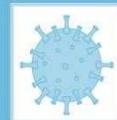


# Coronavirus



## MAYOR'S OCTOBER 2, 2020 STATEMENT

The Honorable Joseph M. Corradino

It's been a confusing and eventful week.

Last Friday, without prior notice, the Governor moved the entire State, including Miami-Dade County, to a Phase-3 re-opening, which fully opened businesses, restaurants, bars, and nightclubs at 100% capacity, unless local governments could justify stricter regulations. Similarly, the State mandated that our schools re-open by October 5th or lose funding. They also undermined mask wearing, our most effective tool, by threatening our local ability to enforce mask rules.

The rationale for this announcement was two-fold. First, to mitigate the economic impact the pandemic has had particularly on restaurants and bars. Second, because of their belief that there is no serious threat of a fall COVID wave. They believe the State is approaching herd immunity and that the life cycle of the virus is about over and it will soon die out. They further believe there is no proof that masks are containing the virus.

Most irresponsible is that these policies and these statements have utterly confused our citizens and undermined their confidence in our leaders.

The medical experts advising Miami-Dade County and its cities emphatically disagree with each of these assertions. They believe that unmasked indoor gatherings in close quarters, like indoor dining, is one of the easiest ways to quickly spread the virus. They also believe that we should anticipate a fall wave, due to the changing weather, the advent of cold and flu season, the relaxation of regulations, and several holidays that will encourage indoor gatherings.

They do not believe we have herd immunity. It can be estimated that 10 times more people have had the virus than have tested positive. This leaves us with about 50% of the population who may have antibodies, where 70%-80% is needed for herd immunity. Nor do they believe the virus is ending its life cycle. An historic look at previous pandemics, including the 1918 Flu, shows that the disease began in the Spring of 1918, a second, more severe wave occurred in the fall of 1918, and a third wave in the winter of 1919. The disease largely abated in the spring and summer of 1919 but lingered as a seasonal flu for years after that.

They continue to believe that masks are our most effective tool. Since the County began mandating masks in July, we stopped the spread in its tracks and have cut the infection rate to its lowest numbers since April.

The State's orders were surprising, confusing and contradictory. Local governments were given no advance warning. It was one of the most egregious preemptions of local authority yet seen. Shocking even from a State that has gladly dictated how cities can trim their trees. It did, however, leave some room for governments to implement more locally tailored rules if they could be justified.

Miami-Dade County has justified more stringent regulations based on the trajectory of the disease and the recommendations of medical experts advising us locally. The rules as they exist today are as follows:

- Restaurants and bars can open at 50% occupancy, regardless of social distancing. They can go up to 100% occupancy if they can separate their tables by the appropriate six-foot distance. They can use outside seating to attain 100% capacity. Masks must be worn when people are not actively eating or drinking. Food and beverages can only be consumed when people are seated, and loud music is not permitted.
- Nightclubs are allowed to reopen but people should wear masks on dance floors.
- In parks, anyone not playing must wear a mask and keep a six-foot distance and playgrounds will remain closed.
- The curfew is still in place.
- The mandatory mask order is still in place; enforcement through fines is still allowed, but those fines are not allowed to be collected until the emergency order has been lifted.
- County public schools will be beginning a phased re-opening on October 5th.

## *The Numbers*

At this point, the trajectory of the disease has ceased going down, and has stabilized and in some cases begun to tick up. As we appear at the bottom of the second wave, we are in a good position, but not a great or secure position. Our ability to control this going forward rests almost completely on our individual behaviors. Wearing a mask works and is critical.

The utilization of hospital beds, ICU beds are about the same as they were last week. Utilization of ventilators are down from last week. All numbers are about where they were after at the low point after the first peak. Today, the utilization of regular beds is at 4.5%, it was 16% two weeks after Memorial Day. The utilization of ICU beds is at 11% today, it was 14% then. The utilization of ventilators is 7% today and it was 5% then.

Hospitalizations have leveled off. Today, there are 353 COVID patients in the hospital, the same as last week. There were 546 people in the hospital two weeks after Memorial Day.

The 14-day average positivity rate is higher than last week. We strive to keep it under 10% on a two-week average. The medical experts suggest we should have only considered further relaxation of the rules when we got below 5%. This week's numbers are still below 5% for the second week in a row, at about 4.6%, but ticking up daily. In early June, the rate was at about 3%.

There are about 600 contact tracers, where we need 800 or more to do it right. Tracers are calling about 90% of the people that are tested positive. More than 50% of those called are refusing to participate. This is a bad sign.

Testing is still down but due to demand and not capacity. We need to maintain that capacity far into the future.

Hospitals have prepared and have stockpiled protective gear and therapeutic drugs. Treatments are improving weekly. Our hospital system is ready for any eventuality.

While the numbers are as low as they have been since early June, they have started to go up. As we re-open, we expect the trajectory to go up. We need to watch on a day-by-day basis to keep it under control. The latest actions by the State may have limited local governments ability to make quick reactions to mitigate any spike or wave. We all need to be extra careful. The virus is still everywhere as evidenced by the fact that most people report contracting it at home. If it can get into the White House, it can get into your house.

Despite the confusion and news of the past week, the facts remain:

- The virus is still with us and will not end just because we proclaim it over. Medical experts consulting Miami-Dade County and the cities say it will last well into 2021.
- It is possible to open our economy and protect ourselves from the virus more fully. Smart, science based, patient decisions have been used in other communities and they work.
- The best protection we can have regardless of anything else is to follow a few simple rules:
  - Wear a mask.
  - Wash your hands frequently.
  - Always stay at least six feet apart.
  - Do not attend large indoor gatherings, particularly in places where you are in close proximity with others and must remove your mask.

It is largely on us as individuals now.

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](mailto:jcorradino@pinecrest-fl.gov). Or contact our staff ([manager@pinecrest-fl.gov](mailto:manager@pinecrest-fl.gov)) and Village Council ([council@pinecrest-fl.gov](mailto:council@pinecrest-fl.gov)). Each and every one of us is working hard every day as a unified team.