising. Most of the deaths are people over 60. Deaths will continue to rise until perhaps mid-September, not only because they are a proportion of the number of people in the hospital, but because the State can report deaths up to a month after they have occurred.

Contact Tracing/Test Results: This is still woefully inadequate. The State of Florida is in complete control of this and, after five months, has simply not produced in a timely manner. We need 800 contact tracers and this week they report we have about 450. They are just now formalizing a daily contact tracer report. They are just now putting a quality control team in place to review the process. They are just now setting up a human resources process for hiring people. They are just now implementing a text messaging system to contact with people who have tested positive. They are still refining the questions that they are asking the people they call. All of this could have been in place in April. It is critical that they adopt best practices from other communities who do this well. Our cities are meeting and working with the State several times each week to better define this process. Leadership is being provided primarily at the local level. Incredibly, five months into this crisis, it is still taking 10 days to 2-weeks to get test results back. This week, it was found that one lab had not reported over 4,000 positive tests in more than a month. Again, unacceptable. Fortunately, this lab's service has been terminated. Testing for the disease and the antibodies continues at the Pinecrest Municipal Center.

The Future: We know now that this disease is responsive to what we have been doing. We will soon be in a position to control and eradicate it. Yet, while the numbers are going down, it is still nearly three times more prevalent than it was in early April. We must continue to wear a mask, stay home if we can, wash our hands, stay distant, and avoid un-masked indoor gatherings. We need to learn to live with this disease and prepare for inevitable spikes as schools open, flu season starts and fall and winter arrive.

We at the Village of Pinecrest are here to help us get through this crisis. If you need to contact me, please do so at 305-606-2364 or jcorradino@pinecrest-fl.gov. Or contact our staff (manager@pinecrest-fl.gov) and Village Council (council@pinecrest-fl.gov). Each and every one of us is working hard every day as a unified team.