

COVID-19 Update Press Conference

Friday, May 29, 2020

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Ed Kelley - Chair, Volusia County Council

Donna Butler - Director, Community Services of Volusia County

Patricia Boswell – Administrator, Florida Department of Health

Mike Chitwood – Volusia County Sheriff

Barb Girtman – Councilwoman, Volusia County District 1

Derrick Henry - Mayor, City of Daytona Beach

James Chisholm - Manager, City of Daytona Beach

Craig Capri – Police Chief, Daytona Police Department

Jeff Isaac – Team Turn Up ENT.

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Good afternoon. I'm Kevin Captain, interim Director of Community Information for Volusia County Government. Today you'll hear from Ed Kelley, Volusia County Chair; Barbara Girtman, Volusia County District 1; Sheriff Mike Chitwood; Derrick Henry, the Mayor of the City of Daytona Beach; Craig Capri, the Police Chief for the City of Daytona Beach; James Chisholm, the City Manager for Daytona Beach; Donna Butler, the Director of Volusia County Community Services, and Patricia Boswell, Administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Volusia County.

Before we begin I would like to read two statements that were individually provided to us by our two local hospital systems. First, as Florida's phased re-opening, this is coming from Advent Health, as Florida's phased re-opening continues, proper hand washing, mask usage and social distancing remain essential to re-opening responsibly, and to preventing the spread of COVID-19. To help local businesses and organizations open safely, Advent Health has developed a new website:

www.adventhealthCFLstatebusiness.com. This website offers comprehensive resources focused on

keeping both staff and customers safe, including safe business guidelines. Re-opening plans, clinically approved videos and downloadable resources are available at the site, as well as more things.

Locally Advent Health has made significant investments in services, infrastructure, personnel and technology to safeguard patients, team members, physicians and the greater community. No one should delay seeking medical care out of fear. When you or a loved one is having a medical emergency, the emergency department is where you should go for critical or life-threatening medical problems, even during a pandemic. However, COVID-19 has heightened the global need for mental healthcare and awareness, and at this time of uncertainty and social isolation, can amplify the stress and anxiety associated with it. If you are struggling with anxiety, depression, addiction or any other mental illness help is available. Advent Health provides mental health services at several campuses including Advent Health DeLand in Volusia County.

There are also numerous resources throughout our community to help those in need and we encourage you to seek support if you need those services. Anyone in the community, if you have questions, you can call the Advent Health Corona Virus Information Line at 877-VIRUSHQ. Nurses are available to answer questions that are general medical questions about COVID-19 and they can refer callers to the appropriate next steps.

Now, Halifax Health, the area's only local trauma center, has also provided a statement for us today. They are mentioning that large gatherings can give rise to new clusters and that we know is a known fact. Behavior in these settings is of special concern and truth be known that gatherings of informed participants could work, if we observe social distancing and the wearing of face shields. While not foolproof, these mitigation strategies do decrease spread along with proper hand hygiene, and refraining from gatherings if you have symptoms such as a fever, or other COVID-19 symptoms or exposures.

Public health officials resort to restriction of these large gatherings to help keep people from doing things that could promote the transmission of COVID-19. In an ideal world, as we want to gather into groups, we need to do so in a respectful manner because we want to be able to avoid any surge and increase in cases. With that, we will move on to our next speaker which is Volusia County Chair, Ed Kelley.

Ed Kelley - Chair, Volusia County Council

Thank you Kevin, and good afternoon. It is a good afternoon and it's always a good Friday when you can have good things to say. And, we do have some very positive things that we are going to say today.

Volusia County, and don't misinterpret this as being the state, Volusia County is moving into our Phase Two of Relaunch Volusia. We've continued to calibrate with our partners and look at health data and we feel confident that as long as we continue to abide by the CDC guidelines and rules that are in place, we are on the right course to the phased re-opening.

Beginning Monday, June 1st, county buildings will re-open to the public. However, those services that during the COVID crisis of Safer At Home, that required an appointment, will also require an appointment. If you are unsure, please call ahead to make sure whether you need an appointment and not before you get in your car and drive to DeLand, or to the office where you are seeking help. Also, the county has implemented additional safety measures. This insures the safety of both the staff and the public.

Beginning Monday, all county libraries will re-open, but with limited hours. You can find those hours listed on the website. Also effective Monday, Votran will resume the collection of fares on all buses. As of today, all county playgrounds have re-opened.

And, another bit of exciting news is the popular summer camp that will take place this year, WILL take place this year. They may look a little different. Registration will take place on-line. Again, you can find out more information at Volusia.org. Remember, the summer program is for children entering grades one through six, between the ages of five and twelve.

Another great opening just in the time for summer is the Marine Science Center. It will open June 6th, but stay tuned, we'll give you more information on that as we move into next week.

We have been continuing to collaborate with our partners and look at the health data as I mentioned. And, abide by the restrictions, abide by being safe distancing from everyone. When you feel uncomfortable or you are around a large group of people, wear your mask. It's important I think that we all do what we can to protect those that around us.

The Lyonia Environmental Center will remain closed to public tours but education programs will resume for the month of June.

DeBary Hall will also open this June the 2nd. I know that is a lot of information, but all of this and more is available at Volusia.org. Also, you might check in your individual city as many of those are changing some of the things that they have. You can check with their websites and find that out as well.

As we continue the re-opening process, please be patient. Also, we may need to point this out, the first 75 checks have gone out on the Small Business Grants. The first 75. We've had over 4,000 applications. Please don't stop applying. If we need additional funding, I've been assured that we can seek those from the allocations. But, do that, and we are happy to know that those 75 checks have gone out.

Continue to follow the social distancing, it is also important. We keep saying that we are in this unprecedented time, which we are. We need to focus on the best decisions for the county. Things that you do, things that I do, things that we all do, affect each other. So, with that, I'd like to bring up, Donna Butler, our Director of Community Services to speak about those particular programs that are going to be available.

Donna Butler – Director, Community Services of Volusia County

Good afternoon, I'm Donna Butler, Community Services Director for the County of Volusia. I wanted to address first our COVID-19 Rental and Mortgage Program. In an effort to assist homeowners and residents who have experienced a loss of income due to COVID-19, the County Council has allocated \$5 million for emergency rent and mortgage assistance. The program is designed to assist eligible households with payment of their rent or mortgage, anywhere from one to three months, at \$1,500 maximum per month, for up to \$4,500 for the total. In order for a household to be eligible, the unit must be located in Volusia County, have a recent mortgage statement or active rental agreement or lease, in the applicant's name, that was current as of March 13, 2020.

The applicant must document or certify a loss of income as a direct result of COVID-19. Their annual gross income must be at or below the area median income of \$77,880. And, that is after the COVID impact, not during the regular season. To estimate yearly household income, the gross monthly income will be multiplied by 12. If yearly household income exceeds this amount, documentation will be reviewed to determine the possibility of eligibility, if the household is greater than four individuals.

These programs have recently been designed and the amount of paperwork has greatly been reduced from the original rental program that was announced. A list of required documentation and applications for both programs may be found on-line at www.volusia.org.

Next I'd like to talk about the Summer Food Service Program. We are expanding our Summer Food Program. Currently, there are 12 sites offering grab-and-go meals for breakfast and lunch, for children ages 18 and under. Starting Monday, June 1st, there will be 46 additional sites that are offering meals. Due to Corona virus concerns, some sites are offering grab-and-go meals. Parents are asked to stay in their car and volunteers will bring the meals to them. Other sites will offer breakfast and lunch at specific times, because youth programming, such as camps, are also being offered on site. To find a site near you go to www.summerbreakspot.com.

And, finally I'd like to talk about our summer camp scholarships. They originally were opened up earlier in the season, unfortunately that was during the initial time of the Corona virus. So, we are opening up scholarship opportunities for income-eligible families. Families with children who are entering grades one through six, and are between the ages of five and twelve, may apply for the scholarships. Students up to 17 years old who will be attending approved special needs camps are also welcome to apply.

Scholarship awards are based on income eligibility. A family must be at or below 200% of the poverty guidelines. For example, a family of four's annual gross income would need to be at or below \$52,400 to become eligible. Summer camp applications are currently being accepted electronically and by mail. And, for more information, you can go to Volusia.org. Thank you.

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Thank you Ms. Butler. And, we will now bring up, Patricia Boswell, she is the Administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Volusia County.

Patricia Boswell – Administrator, Florida Department of Health

Good afternoon, I am Patricia Boswell, the Administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Volusia County. Volusia is at 725 confirmed cases and 37 deaths, associated with COVID-19. We have 20% of the cases, or 142 hospitalizations. Twelve percent, or 88 of the Volusia County cases have been associated

with long-term care facilities. Twenty-three percent of the cases, or 161, have been associated with State Correctional facilities. You can find this information on Florida's COVID Data and Surveillance Dashboard.

As we continue to reopen, we are planning to resume operations as well. Since March, many of our services have been delivered by telephone or curbside with limited services offered within our facilities. We are preparing for more staff and the public. Our workstations will allow for social distancing and our employees and clients will wear face masks. Staff is cleaning and disinfecting throughout the day. We encourage our employees to stay at home when they are sick, and we screen those we are serving.

One final message, I would just like to remind everyone that we all play a role in preventing the spread of COVID-19, and everyone can do their part. The best way to prevent the illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. We continue to recommend everyday preventive actions to stop the spread. This includes avoiding close contact with people who are sick, staying home when you are sick and avoiding persons in poor health. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Cover your cough. Wash your hands using soap and water. Wearing face coverings while in public and by social distancing.

And, as we head into the weekend, please keep these measures in mind. Thank you. And, with that I'd like to introduce our sheriff, Sheriff Chitwood.

Mike Chitwood – Volusia County Sheriff

Good afternoon. Last week we saw large crowds gather on the beachside in Daytona Beach. We saw some gun violence and since last week there has been a lot of talk on, "Where do we go from here?" So, I would like to introduce the folks that have been working on where we go. What happens with the June 6th coming up? I'd like to introduce County Councilwoman, Barb Girtman; Daytona Beach Police Chief, Craig Capri; Daytona Beach City Manager, James Chisholm, and of course the Mayor of Daytona Beach, Derrick Henry. If you folks would come on up and talk about what had happened and where we are going from there. This is all about public health, public safety and what will and will not be tolerated going forward. Councilwoman Girtman, would you like to start us off? The smartest person first.

Barb Girtman – Councilwoman, Volusia County District 1

Thank you; thank you sheriff, thank you community, law enforcement. First of all, I want to thank everybody of course, and those that are here with me today, and many, many others who aren't at this venue. But, we have been working; we have been working hard on the frontlines and behind, for common purpose of unity. Daytona, and in fact, all of Volusia County has a reputation as a safe, diverse, and welcoming place to visit and live. And, all of us, we've been working together in keeping it that way. That's what unites us and brings us together. Our strength is in our diversity. The city, county, law enforcement, elected officials, the NAACP, event organizers, business leaders, we've been working together to strike a balance between fun in the sun and safety. And, we are all saying the same thing. Volusia County is open for business and we welcome everyone here. But, we also know that we have to respect our local residents, our CDC guidelines regarding social distancing, and large gatherings.

While this situation is improving, we are still in the middle of a public health emergency. Trust me, we are all ready for a big party but not just, now is not the time. We appreciate our young organizers like young, Jeff Isaac, who is working with us to postpone the plans for large gatherings, until it is a safer time to reschedule. Again, we want fun, but we want lawful, organized, diverse events to return to our county just as soon as it is safe. In the meanwhile, this is a wonderful opportunity for us to open the lines of communication, broaden those conversations and come together in the spirit of harmony, inclusion and the betterment of our community for our residents and all visitors. I thank you for this opportunity and let's come together and have that conversation very soon. Thank you.

Mike Chitwood – Volusia County Sheriff

Thank you Councilwoman; very well said. I would like to introduce the Mayor of the great city of Daytona Beach, Mayor Derrick Henry.

Derrick Henry - Mayor, City of Daytona Beach

We in Dayton Beach welcome each year about two million visitors to our city. And, I would like to express how grateful we are to people all across the world that choose our city as a destination, a choice to spend their money, and spend their time, and vacation in our city. I also want to highlight the reality that not all visitors are always in accord with our highest expectation. With this reality in mind we want to remind those who choose to visit our city at any time. that we expect the highest and best behaviors

from you. I would also like to say that at any given time, that we are in the midst, I'm sorry, at this time, a crisis, of great magnitude. The greatest crisis of our lifetime. COVID crisis, as I call it. And so it is incumbent of all of us, wherever we go, wherever we visit and whatever we do, to always remember that in the midst of this crisis that we must all take extra precautions to:

One, be safe. Two, think of others at all times and figure out how I can make other people around me feel safer. How can I support my community and how can I support a better environment.

As we know, and as Councilman Girtman has illustrated, we have chosen to open our economy up and we are grateful for each and every visitor. But, it is important that we remember that this crisis is not behind us. And, there are challenges that are yet ahead. And, in order to successfully navigate those challenges, as a community the first things that we need to do, even if we have problems in the midst of a crisis, like we had a week or two ago, we need to remain united as a community. And, to that end I'd like to express special gratitude to the same organizations that Councilman Girtman highlighted. The NAACP working tirelessly with minority elected officials, and our Black Clergy Alliance, working tirelessly together with our young people, like Mr. Isaac, who we are appreciative of because they thought it not robbery to come to the table and to have a dialogue and to recognize what's most important in our community. And, at the end of the day as a locally elected official, I recognize two things: Mr. Isaac acknowledged those things, as well as other young people, that the first and most important aspect, the first two, health and safety. And, they acknowledged that and supported leadership, and we together, the community, must acknowledge our common collective health and safety does matter. But, it also matters what we say as leaders. It also matters how we conduct ourselves. So, we must continue as a community to speak positivity over our environment.

And, I am here today, in conclusion, to remind everyone, that we have in my opinion, between our Sheriff's Department, the city of Daytona Beach and others, the finest law enforcement officers in the entire United States. I put them against anyone, any place, anywhere, any time. Because when you welcome ten million visitors into your community, that in and of itself is a challenge. And when you welcome the scope and variety and level of diversity for the events that we have in our community, with the volume of people at any given time, usually congregated in small areas of space and time, it is a tall, tall order and great challenge for any and every one. And so I put our law enforcement officers before any in the nation. I have full confidence in them.

But, in conclusion, I also want to say to our residents, that we have heard you and we value what you have said. And, we respect what you have said. And, we are responding to your call for a safer, calmer community during these challenging times. But, I also admonish and remind everyone under the sound of my voice, to be reminded that we only get better and we only do better by being united and staying together and letting nothing divide this community, because we are a great community with greater days ahead. And, no one from outside or inside should ever divide us from one another. Thank you and God bless you all.

Mike Chitwood – Volusia County Sheriff

Thank you Mr. Mayor; are you running for office? Hopefully not Sheriff. I'd like to introduce the Mayor, uh, the City Manager of Daytona Beach, Mr. Jim Chisholm.

James Chisholm - Manager, City of Daytona Beach

Thank you and I am not running for office. But, we have a great pleasure to enjoy the benefits of one of the world's most famous beaches and we invite people to come every year, and it is our obligation to make sure that it is a safe opportunity for them to see Daytona Beach and our community. And, hopefully they will spend some money here. We are focused now on maximizing the public safety while they are in Dayton Beach. We want them to come to the community and we want them to adjust to our style of safety in visiting the beach. And, we are going to make some changes as we go forward to insure that we can protect both the pedestrians as well as the traffic that comes into the city going to the beaches. You will note as we go forward this year during the summer there are going to be some changes. We do not have programming for community activities on the boardwalk at this time due to the COVID epidemic and we are going to evaluate that particular activity as we go forward. But, in lieu of that we are going to make some restrictions, or put some restrictions in place that will hopefully enable the public to stay safer, keep a safe distance between each, and be in CDC compliance. And with that we are going to close off part of the boardwalk and restrict access to areas that are not being used by the public.

Travel lanes along US 1 and A1A will be restricted for cars exiting the beach ramps, and we are going to assist them finding their ways out. Temporary fencing has been placed along the sidewalks along the

both sides of A1A to protect both pedestrians, and to encourage pedestrians, *discourage* pedestrians from entering the traffic lanes.

Foot traffic will be limited in the beach hill area. Signage encouraging social distancing will be posted throughout the area and as you approach the beach. Thank you.

Mike Chitwood – Volusia County Sheriff

Thank you sir, Daytona Beach Police Chief, Craig Capri. Craig.

Craig Capri – Police Chief, Daytona Police Department

Good afternoon. We had an extremely busy week last weekend with Memorial Day and I attest that to a lot of people being cooped up in their houses for the last couple of months, and we were open for business. The major attractions and theme parks have been closed. Everyone came to Daytona Beach. We had a plan in place, I thought a very good plan, and I stand by that as I speak today. We had a couple of unfortunate incidents, one involving a shooting, and I am proud to say that we have identified both suspects as the shooters, and will be making an arrest in the near future on those.

The gentleman that was causing the street disturbance blocking the traffic, we will be charging him also. Just so people understand, he is going to be charged with a misdemeanor. At the time there was a huge crowd there. We are trained in techniques as law enforcement officers not to escalate situations, but to de-escalate. There was no need to run in there and make an arrest on a misdemeanor with a crowd that big, when we can identify the suspect and arrest him at a later time. That is why we didn't go in and make that arrest at that point in time. That is safety for the community and safety for our officers, we did not want to start a riot. I am proud to say that the Daytona Beach Police Department, the Volusia County Sheriff's Office, helped develop a national model on de-escalation techniques that are being used around the country. So, we helped form that program, and we use that program. We de-escalate, we don't escalate.

Anybody and everybody is welcome in our city. We don't discriminate. We want you to come to our city and have a great time, but you have to obey the law. You have to obey the rules and have respect. If you don't do that, you are unfortunately will have a bad experience here. We don't want that. I can tell you

that we have a major event coming up next weekend; we are prepared for it and we have a multijurisdictional plan in place working with our partners. And, the beachside will be safe for everyone to come and have a good time as long as they obey the laws and respect.

Mike Chitwood – Volusia County Sheriff

I will close it before we take questions. I want to thank, Jeff Isaac, again for stepping forward and saying that this is not the time for having this event. That when COVID-19 passes and it is safe to do these events, we will do them in a safe and lawful manner.

And, I want to reiterate what everybody said up here, Volusia County and Daytona Beach is open for your business. Next weekend on June 6th, if you are planning on coming to the beach, if you come in a lawful manner, respect our community, you are going to have no problems. But, if you come here to wreak havoc and commit deviltry, then I can't tell you what is going to happen. Because, there is going to be an inordinate amount of police officers, not only in Daytona Beach, but throughout the County. The objective here is for everybody to come, have a good time, enjoy the beauty and the benefits of this County, and then go home. We are looking for no incidents but there are going to be a lot of police out there that you may not be accustomed to seeing; that you may not have seen since the early to middle 2000's. So, with that I am going to ask Commissioner, Councilwoman Girtman, to come back up in case anyone has any questions for you. Anybody in the media have any questions or are there any questions from social media you want to fire up here? (Inaudible) Wait, she wants to record you.

Question 1: Sheriff or Chief, either one, and I know that the promotor, Mr. Isaac, is here. So, the event for June 6th has been called off, as best as you can do that right now?

Mike Chitwood – Volusia County Sheriff

Answer 1: Jeff has done everything that a promotor can do. He is out on social media, you've heard our elected officials, we are all going to get the word out on social media; there is not an event. If you are coming to enjoy the beach or any of the other amenities that we have in Volusia County, by all means, you're welcome to come. We are not excluding anybody. We want you to come and have a good time.

However, we will not tolerate gun violence, and we are not going to tolerate any type of behavior that disrupts the quality of life for our residents or for our visitors.

Jeff, do you want to come up? This is free publicity for you, Jeff. Come on Jeff; come on. Jeff said that he was afraid to talk to me because the rumor was that I am the Big Bad Wolf.

Jeff Isaac – Promoter, Team Turn Up ENT.

Hello, my name is Jeff Isaac. I am Jeff Isaac; I am the promotor of Team Turn Up ENT. I do, I hold events out here in Volusia County. We had an event planned for June 6th, but due to, like, the virus going around, or whatever the case, for everyone's safety we are trying to postpone it for a later date. More information will be posted out for it. I guess that's it.

Mike Chitwood – Volusia County Sheriff

Does anyone have any questions for Jeff?

Craig Capri – Police Chief, Daytona Police Department

Good job (shaking Jeff's hand).

Jeff Isaac – Team Turn Up ENT.

Question 2: Did you hate seeing it get to that level, seeing people in the street, and things like that?

Answer 2: Last week's beach event wasn't my event, like, I wasn't even in town, but I am aware of what happened and that's the reason why we are postponing our event this weekend.

Question 3: Jeff, but the Rip and Chill Event, was that your event?

Answer 3: The Sip and Chill, yes. (Reporter: Excuse me, Sip and Chill, rip, sip, thank you.) (Sheriff Chitwood: She's a certain age where she can't see right. There's a lot of sipping.) Anything else?

Question 4: Jeff, you say you've cancelled the event; you put the word out. How are people responding to that as they seem to be listening to that message right now?

Answer 4: It's not cancelled, it's being postponed for a later date until, like, um, we get a clearance from everything and the bars open up, and everything opens up, and we will move forward with that, but as of right now, it's going to have to be postponed.

Question 5: But, are people listening to that message? How are they responding to the postponement? Does it look like they are going to follow those guidelines?

Answer 5: For the most part, yes, people are getting the message, but I can't really control like what people like do. But, we are still promoting the beach cleanup date as the case, like we are still expecting people to come out. So, if the beach were to get trashed, like Sunday we all will be there to clean up the beach or what not; yeah. (Sheriff Chitwood: Anybody else? No? Okay.) Thank you.

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Thank you Sheriff. I'd like to thank all of our speakers for being here today. And, one last round for any questions for county matters? Okay, with that we will close this afternoon's conference. We hope everyone has a safe weekend. Take care, and stay safe.