

COVID-19 Update Press Conference

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Ed Kelley - Chair, Volusia County Council

Helga van Eckert – Director, Volusia County Economic Opportunity

Holly Smith – Communications Manager, Florida Department of Health in Volusia County

Dr. Margaret Crossman - Chief Medical Officer, Halifax Health

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Good afternoon, I am Kevin Captain, interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County government. For today's briefing you will hear from Volusia County Chair, Ed Kelley, Volusia County Economic Development Director, Helga van Eckert, Holly Smith, the Communications Manager for the Florida Department of Health in Volusia County and Dr. Margaret Crossman, the Chief Medical Officer at Halifax Health. We will get started right away with Volusia County Chair, Ed Kelley.

Ed Kelley - Chair, Volusia County Council

Good afternoon and some of you may already know that yesterday's special meeting of the County Council we discussed the re-opening of the County and the recovery efforts, specifically for our local businesses. We know that those of you out there that have been able to survive have suffered a lot of financial stress, a lot of mental stress, and we want to do what we can and do our part to help you recover and get back into business as soon as possible. We've approved our Relaunch Volusia plan, which outlines a phased reopening of county facilities and services.

We're currently in Phase 1, which consists of community-level physical distancing measures to continue to "slow the spread".

We're working towards Phase 2, and if some of you may realize that we actually moved part of phase two when we accelerated the beach access, which was originally scheduled for phase two. We moved that ahead because we know we wanted to give you access to the beach sooner than possible.

When specific criteria are met, we will move to phase two. We're hoping to get there sooner rather than later, but because they are dependent upon reaching certain milestones, a hard date can't be announced. However, our plan has a goal to be at that point where we can back to a modified normal by May 30th. We also continue to coordinate with our partners at the state level to make sure we remain in line with Governor DeSantis.

Now, on the business recovery, which I feel is most important and something that we recognized early on as a Council and individuals within the community. We approved a \$10 million grant program to help small businesses recover financially from the COVID-19 pandemic. I have friends who are in business who have suffered economic downturns, and I know you may know some, and we are going to ask you to do your part, and that is that if you have a friend or someone you know who has a small business that may not have access to reaching what we are trying to do, let them know that there is information that will be available to try to help them get through this.

In a few moments, Helga Van Eckert, our Director for Economic Development, will get in to the specifics, but essentially, local businesses that meet the criteria can qualify for a one-time, \$3,000 grant under the program. We are also looking for something that is separate and independent of, opportunities to potentially provide PPE equipment. However, our key focus right now is the small business grant, to get you back, and to offset some of your losses.

If we roll out this program, we'll be sure to make that information widely available. And be assured that that program will be independent of the small business grant we're offering and applying for the Volusia County small business grant will not affect your eligibility for any PPE that we may offer in the future. We know business owners are eager to get back up and running as soon as it's permitted, and that's why we're working to get this launched as quickly as possible

The grant application opens tomorrow morning, May 14, at 9 a.m., it will be posted on line and it will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. And the easiest way for you to find out if you cannot remember the link, is to always remember that any information regarding the COVID-19 statistics, go to Volusia.org and on there you will see a link on our phone page where there is a link that will take you

directly to the application and everything can be filled out on-line. The application will be available at Volusia business resources dot com.

And, for those of you who have read maybe that there are many in the medical profession that are worried about a relapse, or that we go into some spikes; Dr. Fauci made a statement, and the key on that statement was that we could go into a resurgence. The question is that can we abide by the guidelines that are set, and he said that if we don't, we could. If we abide by those guidelines, let's prove to the world that we will abide by those guidelines and keep that pandemic from spreading. Let's all do our part; wash your hands, wear your facemask when you are in public, avoid contact with people, wash your hands, and don't touch your face. Get into the habit of not touching your face and with that I will introduce, Helga Van Eckert, Director of Volusia County's Economic Opportunity.

Helga van Eckert – Director, Volusia County Economic Opportunity

Thank you Chair, and good afternoon. As the Chair said, I am Helga van Eckert, I'm the Director of the county's department of Economic Opportunity. And, it is with great pleasure that I can say that yesterday the County Council approved the \$10 million grant that would provide emergency relief to support our local businesses who have a commercial presence within the county, that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The grants are for a total amount of \$3,000 each, and there are specific criteria that will be necessary in order to qualify for those grants. The grant application will be available tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. at www.volusiabusinessresources.com or as the Chair had said, you can go to the Volusia.org and there will be a direct link.

If you go to the site today you will actually see a prequalification checklist. There is a form that you can download and it will tell you the type of information that you need to be able to fill out the application easily so that you can prepare in advance and make sure that all of your paperwork is in place. I am going to read through a list of criteria that will be necessary in order to qualify so that you have an idea in advance.

- Your business has to be a brick-and-mortar business located within a commercial or industrial space located within the county.

- You cannot have more than 25 full-time employees, or 25 full-time equivalent employees. That is to say, that if you have 30 employees, and 20 of them are part-timers, the total amount of hours could not be more than if you had 25 full-time employees at 40 hours per week.
- You cannot be a publicly-traded company or subsidiary of a publicly-traded company.
- You cannot be tax exempt.
- You must be licensed to operate in the State of Florida, Volusia County and the municipality that it is located in, provided licensure is required
- Those Business Tax Receipts must have a date of December 1, 2019, or earlier to show that you were actually a functioning business in advance of the pandemic.
- My business meets all regulatory requirements from Volusia County and the municipality in which it is located
- You must show that you have been negatively impacted (which was not reimbursed by any insurance or any government other program) resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, in an amount of at least \$3,000, but the operations, temporary shut-downs, loss of revenues. And, one of the questions that we have heard from most people so far is: If you have gotten a grant through IDLE or the PPE program, do you still qualify? The answer there is that you can qualify if there is a component to your losses and impact that have not already been refunded to you through either of those programs or through insurance. So, you would need to be able to certify that you have had an actual loss of \$3,000 or more that has not been otherwise dealt with.
- You must be operating within the legal requirements of a business within our county and state.

Those are the basic requirements that you would need to be able to qualify for the grant. Again, the actual grant itself, we have a limited number that are available based on this first round and funded at \$10 million dollars and it is being dealt with on a first come first serve basis. So the grant application process will open up tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. I would highly recommend that if you can pull your paperwork together in advance, have it electronically so that you can upload whatever documentation you need, you have it available to you immediately. It can be in the form PDF or JPG, whatever form you have.

The documentation that you will need to upload is:

- A Completed W-9 Form
- A Copy of the Volusia County Business Tax Receipt
- A Copy of the Municipal Business Tax receipt if required, provided if those are necessary

- Florida Division of Corporations Business Registration Number (if the business is not required to register with Florida Division of Corporations, provide documentation showing that it was operating on or before December 1, 2019 and meets regulatory requirements of Volusia County and the municipality)
- The business' most recent 941 Form

We are very excited about this grant. It is simply the first phase that the county is putting out there to try and help with recovery and resiliency. The County Council has been working to ensure we can take you to that next level. And, part of this application process, at the end of it, we will be reviewing to see what we changes we can make going forward to provide additional assistance, as well as the PPE program. Thank you.

And now with that, I would like to introduce, Ms. Holly Smith who is the Florida Public Information Officer for Public Health for Volusia County.

Holly Smith – Communications Manager, Florida Department of Health in Volusia County

Thank you, Helga, and good afternoon. I am Holly Smith, Communications Manager for the Florida Department of Health here in Volusia County. As of this morning the Florida Department of Public Health is reporting 566 people who have tested positive for COVID-19 here in Volusia County. 30 of those cases have died, and 18 of those deaths were associated with a long-term care facility. 20% of Volusia's COVID cases have been hospitalized. These statistics are updated daily on the Florida Department of Health's website. That address is flhealthcovid19.gov.

COVID-19 testing is coming to midtown Daytona Beach. The city of Daytona Beach has partnered with the Florida Department of Health here in Volusia County with assets coming from the Florida Division of Emergency Management. Collectively we are going to offer "no cost" testing in midtown. The site is going to open this Friday at the Midtown Cultural and Educational Center located at 925 George W. Engram Boulevard, in Dayton Beach. Again, this is no cost testing and it will remain open as long as there is demand for the testing. The hours are 9:00 a.m. in the morning to 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon, six days per week; that means every day except Monday. And, with this site opening Friday, the community is starting to see it take shape. The last couple of days the city of Daytona Beach has been working day and night to set up the site. This is going to be a walk-up site. Testing will be done by nurses who have been sent by the Florida Division of Emergency Management. And, just like other state supported testing sites

that are open around the state, there will be a few members of the Florida National Guard on hand to assist with the operations on site.

The test that is being offered at the midtown site is used to detect the virus. It can be used on people who do not even know if they are sick. This is the test that is done by inserting a swab in the nose. As many as 200 people can be tested every day at this site. The Florida Department of Health will contact every person with their test results. It's expected to take about seven days for those results to come back from the lab, but again the Florida Department of Health will call everyone who is being tested at that midtown site.

Anyone, age 18 or older can get tested. You do not have to have symptoms. You do not have to live in the city of Daytona Beach to be tested, however, you do have to have state issued identification. And, the city of Daytona Beach is working with the NAACP, the Daytona Beach Housing Authority, the Black Clergy Alliance and the Minority Elected Officials of Volusia County to encourage participation from the community. And, I think that it is worth repeating; this is a no cost test and you do not have to be a city resident. The site will remain open as long as there is a demand for the testing.

The City of Daytona Beach has more information on its website. The website address is codb.us/coronavirus. Thank you.

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Thank you, Holly. We will now move to Dr. Margaret Crossman, Chief Medical Officer at Halifax Health, who is joining us in today's conference remotely. Dr. Crossman.

Dr. Margaret Crossman - Chief Medical Officer, Halifax Health

Thank you, Kevin; thank you. Well, Halifax Health is meeting our metrics. We have reduced ED activity as far as influenza-like illness. We have fewer patients presenting with COVID-like symptoms. So, this is very good and in line with what the state is using to determine that we can move ahead, hopefully from phase one to phase two in the next week or so. Our protective gear is in good shape. Our hospital capacity is very good.

Here at Halifax in our special containment unit we have 11 patients, only one of which is on a ventilator. Interestingly enough we have one patient who has a positive viral test, and that is about four weeks out, so she is clinically doing well, but she is staying until her test is negative because she comes from one of our long-term care facilities. Our operating room volumes are increasing slowly with more elective cases and we are continually working to keep our COVID care separate and isolated from our non-COVID care areas. So, this is all going well.

You know across the state others have noted reduced hospitalizations for COVID-19, and those admitted are requiring less intensive care level care. So, these are all very positive things that I wanted to share with you. I also wanted to share some questions that I have had regarding rashes. You may have heard some of the emerging literature about COVID related rashes. There was a larger study that came out of Spain actually where they identified five rash patterns, and there may be more or less in the days ahead, that they felt were associated with the SARS/COV2 virus.

So, the first one is a red-blue discoloration of the toes or fingers. It sometimes could include pustules or vesicles. The next was a vesicular eruption, like vesicles, over the body. The next was a body rash. A red or pink body rash that had a combination of flat or raised small areas. Another was migrating hives. Many of you have seen hives before, there are there, in a few minutes later they might be somewhere else on the body. Big patches of hives that can come and go. And, finally, one that is an indicator of poor blood flow that we call livido. And, sometimes in those situations it would progress to tissue death where there wasn't enough vascular supply to certain areas. Fortunately, those were very, very few and far between.

So, I want to focus on the first one though, because many of you have seen in the literature and in the media called COVID toe. That is the one that is getting the most attention. Now, in the medical world we call this pseudo chilblains. Classic chilblains has to do with a red or purple discoloration of the skin typically from exposure to cold. It involves the toes or the fingers sometimes the nose or other tips of the body. It can be itchy, or burn or painful. Now, typically this is very self-limited but in more severe cases it can progress to blisters, ulcers, sometimes infections or even tissue death. So, in addition there are some medical conditions that has been associated with chilblains.

Now, getting back to COVID we call pseudo chilblains, and we are going to talk about COVID toe. This was first described in China in a handful of their severely ill COVID patients who had multiple organs that were failing and some clotting disorders. Unfortunately many of those did not survive. However, in

Europe, in the Middle East, in Spain, and certainly here in the United States, we are seeing a more benign pattern of this rash. This reddish-purple discoloration is a little more temporary and it's not necessarily associated with severe cases. Research on this milder form suggests it may be related to inflammation or swelling in the very small vessels of the skin. And, that is creating this reddish discoloration in those fingers and toes, especially the toes. And, in many of the studies only about half of the people tested positive for the SARS/COV2 virus. That's kind of interesting. So, there was an association based on the symptoms they had but it was not necessarily confirmed. So, again, this was preliminary information, but again, when you are hearing about COVID toe, I want you to understand what's behind it and where this is coming from.

Now, some have suggested that COVID toe is merely a phenomena of the increased awareness from the media causing increased reporting of discolored digits. And, others have suggested that it is an epi-phenomena; quarantine toe, from more people staying at home, spending more time barefoot, coupled with an unusually cold spring in some areas. But, cases have also been reported in warmer climates so an association with a virus is probably true.

So, back to the rashes. Many rashes have been associated with many different viruses. And, some of the better known viral rashes include chicken pox, measles, hand foot and mouth disease, so, you've seen some of these. SARS/COV2 virus is no different, and in time we will discover more about its characteristic rashes.

So, while the COVID story continues to evolve, there is a common theme. Most people do fine. Some may develop minor or moderate symptoms, and only a handful will progress to a more severe disease. And, that could include multiple organs, including the skin. So, always, if you have questions regarding or other symptoms, whether it is COVID or non-COVID related, please remember Halifax Health is here to help. Thank you.

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Thank you Dr. Crossman. Thank you for all of those specific details and it is great to know that Halifax and all of our area hospitals are ready to care for COVID patients.

So, we do have one question from Facebook for our Economic Development Director, Helga van Eckert.

Helga van Eckert – Director, Volusia County Economic Opportunity

Question: Corina has asked, what if a business lives in Volusia, but their business is in a different county?

Answer: So, the grant is designed for businesses and in order to receive any grant it would have to have the business' physical location in one of the cities in Volusia County. There may be something in Seminole county that is equivalent, I don't know, but it does not go for an individual. Thank you.

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Okay, that will wrap up this afternoon's briefing. We will resume again tomorrow at the Emergency Operations Center, viewed here on Facebook Live at 2:00 p.m. With that, take care, and stay safe.