

COVID-19 Update Press Conference

Friday, June 12, 2020

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Carmen Hall – Director, Volusia County Community Assistance

Captain Tammy Malphurs - Public Information Officer, Volusia County Beach Safety

Joanne Magley – Director of Marketing and Customer Experience, Daytona International Airport

Patricia Boswell – Administrator, Florida Department of Health

Dr. Joe Smith – Chief Medical Officer, AdventHealth, DeLand

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Good afternoon. I'm Kevin Captain, interim Director of Volusia County Government, Community Information division. Today you will hear from Carmen Hall, Director of Volusia County Community Assistance; Captain Tammy Malphurs, Public Information Officer for Volusia County Beach Safety; Joanne Magley, Director of Marketing and Customer Experience for the Daytona Beach International Airport; Patricia Boswell, the Administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Volusia County, and Dr. Joe Smith, Chief Medical Officer of AdventHealth in DeLand.

Before I bring up our speakers, I'd like to touch on just a couple of county updates. The status of most of the county facilities and services continue to remain open. Effective this Monday, June 15, Volusia County campsites will open to 100%.

And, an update on small business. For the reopening grant update for small business, as of June 11, the county has received 2,283 applications. 1,675 of those have passed the Phase one approval process, and 1,146 have passed Phase two, which equates to 962 checks having been issued, totaling \$2,886,000.

As of this morning, June 12, the United-Way of Volusia and Flagler counties, who the county has partnered with to manage the non-profit grant assistance program, has received 89 applications.

I'd also like to touch on two agenda agenda's slated for next Tuesday's County Council meeting on June 16th.

First, will be a resolution which will discuss, the resolution discussion will discuss the Relaunch Volusia assistance program, and allocate funds to support local home-based, or non-brick and mortar based businesses who were negatively affected by COVID-19.

Also, on the agenda for next Tuesday's County Council meeting is a resolution to designate CARES Act funds for the purchasing and distribution of personal protection equipment, or PPE, to local businesses to assist in their reopening efforts. Details of both proposals and resolutions will be discussed at the next County Council meeting this Tuesday, June 16, at 10:00 a.m., and you can follow at Volusia.org. And, as a reminder, all council meetings are streamed online, so it's really easy to go to Volusia.org.

For now I will bring up Carmen Hall, she is the Director for Volusia County Community Assistance, who will be able to speak on several County Assistance Programs that are available. Carmen?

Carmen Hall – Director, Volusia County Community Assistance

Good afternoon, Carmen Hall, Community Assistance Director. The County is still accepting applications for COVID-19 rental and mortgage assistance programs. This program is to assist homeowners or renters who have experienced a loss of income as a direct result of COVID-19. It will provide assistance with rent or mortgage for up to three months and it could include assistance for past due payments, current payments, or future payments if the household remains eligible. The amount of assistance is capped at \$1,500 per month.

For eligibility requirements and for a list of documentation and applications you can visit Volusia.org. At this time, this program has received over 2,000 applications. 733 of these applications have been reviewed with 428 being approved. This means that over \$1.2 million has been approved for assistance to eligible households.

In addition to this program we are also offering our summer food service program. This is available at 54 sites for breakfast and lunch for children ages 18 and under. Due to Corona virus concerns, some sites are offering Grab-and-Go service, while others are providing breakfast and lunch on site, due to other programming at the site, such as camps. To find a site near you, please visit summerbreakspot.com.

And, now we have Captain Tammy Malphurs, the PIO for Volusia County Beach Safety.

Captain Tammy Malphurs - Public Information Officer, Volusia County Beach Safety

Hello, I'd like to talk a little bit about the beach this weekend. We do have a great beach weekend weather-wise, so we are expecting people to flock to the beach this weekend. So, expect to get there early for easy access/easy parking. We do have those afternoon high tides so please, you know, expect that you will have to probably find some off beach parking, and you might not be able to get onto the beach for access for driving, during those high tide conditions.

A couple of things that we want to remind people of. Now we are in that season where we are getting those typical afternoon thunderstorms, and with that, comes lightening. So, we want people to just be aware of that. We are very proactive in monitoring these storms, so please listen to us when we call you out of the water, and make announcements. And, remember that when you are under those pop-up tents, that they don't protect you from lightening. And, we do ask that you seek shelter in a vehicle or hotel or condo.

Another thing I'd like to remind you of is that we still want people to social distance, so please, when you come to be beach, and you drive down on the beach, park at a post. Either a wooden post, or a blue utility post. Make sure that you are spread apart from other vehicles.

And, we'd also like to remind you that the most important and basic thing to remember when coming to the beach, is always swim in front of a staffed lifeguard tower. Thank you.

And, I'd like to introduce, Joanne Magley, she is the Director of Marketing and Customer Experience with the Daytona Beach International Airport.

Joanne Magley – Director of Marketing and Customer Experience, Daytona Beach International Airport

Thank you Tammy. I am Joanne Magley, Director of Marketing and Customer Experience for Daytona Beach International Airport, and I am here today to talk about upcoming flight schedules at the airport, and the "Ready to Fly" initiative. Our airline partners, Delta Airlines and American Airlines, have announced additional flights in the coming months. On June 27th, Delta will add a second flight to its schedule, and on July 2nd, it will add a third flight. On July 7th, American will add two flights, one of which uses the Airbus 319, a larger mainline plane that has 52 more seats than the CRJ 900. On July 11th, American will also resume its weekly Saturday flight to LaGuardia New York. Come mid-July there will be a total of seven daily flights, in and out of Daytona Beach International Airport, compared to three daily flights today.

Now, I'd like to talk about the airport's "Ready to Fly" initiative. Since early March, airport staff have been working on enhanced health and safety measures of the facility, with special attention to high-touch surfaces and enhanced cleaning of the entire facility. Also, additional hand sanitizer stations were installed throughout the facility. The airport has also installed protective barriers at customer service stations including airline ticket counters, rental car counters and retail shops. As a smaller airport such as Daytona Beach International Airport, it's easier to keep your social distance, but we have to, we wanted to help remind people, so we have installed signs and stickers on the floor to remind people to keep their safe distance, and also signs reminding people to keep good hand hygiene.

In the coming months, the airport will make personal care kits available for passengers. The DBA Care Kits, which we are calling them, will include hand sanitizer, face covering and some other amenities. The airport does encourage travelers to follow CDC guidance on face coverings. Delta Airlines and American Airlines require face coverings while travelling, and specific requirements may vary by the airlines. So, travelers should consult with their specific airline for details. More information on all of this can be found on the airport's website at: flydaytonafirst.com.

At this time, I'd like to introduce 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'm Patricia Boswell, the administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Volusia County. Today's statistics, as of early this morning, we've had 864 cases of Corona virus in Volusia County. Our positivity rate over the past two weeks is 2.29%. Even though our cases have risen and leveled off over the past week, the positivity rate has declined.

The recent rise in cases is primarily a result of increased testing. There have been 46 COVID deaths in Volusia County. Thirty of those deaths have been residents or staff at our long-term care facilities. So, the number of new cases and the positivity rate are just two of the metrics that the Department of Health uses to monitor for the spread of disease.

The charts that I am going to show you are posted weekly on the Florida Department of Health's website. The data is through the month of May. This is the most recent data that is posted. The first line graph shows the progression of new cases, by weeks, as of April 26th. Volusia County was on a steady

decline until we saw an increase in mid-May. This increase in cases was primarily a result in increased testing at long-term care facilities, at community test sites, and at our hospitals, as part of their pre-op testing. This graph does not include numbers in June. The graphs are updated weekly.

The more testing that is conducted in the County, the more cases that can be identified, isolated, and contact traced. As we've been saying now for a few weeks, we anticipate a slight increase in the number of cases as we re-open. For the first two weeks in June, we had 71 new cases, followed by 87 new cases the second week. However, the positivity rate declined, because of increase in testing. From 2,484 tests recorded the first week, compared to 4,424 tests the second week.

The next chart demonstrates Volusia County's positivity rate. This is the number of positive tests each day, divided by the total number of tests conducted on that day. This chart illustrates a fluctuation between one and three percent since April 26th. Again, these charts are updated every week. Currently, Volusia County's positivity rate over the past 14 days is 2.29%. A slight decrease from last week.

The next two charts are based on data received from all of our emergency rooms and free-standing emergency departments. The first chart illustrates the number of visits to the emergency rooms for influenza-like illness, which is on a steady decline now that we are out of flu season.

The final graph illustrates the number of emergency room visits for COVID-like illness. There was a slight increase at the end of May. However, in reviewing the number of patients in ICU, on a vent, and bed availability, our hospital systems appear to have more than adequate capacity.

Now, I'd like to talk about some COVID testing available on Tuesday, June 16th. Southwest Volusia residents will have a free COVID testing site in New Smyrna Beach. Testing will be conducted in the bus loop at Chisholm Elementary School. The bus loop is on the north side of the school. You need to access this by taking Wayne Avenue and turning left on Arno Drive. The site will be open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, weather permitting, from 9:00 to 1:00 in the afternoon, until supplies last. Anyone can get tested. This is a nasal swab test and you do not have to have symptoms to be tested. You do not need to live in the city of New Smyrna Beach. This will be a drive-through test site. Again, please access it by through taking Wayne Avenue to Arno Drive. The testing site is a partnership between the city of New Smyrna Beach and the Florida Department of Health of Volusia County. So, to get through the line faster, you can preregister by calling the Department of Health at (386) 274-0500 and select "#" for Corona virus information. The registration call center is open from 8:00 to 5:00, seven days a week. It will take a week, approximately, to receive your results. The Department of Health will

call or mail you the results of the test whether you are positive or negative. Again, if you'd like to pre-register, the number is (386) 274-0500 and press the “#” key.

I'd like to end by reminding everyone that we all play a role in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Everyday practices include frequent handwashing, covering our cough, and staying home when we are sick. The virus is spread through close contact to someone who is infected, so wearing face coverings in public, and practice social distancing, will reduce your chance of exposure. And, as we head into the weekend, please keep this in mind.

Thank you, and at this point I'd like to introduce Dr. Joe Smith, our Chief Medical Officer at AdventHealth in DeLand, who will be joining us by phone.

Dr. Joe Smith – Chief Medical Officer, AdventHealth, DeLand

Thank you so much for having me on. I'd like to reiterate that the past few months have been nothing like our country's experienced in modern times. There is a global pandemic, we've had civil unrest, protests, massive unemployment, a volatile market, and I think that our nation and the people of our county are experiencing a significant amount of stress and trauma. It's certainly important to know that even before the pandemic, the substance abuse and mental health services administration estimated one in five Americans coped with a significant mental health challenge as part of their daily life. We certainly all believe here at AdventHealth, and throughout the community, that number right now is probably far greater. In Volusia County, I want to reiterate, that DeLand serves as a beacon. A place where patients can come for the treatment of substance abuse disorders, mental health disorders, as well as their physical pains and ails.

Here at DeLand, we want to make sure that everyone knows that you are not alone, and that we understand that the community is very stressed and uneasy. And, we are here to be a place of peace and rest for you. There are ways that I think the community can help.

One is, think about your senior citizens or people in your life who are immune compromised. Maybe someone who is receiving treatment for cancer or someone who has a chronic medical condition, and think about how they are living in isolation right now. They have been home without their normal support networks. Let's make sure that we are taking care of each other in that way. Make sure that you are reaching out to your neighbors. There are things that you can do, like make a phone call, and just

check on someone. Or you can perhaps do some shopping for somebody to help them ease back in. If you find then, that people are not doing as well as you would have hoped, perhaps there's a little bit more of an impact on someone, I want you to know that there are avenues that we can help you with here at AdventHealth, to help those people get the resources that they need to return to, not only physical health, but mental health, as well.

I think that children have disproportionately been affected by this, and they may not be able to tell us all how they feel. Children have been out of school. They certainly may not have the same perspective that all of us do, and children too, are at risk for mental health impact from the effects of COVID-19. I think that this is something certainly also, that we as a community, should have our eyes on.

I want to take a moment now and respond to some questions that I've gotten about whether or not we are seeing a surge in the number of cases of COVID-19, since there has been some relaxing of the restrictions during the social distancing guidelines in the Phase I and Phase II rollouts. I can say that we have seen a small but significant uptick in the number of COVID-19 cases spread throughout Central Florida. And, we feel on balance, as a medical community, that is likely due to relaxing those barriers to interacting with each other. Certainly, that was incredibly important; we cannot keep the country on lockdown forever, but I want to be very crystal clear, that what we have to do to make this work, is we have to continue to do the things that we have been doing that press those numbers down so low.

Washing your hands. Making sure that you are staying out of the public if you feel ill. Making sure that you are very careful about touching your face after you have touched, really, anything that has been out of your sight, or that you don't know to be clean. It's incredibly important also to reiterate that you wear a mask to protect someone else, not necessarily to protect you. And, that really only works if large numbers of us wear masks. I can say, and I think that most of you would agree, that when you are out in the community now, we see an awful lot of people not only not wearing masks, but not standing apart, and seemingly being a little bit cavalier.

As of right now we have had 71,000 cases of this virus in the state of Florida, with 870 of those just in Volusia County, which tells us that this little increase means there are still an awful lot of us out there that could still get this virus, and we need to be careful. I think that it is important for all of the reasons we talked about before: our mental health, our wellbeing, and our livelihoods, that we are out doing things that we used to do, but we need to be smart about it. And, I think that this is something that all of you watching or listening can take from this, is to say that, "I am going to be a good citizen and be a

responsible person, and I am going to do everything that I can to make sure that even if I don't have any symptoms, I am going to treat myself like I am sick, and I am going to treat you like you are sick." That doesn't mean that we don't treat each other with courtesy and respect, but it does mean that we need to be quite careful.

I cannot emphasize enough that as we continue to reopen, please take a moment and think about proper handwashing, mask usage and social distancing. They are just as critical, if not more so now, as they were when we were on the front end of this thing. Because, all of that that we have gone through, could be for not, if we don't do the right thing.

If you have any questions, anybody in the community out there, I encourage you to call the AdventHealth Corona Virus Information Line that is 1 (877) VIRUSHQ, that is 1 (877) VIRUSHQ, and we have nurses on staff available to answer your general questions about COVID-19 and help you get care, and refer you to your next steps.

So, if anyone has any questions, I will remain on the line, otherwise, good luck, God bless.

Kevin Captain – Interim Director of Community Information of Volusia County

Thank you, Dr. Smith. Thank you so much for those words, and those were some very important words, definitely.

So today, throughout Volusia County, and the State of Florida, flags are at half-mast in remembrance of the Pulse nightclub mass shooting, which happened four years ago today. It was one of the worst mass shootings in history and it was a tragedy not only for central Florida, but the nation, and arguably the world. However, from that tragedy, we saw individuals and communities join together with an outpouring of support and love. It is important that we continue to join together in acts of peace and kindness, and to remember to be kind to one another. With that, we'll close this conference. Remember, to help your neighbors, take care, and stay safe.